

## Chinese porcelain

Source type: porcelain mug

Date made: around 1780

The fabulous items British traders brought back from China and Asia inspired English craftsmen, artists and designers – who were influenced by Chinese materials and patterns.



## Trading opium to buy tea

To obtain the silver it needed to trade for tea with China, the East India Company smuggled opium from India.

Opium was illegal in China, but nevertheless in demand.

By 1839, East India Company's sale of opium to China paid for the entire tea trade.

Numbers of opium smokers in China:

- **1836** – 12.5 million smokers
- **1880s** – 40 million smokers (10% of the population)

Opium addiction was socially problematic and also blamed for falling birth rates after 1850.