

HI31C: Merchants, missionaries and opium war (previously known as 'China Encounters the Wider World (1550-1800)').

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China's involvement with the wider world has traditionally been characterised as hostile to interaction and innovation, isolationist, and xenophobic. This module encourages students to question these stereotypes. China's official rhetoric of cultural superiority and disdain for trade masks an enduring engagement with the outside world and ongoing trading activities. Long before the encounter with the West in the nineteenth century, China exported its people, its manufactured goods, and its cultural heritage throughout East and Southeast Asia. Throughout its history, Chinese culture was profoundly altered by the exposure to the non-Chinese world in the form of material goods and the intellectual and religious ideas brought by artists, monks, and merchants. In the period from 1550 to 1850, or from the late Ming to the high Qing, China encountered the wider world both within and outside its own borders. The focus of this advanced module is the nature of that encounter and China's dynamic engagement with the wider world.

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