

## **CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES**

- ***Bandana; Bangle; Churidar; Cummerbund; Pashmina; Pyjamas; Shawl***

### **Bandana, Bandanna (n.)**

‘Bandana’ (or ‘bandanna’) has a strong linguistic relationship with the Hindustani *bāndhnū*, meaning “a mode of dyeing in which the cloth is tied in different places, to prevent the parts from receiving the dye”, although this word itself may have originally entered English from Portuguese. Its Sanskrit roots lie in *badhnati*, meaning ‘binds’. Its modern English meaning does not refer to the process but rather the object created, namely a richly coloured silk or cotton handkerchief. The use of the term increased sharply in the West between the 1960s and 1990s, where it became associated with counter-culture.

### **Bangle (n.)**

The original Hindi meaning of *bangrī* was a coloured glass ring worn on the wrist by women. In current use, however, a bangle can be worn on the wrist or the ankle and made of other materials. This change in meaning can be seen as early as 1787 in *Archaeologia*, which talks about “ankles and wrists ornamented with large rings or bangles.”

### **Churidar (n.)**

According to William Hoey in 1880, churidar are “the tight trouser-like pajama ordinarily worn by males and females” that have excess material at the bottom of the legs which falls in folds around the ankles. The word comes from the Hindi *cūrīdār* meaning ‘bangle-like’ or ‘ring-like’, referring to the way in which the fabric gathers, and how it may originally have been held together with bands. Churidar are generally made in such a way that they can stretch and so not discomfort the wearer. The word appears to have entered English quite late – towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – entering the OED officially only in 2015. Hobson-Jobson reports that previous Anglo-Indian terms for churidar included ‘long-drawers’, ‘Mogul breeches’ and ‘mosquito drawers’. Although the term originally appeared only as a singular form, in more recent times *churidars* has become increasingly common (e.g. from this 2008 article in the New York Times: “Many of us who shunned Indian clothes in youth began wearing kurtas and chappals, saris and churidars.”)

### **Cummerbund (n.)**

Cummerbund entered English more than 400 years ago, coming from the Urdu and Persian *kamar-band* (= loin-band, or waist-band). Originally, the sash was worn by domestic workers and low-status office workers in India. It was subsequently adopted by British military officers, who considered it to be a cooler alternative than a waistcoat when dining. The modern use of the cummerbund is generally as part of formal evening wear (often worn with a tuxedo), although they retain their military presence in formal parades and events.

### **Pashmina (n. and adj.)**

The word has multiple origins, being partly a borrowing from the Urdu and Persian *pašm*, meaning wool. Originally, *pašmīna* referred to cloth or shawls made from the fine wool of both sheep and goats, while the later English usage more specifically refers only to goats. The economic importance of pashminas was identified as early as 1877, when H.C. Marsh talked about “valuable goods, such as silk and Pushmeenas.” The word has seen a significant revival in the West since the mid-1990s, when pashmina shawls rapidly increased in popularity. In 1997, for example, the Daily Telegraph noted that “Embroidered ‘pashminas’—luxury cashmere shawls—...displayed a new sensuality.”

### **Pyjamas (n.)**

‘Pyjamas’ (or ‘pajamas’ in American English) remains one of those words which is commonly misspelt, which is no surprise given its etymological history. The OED records spellings including *paunjammahs*, *paejamus*, *paijamahs*, *peijammahs* and many more besides. Deriving from Urdu and Persian, the word originally described loose trousers, usually made of silk or cotton, which were tied round the waist. In the 1840 *Scenes and sports in foreign lands*,

Napier describes being “equipped in our broad straw hats, shirts, light silk or muslin ‘piejamahs’.” Hobson-Jobson describes the European adoption of pyjamas as “an article of *dishabille*”. In its modern sense it is used principally to refer to nightclothes. The term is almost always used in the plural form. As a base word, ‘pyjama’ or ‘pyjamas’ can be combined with many other words to form compounds, including: *bottom; clothes; coat; cord; dress; suit; top* and *party*.

### **Shawl (n.)**

Deriving originally from the Persian *shāl*, ‘shawl’ entered English via Urdu and other Indian languages, and from here also into other European languages such as Spanish (*chal*), Italian (*scialle*) and even Icelandic (*sjal*). ‘Shawl’ originally referred specifically to the oblong piece of material made in Kashmir from the hair of what Richard Lydekker described as “the long-haired shawl goat of Tibet” in 1893. Its meaning gradually widened to refer to an article of clothing generally worn by women to cover the shoulders or the head, made of wool, silk, cotton or a mixture of these materials.

## **FOOD**

### **- *Bhelpuri; Chutney; Curry; Dal; Kedgeree; Mulligatawny; Raita***

#### **Bhelpuri (n.)**

Bhelpuri is an Indian dish or snack typically consisting of puffed rice, onions, potatoes, and spicy and sweet chutneys. Since the dish originated in the Mumbai area, where Gujarati and Marathi are spoken, the word entered English from these languages (bhel = mixture; puri = small round cake), as well as Hindi. In his 1985 *Fall of a Sparrow*, Salim Ali (India’s greatest ornithologist) talks about “falling to the temptation of mid-day *bhelpuris*.”

#### **Chutney (n.)**

Deriving from the Hindi *chatni*, chutney has become anglicised both as a word and as an idea. In the Indian context, chutney means ‘a strong hot relish or condiment compounded of ripe fruits, acids, or sour herbs, and flavoured with chillies, spices, etc.’. English chutneys, however, tend to be tamer, and often have a vinegar base. The word makes an early appearance in Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* (1848) when describing the East India Company’s corpulent Waterloo Sedley and his “chests of mangoes, chutney, and currie-powders”.

#### **Curry (n.)**

The English word curry derives from the Tamil *kari*, a sauce commonly eaten with rice. Its modern usage refers more widely to the preparation of meat, fish, fruit or vegetables cooked with spices which is eaten as a meal. The word also seems to have a relationship with *karil* from Kannada, as described in *Discours of voyages into ye Easte & West Indies* as follows: “Most of their fish is eaten with rice, which they seeth in broth which they put upon the rice, and is somewhat sowre..but it tasteth well, and is called Carriil”. The term *Curry-house*, a favourite British place to eat, has been used for well over a hundred years, with John Fiske writing in 1883 about dining at “Halford’s Anglo-Indian Curry-House”.

#### **Dal (n.)**

Dal is a type of dried, split pulse (that is, lentils, peas and beans), which is widely used in India, across South Asia, and beyond. It entered English at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, deriving from the Hindi *dāl* (= ‘split pulse’), which in turn comes from the Sanskrit *dala* (= to split or divide). It has had (and indeed continues to have) several written forms, including *dol(l)* and *dhal(l)*. Hobson-Jobson notes an interesting difference in usage, that Indians used it “as a kind of porridge [but] Europeans as an ingredient in kedgeree, or to mix with rice as a breakfast dish”.

### **Kedgeree (n.)**

The origins of kedgeree are found in the Hindi ‘khichri’ (which itself derives from the Sanskrit k’rsara) meaning ‘dish of rice and sesamum’ (a type of herb). The original ‘Indian’ dish is “a sort of Pulse and Rice mixed together” (from the 1698 *A new account of East-India and Persia*) with onions, eggs, butter and condiments. The Europeanised version added fish to the dish, and it was often served hot and for breakfast. Figuratively, kedgeree can be used to be mean a jumble, as in this 1938 entry from the Architectural Review: “Winstanley’s Eddystone was a remarkable kedgeree of bits and pieces.”

### **Mulligatawny (n.)**

Mulligatawny – the curse of spelling tests around the world – is a direct borrowing from the Tamil *milaku-taṇṇīr* (which combines *milaku*, ‘black pepper’, and *taṇṇīr*, ‘water’). It refers to a spicy soup which became popular amongst the British, particularly in Chennai. It also became popular back in the UK, where it was often known by the much blander name ‘curry soup’. An interesting obsolete meaning of the word is a ‘European official serving in the former Madras Presidency in southern India’; the term was subsequently shortened to ‘mull’.

### **Raita (n.)**

Raita is a cold side dish consisting of yogurt or (esp. formerly) curds with herbs or spices, and typically also containing finely chopped vegetables or fruit. The original Hindi *rāytā* derives from *rāī*, meaning mustard, the seed of which was a common ingredient historically. An Indian cookery book from 1969 explains one of the key culinary functions of raita, namely that “like a salad, it provides a cooling contrast to the main highly seasoned dishes of a meal.”

## **HIGH SOCIETY AND THE STATE**

### **- *Chit; Gymkhana; Khaki; Palanquin; Polo; Pukka; Tiffin***

#### **Chit (n.)**

Deriving from the Hindi *chittī* and Mahratti *chittī*, ‘chit’ is the more common abbreviated form of *chitty*, meaning a letter or note. An earlier meaning of the word was a certificate given to a servant. It seems to share the same ultimate root with both ‘cheetah’ and ‘chintz’, namely the Sanskrit *chitra*, meaning ‘spotted’ or ‘distinctively marked’. The prevalence of chits is well recorded in Indian history, with the *Athenaeum* in 1871 noting, for example, that “In India the practice of writing chits, i.e. notes, on the smallest provocation has always been carried to excess”. In addition to their bureaucratic function, the whiff of scandal could quickly attach itself to a chit; in *The Lady of the Manor* (1826), Mary Sherwood writes breathlessly that “The *chit* was found on Miss Crawford’s dressing-table; a *chit* which nobody wrote, but which every body read.” Compounds (increasingly rare) using the base term include ‘chit-book’ and ‘chit system’.

#### **Gymkhana (n.)**

A gymkhana originally referred to any display of athletics or sports, in contrast to its more specific contemporary meaning of a meeting at which horses and their riders take part in games and contests. In August 1896, for example, the *Daily Telegraph* makes reference to a “bicycle gymkhana”, while in 1966 the *Publications of the American Dialect Society* describe a gymkhana as a “tight, low speed sports car competition”. The word’s origins are likely to be a mixture of the first syllable of *gymnastics* with the Hindustani *gend-khāna* (‘ball-house’), the name given to a racquet-court. The word was originally hyphenated (e.g. Hobson-Jobson records it as *gym-khana*), but the hyphen has been lost over time. Hobson-Jobson further states that the first use of the term was in 1861 by a Major John Trotter at Rukri.

## **Khaki (adj. and n.)**

Khaki (originally spelt ‘khakee’, ‘kharki’ or even ‘kharkee’), derives from the Urdu *khākī*, meaning dusty. Khaki was initially an adjective used to describe something which was dust-coloured, dull brownish yellow, or drab. The practice of British soldiers dyeing their uniforms such colours (for example during their 1857-8 campaigns) meant that the word was soon nominalised (turned into a noun), used to describe not only the colour, but the actual items of clothing made from this kind of coloured wool or cotton. The 1857 *Lumsden of the Guides* records that “The whole of the troops here are dressed in khâkee”. A particularly interesting usage of the word comes in the term ‘to vote khaki’ or ‘khaki election’ to describe an election which is heavily influenced by wartime or post-war feelings.

## **Palanquin (n.)**

Although the term may be little used nowadays, palanquins (covered boxes used to carry a single person, balanced on two horizontal poles) played an important role in the history of India. Whilst the English word ‘palanquin’ is a borrowing from the Portuguese *palanquim*, it ultimately derives from the Sanskrit *palyanka*, meaning ‘bed’ or ‘litter’. The related terms *pālaki* (from Kannada), *pālakī* (Marathi) and *pālānki* (Oriya) should also be noted. The nasalisation of the final ‘m’ from the Portuguese can also be seen in the change from *manadarim* (Portuguese) to *mandarin* (English). Unsurprisingly, given its complex etymology, Hobson-Jobson presents a lengthy entry for the term, and notes that the specific Indian language through which it entered English is “by no means clear”. The OED argues that the most likely intermediary language was one of western or southern India, rather than one of eastern India.

## **Polo (n.)**

Perhaps surprisingly, polo is actually Tibetan in origin, deriving from the Balti *polo* meaning ‘ball’. The game resembles hockey, and is played on horseback with long-handled mallets, with the riders hitting wooden or plastic balls. Initially coming from China (via Persia), it survived in the mountainous regions of the Indus valley and in Manipur, becoming popular with British army officers in the 1850s. Early polo appears to have been particularly dangerous, with the *Athenaeum* reporting in 1886 “the death at polo of the Sultan Aikbar”. Its usage has spread considerably to refer to a range of similar team games, including “polo on skates” (1883), bike-polo (1986) and canoe polo (2000).

## **Pukka (adj. and n.)**

Pukka, a borrowing from Panjabi, has passed through many spelling variations over time, including *pucka*, *puckah*, *pucker*, *pucca* and *pukkah*. Its original meaning to describe something which was cooked, mature, substantial or permanent, saw it commonly used in the field of weights, measures and money. Over time, this meaning expanded to refer to things which were certain, reliable, genuine, correct or bona fide. For example, in 1858 Colonel Young talks of “receiving pucka information”, Charles Allen wonders about “pucker English” (1893), while EM Forster’s 1924 *Passage to India* notes Mrs Turton’s concern that “Mr. Fielding wasn’t pukka, and had better marry Miss Quested, for she wasn’t pukka.” In the last 25 years or so it has experienced a new lease of life in British English as a slang term to mean ‘very good’ or ‘cool’, popularised in particular by the TV chef Jamie Oliver.

## **Tiffin**

Although tiffin does not in fact derive from an Indian language, it is a word that was made in India. It appears to have derived from the English slang word *tiffing*, meaning ‘to sip’, or ‘to take a little drink’. The earliest recorded use in the OED of Tiffin is 1800, where it refers to a light meal around noon, specifically lunch. Hobson-Jobson notes that *Cordiner’s Ceylon* in 1807 reported “Many persons are in the habit of sitting down to a repast at one o’clock, which is called tiffen, and is in fact an early dinner”. It was subsequently also used as both a transitive verb (“I’d tiffin them if they were my visitors) and an intransitive verb (“Here I tiffined”). Tiffin is used as the base form for several related compound words, such as tiffin-bell, tiffin-table, tiffin-time and tiffin-carrier.

## **HOUSE & HOME**

- **Bungalow; Chintz; Cot; Lacquer; Shampoo; Tank; Veranda**

### **Bungalow (n.)**

The original meaning of bungalow meant not only a one-storied house (as in its current meaning), but also a temporary building such as a summer-house. It derives from the Hindustani *banglā* meaning ‘belonging to Bengal’, or ‘in the Bengal style’. The word is used in English as early as 1676, where a diary entry reads: “It was thought fitt... to sett up Bungales or Hovells ... for all such English in the Companyes service as belong to their sloopes and vessels.” The term *dāk bungalow* was a common Anglo-Indian term, meaning a house for the accommodation of travellers at a station on a *dāk* route (= a route involving a relay of men or horses).

### **Chintz (n.)**

One of the earliest appearances of chintz in English (as *chinke*) comes in Samuel Pepys’ diary of 1663, where he describes buying a ‘paynted Indian Callico’ for his long-suffering wife “to line her new Study”. Another literary Samuel – Samuel Johnson – records the modern definition of the word in his 1755 dictionary, namely “cloath of cotton made in India”. To this description we might add that these chintz cloths are generally fast-printed with designs of flowers, in several colours, and glazed. ‘Chintz’ has a very interesting etymology. Not only does it derive from the same Sanskrit root as *cheetah* (from *chitra*, meaning ‘spotted’ or ‘distinctively marked’), but the original word (borrowed directly from Hindi) was, in fact, the singular noun *chint*. However, given the frequency of its use in the plural form (i.e. *chints*) in a commercial setting, over time the word evolved as *chince*, *chinse* and then ultimately to *chintz*.

### **Cot (n.)**

Cot entered English from the Hindi *khāṭ*, meaning couch or hammock. Its first use in English was recorded as early as 1634 in Thomas Herbert’s *A relation of some yeares trauaile* where he writes “The better sort sleepe vpon Cots, or Beds two foot high”. Its deeper origins appear to be in the Sanskrit *khaṭwā*, which may come from a Dravidian source (see the Tamil *kattil*, meaning bedstead). It then passed into nautical usage to mean a canvas swinging bed for officers or sick persons (“Our captain...was put in his cot, and never rose from it again”). Its modern-day meaning as a child’s bed seems to have been first recorded in the 1813 *Pantologia*, where it is described as the name “now often given to swing-cradles for children.”

### **Lacquer (n.)**

‘Lacquer’ (also ‘lacker’) is of multiple origins, but derives ultimately from the Sanskrit *lākṣā*, a kind of red dye, specifically one which is produced by certain insects as a protective coating. Indeed, one of the chapters of the Sanskrit epic the *Mahabharata* is called ‘Lakshagraha’, meaning ‘The House of Lacquer’. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century it had come to mean a gold-coloured varnish which was used mainly as a coating for brass. Its meaning soon widened, predominantly in India, China and Japan, to refer to a liquid painted onto wood or metal which forms a hard, shiny surface when it dries. The mid-20<sup>th</sup> century yielded another meaning, that of a kind of fixative for a hairstyle, usually applied as an aerosol spray. As the 1983 edition of *Boots Book Hair Care* notes, “During the Fifties and Sixties the *bouffant*, beehive styles led to the over-use and misuse of lacquers.” An interesting folk-etymological (i.e. popular but mistaken) interpretation of the Sanskrit *lākṣā* links it to *lākh*, meaning ‘many’ or, specifically ‘one hundred thousand’ with the word thought to refer to the large number of the insects needed to make the substance form.

### **Shampoo (n. / v.)**

Deriving from the Hindi *čāmpo* (‘to press’) via ‘champing’, ‘shampoo’ originally had a similar meaning to massage. In 1800, it was reported that Tippoo Sultaun “generally rose at break of day” and that “after being *champed*, and rubbed, he washed himself”. Its modern meaning, i.e. to wash the head with a cleaning product (and as a noun, to

refer to the actual substance), did not emerge until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Hobson-Jobson, for example, records only the original meaning of the word.

### Tank (n.)

*Tank*, in the sense of a large artificial pool of water, appears to have entered English from the Gujarati *tānkh* or *tānki* (= an underground reservoir for water; a well) and the Marathi *ṭānken* or *taken*, which has a similar meaning. They may ultimately derive from the Sanskrit *taḍāga* (= pool, lake). An alternative etymology is that they come from the Portuguese *tanque* (= pond). As early as 1655 Edward Terry writes in *A Voyage to East-India* that “Besides their River ... they have many Ponds, which they call Tanques ... fill'd with water when that abundance of Rain fals.” The spelling seems to have stabilised by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with John Fryer writing in 1698 in *A new account of East-India and Persia* about an “Oblong stone Tank... In this all of both Sexes Wash.”

### Veranda (n.)

Veranda seems to have entered English from several Indian languages, namely *varandā* (Hindi), *bārāndā* (Bengali) and *baranda* (modern Sanskrit). An alternative derivation that it is an adoption of the Portuguese and older Spanish *varanda* (*baranda*), meaning railing or balcony. Hobson-Jobson argues that this the existence of the term in these languages was “quite independent”. The main purpose of a veranda, as a platform with an open front and roof, built onto the side of a house on the ground floor, was as a protection or shelter from the sun or rain. The word is used as early as 1711, where a building is described as being “very ancient, two Story high, and has two large Verandas”.

## PEOPLE & PLACES

### - *Blighty; Calico; Cashmere; Doolally; Dungarees; Jodhpurs; Jungle*

#### Blighty (n. and adj.)

‘Blighty’ comes from the Urdu *bilāyatī*, a regional variant of *vilāyatī*, which as the general meaning of ‘belonging to a foreign land’, and the specific contextual meaning of someone English or British. The Urdu adjective seems to be reflected in earlier borrowings of phrases which were never fully naturalised into English, such as *Belattee Sahib* ('foreign gentleman') and *belaitee panee* ('foreign water', i.e. soda water). It did not become widespread in English until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when British soldiers overseas started to use it as a romantic, wistful term of endearment for the UK, as in the 1916 ‘music hall’ song *Take me back to dear old Blighty*. Its use in military slang was subsequently extended further, as both a noun and adjective, to mean an injury or wound sufficiently serious to be sent home to Britain – or at least to be kept away from the most serious fighting. A *Daily Mail* report in 1916 said that “So-and-so stopped some shrapnel and is back at the base in hospital ... he wasn't lucky enough to get a blighty” whilst *An Airman's Outings* in 1917 reports that “a Blighty bullet sent him back to England. In modern-day usage, the term is often used by ex-pats to refer affectionately to the UK. However, it can also be used ironically to indicate a form of patriotism which could be considered jingoistic.

#### Cashmere (n.)

Cashmere, or more fully a ‘cashmere shawl’ is an expensive garment made of fine soft wool from the Cashmere goat and the wild goat of western China. It can also refer to the material of which cashmere shawls are made, or a woollen fabric made in imitation of cashmere. It takes its name from *Kashmīr*, in the Western Himalayas. Its first recorded use according to the OED was in 1822, where John Croker writes in his diary that “She ... and Lady Eliz. were dressed in rich cashmeres ... the wide borders of the shawls making the flounce of the gown.”

### **Calico (n.)**

It seems that Calico initially entered English as a corruption of *Calicut* (modern-day Kozhikode, deriving from the Malayalam *Kōlkōdū*), a port city in Kerala. The French *calicot* has been suggested as the intermediate form, but the age of this is uncertain. The city and wider area was a major site for the production of cloth (as noted by Marco Polo), which is how the material produced there got its name. As Philip Heylyn explained in his 1652 *Cosmographie*: “A smock of Calicut, a kind of linnen cloth here made, and from hence so called.” In time, ‘calico’ became the general word to describe all cotton cloth imported from India and the ‘East’. In the early 1800s, the meaning further diverged as the UK started to export printed calico into the United States. Whilst Europe maintained the word ‘calico’ for the white, unprinted fabric, it was used in the US to refer to the printed design. For example, *Prose & P* (1872) says that “The furniture was extemporized from packing cases...and covered with gay calico.”

### **Doolally (adj.)**

Doolally is a pejorative (negative) word used to describe an unbalanced state of mind. Its origins are as a piece of slang from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in reference to *Deolali*, a large military camp close to Mumbai. British soldiers who had finished their terms of service would wait in the large barracks for their transport home. This often took much longer than anticipated, leading to intense boredom in this transit camp. As a result, some of the camp inhabitants developed ‘Doolally tap’ (tap derives from the Sanskrit *tāpa*, meaning heat, pain or torment. The 1925 edition of *Soldier and sailor words and phrases* defines it as being ‘mad’ or ‘off one’s head’.

### **Dungarees (n.)**

Dungaree was originally a type of coarse and inferior Indian calico. Hobson-Jobson states that the finer kinds of dungaree were used for clothing by poor people, while the rougher kind functioned as “sail-cloth”, as described by the *London magazine* in 1759. It got its name from the Hindi *dungṛī*, most likely from a village of the same name to the north of Mumbai. The more common modern meaning is for trousers made of this material, usually blue in colour and resembling denim, or a garment consisting of these trousers with a bib held up by shoulder straps.

### **Jodhpurs (n.)**

One of the more easily recognisable toponyms (a word named after a place), Jodhpurs were originally known as “Jodhpur riding-breeches” after the city and district in Rajasthan where they were invented. In 1899 the journalist G.W. Steevens described them as “breeches and gaiters all in one piece, as full as you like above the knee, fitting tight below it, without a single button or strap”, a definition which has remained consistent to this day.

### **Jungle (n.)**

The original Hindi *jangal* (from the Sanskrit *jangala*) simply meant desert, waste or forest. This historical meaning can be seen in a 1776 law which states that ‘land waste for five years ... is called jungle’. The modern meaning, i.e. land which is overgrown by long grass, vegetation and forest, typically in the tropics, seems to arise from an association with *tangle*. Its figurative meaning as a place of mess and confusion can be seen in phrases such as ‘the law of the jungle’ (=ruthless competition) and ‘concrete jungle’ (=busy city life) and ‘jungle juice’ (=alcoholic drink).

## **PEOPLE & SOCIETY**

### **- *Mandarin; Mogul; Pundit; Purdah; Swami; Thug; Yaar***

#### **Mandarin (n.)**

In modern-day Britain, the term ‘mandarin’ refers to a person (especially an official) who commands considerable power or importance. ‘Mandarins’ are frequently seen as being secretive and determined to keep the status quo. This meaning entered English at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the term was originally applied to a senior official in the former imperial Chinese civil service more than 300 years beforehand. A 1589 translation of the *History of the Great and Mighty Kingdom of China* saw the first recorded use in English: “The Mandelines of the sea, which Text by Chris Sowton (+44 7941 044063 / [chris sowton@outlook.com](mailto:chris sowton@outlook.com)) for British Council India’s 70 Words campaign.

be certaine iudges appointed to giue aduice of all such matters to the gouernor". In time, the meaning broadened to refer to a similar official in other Asian countries. 'Mandarin' has enjoyed one of the more complex etymological journeys into English. It appears that the term was borrowed from Portuguese (*mandarim*) or possibly older Dutch (*mandorijn*), which itself came from the Malay *menteri*. It is interesting to note that the nasalisation of the final 'm' from Portuguese (*mandarim-mandarin*) follows the same pattern as *palanquim-palanquin*. The ultimate origin, however, is the Sanskrit *mantri*, which was the usual term for a counsellor or minister in pre-Islamic India. Given its journey, it is unsurprising that there were also differences of opinion with regards to stress, with Samuel Johnson (1755) indicating it should be on the final syllable, before the primary stress on the first syllable became the norm at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Mogul (n.)**

Mogul is derived from the Urdu *muğal* (itself deriving from Persian) to describe the successive heads of the Muslim dynasty which ruled much of South Asia between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In *Barnaby Rudge*, Charles Dickens writes about awakening from a dream about "picking a lock in the stomach of the Great Mogul." Today, the term 'Mughal' is more commonly used to describe these rulers. In its modern use, 'mogul' describes an important, influential, or dominant person, especially in the field of business or the media. Thomas Pynchon, for example, describes Pierce Inverarity as a "California real estate mogul" in the 1966 *Crying of Lot 49*.

### **Pundit (n.)**

In modern India, the term 'pundit' is more commonly used to refer to an expert in a particular field, for example a 'football pundit' who provides their opinion during televised games. The original Sanskrit meaning of *pandita* was 'learned man', especially with regards to someone with knowledge of the Sanskrit language and Indian philosophy, religion and law. The word was also borrowed into other European languages (e.g. *pandit* in French; *pondito* in Spanish; *pandito* in Portuguese). Hobson-Jobson (1886) reports an interesting historical variant of this definition, wherein "The Pundit of the Supreme Court was a Hindu Law-officer, whose duty it was to advise the English Judges...on questions of Hindu Law."

### **Purdah (n.)**

*Purdah* comes from the Urdu *parda* meaning curtain – specifically one used in certain Muslim and Hindu communities to screen women from public observation and particularly from the sight of men or strangers. George Valentia records his 1809 experience thus: "He led me to a small couch close to the purdah, and seated me on his right hand ... between his mother and himself, though she was invisible." In this sense, the meaning of the word has broadened over time to refer to the act of covering the face and/or body in public. The word also has a specific meaning in the world of British politics, where historically it referred to the tradition where the Chancellor of the Exchequer (finance minister) did not have to answer questions about the national budget as it was being prepared. It now refers to any pre-election period where civil servants are restricted in what they can and cannot do with regards to government business.

### **Swami (n.)**

The Hindi term *swāmī* was used by Hindus as a term of respectful address to mean master, lord or prince. Its origins are in the Sanskrit *svāmin* meaning the idol or temple of a god. In English, the word is used in both these senses, and also to refer specifically to a Hindu religious teacher. Hobson-Jobson presented a further meaning when talking about *swamy jewelry*, which was made of gold or silver "in European shapes covered with grotesque mythological figures."

### **Thug (n.)**

With its root in the Hindi *thag*, meaning swindler or deceiver, thugs were originally an organised gang of professional robbers and murderers. As members of a secret cult who worshipped the goddess Kali, their preferred methods of execution as being "either by poison, or the application of the cord or knife", according to an 1816 account. Although thugs were eradicated following reform by the Governor-General William Bentinck in the 1830s, thugs remained a source of macabre fascination: a newspaper report from 1897 stated that "When the Prince of Wales

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was in India, a Thug criminal showed him how victims were strangled.” The word today is used more generally to a violent person or criminal. Interesting derivatives which are no longer in common usage include *thugdom*, *thuggism* and *thuggess*.

### **Yaar (n.)**

As a familiar form of address, meaning ‘friend’ or ‘mate’, the use of ‘yaar’ has been popularised in part by the Indian and Pakistani film industries. In the UK, its usage became widespread in the 1980s and 1990s, especially amongst young people with South Asian heritage. It is found, for example, in Hanif Kureishi’s seminal 1986 play *My Beautiful Laundrette*, which contains the line “Can’t you give Omar some work in your garage for a few weeks, yaar?” It entered English from the Urdu *yār* (‘friend or companion’) which itself derives ultimately from the Persian *ayārīdāni*, meaning to help or assist.

## **RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY**

### **- Avatar; Dharma; Guru; Karma; Mantra; Nirvana; Yoga**

#### **Avatar (n.)**

The original meaning of ‘avatar’ in English – the arrival of a god on Earth in human form – derives from the Sanskrit *avatāra*, meaning descent (or literally, ‘to cross down’). In 1784, for example, Sir William Jones writes about the Hindu god Vishnu and “the ten Avatars or descents of the deity, in his capacity of Preserver.” By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the meaning of avatar had broadened beyond Hindu mythology to mean a ‘manifestation in human form’ more generally. The word has seen a resurgence over the last 30 years with its use in the field of computing, with one of the earliest uses in this sense found in the 1985 online role-playing game *Habitat*. It refers to the digital representation of a person or character (e.g. as a photo, sketch or 3D image), often as the individual’s alter ego, which is able to move about in its surroundings and interact with other characters.

#### **Dharma (n.)**

Dharma is an incredibly complex religious and philosophical concept at the heart of many Indian religions, in particular Hinduism and Buddhism. Coming from the Sanskrit meaning decree or custom, a very broad English definition of ‘dharma’ is ‘right behaviour’, a notion which includes behaviour, duties, rights, virtues and moral law. Robert Hardy, in the 1850 *Eastern Monarchism*, describes it simply as “the Truth”. Its complexity has not stopped many in the West from trying to understand the term. This was attempted, perhaps most notably, by Jack Kerouac in his 1958 novel *The Dharma Bums* in which he tried to “turn the wheel of the True Meaning, or Dharma”.

#### **Guru (n.)**

Although used in English as a noun, in the original Sanskrit guru was an adjective meaning weighty, grave, or dignified. The English use is closer to the Hindustani *gurū*, referring to a Hindu spiritual teacher or head of a religious sect. In contemporary society, however, guru has a broader meaning, referring to an influential teacher, mentor or pundit. *Eve’s Weekly* magazine in 1969, for example, describes “Hannah Sahney, the chief instructress for the Indian Airlines’ hostesses” as “a guru to many of her young trainees.” The popularity of the term in this sense has increased rapidly since the 1970s, particularly in the world of business.

#### **Karma (n.)**

The word karma is a key concept in many religions prevalent in India, primarily Buddhism and Hinduism, but also in Jainism and Sikhism. Karma refers to the sum total of a person’s actions in one of their successive states of existence, which determines what happens to them in the next. FM Müller described it in 1879 as “What the Buddhists call by the general name of *Karman*, comprehends all influences which the past exercises on the present, whether physical or mental. In the West, the use of the term grew across the 20<sup>th</sup> century as Eastern religions became more popular,

especially from the late 1960s onwards. The 1969 edition of *Surfer* magazine, for example, hopes that its readers' destiny "may always be flavoured with ... good karma in this life."

### **Mantra (n.)**

Mantra comes directly from the Sanskrit term meaning a thought, specifically the thought behind speech or ritual action, or its symbolic or articulate utterance. Mantra is composed of *man-*, from to think, and *-tra*, a suffix meaning instrument or means. Its modern meaning is much wider than this, referring to a constantly or monotonously repeated phrase or sentence, or a slogan or catchphrase. For example, the Daily Telegraph in 1971 reported that "People who ever have dinner in English country hotels know the *mantra*, or holy formula: 'Coffee will be served in the lounge.'"

### **Nirvana (n.)**

A borrowing from the Sanskrit *nirvāṇa*, the word literally means 'extinction', or as Hobson-Jobson more poetically describes it, 'blown out like a candle'. Although also found in Hinduism and Jainism, it is most commonly associated with Buddhism, where it is used to describe the state of being released from *samsara* - the endless cycle of birth and rebirth. In 1801, *Asiatick Researches* conceived it as a "Hall of Glory, where the deceased Bhuddhas are supposed to be." For much of its early life, the anglicised form contained a 'g' (e.g. *Nirgoowané* and *Nirgwani*), most likely due to a mishearing or miscopying. The extended meaning of nirvana, i.e. as a state of perfect happiness or an ideal place or condition, was coined in 1895 by Arthur Balfour (who subsequently became British Prime Minister) in *The Foundations of Belief* when he wrote about "The very Nirvana of artistic imagination, without desire and without pain."

### **Yoga (n.)**

'Yoga' is a direct borrowing from Sanskrit (although the vernacular pronunciation was *yog* or *jog*). The original had a very broad definition, relating to union, joining, and the act of applying oneself to a task. It also meant yoking a team of animals, which is a clear indication of its shared Indo-European base with 'yoke' (the root is thought to be *yeug-*). In Indian philosophy, the ultimate aim of yoga is to achieve self-understanding and to purify the spirit, which leads to *samadhi* ('union with creation'). A.E. Gough (1891) described "The Yoga" as "the crushing of every feeling, desire, and thought in order to rise to the ecstatic vision of and re-union with the Self". In contemporary usage, it generally refers to specific aspects of this discipline, particularly controlled breathing and physical positions, which are seen as an aid to health or wellbeing. As *Inside Bay Area (California)* put it in 2007, yoga is "a widely-known exercise regimen that connects the body with the mind and the spirit".

## **TRADE & THE SEA**

### **- Atoll; Catamaran; Cowrie; Dinghy; Godown; Gunny; Jute**

#### **Atoll (n.)**

An atoll is a coral island which is formed in the shape of a ring. It surrounds a body of shallow water, called a lagoon. It is the only word common in English which entered from the Maldivian (Dhivehi) language. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that the Maldives are a typical example of an *atoļu*. Several suggestions have been made regarding the origins of this word, with Yule noting its similarity to the Malayalam *adal* (= 'a sinking reef') and Hobson-Jobson the Singhalese *atul* (= 'inside'). The term was popularised and brought into the mainstream by Charles Darwin, and his early writings in the 1842 *Coral Reefs*, where he talks about "an atoll-shaped bank of dead rock" and "a true atoll structure".

#### **Catamaran (n.)**

As early as 1697 in *A new voyage round the world*, William Dampier describes catamarans as being composed of "but one Log, or two sometimes, of a sort of light Wood...so small, that they carry but one Man, whose legs and breech

are always in the Water.” Given that he saw them going up and down India’s Coromandel Coast (its south-eastern side), it is no surprise that the word has Dravidian roots – specifically the Tamil word *katta-maram* meaning ‘tied tree or wood’. The word came to be used to also describe similar craft used in the West Indies, and others of much larger size off the coast of South America. Its modern meaning refers to a sailing boat with twin hulls placed side by side, which are widely used for pleasure and in sailing contests.

### Cowrie (n.)

These shiny and beautiful “small Shells, called Cowries” are abundant in the Indian Ocean. Historically used as currency across South Asia and parts of Africa, these porcelain-like shells “pass for Money in Bengale and other places”, as the Royal Society put it in 1698. One of the places that cowrie currency remained popular, even into the 1800s, was Orissa (Odisha). Indeed, it has been argued that the insistence by the British East India company that taxes be paid in silver rather than *kaudi* (as cowries were known locally) was one of the causes of the 1817 Paik rebellion.

### Dinghy (n.)

The Hindi *dēṅgī* / *dīṅgī* was a diminutive form of *dēṅgā* / *dōṅgā*, meaning ‘large boat’. The *h* was added to the original spelling in order to indicate the hard *g*. When entering English, *dinghy* had a very broad meaning, referring to boats of various sizes and shapes, for example as a “Ganges wherry” (1829), a “small boat, from 12 to 20 feet in length...with a raking mast” (1851) and as a vessel ranging from “30 to 50 feet in length...some of [which] are decked wholly” (1851). Over time, the word came to mean a smaller rowing-boat, specifically an “extra boat in men-of-war and merchant ships” before settling on the common meaning used today, i.e. a rubber dinghy.

### Godown (n.)

The specific history of ‘godown’, meaning a warehouse or other place for storing goods, is a little uncertain. One theory is that it entered English from Portuguese (*gudão*), deriving from the Malay *gedong*, which itself has a close linguistic relationship with *gadaṅgu* (Kannada), *gid(d)angi* (Telegu), *kiṭaṇṇu* (Malayalam) and *kiṭaṇku* (Tamil). Hobson-Jobson, interestingly, notes the Hindustani and Bengali word *gudām*, which they state is “an adoption of the Anglo-Indian word, not its original”. The use of the word spread far and wide, especially to China, primarily through trade. An entry in the 1861 *Ten Weeks Japan* reads “The streets of Yokohama are wide...containing on either side merchants’ godowns and offices” while the *Times* in 1889 reported that “The Germans have agreed to restore to the Sultan of Zanzibar the Custom-house godowns.” As might be imagined, the word has been in significant decline over the past 50 years.

### Gunny (n.)

Gunny is a rough material, generally made from the fibres of jute or hemp, which is used predominantly for making sacks. Lockyer’s 1711 *An account of the trade in India* notes that “Sugar is pack’d in double Goneyes”. It derives from the Hindi and Mahratti *gōn* / *gōnī* meaning ‘sack’. Given its widespread use, it has given rise to a number of compound nouns including *gunny-bag*, *gunny-carpet*, *gunny-cloth* and, most commonly, *gunny-sack*.

### Jute (n.)

It is no surprise that jute derives from Bengali (*jhōṭo* or *jhuto*) given that it was – and continues to be – one of the main exports of West Bengal and modern-day Bangladesh. Jute is a long, soft, shiny vegetable fibre (from either *Corchorus capsularis* and *Corchorus olitorius*) which can be turned into coarse, strong threads. It is used primarily to make rope, bags, sacking and matting. The Bengali term seems to derive ultimately from the Sanskrit *jūṭa*, which is a less usual form of *jaṭā* (= braid of hair). Hobson-Jobson goes further in arguing that this term refers to the matted hair of an ascetic.

## **WILDLIFE & NATURE**

- **Cheetah; Langur; Lilac; Mongoose; Myna; Patchouli; Teak**

### **Cheetah (n.)**

The cheetah – a large, slender, spotted big cat - has an unusual etymological family tree. Its great-great grandparent is the Sanskrit *chitra*, which means ‘spotted’ or ‘distinctively marked’. As such, it has the same ultimate origins as both ‘chit’ and ‘chintz’. When the word first entered English, in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, cheetahs were common in Asia, and were tamed and used to hunt prey, where their speed was a huge asset. As Eyles Irwin poetically put it: “Behold the Chetah! of the leopard-kind, Watchful as night, and active as the Wind.” This characteristic gave rise to its other common name, the hunting leopard. Hobson-Jobson reports an interesting, but highly unlikely use (both historically and phonologically), by Shakespeare in Henry IV Part 2. The line “a team cheater, i’faith; you may stroke him gently as a puppy greyhound” is used, but the word here likely refers to a decoy duck.

### **Langur (n.)**

‘Langur’ is the name given to a particular species of monkey common across the Indian subcontinent (of the genus *Semnopithecus*). The most common type of langur is the gray langur (also known as the ‘Hanuman langur’) are lives mostly in wooded areas. An entry in *Jungle Life India* in 1880 gives a hint of the word’s derivation: “Troops of long-tailed monkeys called Langurs”. *Langur* entered English from the Hindi *langūr*, which comes from the Sanskrit *lāṅgūlin* meaning ‘having a tail’. Another entry from the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1895 notes the behaviour most commonly associated with the animal, noting that the “leafy green trees ... were continually shaken by the antics of the langoors”.

### **Lilac (n.)**

Lilac is a type of plant which is well-known for its pleasant-smelling blossoms, which are usually of a pale pink, purple or white colour. In terms of its etymology, lilac has had a very interesting and complex journey. It seems to have entered English from French, via Spanish and Arabic. *Lilac* and *līlāk* respectively came from the Persian *līlāk* (a variant of which is *nīlāk*, meaning blueish), the ultimate origin of which is the Sanskrit *nīla*. Interesting alternative spellings over its history include *lelack* and *laylock*. Its meaning as the colour (= light purple) appeared at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century

### **Mongoose (n.)**

A meat-eating animal which is native to Africa and South Asia, a mongoose has a long body and tail and short legs. They are famous for their ability to kill snakes. The English word derives from the Marathi *maṅgūs*, which itself derives from *muṅgisa* (Telugu) and *muṅgisi* (Kannada). The first recorded use was in 1673 when Gerald Aungier, second Governor of Bombay (Mumbai), complained that his house was “miserably afflicted with rats so great that a mongoose or our cats will not meddle with them”. Given the mongoose’s spiky nature, it is no surprise that there has been historical confusion over its pronunciation, spelling and pluralisation. The most common British pronunciation in the 19th century had /ʌ/ (the ‘u’ in ‘cup’) in the first syllable, and the word’s ending is thought to have changed to ‘goose’ via folk-etymology (where something unfamiliar is replaced by something familiar), even though there it has no relationship whatsoever with the animal of the same name. In terms of its correct pluralisation, *Caribbean Voices* in 1971 wrote that “The mongoose ... is a troublesome sort of creature ... For nobody seems to know with any degree of certainty which to choose of his plural forms—mongooses, mongeese, mongoose or mongooze.” For the record, ‘mongooses’ is today generally agreed upon as the correct form.

### **Myna (n.)**

The myna (mynah) is a bird in the starling family found across southern Asia, which typically have dark feathers, are sociable, and which have a loud call. Some, especially the hill myna (as opposed to the common myna) are highly skilled in mimicking the human voice. This ability was noted, for example, in the 1813 *Oriental Memoirs*:

“The myneh is a very entertaining bird...articulating several words.” The word entered English from Hindi (*mainā*), which itself came from the Sanskrit *madana*, short for *madana-śārikā* (meaning ‘love starling’).

### **Patchouli (n.)**

Although at first glance it seems that ‘patchouli’ is a borrowing from French, the word has deeper origins, in the Deccan *pacolī*, which itself is likely to have come from the Tamil *paccai* (meaning ‘fragrant plant’). Patchouli, or ‘patch leaf’ as it was historically also known, refers to the strong and lasting perfume made from the plant of the same name. Bentley’s *Miscellany* tells of “Flirting with Miss De Robinson’s handkerchief...waving it about, to diffuse its scent of *pachouli* all over the room.” Hobson-Jobson records some its many uses, including “as an ingredient in tobacco for smoking, as hair-scent by women, and especially for stuffing mattresses and laying among clothes”. Its dried leaves can also be used to make an essential oil.

### **Teak (n.)**

Teak appears to have entered English from multiple sources, specifically Malayalam (*tēkka*), Tamil (*tēkku*), Telugu (*tēku*), Tulu (*tekkī*) and Kannada (*tēgu*, *tēga*, *tēngu*). Its strength impressed John Henry Grose in 1757 who described it as “to the full as durable as oak”, the highest compliment an Englishman could pay. This analysis was echoed by William Hodges who in 1793 wrote that it was a “timber remarkable for its hardness and size”. It was these characteristics which meant that this dark, heavy wood was commonly used in building ships and railways carriages, houses and furniture.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **- *Cheroot; Choky; Coir; Cushy; Loot; Punch; Roti***

#### **Choky (n.)**

Deriving from the Hindi *chauki* meaning shed, station or lock-up, ‘choky’ (also ‘chokey’) entered English in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to refer to a custom or toll station. As John Fryer put it in 1698, “At every Gate, stands a Chocky, or Watch to receive Toll.” Hobson-Jobson suggests that the word’s ultimate origins may be the Sanskrit *chatur* (meaning ‘four’), perhaps referring to a shed resting on four posts. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the word became more closely associated with a police station of ‘lock-up’, as demonstrated by the explorer David Livingstone’s entry in his journal in 1873 that “The idea of the great Mataka in ‘chokee’ made him wince.” Although its usage in modern times has declined somewhat, it has seen a slight resurgence because of its use in the film and stage musical version of Roald Dahl’s *Matilda*, where it refers to a tall but narrow cupboard where misbehaving children are imprisoned.

#### **Cheroot (n.)**

A cheroot is a type of cigar with both ends open, as opposed to an ordinary cigar where one end is pointed. This design means that cheroots do not taper, which simplifies (and therefore reduces the cost) of the mechanical process for making them. As Fairholt writes in 1859: “Cheroots are peculiar in their manufacture, not made by hand but wound on a wire, both ends being cut flat.” These cigars were especially common in southern India (as well as Manila, in the Philippines), and so it is unsurprising that the word ultimately derives from the Tamil *shuruṭṭu*, meaning roll (of tobacco). This base form also gave rise to the French *cheroute* and Portuguese *charuto*. The English phonetic form *sharoot* appears to have entered common usage around 1800.

#### **Coir (n.)**

Coir, meaning the fibre taken from a coconut and used for making ropes and mats, was first used in English way back in 1582. Deriving from the Malayalam *kāyar* (meaning ‘cord’), its earliest spelling was ‘cayro’ or ‘cairo’, as found in Hakluyt’s 1599 *The principal navigations, voyages, traffiques and discoveries of the English nation*: “A certaine shippe made of boordes, and sowed together with cayro, which is threede made of the huske of Cocoes.” Despite its

increased use in garden compost (“Coir Compost is made entirely from coconut fibres and husks and therefore comes from a completely renewable source”), the word has been in general decline over the past 50 years.

### **Cushy (n.)**

The dominant meaning of *cushy* nowadays is in reference to a job or situation that is easy or undemanding, and which requires little or no effort. An 1895 use of the word shows its military origins (“He told me that I had got into a ‘cushy’ troop”), but by 1928 the meaning had widened, with Evelyn Waugh writing in *Decline and Fall* about being “sent to Ireland on a pretty cushy job connected with postal service”. An earlier colloquial meaning of the word saw *cushy* used to describe a person as relaxed or easy-going, as in “That's all right. I know 'im. 'E's *cushy*. ” The word entered English from Urdu (*kušī*), meaning good or pleasant.

### **Loot (n.)**

‘Loot’ is recorded as an English word as early as 1788 in Stockdale’s *Indian Vocabulary* to mean ‘plunder’ or ‘pillage’. More generally, *loot* (and ‘looting’) refers to goods (especially goods of value) which are taken from an enemy or city in terms of war, or in a wider sense something which is taken by violence. Hobson-Jobson makes the point that it entered mainstream English in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century following events such as the Chinese War of 1841, the Crimean War (1854-5) and the Indian Mutiny (1857-8). The word derives from the Hindi *lūt*, which itself appears to come from either the Sanskrit *lōtra* or *lōptra*, meaning ‘booty’, or *lunt*, meaning ‘to rob’. In wider usage, it is used as a slang form as a synonym for money. In 1956, for example, Billie Holiday writes in her autobiography *Lady Sings the Blues* that “There was nothing to do except for Mom to go back slaving away as somebody's maid. In Baltimore she couldn't make half the loot she could up North.”

### **Punch (n.)**

Punch is a drink made from a mixture of alcoholic and non-alcoholic ingredients, now usually wine or spirits mixed with water, fruit, spices, and sugar, and often served hot. Entries in the OED show that its composition has never been fully fixed. It is described in 1658 as being made of “Lime-juice, Brandy and other Ingredients” and in 1725 as “Brandy, Rack [arack], or Rum, Water warm or cold, Lemon-juice, Sugar, and sometimes a little Milk”. Its composition could also change depending where in the world you were. In 1660, for example, punch was described as “a drink they have in the Barbados, made of water and sugar.” The word derives from the Sanskrit *pañcāmṛta*, meaning “five nectars (of the gods)”, a medicine combining five ingredients, namely milk, curd, butter (probably ghee), honey and sugar. Hobson-Jobson gives an interesting parallel of a famous horse medicine called *battisi*, which contained 32 ('battis') ingredients. An alternative etymology for punch was put forward by C.B. Mount in *Notes & Queries* (1905), who noted the prevalence of punch as a seaman’s drink in early use. Based on this he suggested the word originated not in India, but on the way there, as a sailors’ shortening of *puncheon* (= a large barrel).

### **Roti (n.)**

Roti is a type of flatbread originally from South Asia, which is nowadays also popular in the Caribbean and elsewhere. Its defining characteristic is that it is unleavened, i.e. it does include a raising agent. Roti are often eaten with cooked vegetables or curries. The word’s origin is the Hindi *roṭī*, which itself may have come from the Prakrit *roṭṭa* (= ‘rice flour’) or the Sanskrit *roṭikā* (= ‘bread’). *Roti* is also linked to the now rare slang word *rooty* (see Kipling’s “the ‘umble loaf of ‘rootey’ costs a tanner, or a bob”), which derives from the Bengali *ruṭi*, meaning bread, food or rations.

## **BONUS WORDS**

### **Dhaba (n.)**

‘Dhaba’ is a relatively recent entrant into the OED. It records a 1957 edition of the *Times of India* describing it as a ‘small eating shop’. Its more specific meaning, namely a roadside food stall or restaurant, has origins in both Hindi and Panjabi. Whilst the Panjabi *qhābā* meant ‘a thatched stall selling food’, the Hindi *qhāpnā* meant ‘to cover’. The October 2012 edition of the *New Yorker* contains a book review where its “unlikely sleuth” is described as “an illiterate Punjabi woman who runs a *dhaba* where London’s immigrant underclass gathers for talk and tea.”

### **Juggernaut (n.)**

In the modern world, juggernaut is probably best known as the X-men comic book character, played memorably on screen by the ex-footballer Vinnie Jones. Its origins, however, are fascinating but little known. Juggernaut is an anglicisation of the Sanskrit *Jagannath*, meaning ‘Lord of the Universe’, who is considered by Hindus to be a version of Vishnu. He is particularly revered in Puri, in the state of Odisha, and especially celebrated at the festival of *Ratha yatra*, where according to a 1727 account “his Effigie is often carried abroad in Procession, mounted on a Coach four Stories high”. This is also how it came to mean a large and/or heavy vehicle, specifically a lorry. Later accounts by Christian missionaries, especially one Reverend Claudius Buchanan, presented “the Juggernaut” in very negative terms, describing devotees would throw themselves under its wheels and how “four thousand self-devoted human victims” were “immolated every year upon its altar”. This perception fitted in with his view that Indian religions were typified by blood and death, and the association with violence became fixed in English for many decades. Indeed, it eventually came to be used as a transitive verb to mean to crush a victim to death’. In 1830 *The Examiner* newspaper recorded solemnly that a “Mr. Huskisson had been Juggernauted.”

### **Mugger (n.)**

A mugger is a broad-nosed crocodile found in rivers and lakes throughout South Asia. It is also common known as the *marsh crocodile*. Its origins are in the Hindi *magar*, and ultimately the Sanskrit *makara* (= a mythical crocodile or other sea-animal). The word entered the OED but 1844, but an entry from over 200 years before then shows how the seed of the word was planted. In 1625, Finch and Purchas talk about “Innumerable Alagaters or Crocodiles, there called Murgurmach”, where the latter word is an anglicisation of the Hindi *magar-macch*, meaning ‘crocodile-fish’.

### **Pariah (n.)**

Pariah is a borrowing from Tamil, and was initially used to describe a member of a scheduled tribe in southern India who functioned as sorcerers, ceremonial drummers, labourers and servants. Its meaning nowadays is more general, referring to a member of a despised group of any kind, or someone or something to be avoided. In 1901, for example, *The Academy* reported that “Ibsen is the supreme pariah of the English stage.”