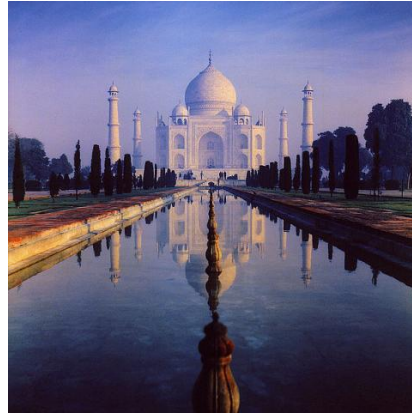




0. THE TAJ MAHAL - Story Preface

1. MUMBAI - FORMERLY KNOWN AS BOMBAY

2. DHARAVI and the SLUMS of MUMBAI

3. ANTI-MUSLIM RIOTS in DHARAVI

4. THE TAJ MAHAL

5. JAI HO!

6. JAI HO! - AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Amal Mongia took this picture of the Taj Mahal on the morning of January 6, 2007. Describing her picture, the photographer states: "January 06-early morning- taken with lubitel-expired ektachrome slide film expired-cross processed. It is NOT photoshopped." Image online via Flickr and Wikimedia. License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

In 1593, a baby girl was born to an influential Muslim family in Hindustan - part of the country we know today as India. Her name was Arjumand Banu Begum. She would grow up to be one of the most beautiful women in the world.

No pictures of her survive, if any were ever made. It's likely there never was a likeness since Purdah, the law of the veil, would have required her to hide her face from the public. The child's father, who worked closely with the imperial family, would ultimately become Prime Minister.

The year before, on the 15th of January, the royal family (also followers of the Islamic faith) had a son. He would grow up to be Shah Jahan ("King of the World"), the ruler of Hindustan.

One day, according to legend, the prince charmed the young woman so much that she agreed to marry him. He had two other wives, arranged by his father for political reasons, but the Prime Minister's daughter was his favorite. He loved her so much that he changed her name to Mumtaz Mahal - meaning "Chosen One of the Palace."

Shah Jahan loved jewels and beautiful architecture. It was he who commissioned the famous Peacock Throne. Encrusted with hundreds of jewels, including rubies and diamonds, he held court amongst beautiful settings - like "arches of silver inscribed in gold."

When he became ruler, Shah Jahan's responsibilities caused him to frequently be away from home. Because he could not bear any absences from his wife, he took her with him - even on military expeditions.

On one such trip - a military campaign at Burhanpur - Mumtaz Mahal was expecting her fourteenth child. She died, giving birth, in 1631. Her distraught husband ordered a mourning period of two years, to be observed by the entire court.

Islamic tradition holds that a woman who dies in childbirth is a martyr. The year after his wife's death, Shah Jahan began work on her permanent memorial - the Taj Mahal. It would take more than twenty years to build. When the emperor died, the beautiful structure also became his final resting place.

Today the Taj Mahal is a symbol of India. People from all over the world travel to Agra to see its beauty.

Perhaps the memorial embodies aspects of the emperor's own birth name - Prince Khurram. Translated into English, his name means "joyous." And that, in a way, seems connected to the award-winning song of *Slumdog Millionaire*: "Jai Ho!" Loosely translated into English, from Hindi, "Jai Ho!" means "Let There be Victory!"

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-TAJ-MAHAL-Slumdog-Millionaire>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-TAJ-MAHAL-Slumdog-Millionaire>



Hindustan - Map of Mughal Rule in India

Map online, courtesy PBS - *Taj Mahal: Memorial to Love* - part of the *Treasures of the World* television series.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hindustan-Map-of-Mughal-Rule-in-India>



Mumtaz Mahal - Alleged Portrait

Photo online, courtesy PBS - *Taj Mahal: Memorial to Love* - part of the *Treasures of the World* television series.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Mumtaz-Mahal-Alleged-Portrait>



Purdah - Veil Requirements

Ladies Of Caubul (1848) - This lithograph is taken from plate 24 of *Afghaunistan*, by Lieutenant James Rattray.

Image online, courtesy the British Library's Oriental and India Office Collection.

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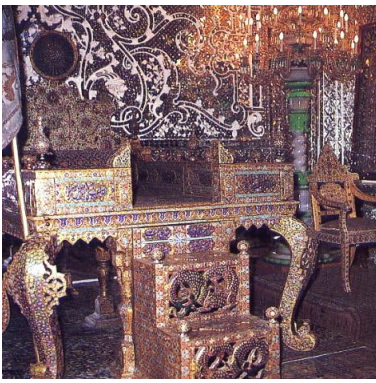
Shah Jahan - 19th-Century Illustration

From *The Mogul Emperors of Hindustan* by Edward Singleton Holden (1895).

Image online, courtesy [Internet Archive Text Collection](http://www.archive.org).

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Shah Jahan - Peacock Throne

Photo online, courtesy British Library.

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Court of Shah Jahan

Image online, courtesy the British Library.

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Burial Place of Mumatz Mahal - The Taj Mahal

Photo by Dhirad, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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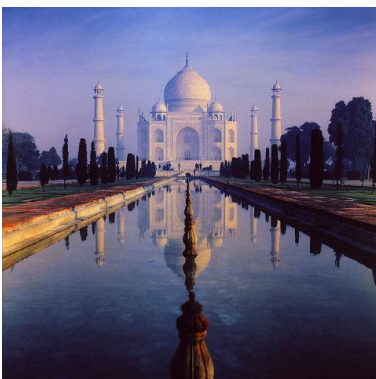


Crypt in the Taj Mahal

Photo by William Donelson, online courtesy TajMahal.net.

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THE TAJ MAHAL

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