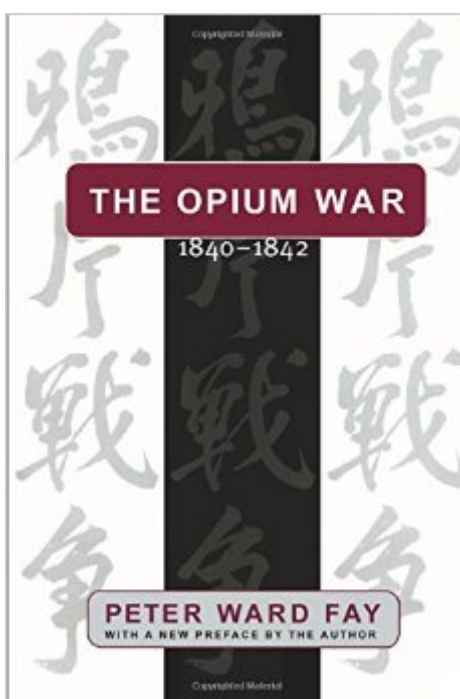


The book was found

Opium War, 1840-1842: Barbarians In The Celestial Empire In The Early Part Of The Nineteenth Century And The War By Which They Forced Her Gates



Synopsis

This book tells the fascinating story of the war between England and China that delivered Hong Kong to the English, forced the imperial Chinese government to add four ports to Canton as places in which foreigners could live and trade, and rendered irreversible the process that for almost a century thereafter distinguished western relations with this quarter of the globe-- the process that is loosely termed the "opening of China". Originally published by UNC Press in 1975, Peter Ward Fay's study was the first to treat extensively the opium trade from the point of production in India to the point of consumption in China and the first to give both Protestant and Catholic missionaries their due; it remains the most comprehensive account of the first Opium War through western eyes. In a new preface, Fay reflects on the relationship between the events described in the book and Hong Kong's more recent history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Anyone unfortunate enough to have to travel through London's Heathrow Airport today will see Stalinist propaganda from the British Government about how protecting Britain from the evils of drug smuggling requires "tougher checks" (presumably the third rate civil servant who authorized these Orwellian signs meant "more thorough" rather than "tougher", but perhaps Britain today really is a place where the government wants leather-jacketed toughs hanging around to keep the citizenry in order.) But there was a time, a mere five generations ago, when British government policy was to manufacture and to facilitate and protect the smuggling of as much opium into China as that country could take. The consequences for the people of China were devastating. Eventually the Chinese government decided to take action against the British, having been far more tolerant of British drug

dealing than the British are today; and for the impertinence of trying to keep British opium out of their own country poor old China was invaded by Britain. (Before any readers of this review who happen to be US Americans are tempted to wade in against evil, nasty, Imperial Britain, note that Americans were working hand in glove, or perhaps one should say shoulder to shoulder, with the British on this.) This part of British and Chinese, indeed Western and Asian, history is important but almost completely overlooked. Fay's book is valuable and worth reading because it is one of the few books that covers this subject. It is a readable book, but a very frustrating one— "and "readable" only in the sense that it is possible to read what the author has written, not that his style of writing, grammar, and concept of what a sentence should be makes it enjoyable to do so.

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