

not even Roman Italy could clear.<sup>3</sup> If we take the Ottoman Empire as an example, and allow that slaves were treated on the whole more mildly than those in the New World, this is still only a difference in degree, rather than kind.<sup>4</sup> Revulsion to the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of slavery in the New World does not make it incumbent to take at face value the self-justifications of polities where slavery remained widespread until much later in the nineteenth century.

Such criticisms are minor in the context of an ambitious and worthy undertaking such as this, and *Unfabling the East* is a valuable and timely work. The legacy of Enlightenment travel writing is a vital part of Europe's cultural and intellectual heritage, and as European societies seek to build and agree upon a shared sense of their own history, the defence and promotion of this inheritance has a key role to play. <[ew@royalasiaticsociety.org](mailto:ew@royalasiaticsociety.org)>

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A DEATH IN HONG KONG: THE MACLENNAN CASE OF 1980 AND THE SUPPRESSION OF A SCANDAL. BY NIGEL COLLETT. (Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Series). pp. 552. Hong Kong, City University of Hong Kong, 2018.

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When I landed in Hong Kong in September 1990 as the newly appointed Director of Public Prosecutions, I walked into a Legal Department racked by scandal, in particular the conviction of Deputy Director Warwick Reid for corruption. So serious was the offence that, despite pleading guilty, he was sentenced to 8 years imprisonment. The effect on the Department was devastating, morale was low and its reputation, especially with the legislative was at rock bottom.

What surprised me, indeed astonished me, was how quickly the Department recovered mainly due to a determination to show everyone that those who remained were honest, efficient and able. It was only some 10 or so years after the events set out in this book had taken place but nobody mentioned them to me, not even former Attorney General John Griffiths QC with whom I had a long and helpful conversation in London. It was as if John MacLennan had never been in Hong Kong let alone an expatriate Inspector of Police who was about to be charged with homosexual offences but who had appeared to have committed suicide hours before he was to be arrested. I used the word "appeared" because there were several who believed him to have been murdered, this despite every indication that he had taken his own life. However there were some aspects that, were suspicious, not least that he had five bullet wounds in his chest and that the Police Investigation of the scene had been so shambolic as to cause anyone with even an modicum of experience of suicides to have their reservations. These suspicions became more cogent because of persistent allegations that MacLennan was being victimised because he knew some very Senior Police Officers were homosexual and were committing criminal offences. It has to be remembered that, at that time homosexuality was a criminal offence. We shall

<sup>3</sup>Walter Scheidel, "The Roman Slave Supply." *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, edited by Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge, Cambridge University Press (2011), p. 289.

<sup>4</sup>For a discussion of this question, see Ehud R. Toledano, *As If Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East*, Yale University Press (2007), pp. 14–23.

never know exactly what happened but it is totally unsurprising that many were very unhappy, bearing in mind that they had lost confidence in the Police and its Special Investigation Unit.

MacLennan was a Scotsman born in a rural area of that country in October 1950 in a village in Easter Ross. He became a Police Cadet in Stirling and joined the Stirlingshire and Clackmannanshire force. He was stationed in Stirling, a small town lacking in excitement and when he learned of vacancies in the Hong Kong Police he left Scotland and arrived in Hong Kong on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1973 to join, as Private Eye put it, “the finest police force money can buy”. Corruption was rife as was homosexuality, in due course he was posted to Kwun Tong and there engaged in some homosexual activities. After his first tour he returned to Scotland and applied to join the Metropolitan Police. He was not accepted and returned to Hong Kong to join the Special Branch. However, he was then accepted by the Met and went to Hendon Police College but decided to return to Hong Kong and did so in early 1978. He was posted to Yuen Long, described as a backwater, in the New Territories, very different to what it is today, where corruption, if not the norm, was significant. MacLennan was not corrupt but he had the habit of bringing back young men to his quarters for homosexual activity. He denied the truth of these allegations and there was insufficient proof to prosecute him. But it was recommended that he be dismissed without explanation, something that would have been unheard of in those days.

MacLennan did not take this lying down. He elicited the help of several prominent people and also said that he had seen a list of homosexuals which contains some household names and very Senior Police Officers. Suffice to say, he was reinstated, but he had so offended his superiors it is alleged that they set out to bring him down. The author describes the police investigation – it does not make attractive reading – and the events leading up to the decision to arrest MacLennan and his death before he could be arrested.

There followed an inquest which to a number of people, including the jury, was far from satisfactory, but the verdict of suicide was justified by the evidence. The story would not go away however and in due course a Commission of Enquiry was set up. Descriptions of what took place at that Enquiry are entertaining, especially the huge antipathy that existed between Counsel taking part and the anxieties of the Hong Kong and British Governments at the direction the enquiry was taking, including a fear that there “may have been a conspiracy among very senior members of Government to select and set up MacLennan for prosecution”. There was a minute to a British Government Minister that “the MacLennan enquiry has clearly misfired”. The side issues have overtaken the Enquiry into MacLennan’s death. The risks to the Hong Kong Government should not be exaggerated. It is clear there was very great concern. The Commission report is mild in its criticisms but firmly concluded that MacLennan had committed suicide because of the shame he felt at having to face the impending charges.

Colonel Collet is unsparing in many of his criticisms of the police investigation, the inquest and the report of the Commissioner... “Yang’s (the Commissioner) refusal to apply the harsh criticisms deserved by those who had taken a hand in that death was to allow all of them to escape any retribution for what they had done”.

This is a book which makes fascinating reading. It is thoroughly researched and meticulous in its description of the complexities of the case. There were so many participant’s that I was constantly having to consult the very helpful resumé of the parts they played. Quite a number of them were still in Hong Kong when I was there, some had advanced in their careers and Sir T.L. Yang was Chief Justice.

Now I must return to that which I said earlier, “nobody ever mentioned MacLennan to me”. I did know about the case from a source which was neither the Police nor the Legal Department but such was the wall of silence that I too refrained from any mention of it. But even the corruption by Chief Superintendent Godber had faded into the background.

It is remarkable how well the Police recovered. Its reputation when I was there was good and I was impressed by the skills and integrity of its Senior Officers. No doubt they learned the somewhat harsh lesson thrown up by this sad incident. <[calavinas@talktalk.net](mailto:calavinas@talktalk.net)>

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GREAT LORDS OF THE SKY: BURMA'S SHAN ARISTOCRACY. By SAO SANDA SIMMS. pp. 476, illustrations. an ebook, Asian Highlands Perspectives/Lulu.com, 2017.  
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*The book under review is also available online for free in PDF format at: <http://bit.ly/2vE3BuY> and please note that it is better to download the uncompressed version for better image qualities, but one needs to be patient when downloading it. Since the book contains lots of images the format is in large file size. The print version of this book is available POD only on order request directly through the publisher's website. Hence, this book publication is not only environmental friendly but also independent from the main stream or more traditional way of publishing.*

This book presents accounts of Tai Shan rulers since the earliest time, with a focus on historical accounts of the Shan States over the one hundred years preceding 1962 including the periods of British colonial rules.

When I first saw the title of this book, what immediately came to mind was a more common Shan word, which has a variation of Romanised scripts including 'saohpa' or 'saopha' or 'sawbwa', a term formally referring to the heads of each of the historical Shan States, namely the ruling system of the Tai cultural areas, now covering the regions of current Shan State and other parts of Myanmar, northern Thailand, southern China and north-eastern India. The term 'saohpa' literally means 'lord of the sky' (sao: lord, owner; hpa: sky). The Shan States before and during the British colonial rule had several *saohpas* (heads of the states) and for those with longer histories and larger lands were known as *saohpa long*, meaning 'great lords of the sky' and hence the title of this book, even though the book also covers historical accounts of both normal 'lord of the sky' and 'great lord of the sky' rulers of the Shan States. Thus, the historical accounts from a Tai Shan perspective have been narrated in this book through the use of alternative Romanisation of names and places different from those used by other academics and Western authors, who adopted the Burmese way of using the Shan terms. The aim of using these terms closer to Tai Shan tongue is clearly stated by the author: "I have used mostly Shan names in the hope that they may survive." (p. 22), and I would also like to add that these terms will be very helpful to researchers for cross referencing or comparative studies.

What is remarkable about this book is that it employs a 'new' terminology as demonstrated by the term 'Tai Shan' being assigned as the name of an ethnic group of people who call themselves 'Tai'. The Burmese, and then Westerners, adopted the additional word 'Shan'. Hence, while the individual terms 'Tai' and 'Shan' are not new, the use of the two words together 'Tai Shan' is new in academic publishing, even though it has been used elsewhere; sometimes the two words were separated with '/' (i.e. Tai/Shan).

Another remarkable feature of this book is the way in which the author presents her material in the latter section, giving accounts of the lives and work of the thirty-four princely rulers, who each ruled