



# GOVERNMENT, IMPERIALISM AND NATIONALISM IN CHINA

The Maritime Customs Service and its Chinese staff

Chihyun Chang

ROUTLEDGE  


# Government, Imperialism and Nationalism in China

The Chinese Maritime Customs Service, which was led by British staff, is often seen as one of the key agents of Western imperialism in China; the customs revenue being one of the major sources of Chinese government income, but a source much of which was pledged to Western banks as the collateral for, and interest payments on, massive loans. This book, however, based on extensive original research, considers the lower level staff of the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, and shows how the Chinese government, struggling to master Western expertise in many areas, pursued a deliberate policy of encouraging lower level staff to learn from their Western superiors with a view to eventually supplanting them – a policy which was successfully carried out. The book thereby demonstrates that Chinese engagement with Western imperialists was in fact an essential part of Chinese national state-building, and that what looked like a key branch of Chinese government delegated to foreigners was in fact very much under Chinese government control.

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**For my parents**



Mark my words, in fifty years' time – I'll not live to see it – you foreigners  
will be as anxious to stop our learning as you now are to hurry us into it!

Guaerjia Wenxiang (1818–76), January 1867



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# Introduction

From the 1850s the old Middle Kingdom underwent many crises – prosperous southern China was occupied by the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom for 13 years, and the empire's heartland was at stake as Emperor Xianfeng abandoned his capital city and the Summer Palace was razed by Anglo-French forces. In addition, *Nian* bandits harassed northern China and Muslim uprisings broke out in the Southwest and the Northwest. Of all these large-scale rebellions, a minor incident consequently led to a major historic event. In 1853 in Shanghai, because of the revolt of the *Xiaodaohui* (Dagger Society, a Triad secret society), France, Britain and America successfully protected their trade interests by transferring the responsibility of Customs administration to foreigners. The Inspectorate was thus established under the supervision of the three foreign powers' Inspectors. The Inspectorate can be seen as a temporary solution to a local rebellion, but it lasted for 96 years and became the most efficient and effective service of the Chinese government.

The Qing government, surprisingly, muddled through these crises and lasted for another half-century. A group of Manchu officials in the central government and Chinese provincial authorities began a series of westernising reforms in order to save this collapsing empire. These projects of westernisation were closely related to the Inspectorate, the Inspector-General (IG, its head), and the Chinese Maritime Customs Service (CMCS). Robert Hart was appointed the second IG in 1863 and held this post until 1911.<sup>1</sup> When this 73-year-old man applied for long leave in 1908 to go back to the UK, the Qing government still allowed him to keep his title and his full salary until he died in 1911. His loyal service made him the most powerful foreigner in China and one of the most powerful officials in the imperial government.

Although it was designed as a revenue collecting institution, the responsibilities of the CMCS, in Hart's hands, went far beyond Customs administration, such as the building up of the Chinese postal service with its far-flung activities in the public weal; the establishment of the Marine Department to secure navigation – lighthouses, wireless signal stations, buoys and beacons located at every corner along the Chinese coastline and rivers; the setting up of the Statistical Department for the compiling and publishing of China's trade statistics, which today are still

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the most precise and reliable quantitative data for researching the economic history of modern China.

The other numerous activities were the setting up of western education through the Tongwenguan (the Interpreter School), the helping to establish and to sustain China's diplomatic and consular service, the supervising of quarantine and port sanitary measures in the days when there was no local or national organisation for the purpose, the organising and managing of the exhibits of China's arts and industries for international exhibitions, and the stewardship of foreign and domestic obligations secured on the Customs revenues.

Over 11,000 foreign nationals served in the CMCS between 1854 and 1950 and were delegated to administer these responsibilities. Another 11,000 Chinese were employed in clerical and physical jobs. The foreign staff had significant international influence and real administrative power at the highest level, constantly shaping the course of the Chinese state at key moments. While it was accelerating China's formation of a more efficient government, the foreign staff constricted her autonomy. Negative feelings against the Inspectorate stemmed from this 'foreignness', which was usually labelled 'imperialist' or 'colonial'.

Due to the complicated nature and sophisticated responsibilities of the CMCS, historians in different generations and regions have a wide range of understandings towards its role in modern Chinese history. They began to research the CMCS from the beginning of the twentieth century, and the industry of historical knowledge has been filled with controversial interpretations of the CMCS.

### A historiographical review of CMCS history

The first volume of *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, published in 1910, set off the studies of CMCS history in the western academic world. In more than a century of the studies of CMCS history, there are three phases – 1910 to 1949, 1950 to the 1990s and 1990s to the present – and non-academic factors constantly influenced the historiography of the CMCS, such as politics, nationalism, methodology and ideology. The best way to filter the data is through a complete understanding of the whole period of the historiography of CMCS history. This explains why some issues were raised particularly.

The writings of CMCS history and modern Chinese history have been closely related since the three-volume *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire* (1910–18) was published. The author, Hosea Ballou Morse, had directed the Statistical Department of the CMCS. As the Department was put in charge of the library of the CMCS, and the publishing of the Returns of Trade and Reports on Trade,<sup>2</sup> the Statistical Secretary controlled most of the documents in relation to China's foreign relations, finance and economy from 1859 to 1948.

The second and third volumes of *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire* narrates modern China's diplomatic history based on the history of the CMCS directed by the 'central figure' of Robert Hart, because the CMCS 'did much more than collect the customs revenue, and at a very early date in its history the Chinese government showed that it estimated rightly the great value of the

work done by the customs for the empire'.<sup>3</sup> But Morse pointed out Hart's problem of favouritism and the great dissatisfaction towards the end of Hart's career. Morse also foresaw the potential rupture between the CMCS and the Chinese government because after 1887 the Chinese authorities 'realised that their foreign customs service existed chiefly as a collecting agent for their foreign creditors'.<sup>4</sup> Compared to Morse, an article on Hart by another Statistical Secretary, Edward Drew, showed more praise.<sup>5</sup> Drew's only criticism was that Hart did not cultivate enough Chinese Commissioners. Hart's niece, Juliet Bredon, also wrote a biography: *Sir Robert Hart: The Romance of a Great Career* (1910, second edition). Generally speaking, the historical images of the CMCS and Robert Hart in the three authors' works are positive.

During the Northern period, the CMCS became unprecedentedly powerful. Contemporary Chinese scholars were worried that Chinese people would neglect the significance of the CMCS because most of the materials concerning the CMCS were in English. Thus, they started to write Chinese monographs based on Chinese materials in order to urge the Northern government to retrieve the power of Customs administration from the foreign Inspectorate.

The earliest Chinese monograph I have found is Huang Xuwan's *Haiguan Tongzhi* (The General History of the CMCS) (1921). Although Huang accessed materials of the Shuiwuchu (Board of Taxation Affairs), this book still lacks credible references and materials. Similar problems were shared by most contemporary Chinese scholars' CMCS monographs. Jin Baoguan finished his *Haiguanquan yu Minguo Qiantu* (The Power of Customs Administration and the Future of the Republic) (1928) in 1925. The Tariff Autonomy Conference was convened in 1925, and he suggested a way to completely solve the problem of the foreign-controlled CMCS. His unrealistic arguments were that 'the IG must surrender the power of appointing the Commissioner to the Financial Minister', and 'the government should set up a Customs College in every major port to train local CMCS employees'.<sup>6</sup> In order to help contemporary Chinese scholars, Jiang Hengyuan's *Zhongguo Guanshui Shiliao* (The Bibliography of China's Tariff Tax) (two volumes, Shanghai: China Bookstore, 1931) was a compilation of a large amount of primary and secondary Chinese materials from 1912 to 1929.

Responding to these critiques, IG Francis Aglen ordered another CMCS in-house historian, Stanley F. Wright, to compile *The Collection and Disposal of the Maritime and Native Customs Revenue since the Revolution of 1911: With an Account of the Loan Services Administered by the Inspector General of Customs* (1925).<sup>7</sup> Aglen's preface states that this book was to 'place on record an account of the stewardship exercised by me in pursuance of arrangements sanctioned by the Chinese Government for the due safeguarding of International and national obligations secured on the Customs revenues'. This book was only for CMCS internal reference but in 1927 the continuity of the CMCS was seriously threatened, which then made 'it desirable now to give this paper publicity'.<sup>8</sup>

The publicity was not enough to justify the CMCS contributions to China, as the two editions were in English. Thus, Officiating IG Arthur Edwardes ordered

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a translation of the 1927 edition of *The Collection and Disposal*. Edwardes' foreword states that he 'is afraid that if this official Chinese edition were not published now, all Chinese people will be misled by mistaken versions of translations'.<sup>9</sup> The said three books were compiled for justifying the CMCS contributions to the Chinese state.

While the CMCS in-house British historians and Chinese scholars were debating, Japanese Assistant Takayanagi Matsuichirou wrote *Shina Kanzei Seidoron* (China's Customs System) (1920).<sup>10</sup> In the middle of his British and Chinese colleagues, he understood both parties' difficulties. He argued that 'the Chinese staff has never been appointed any important post and has never superintended any Customs station'; 'It is absurd that the Chinese staff working in their own country is given unequal treatments'; 'The presence of the foreign staff is to prevent Chinese corruption.'<sup>11</sup> After the 1925 Tariff Autonomy Conference, Takayanagi Matsuichirou revised and enlarged the 1920 edition. He finished three articles and published *Kaitei Zouho Shina Kanzei Seidoron* (Revised and Enlarged China's Customs System) in 1926. This book also became his PhD thesis at the University of Tokyo.

In the Nationalist period, IG Frederick Maze's relationship with the Chinese government became peaceful. In contrast to IG Aglen's defensive response, Maze chose to keep a safe distance from Chinese politics. Because of this the CMCS in-house historians started the reconstruction of the CMCS's record-keeping system. The first step was to re-establish the Customs Reference Library, in 1931.<sup>12</sup> The second step was to instruct Thomas Banister and Stanley Wright to compile a series of works to 'put on record the very varied part played by the Chinese Maritime Customs in the commercial history and trade development of modern China'.<sup>13</sup>

Banister completed *The Coastwise Lights of China: An Illustrated Account of the Chinese Maritime Customs Light Service* (1932), as well as 'The History of the External Trade of China, 1832–81' and 'Synopsis of the External Trade of China, 1882–1931' as the introductory chapter of *Decennial Reports, 1922–1931* (1933). Stanley Wright finished the third edition of *The Collection and Disposal* but renamed it *China's Customs Revenue since the Revolution of 1911* (1936). The purpose of this edition, different from that of the previous two editions, was to stress how the National Import Tariff of 1929 'greatly increased rates of the tariff and resulted in widespread smuggling'.<sup>14</sup> Wright edited the seven-volume *Documents Illustrative of the Origin, Development and Activities of the Chinese Customs Service* (1937–38). The seven volumes are particularly useful now, as they contain all primary materials necessary for CMCS historical researches.

The peaceful relations between the CMCS and the Nationalist government also decreased the hostility of Chinese scholars, so some Chinese scholars started to examine the internal reasons why the Chinese state's Customs Service needed foreigners to administer it. The answer they gave was the incompetence of previous governments. In Wu Yugan and Yang Duanliu's *Zhongguo Guanshui Wenti* (Issues of China's Tariff Tax) (1930), it was argued that 'the reason why the power of Customs administration was held by foreigners was because of

incompetence of the Qing and the Northern governments ... Although it was set up in 1906 to superintend local Commissioners and the IG, the Shuiwuchu was merely a nominal unit.’<sup>15</sup>

The focus of Chinese scholars’ research on the CMCS changed from retrieving the power of Customs administration to thorough surveys of the CMCS statistical data. The Economics Department of Nankai University and the Institute of Social Survey (*Shehui Diaocha Suo*) started to research China’s socio-economic issues and the richest vault is the CMCS statistical data. Tang Youren’s *Zueijin Zhongguo Duiwai Miaoyi Tongji Tujie* (Statistics of China’s Foreign Trade, 1912–1930) (1931) was the first book studying China’s foreign trade after the Revolution of 1911. But Yang Duanliu and Hou Houpei were much more ambitious. They used the entire set of Returns of Trade, going back to when the CMCS started to collect the Returns, to compile statistical data, and edited *Statistics of China’s Foreign Trade during the last sixty-five years* (1931). This book covers 1864 to 1928 and the editing style of this monograph significantly influenced later books of similar style.

Different from these economic historians, Zheng Youkui, driven by the motive of studying the Japanese military economic invasion, paid more attention to China’s inter-port trade statistics. During the Second Sino-Japanese War, Zheng and Han Qitong borrowed statistics data from the CMCS and edited *Zhongguo Buji Miaoyi Tongji, 1936–1940* (The Statistical Data of China’s Interport Trade, 1936–1940) (1951). This book clearly points out how the Japanese military in occupied China issued over-appreciated bills to buy daily commodities from Free China.<sup>16</sup>

As all these outstanding research results were based on statistical data from the CMCS, it is necessary to research the accuracy of the Returns of Trade. There are two articles on this topic from the 1930s, one being Zheng Youkui’s ‘*Zhongguo Haiguan Maoyi Tongji Bianzhi Fangfa ji Qi Neirong Zhi Yangekao*’ (The Studies of the Chronology and Style of the CMCS Trade Statistical Data ) (1934). It was still difficult for Zheng to present a complete account of editorial style and accuracy because in the 1930s the style of compiling the statistics had already changed three times.

Meanwhile, a young man from Oxford unexpectedly showed up. John Fairbank began his study of CMCS while at Oxford and finished his BLitt thesis, ‘British Policy in Relation to the Origin of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service, 1850–1854’, in 1930.<sup>17</sup> In 1932, Fairbank arrived in China. It was an ideal moment for him to study the CMCS. With the Customs Reference Library and the said Chinese economists, Fairbank collected enough primary materials to finish three journal papers in China.<sup>18</sup> Fairbank did not research the Hart era, probably because of Stanley Wright’s stewardship of the Hart materials. Thus, he focused his DPhil thesis on the pre-Inspectorate era of 1842–54.

With his access to the primary materials stored at the Statistical Department, Stanley Wright finally finished his academic monograph, *China’s Struggle for Tariff Autonomy, 1843–1938* (1938). This was the first work to narrate the history of how China lost tariff autonomy and how it was retrieved from the Chinese

point of view. Not only did this book take a ‘Sinocentric’ perspective, it contained enormous details about several historical events of great significance, such as the Tariff Autonomy Conference and negotiations between the Guangdong Nationalist government and the Hong Kong government in the 1920s.

Immediately after his first monograph, Wright began to prepare a monograph of the complete CMCS history. Before completing this landmark work, he first produced a pamphlet, *The Origin and Development of the Chinese Customs Service, 1843–1911: A Historical Outline* (1936). This book was merely for ‘private circulation only’ and ‘a preliminary sketch of a larger work’,<sup>19</sup> but until now this pamphlet is still the best introduction to the CMCS history in the Qing period. In 1950 Wright’s most significant CMCS monograph was finished, *Hart and the Chinese Customs* (1950). Although Wright claimed that this monograph was not ‘an attempt to present a biography in the usual sense of the term seeing that Hart’s private and family affairs have been but lightly touched upon’.<sup>20</sup> It was probably because Stanley Wright was ‘too close to the later actors in the Customs drama, who sponsored – and watched – his work, warning him off when he came too close’.<sup>21</sup> Until now this work is still the closest one to Robert Hart’s biography.

After 1950 the Chinese staff in the mainland and Taiwan were very interested in their personal memoirs and autobiographies.<sup>22</sup> The studies of CMCS history attracted more interest from historians and the academic world started to debate the nature of the 95-year history of foreignness in the CMCS. The debates were mainly between John Fairbank and mainland Chinese Marxist historians. Although before 1950 he only researched China’s Customs Service of 1842–58, in 1968 Fairbank began to work with the last foreign IG, Lester Knox Little, to edit a significant amount of primary materials concerning the correspondence from Robert Hart to Non-Resident Secretary James Duncan Campbell, and then the eight volumes of Hart’s journals. The editing of the correspondence and journals was called the ‘Hart industry’.<sup>23</sup> However, mainland Chinese historians moved faster. Ten years earlier than Fairbank, they started the compiling and translating of CMCS primary materials.

In 1957 mainland Chinese historians began to edit the ten-volume *Diguo Zhuyi Yu Zhongguo Haiguan* (Imperialism and the Chinese Maritime Customs Service) (1957–65). In Fairbank’s eyes, *Diguo Zhuyi Yu Zhongguo Haiguan* ‘serves their propaganda needs. From their point of view, the less said about the good points of the Customs Service, the better’.<sup>24</sup> *Diguo Zhuyi Yu Zhongguo Haiguan* was completed just before the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, which put an end to all academic activities in mainland China. Little and Fairbank’s cooperation pushed forward the studies of CMCS history. Little took the letters Hart wrote to James Campbell from 1868 to 1907 and deposited them at the SOAS library in 1965, but he felt that ‘some use should be made of the copy’. In 1968 he approached Fairbank with 20 volumes of typed correspondence from Hart to Campbell.<sup>25</sup> After eight years of hard work, the Fairbank team published *The IG in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868–1907* (two volumes, 1975).



The publishing of *The IG in Peking* was to counter mainland China's course of the writing of modern Chinese history, represented by *Diguo Zhuyi Yu Zhongguo Haiguan*. The foreword clearly points out that the attitudes towards Robert Hart of the nineteenth-century Britons and the twentieth-century Maoists present 'two utterly different worlds'. 'A special series of volumes in Chinese has published translations of archival documents selected to illustrate the theme of "Imperialism and the Chinese Maritime Customs".' Thus, 'a wide gamut of interpretations is offered to the inquiring student, and much ambivalence hangs over the history of the late nineteenth century in China'.<sup>26</sup>

But the more surprising thing was that the Hart diaries suddenly appeared. After Hart's great-grandson died, without heirs, in 1970, he left the 77 volumes of the Hart journals to Queen's University in Belfast. A student of Fairbank, Gerald Bunker, decided to read the diaries through and record them on tape. The task was extremely difficult as 'the handwriting forced Bunker to hesitate and repeat, even to change the gist of a whole sentence'. The transcriptions by Katherine Bruner 'proved to be unusable'.<sup>27</sup> In 1978 the task was taken over by Richard J. Smith. He 'compared the Bruner typescript with the original journals, made extensive corrections, added Chinese characters when Hart used them, and investigated other research materials in the Hart collection, including letters to and from Hart, photographs, scrolls sent as presents from Ch'ing officials, books, Pin-ch'un's diary, and various other Chinese documents'.<sup>28</sup> After 20 years of endeavour, *Entering China's Service: Robert Hart's Journals, 1854–1863* (1986) and *Robert Hart and China's Early Modernization: His Journals 1863–1866* (1991) were finally published.

The second volume of the Hart journals was published in the year of Fairbank's death. However, not many people know that 'he left unfinished a book that had been on his mind for nearly sixty years'<sup>29</sup> – *H. B. Morse: Customs Commissioner and Historian of China* (1995). This book should in fact be Fairbank's first book, because in 1931 he 'promised he would dedicate his book to Morse when it was completed'.<sup>30</sup> The publishing of this book had been delayed for six decades. Before he died, Fairbank had prepared the preface, in which he admitted that Morse and he 'have so much in common' and may share 'certain predilections and blind spots'. He concluded: 'A biography reports on a life. It settles few issues.'<sup>31</sup>

Apart from the Fairbank team, western historians seemed to be not particularly interested in the CMCS. Nicholas Clifford studied the Maze Papers at SOAS, exchanged correspondence with L. K. Little and produced 'Sir Frederick Maze and the Chinese Maritime Customs, 1937–1941' (1965);<sup>32</sup> Jonathan Spence's *To Change China: Western Advisers in China* (1969) has one chapter on two IGs, Horatio Lay and Robert Hart, and Jacob Gerson's *Horatio Nelson Lay: His Role in British Relations with China* (1972) is one of the most notable works. Without the Hart correspondence and journals, these works could rely only on secondary sources and the primary materials in Britain.

But a few Taiwanese historians who received their doctorates at American universities followed the 1930s Chinese socio-economic scholars' research and



in the 1970s restarted the study of the economic history of China. Inspired by *Statistics of China's Foreign Trade during the last sixty-five years*, Hsiao Liang-lin wanted to compile an extension version. With some CMCS retired staff members' help, namely Ye Yuanzhang and L. K. Little, he finished *China's Foreign Trade Statistics* (1974) in which the primary materials are taken from CMCS statistical data.<sup>33</sup> But the more important person is a young Harvard PhD, Liu Tsui-jung. She came back to Taiwan and trained a number of economic historians.

Several years before Liu came back to Taiwan, in 1970, the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, bought 100 reels of microfilm of CMCS publications from Harvard.<sup>34</sup> Liu and her students used the statistical data of the CMCS and focused their researches on the economic history of China. Under Liu's supervision these Masters students started to use the 100 reels to study China's regional economic history, such as Fan I-chun's 'Shantou Maoyi yu Hanjiang Liuyu de Jinji Bianqian, 1867–1931' (The Economic Development of the Trade in Swatow and the Han River Basin, 1867–1931) (1981). This became the most popular trend of historical research in Taiwan. Some other Masters students, not supervised by Liu, also followed a similar research course, such as Lin Manhong's 'Cha Tang Zhangnaoye yu Taiwan zhi Shehui Jingji Bianqian, 1860–1895' (Tea, Sugar and Camphor and the Social Economic Changes in Taiwan, 1860–1895) (1977).

After the Cultural Revolution, mainland China initiated another editing assignment to combat the western writing of modern Chinese history. In mainland China in 1982 the Institute of Modern History of China's Academy of Social Sciences and the Second Historical Archives of China started to edit their version of *The IG in Peking* and produced the *Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs: Confidential Correspondence between Robert Hart and James Duncan Campbell, 1874–1907*, edited by Chen Xiafei and Han Rongfang (1990). These four volumes contain Campbell's replies to Hart, which *The IG in Peking* does not collect. The mainland Chinese academic world in the 1980s was still isolated from the international academic world, and chief editor Chen Xiafei did not know *The IG in Peking*. However, the editing of *Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs* still had its own symbolic meaning, to 'offer our [mainland Chinese] readers this collection, a complete and unabridged historical of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service which is a clear proof to show that we have not provided a false picture of history'.<sup>35</sup>

Of all mainland Chinese historians, Chen Shiqi is the most outstanding. He can be seen as the mainland Chinese version of John Fairbank. During the Cultural Revolution the Chen family secretly collected the primary materials in relation to the CMCS.<sup>36</sup> In 1979 Chen restarted his academic career at Xiamen and concentrated on studies of CMCS history.<sup>37</sup> Most of Chen's research achievements were published after his retirement in 1986.

In 1985 the Zhongguo Haiguan Xuehui (Academy of Chinese Maritime Customs) and Chen set up the Research Center for Chinese Maritime Customs at Xiamen University. The Customs Academy in Beijing also started an academic journal particularly focused on CMCS history – *Haiguan Yanjiu* (Customs Studies). Driven by the Research Center and the Academy, three international

conferences on CMCS history were convened in 1988, 1990 and 1995, and some of the articles were published in *Modern Chinese History Studies*, *The Journal of Chinese Social and Economic History* and *Historical Research* respectively.<sup>38</sup>

In Chen Shiqi's eyes, before 1981 the researches of CMCS history were 'narrow-minded and groundless'.<sup>39</sup> But in the 1990s Chen's team achieved a major research breakthrough. In 1993 Chen finished his *Zhongguo Jindai Haiguanshi, Wanqing Bufen* (The Modern History of the CMCS, Late Qing) and in 1997 his *Zhongguo Jindai Haiguanshi, Mingguo Bufen* (The Modern History of the CMCS, the ROC) was finished. And Chen's student, Dai Yifeng, produced *Jindai Haiguan yu Zhongguo Caizheng* (The Modern Customs Service and China's Finance) (1993).

During the 1990s, the Research Center translated a number of English works, such as *Hart and the Chinese Customs*, and *Horatio Nelson Lay and Sino British Relations*; and published a number of reference books, such as *Zhongguo Jindai Haiguan Changyong Ciyu Yinghan Duizhao Baodian* (English Chinese Dictionary for terms of the Chinese Maritime Customs), edited by Chen Shiqi and Sun Xiufu (2002), and *Zhongguo Jindai Haiguan Dashiji* (Records of the Chinese Maritime Customs), edited by Sun Xiufu and He Ling (2004). Due to the support of these results, Chen combined the Qing part and the Republic part of his *Zhongguo Jindai Haiguanshi* into the one-volume *Zhongguo Jindai Haiguanshi* covering 1842–1950 (2002). After 30 years' endeavour, this complete version of *Zhongguo Jindai Haiguanshi* concludes Chen Shiqi's contributions to CMCS history.

After John Fairbank's death the editing of the primary materials of Robert Hart ceased. For nearly a decade the western academic world had relatively less interest in CMCS history. Like Fairbank, though, another opportunity unexpectedly presented itself. Hans van de Ven learned that the Second Historical Archive of China holds around 55,000 files of the CMCS. In order to manage such a huge amount of primary materials, van de Ven and Robert Bickers assembled a team in the Archive and the research results are an electronic catalogue of all 55,000 files, a database of 22,000 staff members, an electronic bibliography, and 372 reels of microfilms of CMCS primary materials.

With these resources, western historians restarted the studies of the CMCS history. Van de Ven's and Bickers' research teams finished a number of monographs, journal articles, and dissertations. In 2006 *Modern Asian Studies* dedicated an issue especially to CMCS history (40, 3); most of the articles still focus on Robert Hart and his era, discussing Hart's political connections in the 1860s, the influence of his Irish roots, the historiographical history of the Hart–Campbell correspondence, Hart's design of the Statistical Department, and so on. In 2008 the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* also devoted an issue to this topic (36, 2) but the articles there move beyond Robert Hart, covering the Chongqing Inspectorate from 1941 to 1945, the Native Customs Service after 1901, and the foreign staff's community.

The mainland Chinese historians began to conclude their research achievements of the 1980s and the 1990s by producing several books of collected papers, such as *Hede yu Zhongguo Haiguan Lunwenxuan* (Journal Collection of Robert Hart and the Chinese Maritime Customs), (ed. Customs Academy; Beijing: