

# THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF CHINA

Volume 10  
Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911, Part I

edited by  
JOHN K. FAIRBANK



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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY  
OF CHINA

*General editors*

DENIS TWITCHETT and JOHN K. FAIRBANK

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Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911, Part 1

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## GENERAL EDITORS' PREFACE

In the English-speaking world, the Cambridge histories have since the beginning of the century set the pattern for multi-volume works of history, with chapters written by experts on a particular topic, and unified by the guiding hand of volume editors of senior standing. *The Cambridge Modern History*, planned by Lord Acton, appeared in sixteen volumes between 1902 and 1912. It was followed by *The Cambridge Ancient History*, *The Cambridge Medieval History*, *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, and Cambridge Histories of India, of Poland, and of the British Empire. The original *Modern History* has now been replaced by *The New Cambridge Modern History* in twelve volumes, and *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe* is now being completed. Other Cambridge Histories recently undertaken include a history of Islam, of Arabic literature, of the Bible treated as a central document of and influence on Western civilization, and of Iran and China.

In the case of China, Western historians face a special problem. The history of Chinese civilization is more extensive and complex than that of any single Western nation, and only slightly less ramified than the history of European civilization as a whole. The Chinese historical record is immensely detailed and extensive, and Chinese historical scholarship has been highly developed and sophisticated for many centuries. Yet until recent decades the study of China in the West, despite the important pioneer work of European sinologists, had hardly progressed beyond the translation of some few classical historical texts, and the outline history of the major dynasties and their institutions.

Recently Western scholars have drawn more fully upon the rich traditions of historical scholarship in China and also in Japan, and greatly advanced both our detailed knowledge of past events and institutions, and also our critical understanding of traditional historiography. In addition, the present generation of Western historians of China can also draw upon the new outlooks and techniques of modern Western historical scholarship, and upon recent developments in the social sciences, while continuing to build upon the solid foundations of rapidly pro-

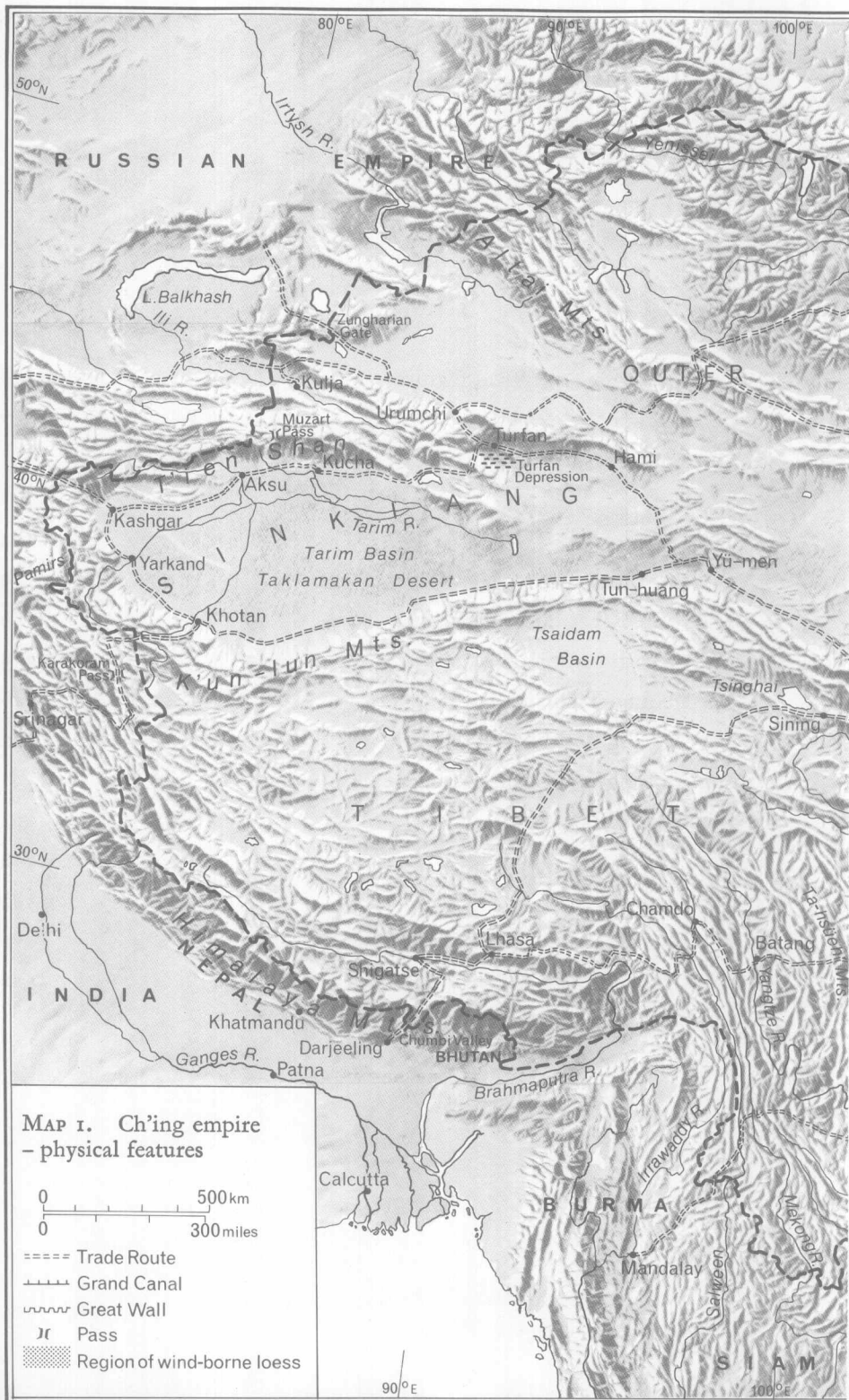
gressing European, Japanese and Chinese sinological studies. Recent historical events, too, have given prominence to new problems, while throwing into question many older conceptions. Under these multiple impacts the Western revolution in Chinese studies is steadily gathering momentum.

When *The Cambridge History of China* was first planned in 1966, the aim was to provide a substantial account of the history of China as a benchmark for the Western history-reading public: an account of the current state of knowledge in six volumes. Since then the out-pouring of current research, the application of new methods, and the extension of scholarship into new fields, have further stimulated Chinese historical studies. This growth is indicated by the fact that the History has now become a planned fourteen volumes, which exclude the earliest pre-dynastic period, and must still leave aside such topics as the history of art and of literature, many aspects of economics and technology, and all the riches of local history.

The striking advances in our knowledge of China's past over the last decade will continue and accelerate. Western historians of this great and complex subject are justified in their efforts by the needs of their own peoples for greater and deeper understanding of China. Chinese history belongs to the world, not only as a right and necessity, but also as a subject of compelling interest.

JOHN K. FAIRBANK  
DENIS TWITCHETT

*June 1976*



RUSSIAN

EMPIRE

OUTER

SICHUAN

KANSU

SHAN

CHINA

INDIA

NEPAL

TIBET

BHUTAN

BURMA

SIAM

L. Balkhash

Zungharian Gate

Kulja

Urumchi

Turfan

Hami

Muzart Pass

Aksu

Kucha

Turpan Depression

Kashgar

Yarkand

Khotan

Tarim Basin

Taklamakan Desert

Tun-huang

Karakoram Pass

Srinagar

Kun-lun Mts

Tsaidam Basin

Tsinghai

Sining

Dehi

Khatmandu

Darjeeling

Shigatse

Lhasa

Chamdo

Batang

Ganges R.

Chumbi Valley

Brahmaputra R.

Calcutta

Irrawaddy R.

Mandalay

Salween

Mekong R.

50°N

40°N

30°N

80°E

90°E

100°E

90°E

100°E



## PREFACE TO VOLUME 10

Historians writing about the late Ch'ing period for an English-reading audience have no choice in selecting a system of romanization of Chinese into English. The Wade-Giles system with its unfortunate use of the apostrophe is no doubt less simple and efficient than the new *pinyin* system of the People's Republic of China, but it is still the system used in nearly every reference work on China now available to a reader of English. From the corpus of dictionaries, bibliographies, biographical dictionaries, place-name gazetteers, maps and other research aids, the Wade-Giles system has permeated the Western literature on China too deeply to be substituted. We use it here.

However, as we ponder differences such as that between *chiang* and *ch'iang* (wondering, for example, if *chiang* is actually *ch'iang* with the apostrophe omitted by error), we should not blame our discomfort entirely on Sir Thomas Wade. Other cooks than he also contributed to our mess of romanized pottage. Nineteenth-century China's dialectical differences were reflected in the Imperial Post Office romanization which is generally used for *major* place names. Thus we spell the province Kiangsi, as in the *Postal Atlas of China*, not Chiang-hsi as it would be in Wade-Giles - *except* that our Bibliography follows Wade-Giles, and the gazetteer of Kiangsi will be found under Chiang-hsi, naturally.

To this place-name ambivalence (is Wade-Giles' Chiu-chiang such a major place that we should romanize its name by the Post Office's Kiukiang?), there is added only the unpredictable capacity of great men for lexicographical deviation. In this volume only the master comprador Tong King-sing (whose name sounded like that) seems to have beaten the system, as Sun Yat-sen will do in the next volume.

Works cited in footnotes with minimal data will be found listed alphabetically with full data in the Bibliography, which is divided into two sections. All entries with transliterated titles and Chinese and Japanese characters are listed in one section, and the remaining works in the other. We have avoided the constant repetition of p. and pp. The notation 2.27 refers to page 27 of volume 2 (in Western or modern-bound books) or *chüan* (of traditional Chinese works).



Places mentioned in the text are as far as possible shown on one or more maps; page numbers of such maps are in italics in the Index.

### *Acknowledgements*

A *Cambridge History* is meant to be indebted to every significant contributor to its field. Our footnotes indicate the range of our debts inadequately yet they can hardly be otherwise expressed. We deeply regret the death of one of our contributors to this volume, the late Ting-ye Kuo, who was the first Director of the Institute of Modern History at Taipei.

JKF

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## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION: THE OLD ORDER

### HISTORY AND CHINA'S REVOLUTION

The history of modern China – what is now thought to have happened there – is full of controversy. Major events are known but their significance is disputed. Meanwhile many minor events remain unknown or disregarded.

The first cause of controversy is widespread historical ignorance due to the lack of a generally accepted body of research and writing in this underdeveloped field. I say 'historical ignorance' because the task of history is to understand the circumstances, motives and actions of *all* parties concerned, and an unbalanced knowledge, of one side only, may leave us still quite ignorant of the other side in a conflict, and therefore less able to comprehend it.

For example, British documents on the Opium War of 1840–2 were published extensively at the time, but Chinese documents not until ninety years later, in 1932. Moreover, the documents of both sides give primarily official points of view; the wartime experience of ordinary Chinese people was less well recorded and has been less studied. Even this seemingly well known event is still imperfectly understood. For instance, how far were Chinese local people merely passive spectators of Anglo-Ch'ing hostilities? How far were they moved to patriotic resistance? Opinions and instances differ.

A second cause of controversy is the broad cultural gap that separated the major historical protagonists – not only the cultural differences in language, thought, and values between the foreign invaders of China and the resistant Chinese ruling class in the nineteenth century, but also the similar differences between that ruling class and the great mass of the Chinese people, once they became revolutionary in the twentieth century. In short, China's modern history records two great dramas – first, the cultural confrontation between the expanding Western civilization of international trade and warfare, and the persistent Chinese civilization of agriculture and bureaucracy; and second, arising out of the first,

the fundamental transformation of China in the greatest of all revolutions.

These vast movements of conflict and change – between China and the outside world, between China old and new – have produced distinct points of view in the historical record and among historians. Most obvious to Western historians is the Victorian view of the world with which the British, French and American expansionists set up the unequal treaty system in the mid-nineteenth century. They believed in the nation state, the rule of law, the benefits of individual rights, Christianity and scientific technology, and the use of warfare in the service of progress.

Similarly identifiable is the old Chinese ruling-class view of the world which believed in the classical Confucian teachings and the universal supremacy of the Son of Heaven, who maintained his rule by the edifying example of his virtuous conduct at the top of a harmonious social order of hierarchy and status. In this *ancien régime* the classical learning tolerated only change-within-tradition, the extended family system dominated the individual, a doctrine of duty eclipsed any doctrine of rights, civil administrators controlled the military and used the merchants, and the principles of moral conduct took precedence over human passions, material profit, and the letter of the law. Truly, two civilizations stood embattled.

As the more ancient and less rapidly changing civilization gradually gave way before the more modern and dynamic, a pioneer generation of Chinese scholars and administrators pursued goals of reform, gradually working out a new view of the world and of China's place in it. This new view, in an era of collapse, inevitably lacked the unity of its predecessor. Confusion of ideas grew as central authority declined, and only in the mid-twentieth century could a new historical orthodoxy become established through the application of Marxism-Leninism to China in the thought of Mao Tse-tung.

As the great Chinese revolution continues to unfold, the Maoist view of history will continue to evolve; so also will Western, Japanese and other outsiders' views, and a degree of convergence between them is to be expected. Nevertheless, present-day ideas of what has happened in modern China, how and why, will continue to be highly controversial. The contrast between Chinese and foreign, Confucian and Victorian, views of history in the nineteenth century has been succeeded by a conflict of various views today. The fact that these latter views share much more common ground as to the nature of modern history may only sharpen the controversies that arise between them. But the continuing struggle of ideas in the effort to understand the past origins of the present can only strengthen, in the end, the common bonds of understanding among peoples.

Although the foci of historical concern shift about from generation to generation, in the case of modern China certain unresolved problems of interpretation seem likely to pre-empt attention for some time to come. One major problem of interpretation is the degree and nature of foreign influence. Foreign activity in China increased markedly during the nineteenth century, becoming steadily more influential and pervasive and eventually contributing to a metamorphosis of Chinese life from top to bottom. Yet the process of foreign impact and Chinese response began gradually, almost imperceptibly. The perception of this process has developed through a succession of phases with increasing intensity and sophistication.

In the first phase it was recognized by observers both foreign and Chinese that the old agrarian-bureaucratic empire of China was no match for the expanding British and other empires of international trade and gunboats. The tempo of foreign aggression on China steadily accelerated. The Opium War of 1840-2 was followed within fifteen years by the Anglo-French invasion of 1857-60, within another decade or so by Russia's occupation of Ili in 1871 and Japan's take-over of Liu-ch'iu in 1874, and within still another decade by the Sino-French war of 1883-5. Nine years later came the smashing Japanese victory over China in 1894-5, followed by the Scramble for Concessions of 1898 and the Boxer War of 1900. These dramatic disasters were accompanied by a less tangible but more far-reaching collapse of China's traditional self-image, her Sino-centric view of the world.✓

In retrospect, China's nineteenth-century experience therefore became a stark tragedy, an unforeseen and certainly enormous decline and fall almost without equal in history. This tragedy was the more bitter because it was so gradual, inexorable, and complete. The old order fought a rear-guard action, giving ground slowly but always against greater odds, each disaster followed by a greater, until one by one China's asserted superiority over foreigners, the central power of the emperor at Peking, the reigning Confucian orthodoxy, and the ruling elite of scholar-officials were each in turn undermined and destroyed.

A second perception gained ground among Chinese revolutionaries of the early twentieth century, who found themselves in a different world, as nationalists in an expanded international world of nationalisms. Under imperialist pressure the *ancien régime* of the Ch'ing dynasty in China had taken on during the late nineteenth century an increasing burden of foreign special privilege. This had been indexed in the steady expansion of the unequal treaty system: the increase in the number of treaty ports from five in 1842 to about fifty in 1911; the extension of extraterritorial



consular jurisdiction over treaty-power nationals, their property, trade and industry; the expansion of foreign shipping in Chinese waters from gunboats on the coast to steamship lines on main rivers; the employment of foreign administrators not only in the maritime customs but also in some native customs, post office and salt revenue administrations; the spread of missionary work into every province and into the fields of education and medicine; and a multitude of other features like foreign garrisons in Peking after 1900 and pre-emption of customs revenues after 1911 to pay off foreign loans and indemnities. All this represented the special influence in Chinese life of people from outside the country. For modern nationalists, what could be more provocative of patriot indignation? More and more, from the period of World War I, this foreign invasion was called 'imperialism', and imperialism was seen as a humiliation that must be wiped out.

Another perception accompanied this view: that imperialism in China had been facilitated by Chinese weakness, not merely in military terms but in moral terms – in a lack of patriotic devotion, manifested in working for foreigners and profiting with them from the vicious traffic in opium or in coolies as well as from the evils of industrial exploitation of labour in port cities. Moral degeneracy was equally evident in warlord particularism, landlord selfishness, family-first nepotism. Most of all China's weakness had inhered in the old ruling-class strata – the alien Manchu court, the out-of-date officials trained in ancient classics, the literati whose prerogatives let them monopolize higher learning and culture, the landlords who exploited impoverished tenants. All this complex of institutions and practices could be summed up under 'feudalism'.

In this way China's nineteenth-century disaster was perceived in the twentieth century under twin headings of feudalism and imperialism. These terms and the explication of them by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao have been used in the People's Republic to describe China's modern history. In a vast land still overwhelmingly agrarian, still mindful of the Japanese aggression of the 1930s and 1940s, the native ruling class and foreign invasion stand out as the two major evils inherited from the past and still to be combated today.

The concept of imperialism has been expanded during its use in China. The role of imperialism as seen in retrospect has grown steadily since the 1920s in the thinking of both the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party. It is built into the thought of Mao Tse-tung. Imperialism was at work from the Opium War onward, long before the rise of the Leninist type of finance-capitalist imperialism in the 1890s. Maoist imperialism not only goes further back in time to include the wars and gunboat diplomacy