

ARCHIVES OF CHINA'S IMPERIAL MARITIME CUSTOMS

Confidential Correspondence

Between
Robert Hart
and
James Duncan Campbell
1874—1907

Volume I

Compiled by
Second Historical Archives of China
Institute of Modern History, CASS
Chief Editors
Chen Xiafei *and* Han Rongfang

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS BEIJING

中国海关密档——赫德、金登干函电集

1874—1907

第一卷

中国第二历史档案馆 合编
中国社会科学院近代史研究所

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外文出版社出版

(中国北京百万庄路24号)

邮政编码 100037

北京外文印刷厂印刷

1990年(16开)第一版

(英)

ISBN 7-119-01339-4/K·78(外)

09500

First Edition 1990

ISBN 0-8351-2465-7
ISBN 7-119-01339-4

Copyright 1990 by Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, China

Published by Foreign Languages Press
24 Baiwanzhuang Road, Beijing 100037, China

Printed by Foreign Languages Printing House
19 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Beijing 100044, China

Printed in the People's Republic of China

Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs

EDITOR'S NOTE

I. The confidential documents in this collection include all the letters and correspondence between Robert Hart (1835-1911), Inspector General of China's Imperial Maritime Customs Service in late Qing Dynasty, and J.D. Campbell (1833-1907), director of the Customs Service's London Office. The letters come between 1874, when the London Office was set up, and 1907, when Campbell died. The correspondence between them before 1874 and some letters Hart wrote to Campbell when he was ill in 1907 are not included, as they are not in this book's scope.

II. All the letters have been arranged in chronological order. According to the system Hart and Campbell developed, Z stands for confidential letters, A refers to official correspondence and S.O. means semi-official letters. The categories are mixed together in this book. The letters which were misnumbered have been published according to the original numbers on the letters, and necessary notes and further explanations have been added.

III. In order to retain the original feel of the documents, no changes have been made of incorrect writing or wording. Obvious spelling and writing mistakes, as of names, names of places and wrong dates, have been corrected in the notes or in the index.

IV. The letters written by Campbell in pencil usually have no title and signature, and they have been kept as they are.

V. The original documents of hand-written letters by Campbell to Hart were press copy of the original letters. Because of the long period of storage, some of the words are hard to read. After careful studies, most of the unreadable sentences and words have been sorted out and made understandable. Some of the sentences and words which are impossible to recognize have been left out so as to avoid an incorrect or misinterpretive understanding of the original meaning.

VI. The original letters by Campbell were all destroyed in 1900 when Hart's house was ruined by a fire, but Campbell had kept his letters in press copies which contained some additional materials. We have not included those letters in this collection with the exception of some closely related to the original letters.

VII. Some of the persons mentioned in the letters cannot be identified because they are not given full names. In addition, no notes have been made for those who applied to work for the Customs Service, but failed to be admitted.

VIII. Hart and Campbell often wrote in capital letters. To show respect for the original documents, we have made no changes or corrections.

PREFACE I

Huan Xiang

Those who are familiar with the history of late Qing Dynasty all know Robert Hart, a British who was born in Northern Ireland. From 1861 to 1911 he acted as Inspector General in China's Customs Service for fifty years. It was Hart who formulated and implemented the foreigner-dominated system of China's Customs Service.

In 1833, James D. Campbell was born in Edinburgh, Scotland and he was two years older than Hart. From 1862 on, Campbell worked in China's Customs Office for four years and became one of the close friends of Hart. In 1874, Campbell was appointed by Hart the representative of China's Customs Service in London, in charge of everything, public or private on behalf of Hart in England, thus becoming another very important figure at then China's Customs Service (Hart's system).

Foreigners took control of the economy of the Qing Government as they took China's Maritime Customs in their hands and they further stepped into the China's politics. The Qing Government headed by Ci Xi (Empress Dowager) did everything to maintain its internal rule which was reactionary and corruptive while at the same time was very servile to foreigners and invasion. They were so ignorant and weak that they even let China's Customs Service be controlled by foreigners. Therefore, Hart became one of the most powerful and influential foreigners in China in the late nineteenth century, who was not only in charge of the management of China's Customs Service, but also got involved in China's internal and external affairs in the capacity of the supreme advisor for the *Zongli Yamen* (an office dealing with foreign affairs set up by Qing Government in January 1861). By controlling the Customs, Hart paid huge sum of indemnity to foreign governments through taxes so as to make beneficial and effective the unequal treaties imposed upon China by imperialist powers.

Hart participated in the activities of Li Hongzhang in setting up China's naval forces. Trusted by the Qing Government, Hart sent Campbell to Paris during Sino-French War in 1884 and formulated and signed a cease-fire agreement with the French foreign minister. On behalf of the Qing Government, Hart engaged in several negotiations with foreign governments. In 1885, Hart negotiated with Portuguese Government on the issue of Macao and signed the Lisbon Agreement and later he negotiated with Indian Government on the issue of Sikkim and negotiated with Britain on the issue of navigation in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River. Hart also organized the establishment of China's postal system and provided funds and consultant service for the Qing Government when it began to set up offices of ministers in foreign countries. He also got involved in the setting-up of *Tong Wen Guan* (the Institute of Education) proposed by the Qing Government. Those are only a few examples of Hart's many activities which showed that Hart served the Qing Government only in name, but helped imperialists harm China in reality. Hart committed many crimes against the Chinese people during his stay in China. All his activities in China are on record and have been made known to the public.

Hart had a habit he kept for a long time. Once a week, he wrote to Campbell who was in London, accounting his business in China and telling Campbell what to do for him in Britain. Campbell answered every letter Hart had written to him and they kept correspondence with each other for years without a stop.

In 1975, two volumes of Hart-Campbell correspondence were published by the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press in the United States. The letters were those written between 1868 and 1907. The correspondence disclosed many secrets of Hart's activities in China. It goes without saying that those letters written between Hart and Campbell provide valuable and hard-to-get data for the study of the politics and economy of the late Qing Dynasty. However, the volumes contain only Hart's letters without Campbell's. It is said that only a small part of Campbell's return letters have been kept, and therefore only the letters written by Hart to Campbell were published. However, until we can have all the letters, both by Hart and Campbell, published, it is difficult for us to have a clear understanding of some of the important events.

The historians and publishers in China have happily made up for the loss by sorting out from the Customs Service's records and editing all the letters Campbell wrote back to Hart. Now, for the first time, the complete materials containing both Hart's and Campbell's letters have been collected and published. This is a truly significant accomplishment, as much of this material has until now been kept secret. By seeing the complete picture in both Hart's and Campbell's correspondence, we can get at previously unknown facts which will help us to gain a deeper understanding of the inside story of the foreign-dominated Maritime Customs Service, as well as help us to have a better idea of the truth of the important events of China's foreign relations in the late nineteenth century. For ordinary readers, reading the letters written by Hart and Campbell will also provide some insight into the damage and injuries done by imperialists to China and obtain a true picture of the degenerate and corrupt late Qing Dynasty. For this, we should express our sincere thanks to the historians and publishers of our country.

PREFACE II

China Customs Society

Through cooperation between the Second Historical Archives of China and the Institute of Modern History of China's Academy of Social Sciences, the lengthy *Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs: Confidential Correspondence Between Robert Hart and James Duncan Campbell, 1874-1907* is now published. It is a work of great significance.

The customs service of any country controls the lifeline of its economy — import and export affairs. After the Opium War, when China was forced to open to the Western powers, China's power over its tariffs was lost to foreigners, and China's tariffs therefore no longer fulfilled the function of protecting the national economy. Before long, the administrative power of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service was taken over by foreign invaders. For the ninety years between 1859 and 1949, the five Inspectors General (the top position in the Customs Service) were all foreigners; the most important of these was Robert Hart, a British who held the post for fifty years. It was Hart who formulated and implemented the customs system which favoured both the dumping of goods and the importation of capital into China by foreign invaders. This system of a semi-colonial nature was held by China's Customs Service for a long time. Campbell, one of the closest aides of Hart, was head of the London Office of the Customs Service for over thirty years. He played the role of ambassador for Hart.

The foreigners in the Imperial Maritime Customs Service, such as Inspector General Hart and his assistant Campbell, were not satisfied to see their power limited to the area of customs. Using the Customs Service as their base, they began to extend their power to postal service, external affairs and civil administration, eventually taking control of many matters which were wholly unrelated to the Customs Service. In fact, they were all agents of foreign imperialists in China, and, under their control, the Customs Service in China was an administrative organ only in name, while actually being a stronghold for the foreign invasion of China. It must be pointed out that some scientific management methods adopted in the customs services of Western countries were introduced by the foreigners into China's Customs Service; nevertheless, under the historical conditions of China at that time, all those advanced methods in management were adopted to benefit the Western countries. Those advanced and scientific methods all were of a semi-feudal and semi-colonial nature, and they were used for the advantages of foreign invasion of China. Just as Mao Zedong pointed out more than four decades ago, the aim of the foreign capitalists invading China was not to turn a feudalistic China into a capitalist China, but to partition China into their colonies or semi-colonies.

The Chinese people waged a long struggle against foreign imperialists, with one of their aims being to restore the sovereignty of China's Customs Service. It was only under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and through an arduous armed struggle that the wish to restore the sovereignty of China's Customs Service was realized. With the founding of the People's Republic of China, an integral and unified customs organization of a socialist nature — the General Administration of Chinese Customs and its branches throughout the country — was established. The General Administration of Chinese Customs is free from foreign control.

To lay bare the crimes committed by foreign invaders and to develop research into the history of China's Customs Service in old China, a set of books and materials about China's Customs

Service entitled *The Imperialists and China's Customs Service* (10 volumes) was edited and published by the General Administration of Chinese Customs in the 1950s and 1960s. Much of the material in the books was selected from the collections of correspondence between Hart and Campbell. In 1975, the U.S. scholar J. K. Fairbank edited the book *The I. G. in Peking*, based on a copy of the correspondence between Hart and Campbell. This copy had been taken away by the last foreign Inspector General, an American named L. K. Little, when he left China. J. K. Fairbank wrote a preface for the book and L. K. Little wrote a long introduction to the Imperial Maritime Customs Service. In the preface and introduction, they charged that, though the publishing of the book *The Imperialists and China's Customs Service* was intended to provide an overall picture of the relations between foreign imperialists and China's Customs Service, but the materials used were selected. Their charges are groundless. Now we offer our readers this collection, a complete and unabridged historical material of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service which is a clear proof to show that we have not provided a false picture of history.

As an academic institute studying the history and theory of China's Customs Service, the China Customs Society fully supports the efforts to edit and publish this book made by Chen Xiafei and others from the Institute of Modern History. The materials used in the book, which were selected from the archives of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service, are a rich and reliable source for research. At the same time, where necessary, notes are given to clarify difficult points. It is our belief that the publishing of this book will provide a very important resource for the further study of China's modern history and the modern history of China's Customs Service. We sincerely hope that scholars and experts in history and other academic fields will join us in the effort to make further study of every period of the history of China's Customs Service. It is our wish that the materials in this book will help to provide a true and objective picture of history and will help us to arrive at a relatively reliable conclusion. No doubt, in-depth study of the history of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service will deepen our understanding of the society and history of modern China, as well as strengthen and promote the mutual friendship and cooperation between China and other countries and between the Chinese people and their peoples.

INTRODUCTION

Chen Xiafei

I

Archives of China's Imperial Maritime Customs: Confidential Correspondence Between Robert Hart and James Duncan Campbell, (1874-1907) is compiled from the confidential archives kept by the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service. All together, 3528 letters and 4496 telegraphs have been collected.¹ These letters and telegraphs reveal diplomatic secrets of the late Qing Dynasty that up till now have remained unknown or unclear to the public, and therefore they are important records of the imperialist powers' aggression in China. Even the story of how these records were preserved is a proof of China's humiliation.

Robert Hart (1835-1911), an Englishman (his Chinese name was He De, and he styled himself Lubin) came to China in 1854. He took his first post in the Maritime Customs in 1859. He soon after became the Inspector General, the highest position in the service, an office he held for fifty years (1861-1911). The Maritime Customs — at that time controlled by foreigners — was the actual executive organ of the imperialists' aggressive policies in China and was the behind-the-scene manipulator of both the old and new warlord governments in the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China. Robert Hart, as Inspector General, was the most influential figure in facilitating such a situation. James Duncan Campbell (1833-1907) was a confidant and close friend of Robert Hart. He was selected in 1874 to be director of the London Office of the Maritime Customs, a post he held for thirty-four years. He was a very capable assistant to Robert Hart in interfering in the diplomatic affairs of the Qing Dynasty and in collecting intelligence information. During those thirty-four years, Hart and Campbell never stopped their regular correspondence except for the period between June and August in 1900, when the *Yi He Tuan*, (known to the West as the Boxers), waged their struggle against the imperialists. In their correspondence, Hart told Campbell things about China's political situation, the diplomatic policies of China's rulers, business of the Maritime Customs and the general circumstances in various places in China, as well as his personal matters. He also directed Campbell to perform various secret activities in Britain and Europe for the government of the Qing Dynasty, such as in diplomatic matters and in the procuring of foreign loans and arms and warships, as well as directing Campbell in the arrangement of his speculation and of various additions to property Hart held. Campbell, in return, reported to Hart details of political and economic information gathered in Britain and Europe and the press comments of foreign newspapers on China.

The correspondence between Hart and Campbell, because of its secret nature, was not only kept under tight wraps by themselves, but was also taken seriously by the Inspectors General after Hart. Hart kept the letters and telegraphs locked in a safe when he worked in China. He never revealed the contents of the correspondence to anyone, though at times he would send selected information about Britain's China policy and the political situation in Europe to the *Zongli Yamen* of Qing Dynasty. In order to keep the letters and telegraphs secret, he hired people of the labouring class (drivers of camels and carts) as servants, rather than hiring educated ones. In 1900, the letters

¹ Additional 426 telegraphs between Robert Hart and his brother, James Hart, are attached for your reference on Hart's activities during the negotiations and signing of the India-Tibet Treaty.

and telegraphs from Campbell and the drafts of his letters to Campbell were burned at his house during the *Yi He Tuan* Movement. After Campbell died in London of illness in 1907, Hart asked his son, E. Bruce Hart, to get the manuscripts of his letters to Campbell from Campbell's relatives and to keep them in the London Office. After Hart's death, his British successor — the new Inspector General of the Chinese Maritime Customs, Francis Arthur Aglen — sent for the manuscripts from Hart's family members, then kept them in Beijing. When Aglen left China in 1928, he brought these manuscripts with him to Britain, claiming possession of them. In the same year, another Englishman, Frederick William Maze (Hart's nephew), was appointed Inspector General of the Maritime Customs by the government of the Republic of China. He knew of the manuscripts and he also learned that Aglen had taken them back to Britain. After taking office, he demanded that Aglen return the manuscripts, but was refused. He then hired lawyers and began a lawsuit in a British court. The effort ended in vain. Later, the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Republic of China instructed China's envoy in Britain to deal the matter with the British Government. Finally, an agreement was reached that the manuscripts would be kept in Britain, while China could make copies. Maze then instructed the London Office to type two copies and send them to China. One copy was kept by himself, while the other was kept in a safe in the office of the Shanghai Maritime Customs. The copy kept by himself was handed over to his successor, an American named Lester Knox Little, in 1946. Little took the copy with him to Taiwan in 1949 just before the liberation of Shanghai. After finishing his term in Taiwan, he took the copy with him to the U. S. A. and gave it to Professor John King Fairbank of Harvard University and others for publication. The resulting book, *The I. G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907*, was issued concurrently in both the U. K. and the U. S. A. in 1975. Little wrote a lengthy introduction for this book, presenting details about various aspects of the Chinese Customs. The copy kept at the Shanghai Maritime Customs Office was shipped together with other archives to the General Administration of Customs of the Central People's Government after Shanghai's liberation.

The original copies of the letters that Campbell wrote to Hart before 1900 were burned during the *Yi He Tuan* Movement. However, Campbell kept press copies. These copies were bound into fifteen books. There were also some letters kept at his house that therefore were not incorporated into those books. Campbell told his wife not to give the letters to anyone except for Hart himself. After Campbell's death, upon Hart's instructions, E. B. Hart took the copies to the London Office of the Customs Service. The London Office was recalled in 1947, so the letters and other archives were shipped to China.

These books and the carbon copies of Hart's letters to Campbell were incorporated into the confidential archives of the Chinese Maritime Customs and kept in the library of the Shanghai Maritime Customs. However, a few letters written during the periods from 1874 to 1877 and from 1898 to 1906 were not found in the bound books. They are still in England in the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London together with Hart's other manuscripts. As far as telegraphs are concerned, they were transmitted in ciphers that were designed and frequently changed by the two men. Campbell's telegraphs were deciphered by a designated officer at Beijing's Inspector General's Office. Campbell did the job by himself. The whole set of telegraphs have been kept intact at China's Customs Service.

II

As for Robert Hart and his activities, even though there was unanimous praise from the Qing Government and the ruling class, the intellectual circle at that time nonetheless possessed a sober image of him. For example, some people pointed out that he "seems to be honest, but actually is treacherous in heart,... being partial to Western businessmen ... [and having] benefited foreign

countries.”¹ Others said that he was accustomed to “abusing power and being arbitrary; to taking high position and gaining huge benefits but still [being] loyal to Westerners and unfaithful to Chinese.”² And as for Hart’s firmly advocated policy of supporting the Qing Dynasty so as to get the most of it, someone made it clear by describing it as a “new means to destroy China.”³

Chinese Marxist historians’ position on this issue is even more explicit and well known. Since the 1940’s, they have made it very clear in their works that Hart was an important agent of the British imperialists in China and a sly colonizer.

In Western countries, there has always been a completely different opinion. In *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire* published in the 1920s, the author, an American named H. B. Morse, even said that, “In understanding this work my first idea was to make my central figures Sir Robert Hart and the great Customs Service which he had organized.”⁴ H. B. Morse believed that “instructed friends of China have generally been hopeful of her future. Among them it may confidently be said that the most friendly and the wisest in counsel was Sir Robert Hart.” Morse also said that Hart was “the firm and constant friend of China during half a century of administration.”⁵ For many decades, this opinion was widespread in Western countries, also influencing those Chinese historians who at that time worked for the comprador bourgeoisie. Considering Morse’s life experience and the time in which he lived, it is no surprise that his book was used by the rich English merchants living in Shanghai’s concession as historical evidence to support their compliments of Robert Hart.⁶ Nevertheless, Morse, after all, had had no opportunity to be exposed to Chinese archives and some other important materials such as the presently published *Archives of China’s Imperial Maritime Customs: Confidential Correspondence Between Robert Hart and James Duncan Campbell (1874-1907)*.

Half a century has passed since then. As time moves ahead, a great deal of historical materials have been published and research work has continued to make progress. If researchers treat history entirely in a scientific manner and rid themselves of traditional prejudices, it should not be difficult for them to make a truthful conclusion from the facts.

As mentioned earlier, Professor J. K. Fairbank, the author of the book *The I. G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907*, had noticed this difference of opinions, and in the book’s preface he emphasizes this fundamental difference between Chinese and Western scholars. However, Professor Fairbank’s basic assessment of Robert Hart remains much the same as Morse’s. L. K. Little, in the introduction he wrote for the book, completely adopts Morse’s viewpoint except that the term “reform” — as used by Hart — is reworded as “modernization.” Professor Fairbank also expresses unfavourable comments on the methodology of modern Chinese historians. In his letter “Imperialists and the Chinese Customs,” written earlier than this book, he supports his viewpoint. As editors of this book, we think that it is our responsibility to say a few words about our opinions on some of the issues when introducing these documents.

We believe that Robert Hart was a product of his era — an era when the bourgeoisie imperialists employed various military, economic and even cultural means to force China step by step into the position of a semi-colony and a colony. Hart’s lifetime work was an important part of that aggression. But Hart was a far-sighted colonist. He fully understood where the long-term interest of Great Britain and the capitalists of the world laid. He was nonetheless different from

¹ Chen Zhi, *Yong Shu Wai Pian: Shui Si (Additional Articles to the Book of Commonplace: Inspector General)*, vol. 1, p. 14.

² Xue Fucheng, *Yong An Wen Bian (A Yong'an Collection of Articles)*, vol. 2, p. 53.

³ Liang Qichao, “A New Method to Destroy China,” *Yin Bing Shi (Yinbing Room)*.

⁴ H. B. Morse, “Prefactory Note”, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, vol. 2, Kelly and Walsh, Ltd., Shanghai, Hongkong, Singapore and Yokohama, 1918. (Chinese version: vol. 2/3, p. 2.)

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 8; and vol. 3, p. 155. (Chinese version: vol. 2/3, p. 4; vol. 3, p. 165.)

⁶ On March 27, 1914, the Shanghai Committee for the Bronze Statue of Robert Hart wrote these complimentary words for the statue’s inscription: “Accomplished a Work of Great Beneficence for China and the World.”

those ordinary foreign merchants, and even some of the foreign diplomats, who wished to become rich in China in the shortest possible time and then go home with the exploited wealth, or those who tried to wrest whatever rights and benefits they could from China in a unrestrained and greedy way. Those who were eager for instant benefit sometimes instead got less in the end. Hart was quite good at long-term planning for the benefits of Great Britain and other big imperialist powers. The Imperial Maritime Customs Service under his control created various conditions meant to "work for the general foreign interest in the orderly growth of trade while also working steadily to maximize the Manchu dynasty's revenues from foreign trade."¹ In other words, according to Hart, foreign merchants should expand the Chinese market through effective promotion of their products (including opium) rather than gaining benefits mainly by bribery, tax evasion and unlicensed transportation of goods — while this new strategy would at the same time force China's agricultural economy to submit to the needs of the imperialists so that orderly growth could be obtained. It should be made clear that "to maximize the Manchu dynasty's revenues from foreign trade" was only one of the factors in "the orderly growth" envisioned by the foreign capitalists, while in the final analysis, the growth was still in the "general foreign interest."

The support of the Qing Dynasty fit into the long-range scheme because, for one, the Qing Government "enforced law and kept order" in China for foreigners, who otherwise would have had a hard time surviving. Second, a China with a backward economy and limited markets that were based on small-scale agriculture and a handicraft industry would be unable to accept a steady flow of foreign products, and thus the "orderly growth of trade" could not be realized without an ever expanding Chinese market. In an era when the capitalists employed all possible bloody means to exploit their colonies and semi-colonies, Hart's strategy was indeed very uncommon. The fact that this idea was attacked by short-sighted foreigners as "pro-Chinese actions"² is fully understandable. On the other hand, if the big imperialist powers intended to occupy the Chinese market and make it capable of accepting more and more of their products, and if they did not intend to wage a war for the specific interests of each individual drug trafficker at any given moment, Hart's way, from the angle of realistic politics, might very possibly be the best option.

That he was appreciated by the British Government and other governments, who all benefited from his service, is easy to understand.

Robert Hart understood very well the special conditions of China. He knew how much the "foreign interest" could get in return for saving the corrupt Qing Government. The Maritime Customs under his control provided the Qing Government with increasing revenue year after year, as well as funds and consultation for diplomatic activities, and he therefore easily earned the trust of the Qing Government. Even when he was gaining personal benefits, which he would do wherever possible in a roundabout way, he never appeared to be very aggressive and greedy. He helped the Western powers to get actual benefits, while at the same time artfully saving face for the Qing Government. For the rulers of a dying empire, the significance of saving superficial dignity was far beyond the psychological issues of dignity or vanity. It was necessary for the survival of a falling dynasty. The ability to gain benefits through actual strength and still be appreciated by the other party as "friendship" was the uncommon element which secured Hart's success.

During the period when the Eight-Power Allied Forces occupied Beijing and the imperialist powers were fighting each other over the partitioning of China for their benefits, Robert Hart published a well-known article saying that "partitioning" was an unwise strategy. In the article, he advocated a policy of helping the Qing Dynasty in order to "make the best of it."³ This was not simply a kindness to the Chinese people, but rather the logical conclusion of his rooted train of thought.

¹ John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner and Elizabeth MacLeod Matheson, ed., "Foreword," *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A., 1975, p. xiv.

² Fairbank, vol. 1, p. 63.

³ Robert Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim: The Peking Legation: A National Uprising and International Episode*, Chapman and Hall, London, 1901, p. 50.

History has proved that Hart was not the person who changed the mind of the big imperialist powers from their intention to divide China. They were mainly baffled by the brave and tenacious struggle waged by the Chinese people. The *Yi He Tuan* Movement, so hated by the imperialists as a most heinous crime, was one of those courageous attempts. Even though the *Yi He Tuan* Movement was bloodily suppressed in the end, it had made a historical tendency clear: that it was far beyond the power of the imperialists to conquer the national pride and the will for independence of the Chinese people. This explains the fact why Hart's opinion was readily accepted by those sober-minded and experienced aggressors. The signing of the International Protocol of 1901 and its terms (basically the same as those suggested by Hart) was a proof of this recognition.

We do not intend to deny the fact that Robert Hart himself at that time firmly believed that he was "loyal" and "friendly" to the Qing Government. He did express this once in a while in his letters. But there was a precondition for his "loyalty" and "friendship": That there be no conflict of interest between the British Empire and the Qing Dynasty. It is well known that, among the capitalist countries of that era, Britain had the largest share of benefits in China. It would be advantageous for Britain to keep China in a state of relative unity and stability so as to export more products into China and thereby extend and strengthen its economic exploitation. But because of uneven development in the capitalist world, Britain's status was challenged by other newly developed imperialist nations who wanted to reapportion the world market. As a result, Britain's interests in China were threatened. (As far as the post of Inspector General and the Chinese Maritime Customs were concerned, this new situation was also a threat to Hart's personal interest.) Under these circumstances, then, evolved "the community of interest between the British in China and the Manchu dynasty."¹ This "community of interest" was also favoured by the Qing Government. Since the rise of the Taiping Army in 1851, continuous people's uprisings (mainly among the Han people but also including other minority nationals) had severely shaken the rule of the Qing Dynasty. With the help of the Han landlords, those uprisings were eventually put down. (However, local powers formed mainly by the Han landlords also gradually developed.) The Qing Dynasty, which originated from a national minority that lived on the frontier, had always kept a strict line between the Hans and Manchurians; these people's uprising were actually the Manchus' most feared danger. Compared to this danger, the unequal treaties, foreign privileges in China and even cession of territories and payment of reparations were only minor damages. So long as the colonists' aggression would not further weaken the dealing strength of the Qing Dynasty, but rather, might actually be a tool which could strengthen the Manchus' rule over the Chinese people (this is exactly what Hart had so ardently advocated), it was natural that the Qing Dynasty and the foreign colonists developed a "community of interest" and grew "loyalty" and "friendship." The Qing Government did not take Hart as "our Hart"² and reward him exceptionally out of recklessness.

However, it will be totally wrong to misinterpret this relationship as "friendship" toward the Chinese people, for this lumps together the traitorous rulers of the Qing Dynasty and the Chinese people. Nevertheless, Robert Hart himself never confused the difference. He had not only whole-heartedly assisted the Qing Government in hiring foreigners and buying foreign arms to put down the Taiping Army, but also resolutely opposed the revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. Dr. Sun Yat-sen, who had spent a long time receiving Western education, was regarded as a pioneer in accepting Western culture among the Chinese people whom the Western colonists treated as uncivilized. The revolution led by himself to capitalize China was nothing but what had been first practised long before by the Western countries. Yet, he was unable to get the "friendship" of Hart.³ Thus it can be seen that if Hart did have some "friendship" toward China, it was never toward the Chinese people.

¹ Fairbank, "Foreword", p. xiv.

² S.F. Wright, *Hart and Chinese Customs*, WM Mullan and Son (Publishers) Ltd., p. 221 Belfast, 1950.

³ See letter 2560 in this collection: Hart to Campbell, 3 January 1897, letter 2/737. Hart said in the letter that Dr. Sun Yat-sen "be plotted and caused trouble at C'ton... So he deserves no sympathy."

As viewed from a pure technical angle, we would agree to the judgment that the Chinese Maritime Customs under his control at that time had performed considerably well, having introduced some foreign techniques. The question is how to evaluate it in terms of China's modernization. From Hart's position, the reforms of the administration and the new efficiency were necessary; otherwise, the Chinese Maritime Customs would have been unable to have "helped importantly to make the treaty system work."¹ However, to connect the good performance of this institution with the modernization of China is obviously a different question. How can people regard the good technical performance of an institution which only nominally belonged to China as an "excellent accomplishment of the modernization" of so huge a country as China?

Hart had ardently advocated the Qing Government to carry out a "reform" based on the Western capitalist model and introduce some advanced technology.

Those ideas had influenced the institutional reform movement that arose at the end of the nineteenth century. So it was not without some progressive meaning, considering the historical conditions then. However, the original intent of the preachers of such ideas was: 1. to teach the stupid and clumsy Qing Government how to update itself so as to meet the requirements of the imperialist powers; 2. to infuse blood into the dying Qing Dynasty to defer an inevitable revolution. So when evaluating from an historical angle the actual results of the reforms—they were all either never implemented or failed—it is clear that they left the Chinese people only with bitter memories and nothing close to "modernization."

So we can see that the opinion that Hart was a pioneer in facilitating China's "modernization" (which is based on the idea that he introduced Western techniques and administration methods to the Chinese Maritime Customs and preached "reform") is a one-sided argument. All the more so, then, the widely accepted judgment on China's "modernization" (reportedly the "most generally applied by Western historians") that the "unequal treaty era ... [was] part of a process of modernization of [China]" is unacceptable.² Because what this is really saying is that the process of China with its backward economy being forced to become a semi-colony and colony by foreign imperialists' aggressions was a process of her modernization. This judgment does not conform to the reality of history.

Of course the reality of history is that the foreign capitalists' invasion brought about the disintegration of China's feudal society, promoted the growth of capitalist elements and then transformed a feudal society into a semi-feudal society (or semi-capitalist society). But this is only one side of the story. The other side is that with the flood of foreign capital the imperialist powers ruthlessly exploited China, nipped in the bud the capitalist elements in China's feudal society that had long been in the cradle and forced an independent China to become a semi-colony and colony. And in the final analysis, the Chinese people, after having suffered tremendously for a whole century, did not experience any of this rapid progress of capitalism, and naturally did not see any "modernization."

To exaggerate the former viewpoint of the era as the main trend of history, whether intentionally or not, will inevitably make one fall into the category of apologists for the aggressors and their crimes. If people were really to believe the theory of "a process of modernization," they would be forced to accept the absurd logical extreme: They would be unable to deny that the industry set up in the Japanese occupied areas during their invasion in China at the price of hundreds of thousands of Chinese lives was purely for the "modernization" of China and a token of "friendship." In fact the Allies spent a huge amount of money for arms and fought bloody battles against Japan in the Pacific War—this being nothing but an attack on Japan's tremendous effort to "modernize" China. This is not an absurd argument produced by us, but a once wide-spread, and even now still existing, militarist philosophy of the Japanese aggressors.

¹ Fairbank, "Foreword" p. xii.

² Fairbank, "Foreword," p. xii. Professor Fairbank says that: "At all events, modernization is not only what has happened in modern times; it is the process of growth and change in the modern period as analyzed by the concepts of the social sciences and synthesized by the historian...."

The truth is that China was not a piece of virgin land developed by Western free immigrants. Long before she was invaded by Westerners, China had already had a well-developed handicraft industry and an intact, self-contained economic system together with a high level of ancient civilization, as well as capitalist elements. The Western countries had consistently run deficits in their commodity trade with China until the 1860s. The main role that the early capitalists had played in China was neither to increase commodity exports nor to develop capital investment. Rather, they had relied on such bloody means as the payment of reparations, direct exploitation, the opium trade, traffic of hard labourers, the sales of arms, etc., to accumulate capital and develop a colonial economy in China. We can very easily find a few figures to verify the scale of exploitations of those colonists on Chinese people. The total value of opium imported to China by British and American merchants between 1821 and the eve of the Opium War, for instance, was estimated at about 240 million dollars.¹ After the Opium War, opium trade increased by many times. According to the inventory bills of Hart between 1875 and 1876, the annual imports of opium in the name of "Western medicine" reached 70,000 boxes.² In the year 1856 alone, the opium imported from British India was valued at about 35 million U.S. dollars.³ An English opium trader named Jardine reported in the 1830s that in the good years the profit for a box of opium could be as high as 1,000 silver dollars.⁴ One will be astonished to learn the just roughly calculated figures (which would not include the smuggled opium) of the profits gained in China mainly by Britain and the U.S.A. through opium trade during those several decades. The result of the opium trade was that China had a serious financial and economic crisis, there being a tremendous outflow of silver, and China was consequently weakened and left poverty-stricken.

The damage caused by the payment of war reparations is also quite clear. The Treaty of Shimonoseki (1859) and the International Protocol of 1901 are good examples: reparations in the former were 230 million taels of silver and the latter 450 million taels; including interest and local reparations, the total amount was 1 billion taels of silver. As a result, each individual Chinese (of a total population of 400 million) had to pay about 3 taels of silver for these two treaties alone.

After the 1870's foreign products were dumped into China in large quantities. Furthermore, since China had been coerced into becoming involved in the international capitalist system under the slavery status of a semi-colony and colony, the national capitalist elements, strangled by foreign capitalists, never had a chance to develop. As China moved into the 1920s, foreign enterprises in China gradually developed a kind of capital export nature. Nevertheless, their capital was still mainly accumulated on the land of China. According to the estimate of experts, by the year of 1936 foreign capital in China totalled about 1.98 billion U.S. dollars, of which that invested from outside of China was only 940 million dollars.⁵ But even including this foreign capital, the capitalist elements of China only had a very feeble growth.

According to the statistics collected after the founding of New China in 1949 the total fixed assets of China's heavy industry were valued at 12.8 billion RMB. If calculated in the currency value of 1936, it was worth about 5.12 billion yuan of the KMT government's paper currency. (This figure represents the pre-Liberation assets of the bureaucratic monopoly capital including investments taken over from the Japanese, Italian and German fascists. The capital investments of Britain, the U. S. A. and others had been virtually destroyed by Japan during the War of Resistance Against Japan, and so have been omitted.) The figure of fixed assets for the communications industry was about the same. The net value of private industries (i.e. the national capital) was

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1979, vol. 16, pp. 18-19.

² Li Gui, *Ya Pian Shi Lu* ("Events of the Opium Trade,") *Ya Pian Zhan Zheng*, (*The Opium War*) vol. 6, Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1957, pp. 149-151.

³ Marx and Engels, *op cit.*

⁴ Bob Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-1842*, Cambridge University Press, Britain, 1951, p. 105.

⁵ Wu Chengming, *Di Guo Zhu Yi Zai Jiu Zhong Guo De Tou Zi* (*Imperialist Investments in Old China*) People's Publishing House, Beijing, 1955; C. F. Remer, *Foreign Investments in China*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1933 p. 64.