

# A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS OF THE MARITIME CUSTOMS IN SOUTHERN TAIWAN, 1863–95

## I. INTRODUCTION

History of the China Imperial Maritime Customs has been studied for more than a century. These studies have continually suggested how important the institution had been in history, from such points of view as: the Customs' role in modern China, Sino-foreign relationship, disposal of customs revenue, and international trade; their organization, personnel, and personalities; and their broader international and interregional relationships.<sup>1</sup> Although the original Maritime Customs publications, especially the lengthy annual trade returns and reports, and related documents, are kept in libraries of renowned universities and some government agencies in China and abroad,<sup>2</sup> efforts have been made by various organizations to make the historical materials of the Maritime Customs accessible to a wider readership since the 1960s. Consequently, different versions of duplication, including microfilms and reprints, have been published and are instrumental to scholars who could not have access to the original prints.<sup>3</sup> In this 21st century, attempts have also been made to build a digitalized platform for pooling resources together to enlarge the accessibility of the documents.<sup>4</sup> In time, perhaps the next generation researchers can save much of the tedious work of

the 20th century and organize their materials more efficiently.

Despite the growing accessibility of the Maritime Customs documents, there are still some fundamental barriers for future students to even start approaching the subject. First of all, the Maritime Customs documents cover a wide range of historical materials, ranging from the Customs Administration's institutional publications to the public and private documents of the Customs officials and other personnel. The almost infinite seas of historical materials provide an endless path for intellectual inquiry, encouraging for motivated students but rather difficult for beginners. Secondly, as the Qing Empire could not impose direct rule over its various regions, either ceded or leased to foreign powers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these regions' Maritime Customs took a path different from the empire in history that would not be easy to understand. Thirdly, for the beginners of the history of the Maritime Customs, it would be difficult to handle even the institutional publications of the Customs, which may look unclear and endless. Luckily, this problem had been mostly solved with the publication of Professor Hamashita Takeshi's 濱下武志 first book with a complete list of Maritime Customs' publications [Hamashita 1989: 643–69]. Fourthly, throughout the nearly-a-century history of the China Maritime Customs under foreign personnel, its trade reports and trade statistics had been compiled according to different designs and arrangements in different periods of history. Students of these Customs publications would have to painstakingly work out the changes of their layouts in order to avoid inconsistency in calibration. In this respect, the recent work of Thomas P. Lyons has provided great help to the beginners of the subject [Lyons 2003].

Last but not the least, although several replications have been carried out from different sources throughout the last few decades, no advances have practically been made that could claim to be complete. Besides the reprints by the Center for Chinese Research Materials (microfilm) in the U. S. A., Historica Sinica 國史館 (covering only 1901–36) in Taiwan, and the Jinghua Press (Jinghua Chubanshe 京華出版社) in Beijing, there exist a dozen of selected reprints and/or translations by various institutions in China. Some concentrated at the “treaty port” level, such as Shanghai, Canton, Tianjin, Suzhou, and Xiamen.<sup>5</sup> Some others covered data at the provincial level, such as Zhejiang, Fujian, Sichuan, Hunan, and Hubei [Liu 1934; Zhou, Cen, Wang, and Ma 1941; Zeng 1984–87; You 1990; Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Hangzhou Haiguan 2002]. Taiwan's Academia Sinica 中央研究院 even reprinted those covering only the island's customs data before the Japanese takeover in 1895 [Huang, Lin, and Ang 1997]. Looking handy to beginners, each reprint or translation certainly involves editorial selection, mistakes, and typo errors.

Nonetheless, as the Imperial Maritime Customs covered a wide range of activities, from trade, finance, and transportation to fiscal policy and diplomacy, any student of these areas of research cannot avoid going back to the fundamentals, the periodical publications of the Customs. In view of this highly demanding task, this short article therefore sets out to provide a brief introduction to the documents for the beginners of the history of the Maritime Customs by paying attention to the periodical publications. Because of the multiplicity and complexity of the Maritime Customs materials, this article uses the case of the Maritime Customs of Southern Taiwan for critical examination. In particular, through a comparison of the three existing versions of reprints of South Taiwan's Customs publications under the Qing, this article hopes to clear the path for future students in collecting the most complete set of materials for their own work.

On the other hand, the area of South Taiwan, as well as other parts of the Island of Formosa, had been put under the Qing Empire from the late 17th century until 1895, and consequently it was included into the same jurisdiction of the China Imperial Maritime Customs. From 1895 to 1945, because of the Japanese rule, Taiwan's Maritime Customs changed course and was incorporated into the Japanese Empire.<sup>6</sup> Its peculiar history deserves scholarly attention not only for understanding the complexities in modern East Asian history but also for re-examining the nature of the Maritime Customs beyond the Qing Empire and the Republic. Therefore, the current article hopes to set the path to further explorations on that complexity for future research by focusing on the pre-1895 details.

## II. BASIC STRUCTURES

One of the major significances of the China Imperial Maritime Customs with high regards of the scholarly world has been the periodical publications of the Customs authorities, including the "trade returns", "trade reports", and the "decennial reports" [Lyons 2003: 40–1]. To students of the Taiwan Maritime Customs, although the "decennial reports" contain valuable information (as will be discussed later), there is only one issue, in English only, for the period 1882–91, being published in 1893.<sup>7</sup> Due to the First Sino-Japanese War and the subsequent transfer of sovereignty to Japan, Taiwan's Maritime Customs was not included in the second compilation of the "decennial report" for the period 1892–1901 [Inspector General of Customs 1906]. Therefore, the students of South Taiwan's Maritime Customs, and of the whole island, must rely upon the annual reports and trade statistics for most of the information needed.

Regarding the “trade returns”, it started to be published since the late 1850s and early 1860s for the whole of the Qing Empire, and was published without interruption for Taiwan from the last quarter of 1863 to 1895. Similar to other treaty ports’ “trade returns”, those of South Taiwan’s consists of trade statistics covering imports, exports, and re-exports of both foreign and native goods, movement of precious metals, shipping tonnage, custom duties, passenger traffic, and the trade performance of the respective port’s “staple goods”. This structure of presentation was basically kept throughout the 19th century for all treaty ports in the Qing Empire from north to south in two or three volumes for each year.

On the other hand, the “trade reports”, also being published in the 1860s, are literally the written description and/or official interpretation of trading condition of each year as revealed in the “trade returns”. Yet unlike the “trade returns”, “trade reports” did not have the same degree of regularity during the 1860s and the early 1870s (see Table 1). In some years, “trade reports” can cover the events of two or three years. This problem of irregularity causes problems for students in obtaining the precise official explanation on certain timely events.

### III. MORE PROBLEMS OF IRREGULARITIES: TRADE REPORTS

Perhaps equally problematic to the beginners of the Customs publications is the fact that both “trade reports” and “trade returns” for South Taiwanese ports had used different names of places to represent all treaty ports involved throughout the three decades of international trade under the Qing. As shown in Table 1, the term “Takou” or “Takow” was first used. The system to calibrate the trading figures of the “treaty ports” seems not to have been fixed before 1865, as “Taiwan-foo” was put as an individual entry vis-à-vis other Chinese ports related to the “coastal trade” in the period 1863–64 [Inspector General of Customs n.d.: 7]. When all South Taiwanese ports commenced operation in 1865, the name of places for the “trade returns” changed into “Takow and Taiwan-foo” until 1870, while “trade reports” remained unchanged. From 1871 to 1890, the term “Takow” was used to represent all South Taiwanese ports. From 1891 to 1895, the term “Tainan” was used to replace “Takow”. Yet, in fact, all these years’ “reports” and “returns” included figures from both Takow and Taiwan-foo (later called “Tainan-foo”), while the Anping 安平 Harbor functioned as Taiwan-foo’s outpost.

Table 1 also reveals that from 1865 to 1881, “trade returns” and “trade reports” were published in separate covers. As for the “trade reports”, an

Table 1. The Names of Places Used by the China Maritime Customs' Periodical Publications to Represent South Taiwanese Ports, 1863–95

Year	Reports	Returns	Chinese Reports (1889–1895)	Approximate Title of the Year's Volume for China
1863	▲	△	▲	▲ <i>Returns of the Import and Export Trade, at the Port of ____ for the Year</i>
1864	▲	The Port of Takou – Formosa ( <i>Returns of Trade at the Port of Takou – Formosa, under Provisional Regulations, from 26th October, 1863, to 5th May, 1864. And From 5th May, to 31st December, 1864</i> )	▲	<i>Reports on Trade at the Ports of Shanghai, Canton, Swatow, Amoy, Ningpo, Hankow, Kiukiang, Chefoo, and Neuchuang, for the Year</i> <i>Returns of Trade at the Port of ____ in China for the Year</i>
1865	Takow, Formosa	Takow & Taiwan-foo, Formosa	▲	<i>Reports on Trade at the Ports in China Open by Treaty to Foreign Trade, for the Year</i> <i>Returns of Trade at the Port of ____ for the Year</i>
1866	Takow, Formosa	Takow & Taiwan-foo, Formosa	▲	Same as above
1867	Takow	Takow & Taiwan-foo, Formosa	▲	<i>Reports on Trade at the Treaty Ports in China, for the Year</i> <i>Returns on Trade at the Ports in China Open by Treaty to Foreign Trade, for the Year</i>
1868	Takow	Takow & Taiwan-foo, Formosa	▲	<i>Reports on Trade at the Treaty Ports in China, for the Year</i> <i>Returns of Trade at the Treaty Ports in China for the Year</i>
1869	▲	Takow & Taiwan-foo, Formosa	▲	Same as above
1870	Takow	Takow & Taiwan-foo, Formosa	▲	Same as above
1871	△	Takow, Formosa	▲	Same as above
1872	△	Takow, Formosa	▲	Same as above
1873	Takow (Formosa)	Takow, Formosa	▲	Same as above

1874	Takow (Formosa)	Takow, Formosa	▲	Same as above
1875	Takow (Formosa)	Takow, Formosa	▲	Same as above
1876	Takow (Formosa)	Takow, Formosa	▲	Same as above
1877	Takow	Takow, Formosa	▲	Same as above
1878	Takow	Takow, Formosa	▲	Same as above
1879	Takow	Takow, Formosa	▲	Same as above
1880	Takow	Takow, Formosa	▲	Same as above
1881	Takow	Takow	▲	Same as above
1882	Takow	Takow	▲	<i>Returns of Trade of the Treaty Ports and Trade Reports for the Year</i>
1883	Takow	Takow	▲	Same as above
1884	Takow	Takow	▲	Same as above
1885	Takow	Takow	▲	Same as above
1886	Takow	Takow	▲	Same as above
1887	Takow	Takow	▲	Same as above
1888	Takow	Takow	▲	Same as above
1889	Takow	Takow	打狗	Same as above
1890	Takow	Takow	打狗	Same as above
1891	Tainan	Tainan	臺南	Same as above
1892	Tainan	Tainan	臺南	Same as above
1893	Tainan	Tainan	臺南	Same as above
1894	Tainan	Tainan	臺南	Same as above
1895	Tainan	Tainan	臺南	Same as above

▲ Non-exists in the original

△ Combines with other year(s) in the original

Sources: [Chinese Maritime Customs Publications n.d.; Zhongguo Dier Lishi Dang'anguan, Zhongguo Haiguan Zongshu Bangongting 2001].

individually styled “trade report for the year” would be included into the volume for China as a whole.<sup>8</sup> As for the “trade returns”, each individual port would equally be included into another series.<sup>9</sup> From 1882 onwards, both were combined, albeit only nominally, into a consolidated volume divided by respective treaty ports, titled *Returns of Trade of the Treaty Ports and Trade Reports for the Year* in the “statistical series”. In short, from 1865 to 1895, there were at least three different sets of titles for each treaty port’s “trade reports” and “trade returns”.

Going further into the basic structures of these “reports” and “returns”, one would find more differences among different issues. To begin with, as summarized in Table 2, the earliest issue of the “trade reports” (1865) has no clear section headings, depending on the writing skills of the author to tighten up the literary flow of the report. Some section headings come forth in the next issue, namely “Imports”, “Exports”, “Shipping”, and “Duties”. Yet, this structure was not strictly followed in the next five years, during which some years could not even produce its own “trade report”. From 1873 onwards, more defined section headings appeared in each year’s report, although in some of the years, such as 1887 and 1889 respectively, section headings disappeared again. Of course, this certainly does not necessarily mean the content of the sections disappeared in those issues without section headings.

On the other hand, certain peculiar arrangements of the headings seem to reflect certain concern of the Customs authorities. The “Shipping” section is a case in point. Although the “Shipping” section appeared as early as in 1866, its importance in the eyes of the Customs seems to have risen in the 1870s, as a separate section was devoted to “Junk Trade” after the “Shipping” section. By the end of the decade, “Shipping” even became the first section that appeared in the report, perhaps showing the Customs prioritizing the subject matter. Although that emphasis did not last for long, it reappeared occasionally in the 1880s. The structure of the “trade report” was finalized in 1890.

#### IV. INCONSISTENT ENTRIES LAYOUT: TRADE RETURNS

Similar to the changes in structure of the “trade reports”, the outlook of the “trade returns” also varies at times. As summarized in Table 3, the initial sections were simply arranged to provide statistics of the year, essentially on foreign trade, coastal trade, shipping, and customs duties. “Special Tables” were also compiled to focus on the staple export of the port. When the piles of statistical information grew, more ways to analyze and present the data

**Table 2. Variations in the Section Headings of the “Trade Reports” of South Taiwanese Ports, 1863–95**

Year	Section Headings
1863	▲
1864	▲
1865	No clear Section Headings
1866	Imports, Exports, Shipping, Duties
1867	No clear Section Headings
1868	Imports, Exports, Shipping, Revenue
1869	▲
1870	Imports, Exports, Revenue, Shipping
1871	▲
1872	▲
1873	Value of Trade, Foreign Imports, Native Imports, Exports, Shipping, Revenue
1874	Foreign Imports, Native Imports, Exports, Treasure, Shipping, Revenue, Occurrences
1875	Imports, Native Imports, Exports, Shipping, Junk Trade, General Remarks
1876	Foreign Imports, Native Imports, Exports, Shipping, Duties
1877	Imports, Exports, Shipping, Revenue, General Remarks
1878	Same as above
1879	Shipping, Foreign Imports, Native Imports, Exports, Summary, Conclusion
1880	Shipping, Foreign Imports, Native Imports, Exports, Treasure, Value of Trade, General Remarks, General
1881	Imports, Exports, Re-exports, Shipping, Treasure, General Remarks
1882	Imports, Exports, Shipping
1883	Value, Imports, Exports, Shipping, Junk Trade, Crops, etc., General Remarks
1884	Imports, Exports, Shipping, Revenue, Prospects for 1885
1885	Imports, Exports, Shipping, Revenue, General, Prospects for 1886, The Takow Bar
1886	Imports, Exports, Transit Trade, Duties, Treasure, Shipping, General
1887	No clear Section Headings
1888	Shipping, Foreign Imports, Native Exports, Values, Transit Trade, Revenue
1889	No clear Section Headings
1890	Local, Revenue, Foreign Trade, Coast Trade, Inland Transit, Shipping, Passenger Traffic, Treasure, Opium, Miscellaneous
1891	Same as above
1892	Same as above
1893	Same as above
1894	Same as above
1895	Same as above

▲ Non-exists in the original

Sources: Same as Table 1; and [Huang, Lin, and Ang 1997].



**Table 3. Variations in the Section Arrangements of the “Trade Returns” of South Taiwanese Ports, 1863–95**

Year	Section Arrangements
1863	Foreign Trade, Coast Trade, Duties, Shipping, Summary of Trade, Special Tables
1864	Foreign Trade, Coast Trade, Shipping, Duties, Summary of Trade, Special Tables
1865	Foreign Trade, Coast Trade, Shipping, Duties, Special Tables
1866	Same as above
1867	Part I. Foreign Trade (Foreign Imports, Foreign Exports); Part II. The Whole Trade, Foreign and Coastwise: Foreign and Chinese Goods (Imports and Re-exports), Chinese Produce Exported, Treasure, Export of Sugar, Opium, Summary, Duties
1868	Foreign Goods Imported, Chinese Produce Imported, Chinese Produce Exported, Treasure, Opium, Summary and Comparative Tables, Shipping, Duties
1869	Trade in Foreign Goods (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Exports and Re-exports), Treasure, Opium, Summary and Comparative Tables, Shipping, Duties
1870	Trade in Foreign Goods (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Exports and Re-exports), Treasure, Opium, Summary and Comparative Tables (Principal Imports, Principal Exports), Shipping, Duties, Appendix (Comparisons by Flags)
1871	Trade in Foreign Goods (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Exports and Re-exports), Treasure, Opium, Comparative Tables (Principal Imports, Principal Exports, and Trade), Summary, Shipping, Duties
1872	Trade in Foreign Goods (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Exports and Re-exports), Treasure, Opium, Comparative Tables (Principal Imports, Principal Exports, Trade, and Shipping), Summary, Shipping, Duties, Carrying Trade (by Nationality and Treaty Ports), Transit Trade (by Nationality and Treaty Ports)
1873	Trade in Foreign Goods (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Exports and Re-exports), Shipping, Value of Trade, Duties, Treasure, Opium, Comparative Tables (Principal Imports, Principal Exports, and Trade), Carrying Trade (by Nationality and Treaty Ports), Transit Trade (by Nationality and Treaty Ports)
1874	A. General Tables: Shipping, Value of Trade, Trade in Foreign Goods (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Exports and Re-exports), Transit Trade, Duties B. Special Tables: Treasure, Opium, Sugar, Comparative Tables (Principal Imports, Principal Exports, Trade, and Shipping), Carrying Trade (by Nationality and Treaty Ports), Transit Trade (by Nationality and Treaty Ports)
1875	Same as above
1876	Same as above

1877	Same as above
1878	Same as above
1879	Same as above
1880	Same as above
1881	Same as above
1882	<p>A. General Tables: Shipping, Value of Trade, Trade in Foreign Goods (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Exports and Re-exports), Transit Trade, Duties</p> <p>B. Special Tables: Treasure, Opium, Sugar, Comparative Tables (Principal Imports, Principal Exports, Trade, and Shipping)</p>
1883	Same as above
1884	Same as above
1885	Same as above
1886	Same as above
1887	Same as above
1888	Same as above
1889	Same as above
1890	Same as above
1891	<p>A. General Tables: Shipping, Value of Trade, Trade in Foreign Goods (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Imports and Re-exports), Trade in Native Produce (Exports and Re-exports), Transit Trade, Duties</p> <p>B. Special Tables: Treasure, Opium, Sugar, Comparative Tables (Principal Imports, Principal Exports, Trade, Shipping, and Passenger Traffic)</p>
1892	Same as above
1893	Same as above
1894	Same as above
1895	Same as above

Sources: Same as Table 2.

were adopted. In 1866, for instance, the compilers started to make comparative tables for the current year and the previous ones. In 1867, an attempt was made to present the statistics in two parts. The first part was designated for the foreign trade sector, including treasure and shipping, conducted through the port. The second part was for all trade transactions going through the port, including domestic trade with other treaty ports of the Qing Empire. The former seems to be simple and straightforward, concerning only with the foreign sector in trade, shipping, and treasure. The latter seems to be more elaborate, with more details in the port's trading and shipping relationships with other countries and other ports. However, that structure did not last for long. In the next year, a simplified version was produced to include all entries of trade returns back into one part. From 1868 to 1873, various entries concerning all directions and nature of the trade, treasure, opium, principal trading items, shipping, and the performance of trade in comparative terms were presented in each year's "trade returns" records, with slight variations in each year.

From 1874, the "trade returns" had basically been finalized in a dual-part format similar to, but not exactly, the repetition of the one in 1867. The 1874 issue basically set two parts as the 1867 issue did, but "Part A", which includes all the fundamentals in a year's trading and shipping information, was given a name of "General Tables". "Part B", on the other hand, includes various tables on specialized topics and themes in the port's trade, and was thus entitled "Special Tables". Despite the slight variations in emphasis over the next two decades, all "trade returns" subsequently published followed this dual-part format to present the statistics.

One important academic value of the "Special Tables" is the additional and elaborate information on the principal trading items. Sugar, especially brown sugar, is a case in point. Although the statistical information of "Part A" contains the trading figures of brown sugar, including the value and quantity, the information on the destination of exports is not totally clear. "Foreign countries", "Hongkong", and "Chinese Ports" are the three main categories for the destinations of exports. From 1872 till 1895, the "Special Table" on brown sugar's exports started to list out all the locations for exports, and the quantity of sugar exports to each of these locations (treaty ports or foreign countries) [Inspector General of Customs 1873: 109]. The same table also provides the information all the way back to 1868. Despite the absence of the figures on the value of the commodity to a specific location, such information has already been instrumental to the study of the subject matter.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, despite the consistent publications of statistics on the exported brown sugar, the changing structure of presentation of the "trade

returns” have posed a major obstacle for the students of Maritime Customs records to overcome before achieving a closer understanding of the statistical data. Lyons provided us with a thorough case of Fujian’s tea trade in the period covering the whole statistical series of the Maritime Customs and neatly demonstrated how statistical data might alter through all these changes [Lyons 2003: 75–152]. In the case of South Taiwanese ports, as the connotation of a statistical entry might be changed at certain points, it creates a problem of inconsistency in the data, disrupting the statistical sequence which might be built for a more concrete description. The statistics concerning South Taiwanese ports’ trade with Amoy (Xiamen) is a good example. For the period 1863–69, Amoy stands as an individual entry, alongside with other Chinese ports, in the statistical records of the commodity trade (imports, exports, and re-exports) of Takow or Taiwan-foo/Takow. From 1870 onward, individual entries for all separate ports were amalgamated into one “imports from Chinese ports” or “exports to Chinese ports”, resulting in a certain degree of obscurity for Amoy’s figures from then on.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the Customs’ periodical publications cannot provide continual and consistent statistical sources for any analysis of South Taiwanese ports’ overall commodity trade on a port-to-port basis.

Similarly, the study on South Taiwanese ports’ external trade with a specific “foreign country” cannot be conducted easily. In 1865 and 1866, the names of “foreign countries”, by that time only Hongkong and Japan, were listed in the sections on both “foreign imports” and “exports”. From 1867 to 1895, despite the increase in the number of foreign countries conducting trade with South Taiwan, their names were not shown on the columns of these tables for all the different entries of commodities. Yet, at the end of each table, there exists an amalgamated figure for goods “imported from foreign countries” and “exported to foreign countries” respectively. From 1870 onwards, although there was still an anonymous title “imported from/exported to foreign countries” for the commodity trade lists, there exists a “summary” for the year’s trade value which breaks down the figures according to nationality. Although one can find the amalgamated figure of trade with a specified country, one cannot directly find exactly how much that country bought from South Taiwan for a specific commodity.

To search for the trade of a specific country for a specific commodity, one needs to painstakingly trace the statistics through cross reference analysis. For instance, the 1875 “trade returns” states that there were various “imports from foreign countries” (timber, chintzes, and coal) valued at HK. Tls. (*Haikwan Tals*) 1,293. As figures for foreign imports from Hongkong were put together with other Chinese ports, the said amount will only be applicable to another “foreign country”. At the summary, the exact amount

of HK. Tls. 1,293 is shown for the “imports from Japan”. Therefore, the said amount must refer to Japan’s contribution to South Taiwan’s foreign imports. On other occasions, bold estimates must be needed.

Even worse, the position of Hongkong in the Maritime Customs publications varies from one table to another. In the table concerning “foreign imports”, Hongkong is classified under “Hongkong and Chinese Ports” but it is counted independently in the case of “imports of native products” and “exports”. Behind the scene, there obviously existed a structure of trade in which the then British colony had played a very specific role as an entrepôt for Euro-American and Chinese commodities entering into the South Taiwanese market and a rallying point for the island’s native products to sell beyond Asia. Yet, it would be a difficult obstacle for students of the Maritime Customs records to calibrate the economic fundamentals in a systematic and sensible fashion.

## V. PROBLEMS OF REPRINTS

Irregularity of these periodical publications in the 19th century certainly causes difficulty to fully understand the official view on trade situation in each year. Yet, to the beginners of the Maritime Customs publications, hurdles are also set by the existence of different reprint versions of these publications. Currently, there are three versions of reprints of the Maritime Customs periodical publications available to the students of Taiwan Maritime Customs statistics. The first one, as said, is the microfilm made by the Center for Chinese Research Materials, which was based on the Maritime Customs publications deposited with Harvard University Library (hereafter abbreviated as the “Harvard microfilm version”). Recently, Professor Wu Songdi 吳松弟 compiled the Harvard University Library collection of the Maritime Customs publications and reprinted that collection entirely [Wu S. 2014]. Although it contains more materials than the microfilm version in many aspects, the periodical publication section is the same as the microfilm, and therefore the same as the “Harvard microfilm version”.

The second one is the printed copy published by the Jinghua Press in Beijing (hereafter abbreviated as the “Jinghua reprint version”). The last printed version particularly on Taiwan’s customs trade records during the Qing rule was published by the Preparatory Bureau of the Institute of Taiwan Historical Research (Taiwanshi Yanjiusuo Choubweichu 臺灣史研究所籌備處), Academia Sinica in Taiwan in the 1990s [Huang, Lin, and Ang 1997]. This last version (hereafter abbreviated as the “Taiwan reprint version”) was also based on the “Harvard microfilm version” but edited and

reorganized according to the editors' tailoring to fill the Taiwanese needs.

None of the currently available version of reprints is complete, however. All three versions of reprints equally have shortfalls in certain issues. As tabulated in Table 4, all three versions, including the "Harvard microfilm version", have some shortfalls of issues, either the reports or the returns, or both. Most of these shortfalls obviously happen to the original's early issues of the periodical publications, probably because of the limitation of each collection's endowment. Yet, some of the shortfalls appear to be deliberate, such as the absence of the entire official Chinese translation in the "Taiwan reprint version" to serve the reprint version's need to focus on introducing Maritime Customs documents in English. Some others, such as the non-existence of all the pre-1882 trade reports in the "Jinghua reprint version", cannot be understood without taking politics into consideration. By avoiding the reprinting of the reports solely written in English, the Beijing publisher might need to demonstrate to the readers the Maritime Customs in Chinese sovereignty. Whatever the possible reason, these shortfalls certainly pose difficulties for the students working on the early history of the Customs' trade statistics and reports in the mid-to-late 19th century.

## VI. DECENNIAL REPORT: ONE AND ONLY ONE

Besides the existence of shortfalls in "trade reports" and "trade returns", these versions of reprints also differ from each other on the matter of the "decennial report". As said, Taiwan ports only have one issue of the "decennial report" for the period 1882-91. In both "Harvard microfilm version" and the "Jinghua reprint version", the "decennial report" is included. Yet, the "Taiwan reprint version" simply did not include it at all. Since the "decennial report" contains information other than the "trade reports" which was basically published yearly, its exclusion from the "Taiwan reprint version" would hinder potential newcomers to have access to such an important Customs publication.

One important element which stands out clearly in the only "decennial report" for South Taiwanese ports, amalgamated into the term "Tainan", is the information regarding the condition of Anping. As a subsidiary port and an outer port of Taiwan-foo (later Tainan-foo), Anping's information had been put under Takow or Taiwan-foo. Because valuable information about the Anping Harbor, such as shipping clearance data, is not usually available in other Customs publications, Anping's trade performance as an individual harbor had never been exposed to the readers of the "trade reports" and "trade returns". Only in this "decennial report" one can find

**Table 4. Comparative Table on the Structure of the Three Reprint Versions of the China Maritime Customs' Periodical Publications Concerning South Taiwanese Ports, 1863–95**

	“Harvard Microfilm version” (with Chinese version from 1889 on)		“Jinghua reprint version” (with Chinese version from 1889 on)		“Taiwan reprint version” (no Chinese version)	
	Report	Returns	Report	Returns	Report	Returns
1863	▲	X	X	△	X	X
1864	▲	X	X	○	X	X
1865	○	○	X	○	X	X
1866	○	○	X	○	X	X
1867	○	○	X	○	X	X
1868	○	○	X	○	X	○
1869	▲	○	X	○	X	○
1870	○	○	X	○	X	X
1871	△	○	X	○	X	○
1872	△	○	X	○	X	○
1873	○	○	X	○	X	○
1874	○	○	X	○	○	○
1875	○	○	X	○	○	○
1876	○	○	X	○	X	X
1877	○	○	X	○	○	○
1878	○	○	X	○	○	○
1879	○	○	X	○	○	○
1880	○	○	X	○	○	○
1881	○	○	X	○	○	○
1882	○	○	○	○	○	○
1883	○	○	○	○	○	○
1884	○	○	○	○	▽	○
1885	○	○	○	○	▽	○
1886	○	○	○	○	▽	○
1887	○	○	○	○	▽	○
1888	○	○	○	○	▽	○
1889	○	○	○	○	▽	○
1890	○	○	○	○	▽	○
1891	○	○	○	○	▽	○
1892	○	○	○	○	▽	○
1893	○	○	○	○	▽	○
1894	○	○	○	○	▽	○
1895	○	○	○	○	▽	○

▲ Non-exists in the original

△ Combines with other year(s) in the original

○ Contains in this reprint

X Excluded in this reprint

▽ Renamed in the “trade returns” of the same year

Sources: Same as Table 2.

separate information on Anping, including the landscape of the harbor, shipping condition vis-à-vis Takow, and sugar exports.<sup>12</sup> Such information proves the limits of the “trade reports” and “trade returns”, both of which tend to provide regular/annual information for the ambiguous “trinity” of Taiwan-foo (Tainan), Anping, and Takow in the Qing’s administration of South Taiwan’s Maritime Customs.

Yet, the one and the only one “decennial report” of South Taiwan suffers from the same problem of inconsistency, especially with the statistical criteria of the trade returns. The figures related to “foreign population” are the case in point. The “trade returns” recorded the number of foreign residents and firms, according to their respective nationalities, in the treaty ports from 1872 to 1881. Those entries are not shown in the “trade returns” from 1882 on, and yet, the “decennial report” lists out the numbers of foreign residents without consistently referring to their nationalities—“British Consular officials”, “German Consular officials”, “Custom House officials”, “European merchants”, “Parsee merchants”, “Protestant missionaries”, “Roman Catholic missionaries”, “Medical practitioners”, and “Pilots” [Montgomery 1893: 485–6]. Obviously, nationality of foreign residents in the treaty ports was not the primary concern of the Customs officials. This inconsistency, similar to the other inconsistencies, affects us all in understanding the history of the foreign community in South Taiwan’s treaty ports.

## VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In 1895, following the transfer of sovereignty of the Island of Formosa, the Imperial Maritime Customs issued its last trade report and returns in the following year. For the students of the Maritime Customs in Taiwan to uncover the meaning of the new Customs under Japan’s jurisdiction, it also means the need to handle a new set of periodical publications in a different logic, design, and language. Equally, it will need more efforts by various authorities to reproduce the materials, hardcopy or digital, and accordingly, the wit and will to meet the new challenges in handling different versions of reprints.

## NOTES

- 1 The history of the China Maritime Customs began with Hosea Ballou Morse and Stanley Fowler Wright, see [Morse 1908; 1910–18; Wright 1930;



- 1935; 1938; 1940]. Also see [Fairbank 1953; Hsiao 1974; Bruner, Fairbank, and Smith 1986; Hamashita 1989; Fairbank, Coolidge, and Smith 1995].
- 2 For example, the Bodleian Library of the University of Oxford, the Harvard University Library, and the Hong Kong University Library all possess originals of Maritime Customs trade returns and trade reports.
  - 3 These include the following [Chinese Maritime Customs Publications n.d.; Shanghai Tongshang Haiguan Zaocechu 1982; Zhongguo Dier Lishi Dang'anguan, Zhongguo Haiguan Zongshu Bangongting 2001].
  - 4 For example, see [Department of Historical Studies].
  - 5 For example, see [Xu 1985; Xiamenshizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui... 1990; Lu 1991; Wu H. 1993; Guangzhoushi Difangzhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui Bangongshi... 1995].
  - 6 For the discussion on the transition, see [Lin Y. 2017].
  - 7 On the South Taiwanese case, see [Montgomery 1893]. In the postwar years, Taiwanese scholars also added a Chinese translation, see [Montgomery 1957: 108–32].
  - 8 For example, see [Inspector General of Customs 1881].
  - 9 For example, see [Inspector General of Customs 1870].
  - 10 See for example, [Lin M. 1997].
  - 11 See [Chan 2013: 156–58].
  - 12 See [Montgomery 1893: 473, 478]. See also the map of the Anping Harbor in the same volume, unpaginated.

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