# Chinese Engineering & Mining Co. Tientsin (Chinese-flag) Chinese Engineering & Mining Co. Ltd, Shanghai (British-flag) and London

# SHORT HISTORY & ILLUSTRATED FLEET LIST

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Until the 1880s, steamships in Chinese waters mostly burned coal imported from Britain, NSW and especially Kyushu, Japan. Kwang-Ching Liu (1962: 93, 103) records that from 1869 the Shanghai S.N. Co. (SSNC) was achieving considerable economies by using Hupeh and Kiangsi coal ('country coal') mined by traditional methods. Nevertheless, Haviland (ASNC IV: 105-05) notes that in 1873 Takashima coal was still 'both better and cheaper than the native Chinese coals', as illustrated by Tong King-sing, General Manager of China Merchants S.N. Co. (CMSNC), and others acquiring *Manchu* (804/66) from SSNC that year to carry coal from Nagasaki to Shanghai (until the ship was lost in January 1874).



Tong King-sing's MANCHU loading coal at Nagasaki in 1873-4. The ship's US flag required American majority ownership, Tong being listed with 37.5%. (Presumed Felix Beato, from British Consulate, SK\*).

In 1877 under the patronage of Governor-General Li Hung-chang, Tong set up the Kaiping Mining Bureau as a mixed state/merchant enterprise to supply bunker coal and also provide back-loadings

to CMSNC vessels trading to northern ports (A. Feuerwerker, *China's Early Industrialization*, 1970'; Liu, 'A Chinese Entrepreneur' in Maggie Keswick, ed., *The Thistle and the Jade*, 1982).

With modern machinery and technical support from British engineers and miners, commercial production of high quality coal began in 1882 at Tangshan in the Kaiping district of what was then Chihli province or Hopei, now Hebei. A short railway and canal were laid out to ship the coal to Taku at the mouth of the river Hai Ho [Hai He]. After Tong was ousted from his CMSNC position in 1884, he focused his efforts on what became known in foreign circles as the Chinese Engineering & Mining Company (CEMC). In 1888 the Chinese Railway Company extended the full distance to Taku and in the other direction ninety miles to Tientsin [Tianjin] and subsequently on to Peking [Beijing]. At first CEMC relied on CMSNC and other commercial tonnage for shipments beyond Taku. However, expansion of the Chinese Navy's Peiyang [North Sea] fleet and the development of Port Arthur as a well-equipped naval base meant there was need for a regular supply of bunker coal to there and also the anchorage at Weihaiwei. In 1889 a Navy Board Ioan of TIs 500,000 enabled Tong to buy a steamer, renamed *Pei-Ping*, and to order three more colliers, *Ching Ping*, *Fu-Ping and Yung Ping*, from British yards for this purpose. The ships had not long been in service before Tong fell ill and died, in late 1892.

The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 saw the destruction of the modern but poorly commanded Peiyang fleet and the seizure of its main bases of Weihaiwei and Port Arthur. After agreeing to pay a huge indemnity, the Chinese government briefly regained control of Port Arthur before in 1898 it was leased to Russia along with the South Manchurian Railway. Weihaiwei was leased to Britain. Nevertheless, buoyant commercial demand ensured that CEMC continued to prosper. Its small fleet had been protected from seizure by temporary transfer to the German flag. In 1897-98 it took delivery of two more colliers, *Kwang-Ping* and *Kaiping* of double the size of the original trio and each able to carry around 2,000 tons of coal.

A major change occurred around the same time, in April 1898, when the nearby coastal settlement of Chinwangtao was granted the status of a treaty port. The foreign jurisdiction enabled the raising of foreign capital for construction of a purpose-built coal port. Prominent British civil engineer Sir John Wolfe-Barry (1836-1918), who had just completed Tower Bridge and previously Barry Docks, was brought in with his nephew Lt Col. Arthur John Barry as Joint Consulting Engineers to design an artificial, ice-free deepwater port at Chinwangtao [Qinhuangdao], just below the end of the Great Wall. A 60-mile branch railway would connect to the mines at Tangshan. Construction of the stone breakwalls and a wooden pier began in April 1899 with *Hsi-Ping* being used to ship in materials.

Then in mid-1900 North China was convulsed by the Boxer Rebellion as a reaction to growing foreign control, with fatal attacks on foreigners. Tientsin was besieged. Chinwangtao was occupied and the pier and sections of railway destroyed. In October the strategic Kaiping mines and railways were seized by Russian forces while an international force, mainly British and German, reoccupied Chinwangtao, enabling repairs to be set in train and construction to be resumed. Meanwhile in London wheels had been set in train by the machinations of Herbert Hoover (later U.S. president). A court case brought by the Chinese interests was lost in London, clearing the way for an Anglo-Belgian syndicate to take over the imperial state enterprise. In December 1900 the Chinese Engineering & Mining Company Ltd (CEMCL) was registered in London with a capital of £1 million and in February 1901 was reported to have become legal owner of the mines and plant. British troops took over from the German garrison in May. Work was pushed ahead to complete the \$2.5

million port, which was partly open by 1903 and by the mid-1900s had seven berths, all served by rail, with a low-water depth of 21' (eventually 29') on a muddy bottom.

Another notable development in December 1903 was the appointment of the formidable Major W.S. Nathan (1867-1940) as Agent of CEMCL in China and also General Manager. He had joined the Royal Engineers in 1880, served on the North West Frontier in 1897-98 and then in South Africa during the Boer War, where he became Assistant Director of Railways and then Secretary of the Railway Board. He was a staunch defender of British interests as well as a highly capable engineer and business manager and guided CEMCL into its most prosperous era besides representing the Pekin Syndicate in North China. From 1903 to 1907 his older brother, Sir Matthew Nathan (1862-39), Lt Col. Royal Engineers, served as Governor of Hong Kong.



Old Russian-style head office at Tientsin (Wright & Cartwright, 1908: 238).

By 1908 CEMCL had become one of the most efficient and profitable foreign enterprises in China and the leading enterprise with headquarters in Tientsin. Wright & Cartwright, 'Twentieth Century Impressions' (1908) gave a detailed description. Output from the two collieries at Tangshan and Linshi, the coke factory and firebrick works had increased to 1.5 million tons, besides which the company operated the branch railway, the Ping Line of Steamers, its own local telegraph network,

what was claimed to be the largest electricity plant in the East and a township that was emerging as the summer seaside resort of Peitaiho [Beidaihe] for expatriates at Tientsin and Peking.

CEMCL maintained its own wharves and godowns at Tientsin, Chinwangtao, Tangku, Shanghai and Canton as well as godowns at Newchwang (Yingkow) and Chefoo. Ping Line ships operated north to Newchwang and as far south as Canton. Its flagship was the 3540-dwt *Kaiping* (1905) which provided weekly passenger and mail connections with Shanghai as well as carrying coal and backloadings of general cargo. The 600-mile voyage with connection by rail to Tientsin and Peking was actually faster than the direct route up the winding Hai Ho to Tientsin. Chinwangtao was also becoming an embarkation point for North Chinese indentured labour to as far afield as South Africa.

Following the revolution of November 1911 that overthrew the Manchu (Qing) dynasty, in 1912 CEMCL became a listed company with a capital of £1 million and in mid-1912 combined with the adjacent Chinese-owned Lanchow Coal Mine Co. to form the Kailan [=KAl(ping) LAN(chow)] Mining Administration (KMA) with headquarters in Tientsin. Although the shareholding was 50/50, the profit share was set at 60/40 (US, *Daily Consular and Trade Reports*, July-Sept. 1912). Major Nathan took charge of KMA as well as CEMCL in China and Alfred W. Berry became Secretary in London – the shipping fleet continued to be owned by CEMCL. Production of around 2 million tons in 1912 was shipped in the proportions of 0.8 mt to Tientsin and district, 0.4 mt to Shanghai and 0.8 mt to Chefoo, Dairen, Hong Kong and Japan. KMA now ranked alongside Mitsui and Mitsubishi as one of the main bunker coal suppliers in China. Dodwell acted as KMA agents in Hankow and Hong Kong.

By 1920 over 3,000 'coolies' were employed at Chinwangtao for loading and bunkering and manhandling basket by basket could load up to 12,000 tons in a 24-hour day (KMA, c.1920). It may be noted that conditions for those working in the mines and on the wharves were appalling, whether in the dusty heat of summer or the biting cold of winter, a matter in which managers and owners apparently took little interest.



Postcard from 1910 giving an overview of Chinwangtao port. KWANG-PING is alongside, and probably a German steamer is bunkering (Internet).



Early KAIPING (top) at Chinwangtao pier being loaded from rail wagons by basket and plank (KMA, c.1920).



CMECL ship loading at Chinwangtao in 1920 (Internet).



Map of Chinwangtao Harbour in 1920 showing 5 berths inside the breakwater and two at the pier, also slipway, rail yards, customs house and hotel (KMA, c.1920).



1930s aerial view of Chinwangtao Harbour (N.I.D., China Proper III, 1945: Plate 104).

While KMA greatly increased its output to 3 mt by 1915 and 4.5 mt by 1930, it never added to its coastal shipping fleet. By 1912 only *Kwang Ping* (1898) and *Kaiping* (1905) remained and after 1925 *Kaiping* became the sole company ship. All other tonnage was acquired through the charter market, by 1920 around eighteen vessels and seldom less than a dozen with a core fleet on long-term charter. From 1928 the leading charterer was A/S Norasiatic Coal Transports Ltd of Oslo (C.L. Halvorsen, then from 1930 E.M. Nilsen-Moe as Manager) with *Amur* (2272/97), *Gurth* (2297/00), *Rowena* (3779/07) and *Wilfred* (4052/11). These four vessels passed to Moller & Co. of Shanghai, which by the mid-1930s had taken over as the leading charterer alongside other Scandinavian owners. The China Coaster's Tide Book 1940, published in 1939, listed fifteen chartered vessels:

*Isabel Moller* (2834/18), *Marion Moller* (3827/09), tug *Minnie Moller* (377/09), *Corona* (3264/20), *Dalblair* (4608/26), *Ingeren* (6118/11), *Lyder Sagen* (3944/18), *Ravnefjell* (1339/38) and *Sygna* (3881/07), also *Ivanhoe*, *Rowena*, *Sheaflance*, *Suzanne* (3/33 wrecked at Swatow o/v Chingwantao-Swatow) and *Wilfred*, though the latter group were no longer current. They all flew the KMA houseflag of a black diamond on a yellow ground.



KMA's massive new head office in Tientsin opened in 1922 (KMA, c.1920).

Australian J.F. Moodie-Heddle, who was *Kaiping*'s Second Mate in the mid-1930s, later noted in 'The Great Cold' (*The Annual Dog Watch*, 1968) that she was strengthened for ice with frames spaced just 12 inches apart. She also had 'lots of power' for a service speed of 13 knots. In winter months this enabled her to push easily through loose pack ice in the approaches to Chinwangtao. During the harsh winter of early 1936, when the sea ice froze several feet thick for up to 70 miles beyond Chinwangtao, *Kaiping* was used between coal voyages to Shanghai as a stand-in icebreaker to escort convoys in and out of the port. Charter terms made KMA liable for any ice damage, so they did not want their elderly tramp steamers trying to break their own paths. Subsequent annual docking in Hong Kong revealed quite a lot of damage to *Kaiping*'s thirty-year-old plates, rivets, rudder pintles and stern post.

Under the Kuomintang government's Mining Law of 1930, foreign ownership was restricted to 49%. KMA thereby formally became a Sino-British enterprise but effectively remained under British managerial control. By then W.S. Nathan had retired to London, where he died in England on 23 October 1940. His son E.J. Nathan (1898-1962), formerly company Secretary, took over as General Manager and later as Chairman. Output increased to over 5 million tonnes with capacity to achieve 6 mt but over the course of the decade economic depression and political instability caused production to stagnate.

Following the outbreak of war between China and Japan in July 1937, the region around the mines, including the city of Tientsin and the port of Tangku, was quickly brought under Japanese occupation. The mines remained under British administration but by arrangement with the Japanese authorities and interests boosted output to meet the needs of Japan's wartime mobilisation (for the defeat of China). According to the PhD thesis of D.M. Swan, 'British Industrial Investment in Mainland China, 1895-1940' (SOAS, 2005: 185), KMA's output soared from 4.66 million tonnes in 1937 to full capacity of 6.0 mt in 1939, 6.6 mt in 1940 and only slightly less in 1941. Gross profits in sterling almost doubled for both KMA and CEMCL.

Bernard Wasserstein, *Secret War in Shanghai* (2017) notes that by prior understanding Nathan and his foreign staff continued to operate the mines as 'advisors' until February 1943, when they were interned in Shanghai.

According to her Board of Trade Record (BT 389/17/99), the now elderly *Kaiping* remained in service until mid-September 1941, when she was last recorded as departing Chinwangtao for Shanghai. On the eve of Pearl Harbour she left Hong Kong for Manila, where she was bombed and sunk three weeks later. After being raised and repaired by the Japanese, as *Kaiho Maru* she resumed service in December 1943 as a shortsea collier loading as far away as Chinwangtao, Dairen and Korea but also at Kyushu coal ports for Osaka/Kobe or steel mills (Wakamatsu, Hirohata, Yawata). Her 40-year career ended when she was mined and sunk in April 1945. The small tug *Yin Ping* was commissioned into the Royal Navy and was lost in the evacuation of Singapore. The other two dredges and the tug *Fu Ping* apparently survived the war at Chinwangtao.

Japanese forces remained in position under terms of surrender until November 1945, when American Marines landed at Chinwangtao and took control of Tientsin, Tangku, the KMA mines around Tangshan and the railways that linked all these together (history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v07/d543). Logistical support was then provided to KMT armies to re-establish central government rule. Nevertheless, most of the countryside remained under Communist sway until in late 1948 Communist armies under Lin Biao launched a successful offensive from Manchuria. Chinwangtao was occupied on 28 November and by the end of January 1949 all the rest of North China, including Tientsin and Peking. KMA was allowed to resume some production and in February a modest barter trade was re-opened with Shanghai but the company ceased to have any commercial autonomy. Legally KMA had been a Chinese enterprise since 1930 so the assets, including the tug and dredges, came under PRC control and in 1952 were vested in the Ministry of Communications. The British holding company CEMCL now became redundant, though because of outstanding claims it was not dissolved until 1984.

The old port of Qinhuangdao remained in use until June 2013, when a new port was opened on the eastward side and soon became China's leading port for coal shipment. The old port has been preserved as a cultural relic.

Further details of the early years of the Kaiping mines may be found in Ellsworth C. Carlson, *The Kaiping Mines, 1877-1912* (Harvard, 1971). The role of Herbert Hoover is detailed in George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Vol. 1, The Engineer, 1874-1914* (Norton, 1983). An overview of the mines, associated industries and the port of Chinwangtao is The Kailan Mining Administration, *Kaiping Coal* (KMA, c.1920).

# **Fleet List**

### With acknowledgement to Miramar, Peter Cundall (Kaiping/Kaiho Maru) and the Shigetoshi Kizu database (Yung Ping, Hsi-Ping).

#### PEI-PING 北平 (1889-04) 326n/??

Built at Shanghai for unknown owners (name unknown). 1889 sold to CEMC, Tientsin r. PEI-PING. 17/7/04 seized by *Hongkong Maru* about 10 m. NE of Weihaiwei on voyage Shanghai-Newchwang – 11/8 released by Sasebo Prize Court. 1904 sold to August Vernon, Tangku (?French flag) for Tientsin-Newchwang line. 1906 sold to Chinese Railways Bureau, Peking (same route). Unlisted LR 1909/10 [*Dairen Kisen History*, p. 21].



PEI-PING, December 1897, inaugurating mail service Chefoo-Chinwangtao http://www.360doc.com/content/15/0221/14/1678022\_449767932.shtml.

**CHING PING** (1890-94, 1895-1908) 886/90-12 (T3cy, M. Pratt, Huddersfield, 83 nhp) 259.6 x 31.2' Built by Blyth SB & DD Co. Ltd, Blyth (#74) and reg. to John White, London. 1892 t/f to CEMC, Tientsin. 1894-95 reg. at Hamburg to Deutsche-Asiastische Bank AG as TE-YI. 1895 reverted to CEMC as CHING PING. 1899 lengthened (1049 grt). 1900 t/f to CEMCL, Shanghai. 27/2/08 wrecked in Shitau Bay, Shantung o/v Shanghai-CWT.

**FU-PING** (1890-94, 1895-1904) 886/91-2 (T3cy, M. Pratt, Huddersfield, 83 nhp) 259.6 x 31.2' Built by Blyth SB & DD Co. Ltd, Blyth (#75) and reg. to J. Whittall, London. 1892 t/f to CEMC, Tientsin. 1899 lengthened (1049 grt). 1894-95 reg. at Hamburg to Deutsche-Asiastische Bank AG as TE JEN. 1895 reverted to CEMC as FU-PING. 1900 lengthened (1435 grt) and t/f to CEMCL, Shanghai. 12/10/04 seized by Japan as war prize. 1905 sold to R. Tomikura, Yokohama r. CHOSAN MARU. 1910 owners Tomikura Senpakubu. 1911 sold to S. Ishida, Kobe. 31/8/12 wrecked near Keelung. [First reg as FU PING (no hyphen).]

#### YUNG PING (1891-94, 1895-1905) 990/91-1 (T3cy, 82 nhp) 215.4 x 31.3'

Built by Craig, Taylor & Co., Stockton (#24) reg. to Russell & Co, Stockton, but early-6/91 owners insolvent, reg. to C. Bullock, London. 1892 t/f to CEMC, Tientsin . 1894-95 reg. at Hamburg to Deutsche-Asiastische Bank AG as TE LI, LR 99 as TE-LI of CEMC, Tientsin. 1901 t/f to CEMCL, Shanghai r. YUNG PING. 1905 sold to Kameshiro Shigeru, Osaka r. JINGI MARU No.2. 1907 sold to

Yonezo Kaiji, Kobe. 1909 sold to Ching Kee & Co., Chefoo r. SHENGLEE. 1916 chartered to Shawhsing S.S. Co. for Newchwang/Loongkow route and later on the coast. 1921 t/f to Ching Kee S.N. Co. Ltd., Chefoo as SHENGLEE. 17/8/29 ran aground and wrecked on W. Niushantao (Island) on voyage Dairen-southern ports.

#### HSI-PING (1897-1910) 2140/97-9 (T3cy, 156 nhp) 274.5 x 41.3'

Built by Howaldtswerke, Kiel (#300) for CEMC, Tientsin. 1901 t/f to CEMCL, Shanghai. By 1910 reanglicised as HSIPING. 1910 sold to Harada Shoko G.K., Osaka r. MATSU MARU and 5/10 placed in Osaka/Kobe-North China trade. 29/3/11 grounded in snowstorm on northern tip of Chang Hsing Island o/v Tsingtao-Newchwang.1916 t/f to Harada Kisen K.K., Osaka. 21/1/17 wrecked in snowstorm on Nebuta coast, Fukuyama-machi, Matsumae-gun, Oshima Kuni, Hokkaido o/v Otaru-Kobe with timber.



HSI-PING as MATSU MARU in Harada Kisen colours (postcard SK colln).

#### **KWANG-PING** (1898-1925) 1966/98-4 (T3cy, 175 nhp) 265.0 x 40.2'

Built by Built by J. Scott & Co., Kinghorn (#101) for CEMC, Tientsin. 1901 t/f to CEMCL, Shanghai. 1925 sold to San Peh S.N. Co. Ltd, Shanghai r. HSING-SHIH (2018g). 14/10/28 collided with and sank *Hsin Shutung* (c.1000/21, Szechuan S.N. Co.) near Huangchow. 12/8/37 sunk as blockship at Kiangyin.



KWANG-PING at Kaiping Coal Wharf, Shanghai (KMA, c.1920).

#### KAIPING (1905-41) 2563/05-8 (T3cy, 407 nhp) 312.0 x 44.3'

Built by Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson Ltd, Wallsend (#745) for CEMCL (reg. London). 10/12/41 arrived Manila Bay via Hong Kong (7/12). 28/12/41 sunk by Japanese aircraft in Manila Bay. Raised by Japanese and 3/8/43 sailed Manila via Takao for Moji for repair as KAIHO MARU (海鵰丸). 12/43 recomm. as shortsea collier (Nakamura Kisen, mgrs). 9/9/44 stranded on Korean coast – refloated and 5/10 arrived Karatsu, thence Tama for repair. 11/44 resumed service. 29/4/45 sunk by mined off Hakata, Kyushu (34.00N, 130.50E).



KAIPING displaying the black diamond on yellow funnel (SK colln).

**KAILAN** (1914-c.30) 191/14 (tug)

Built by Kiangnan D. & E. Works, Shanghai for CEMCL for use as harbour tug at Chinwangtao. c. 1930 t/f to CDC as **YIN PING** (see below).

## Chinese Dredger Company Ltd, London

The port of Chinwangtao had been constructed by CEMCL and remained under the control of CEMCL/KMA until the Pacific War (Naval Intell. Divn, *China Proper: vol. III*, Geographical Handbook Series, July 1945). In 1914 CEMCL/KMA took delivery of the tug *Kailan* for harbour duties at Chinwangtao. The subsidiary Chinese Dredger Co. Ltd (CDC) was formed in February 1917 to undertake the functions of port maintenance, towage and salvage. To assist in harbour deepening, In 1929 CEMCL/KMA added the grab dredger *Chun Ping* and the ice-strengthened, seagoing tug *Fu Ping*. Probably in 1941 the older tug *Yin Ping* was allowed by the Japanese authorities to leave Chinwangtao and was subsequently lost in the evacuation of Singapore but the other craft were recovered after the war. They were then re-registered in Hong Kong but almost certainly came under PRC control in 1949 and were removed from LR around 1955. The company was struck off the British register in November 1984, reinstated by petition of a creditor, and then finally dissolved in March 1996.

#### YIN PING (c.1930-42) 191/14 (tug)

Built by Kiangnan D. & E. Works, Shanghai for CEMCL as KAILAN. C.1930 r. YIN PING. ??/41 comm. by RN and directed to Singapore. 13-14/2/42 sailed Singapore with evacuees (full complement 78). 15/2 shelled by IJN ships in Bangka Strait, set on fire and abandoned, survivors interned [details at www.muntokpeacemuseum.org]



YIN PING (F.E. Small Craft Handbook).

#### CHUN PING (1929-49) 425/29 (C2Cy, twin grab hopper dredger)

Built by H. Robb Ltd, Leith (engines by McKie & Baxter, Glasgow) for CEMCL. SE 12/41. Postwar registered at Hong Kong. 1949 presume taken over by PRC, fate unknown.

## FU PING 輔平(1929-49) 288/29 (T3Cy, 660 hp, ice-strengthened tug)

Built by Hongkong & Whampoa Dock Co. Ltd, Hong Kong for CEMCL. Postwar registered at Hong Kong. 1949 taken over by PRC. RLR 1955. Fate unknown.



FU PING (HWD).



FU PING in small ice (SK\*).



FU PING with enclosed bridge and new funnel marking, evidently under the PRC flag (*Chinese Shipbuilding History*).

SHUN PING 順平(1936-49) 289/29 (C2Cy, 330 hp, grab hopper dredger, ice-strengthened) Built by Taikoo D. & E. Co. Ltd, Hong Kong. Postwar registered at Hong Kong. 1949 taken over by PRC, fate unknown.



SHUN PING evidently in the PRC era (Chinese Shipbuilding History).



Passenger and freight advertisement from the early 1930s (Graham Thompson coll.)