

C. Y. Tung (1912–1982) and the Rise of Modern Chinese Shipping

By Howard Dick and Stephen Kentwell

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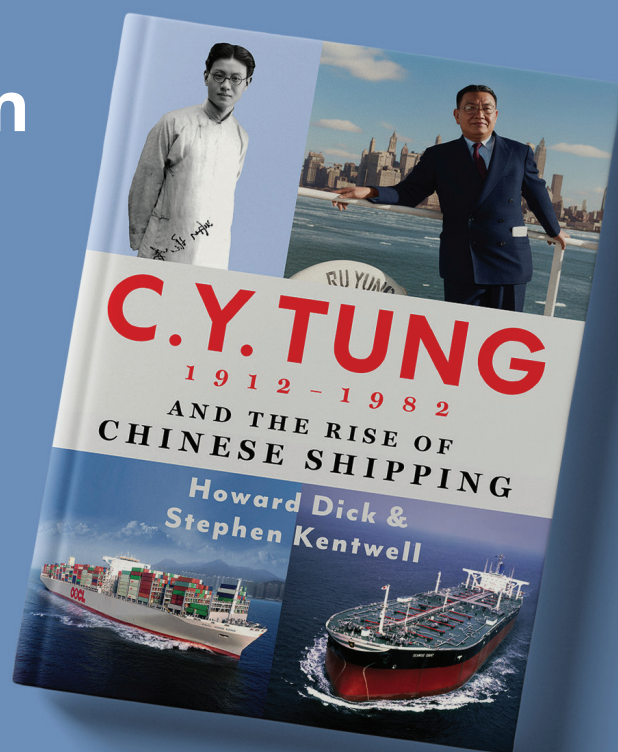
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Shanghai-born and later Hong Kong-resident shipowner **TUNG CHAO-YUNG** (1912–1982) is remembered worldwide as a champion for Chinese shipping, founding the companies Chinese Maritime Transport and Island Navigation, and pioneering container shipping for Asia in Orient Overseas Container Line/OOCL. Despite coming from a humble background, by the time of his death he controlled a huge fleet of passenger liners, bulk carriers, tankers, and container ships, while also being diversified into port terminals, dockyards, banks, and prime real estate. This business biography sets out his pathway from a junior executive in the early 1930s to one of the world's leading private shipowners. The authors argue that Tung achieved his desire to develop Chinese ocean shipping through his ability to learn, innovate, network, and devise strategies through decades of rapid technical and organizational change. He also earned respect for his generous philanthropy. After his death, sons Tung Chee-Hwa and Tung Chee-Chen were able to navigate a financial crisis, and restructure the Group in the face of intensifying competition in the 1980s, grow the Group

through the challenges and opportunities of globalization and advancement in supply chain management and technology within the industry in the 1990s through 2010s. OOCL became one of the most competitive liner companies in the industry until divestment in 2017. Eight decades since their establishment, privately owned Island Navigation and, now independently, Chinese Maritime Transport continue to trade globally in dry-bulk and tanker markets. The book concludes with an overview of the emergence of the state-owned PRC fleet and brief histories of other multi-generational family companies.

HOWARD DICK, an honorary professorial fellow in the Department of Management and Marketing at the University of Melbourne, Australia, studies the economic and business history of East Asia.

STEPHEN KENTWELL is a retired Australian diplomat and senior Asia analyst who has been closely observing East Asia's merchant shipping since the 1950s.

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Praise for *C. Y. Tung (1912–1982) and the Rise of Modern Chinese Shipping*

'C. Y. Tung, as the founder of Tung Group, was a name I heard regularly in my early years in liner shipping in the 1960s and 70s. His sons C. H. and C. C. built a strong management team and together expanded the liner company of the Group with investments also in container terminals particularly in Asia and the USA. This growth was thanks to strong leadership and the family values. Their roots were in China, but their focus was the world.'

— **Flemming R. Jacobs**, Global Maritime Forum

'Throughout the history of Mitsui O.S.K. Lines' shipping business, competition, and collaboration with Hong Kong's maritime industry have been crucial elements. When I led our container business, the Tung family's OOCL was both a valued partner and formidable rival, with strategies we learned much from. Reading about C. Y. Tung's life and career reveals the roots of these remarkable achievements. Highly recommended.'

— **Junichiro Ikeda**, Mitsui O.S.K. Lines

'Mr C. Y. Tung not only brought glory to China, but also established the largest fleet in Chinese history and became a world-renowned shipping magnate. This book will shed new light on Mr C. Y. Tung's life and contributions.'

— **Hwei-Shing Cheng**, Institute of Chinese Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

'C. Y. Tung's biography is actually two stories in one lifetime. The first story is about a remarkable man with vision, passion, perseverance, and resilience who lived by five guiding principles: (1) recognize that dignity and respect are the cornerstone of leadership, (2) learn how to embrace change and make uncertainty your friend, (3) culture and values are more important than results because they drive the longer game of sustainability, (4) the importance of trading on integrity, and (5) source of family as strength. The second story is about the emergence of modern China shipping and how this developed on the backs of heroes such as C. Y. Tung. The success of modern China shipping is based not just on technology, innovation, and risk, but on its people. Because unlike technology, people have common sense, instincts, and a sense of humour.'

— **Christopher J. Wiernicki**, MIT Engineering, Royal Caribbean Group, American Bureau of Shipping (ABS)

'Dick and Kentwell's account of the life and business of C. Y. Tung is a stimulating contribution to our understanding of

Chinese maritime and business history, and of the rise of modern China.'

— **Robert Bickers**, University of Bristol

'This marvellously illustrated new book about eminent Hong Kong shipowner C. Y. Tung is far more than a biography. As C. Y.'s life unfolds, the reader also gets an indispensable history of the rise of modern China's merchant marine to its present global dominance.'

— **Stephen Davies**, University of Hong Kong

'My family shipping business was founded in Shanghai in 1926 but due to China's turbulent modern history all records of our early ships were lost. Incredibly records of that period were rediscovered from the authors' website in 2020. This book is a testament, a record, and the culmination of their lifelong devotion to Chinese maritime history.'

— **Chih-Chien Hsu**, Eddie Steamship Co. Ltd.

'Recording the life and work of C. Y. Tung, this book gives an insight into the rise of one of the first Chinese to build a global business. It is a detailed and compelling biography of one of the twentieth century's great shipping tycoons.'

— **Tim Huxley**, Mandarin Shipping Ltd.

'Dick and Kentwell have written far more than a sensitive biography of C. Y. Tung who built one of modern China's foremost shipping companies; it is also a story of ships, twentieth-century China, and the re-emergence of China as a global commercial shipping giant.'

— **Stephen L. Morgan**, University of Nottingham

'This biography is a significant contribution to understanding China's expanding post-war maritime influence, told through the remarkable life of C. Y. Tung. Beyond being a business biography, it interweaves his personal experiences, global connections, and entrepreneurial ventures into the broader narrative of China's maritime rise. Tung's career in shipping exemplifies resilience, vision, and adaptability during a period of profound social and political transformation.'

— **Richard Kendall**, Hong Kong Maritime Museum

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