

Claude Kinder and Tangshan

In the late 19th century, the development of China's first commercial railway was closely linked to the work of **Claude William Kinder**, a British railway engineer who played a central role in the early growth of rail transport in China.

Kinder arrived in China in the 1870s and was appointed chief engineer to the Kaiping Mining Company in Hebei Province. He was responsible for the construction of the Tangxu Line, which opened in 1881 and connected coal mines near Tangshan with waterways supplying Beijing and Tianjin. At a time when steam railways were viewed with suspicion, Kinder's technical expertise and persistence were instrumental in demonstrating the railway's value.

The Tangxu Line is now recognised as China's first successful commercial railway and marked the beginning of large-scale railway development in the country. Tangshan, once a small settlement, went on to become a major industrial city, with its railway heritage preserved today at the China Railway Origin Museum. Kinder is widely regarded as a founding figure in China's railway history and is often described as the father of Chinese railways.