

Trautmann & Co., Shanghai (1/6/63-8/68) North China Steamer Co., Shanghai (8/68- 12/73)

SHORT HISTORY & ILLUSTRATED FLEET LIST

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J.F.H. (Johann Friederick Heinrich) Trautmann first appears in the 'North China Herald' of 3 August 1850 listed as 'mercantile assistant' with Sykes, Schwabe & Co. of Shanghai. By Notice of 20 March 1852, he was authorized to sign on the firm's behalf. Not two years later adjacent Notices were carried to the effect that the partnership of Sykes, Schwabe & Co. was dissolved as of 31 December 1853 and that from 1 January 1854 the business would be carried on as G.C. Schwabe & Co. Adam Sykes and Benjamin Butler thereby departed the scene and Trautmann was elevated to partner alongside Gustav Christian Schwabe and George Stormont Spreckley.

A remarkable Letter to the Editor of the 'North China Herald' of 1 April 1854 by Customs officer Lo Yuen Yew gave a none-too-flattering insight into Trautmann's character. An issue had arisen after the Bremen-registered *Aristides* had arrived in Shanghai on 23 February 1854 consigned to English merchant Mr. Withington. The abstract of the manifest was in Chinese and the vessel was mistakenly taken to be Burmese and placed under the authority of the Chinese Customs to discharge. When the mistake was realized, the Taotai requested Withington to report and place the ship under a foreign consul, as the treaties required, except that the city-state of Bremen had no local consul. Withington demurred to do on grounds that *Aristides* had already been consigned to Trautmann to load an outward cargo of tea. Trautmann was then advised by the taotai that he should not begin loading. He returned the letter written in Chinese, demanding that it be written in English or German, after which Lo had written in English seeking the treaties to be respected, but Trautmann ignored that too, saying more or less that *Aristides* was a Bremen vessel, he was German, and he would do what he liked. After Trautmann had failed to respond to negotiations through intermediaries to place the ship under the Prussian consul, while continuing to load, the Taotai himself, the top Chinese official in Shanghai, with Lo as interpreter, made a personal call at Trautmann's house to try and resolve the matter, but was treated very rudely. Eventually the Taotai

granted a very reluctantly approval (chop) to the export to avoid an issue with the rest of the foreign community. Lo's letter with a letter from Trautmann as an appendix politely accused him of lying and bad faith, including understating by half the amount of tea being shipped. He observed that the firm 'had a very good name with all Chinamen for not smuggling tea when Mr Spreckley was there'. Trautmann would not have been the only merchant in the foreign settlement with a contemptuous attitude towards Chinese officials, as witnessed by the previous and subsequent Opium Wars, but the incident does suggest that he could be arrogant and difficult.

By simultaneous Notices dated 7 May 1856, it transpired that Trautmann had resigned from Schwabe & Co. as of 31 March and from 7 May was trading in his own right as Trautmann & Co., General Agent and Commission Merchant'. No address was given but there was no need, Shanghai still being a very small foreign settlement. Trautmann & Co. then began to be listed as agent to sailing vessels trading down the coast to and from Hong Kong, also as a supplier of 'superior claret'. In the course of 1857 he also advertised the sale of Singapore timber, Manila rope, tea mats, and Dutch gin.

Whether or not the business was thriving, in mid-1857 further Notices announced that as of 30 June the business of Trautmann & Co. was closed and that from 1 July he would become partner in Hakort & Co., which was relocating from Canton to Shanghai (sic). Bernhard Harkort had been resident at Canton since at least 1846, when he became partner in the firm of Carlowitz, Harkort & Co. In January 1862 at Hong Kong Trautmann successfully bid \$63,000 on behalf of Harkort & Co. to purchase the wooden paddle steamer *London* (687/37), which from 1853 to mid-1861 had been employed on the Australian coast and would now be deployed by Harkort & Co. on the Yangtze.

On 19 June 1862 Trautmann was injured and sixteen were killed in a boiler explosion on the American steamer *Union Star* (193/61). This vessel had arrived at Shanghai from the United States two weeks earlier and in the interim had been sold to Wheelock & Co. As steam was raised and ordered raised again during what was evidently a trial voyage for potential operators or buyers, the boiler burst, blowing the funnel, mask and deck houses overboard. This may have caused some permanent damage to his health.

Whether or not Harkort was also on board is not known, but the next year Bernhard Harkort decided to retire to Germany. An NCH advertisement dated 1 June 1863 advised that the assets of Harkort & Co. were henceforth taken over by Trautmann & Co. represented by J.F.H. Trautmann, Frederick Horsen Block and August Wieters. The hong name of Trautmann & Co. was 惇裕 read as 'Tung-ye' ('Teng-ye'), meaning 'honest and abundant'.

Trautmann & Co. consolidated further by taking over the businesses of J.F.H. Trautmann in London and Robert Carrick Donaldson Moffat in Hankow. Moffatt was then admitted as partner along with Franz Borntraeger at Shanghai. The Notice of 1 June 1865 also advised the opening of a branch in Yokohama. That branch was liquidated in 1868 with some assets transferring to the German-connected firm, Textor & Co. (meiji-portraits.de/meiji_portraits_1.html), which in 1869-70 also briefly operated *Ta Pang Nyo* after service under the Japanese flag. 'The Chronicle and Directory for China, Japan and the Philippines for 1869' lists four foreign clerks at Shanghai and two at Tientsin plus J.F.H. Trautmann, merchant at 9 Szechuen Road, Shanghai. As of mid-1870 Trautmann & Co. were also serving as Secretaries for the China and Japan Marine Insurance Company, a Shanghai company whose Court of Directors besides Trautmann were F.A. Groom (Glover, Dow & Co.), R.W.

Little (Little & Co.), T. Probst (Wm Pustau & Co.) and J.B. Robertson (Bull, Purdon & Co.).

The ships taken over from Trautmann & Co. in June 1863 were the fast paddle steamer *Nanxing*, the somewhat smaller screw steamer *Shun Lee* and probably the little *China*, about which few details are known. In March 1863 *Nanxing* had already been placed in service to Chefoo and Tientsin and she continued on that line, while *Shun Lee* ran about monthly south to Hong Kong via ports. Two new screw steamers were quickly added, *Ying Tze Fei* (also *Yuen Tse Fei*, both readings of the characters for 'flying swallow') launched at Glasgow late in December 1863, and *Ta Pang Nyo*, which was launched and delivered a few months later. It seems that the former was intended as a consort for *Nanxing*, the latter as a larger replacement for *Shun Lee*, which was sold to Japan in February 1864. The southern line evidently did not prosper and in August 1866 *Ta Pang Nyo* was sold to Japan. The long-idle *China* followed soon afterwards.

NCH of 22 September 1866 reported a case before the Mixed Court of Shanghai between Augustine Heard & Co. and merchant Chu Fah-Mow, the latter having invested in Trautmann & Co. with a term to 1868, implying that Trautmann & Co. had been reconstructed with funds on a five-year term. The pending expiry of that arrangement may explain why in August 1868 Trautmann & Co. floated their shipping business in Shanghai as The North China Steamer Company Ltd (NCSC). The capital was to be Tls 300,000 in 600 shares of Tls 500 each and, based on the net profits of *Nanxing* and *Ying Tze Fei* in the previous two years, the prospect was held out of a dividend of 34% (NCH, 22/8/68). In the event only 388 shares were issued of which Trautmann & Co. held 140 (36%) and the balance was held roughly one-third by local westerners and one-third by Chinese (Liu, 1962: 192n30). Trautmann & Co. did very well out of it, selling *Ying Tze Fei* for Tls 75,000 and *Nanxing* for Tls 60,000 and a wharf for Tls 30,000, plus being appointed agents at a commission of 5% on gross receipts.

The prospectus turned out to be wildly optimistic. The fast paddle steamer *Sin Nanxing* was ordered from Scotland and was ready for service in March 1870 but the stable arrangement between NCSC and Shanghai S.N. Co. Ltd (SSNC) to share the northern trade did not survive the entry of Jardine Matheson & Co. in the spring of 1870 at the instigation of their Shanghai Manager F.B. Johnson. In July negotiations by Jardine compadore Tong King-sing led to Chinese shareholders in NCSC buying out *Nanxing* and placing her under Jardine management (Liu, 1962: 193n39). By the end of 1870 NCSC, with its two remaining ships was in serious financial difficulties and Trautmann himself was said to be looking to retire to England. In February 1871 agreement was reached for Jardines to take over the two NCSC ships and its wharves (Further details in Beancaker pp.4-5). In 1873 Trautmann's wharf in Shanghai was taken up in an extension of Hunt's Wharf along to the Shanghai & Hongkew Wharf.

Trautmann & Co. continued in business as Commission Agents (including silks) and also as General Managers of The China and Japan Marine Insurance Company. On 18 September 1875 a long and detailed Letter to the Editor (NCH) complained of the excessive remuneration to the Managers and Contributors at the expense of Shareholders. Thereafter the firm is no longer mentioned in news or advertisements. On 10 March 1882 a Meeting of Shareholders voted to liquidate the firm. It appears that no business had been done for some years with the most recent statement of accounts being dated 31 March 1877, all subsequent accounts having been lost by fire!

Judgement in a legal case over trusteeship in December 1902 had it that Trautmann & Co. had ceased to exist more than thirty years previously and that the partners had so long 'left the

jurisdiction that nothing can be ascertained as to their whereabouts'. It may therefore be taken that Trautmann & Co. had ceased to exist in the mid-1870s. Around the turn of the century a Mr Trautmann (no initials) is listed from time to time among coastal and river passengers. Then in NCH of 8 December 1905 a short death notice appeared in German to the effect that on the previous day Herman Trautmann had died in the General Hospital after a short illness, mourned by his colleagues and friends. He may have been a brother to J.F.H. (Heinrich). Since no family was mentioned, presumably by then J.F.H. had also deceased.

Ta Pang Nyo/Luzon/Tsuruga Maru/Yung Wei (1864) had an extraordinarily long career that seems to have lasted at least until 1949 and perhaps longer. Further detail may be found in the accompanying photo-essay 'Time Warp'.

As a postscript it may be noted that Dr Oskar Trautmann (1877-1950), Chief of the Eastern Department in the Foreign Office [since 1928], was appointed Minister [Ambassador] to China in February 1931. An official resume carried on 24 February revealed him to have been a career diplomat since 1904 and from 1921 to 1925 Councillor at the German Embassy in Tokyo, but no mention was made of any family background. He would serve in Nanking until August 1938 after tireless but ultimately fruitless efforts as a peacemaker between China and Japan. A selection of his rediscovered Chinese paintings was auctioned by Sotheby's on 27 September 2021 (www.sothebys.com/en/articles/the-legacy-of-oskar-trautmann-german-diplomat-chinese-art-connoisseur).

Fleet List

LONDON (1861) 685/37 (w.p.s., 167.0 x 26.7', 2cy /380 nhp/12k)

Built by John Wood, Port Glasgow with beam lever engine by Robert Napier, Govan for Dundee, Perth & London Shg Co. Ltd, Dundee. 5/53 sold to E. Baxter & Son, G. Armitstead, and others, Dundee and sent to Australia. 6/53 re-reg. at Sydney to Sydney & Melbourne Stm Packet Co. for Sydney-Melbourne passenger service. 10/55 after trading losses laid up for sale. 1/56 t/f to R.M. Robey and E.M. Sayers, 3/56 resumed Sydney-Melbourne service. 7/56 repossessed by liquidators and sold for £7,000 to Australasian S.N. Co., Sydney. From 1858 laid up as reserve vessel. Mid-4/61 last reported service (Sydney Harbour). 28/12/61 reg. at Hong Kong to Timothy Sullivan, Master Mariner. 11/1/62 sold at Hong Kong for \$63,000 to J. F. H. Trautmann (Harkort & Co.), Shanghai, where 3/63 re-reg. From 2/62 two return voyages Shanghai-Hankow, then 5/62 one sailing Shanghai-Ningpo. 3/6-16/8/62 three return voyages Shanghai-Hankow. 19/9/62 all shares t/f to Andrew Major, Shanghai. Voyage to Japan, returning 11/10/62, then to Amoy and Yokohama (4/63), returning from Kanagawa 5/6 and laid up. 7/63 sold to Edward Byrne (Byrne & Co.). 1/64 single voyage Shanghai-Ningpo. 14/5/64 left for Nagasaki, subsequently sold to foreigners, British registry closed 23/4/67. By 1874 trading from Saigon as THÀUAN-THIP (clydeships.co.uk). NFI. Somner (DP&L) wrongly states '6/63 broken up' [clydeships.co.uk; Sydney, HK registers; Somner (1995); McKellar, 1977; Haviland, ESNC; NCH].

KATE (1862-62) 489/61 (i.s.s., 193.0 x 25.1', 2cy/120nhp by John Key & Sons, Kirkcaldy)

Built by Laurence Hill & Co., Port Glasgow for own account, 25/7 launched, 4/8 registered. Early 1862 sold and re-reg. at Glasgow as 28/1862 to Meinhard Ernst Robinow for Hakort & Co. 8/6/62 at Singapore from Cardiff, 25/6/62 arrived at Shanghai, 13/7 in service to Hankow. 27/8/62 sailed

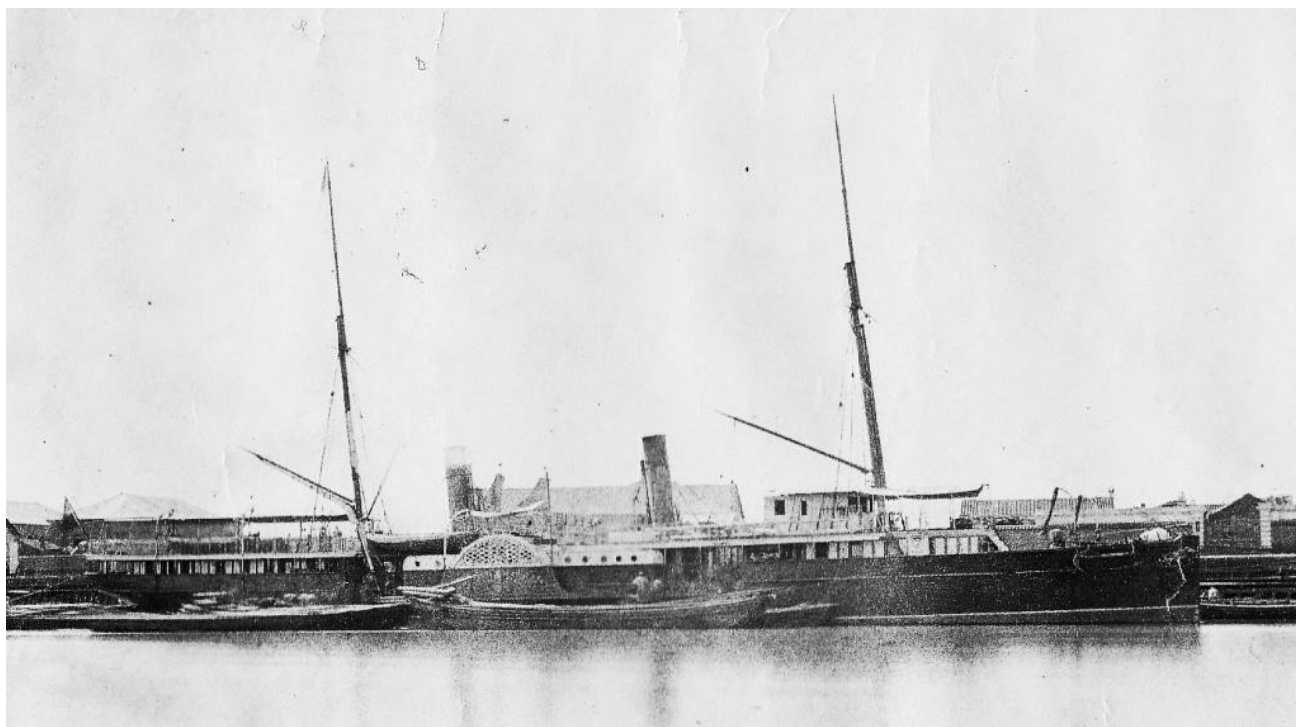
Shanghai for Hankow but early on 28/8 below Langshan Crossing at Plover Point struck Actaeon Bank, backed off but heeled over on tide and sank, 5 Chinese passengers missing, 4/7/64 register closed [clydeships; Haviland, ESNC].

CHINA (1863-66) 146n (steamer, 130 x 24')

Launched in UK in 1862 but not identified. By 1863 trading on China coast for Trautmann & Co. 10/65 laid up at Shanghai. 24/4/66 at Nagasaki sold to Captain B.R. Johnson, placed under U.S. flag. 4/5/66 arrived at Shanghai [NCH = 6/66 still laid up Shanghai for T&Co.! Suspect this is another CHINA]. 10/66 [under British flag,] sold to Tosa-han, Tosa r. UTSUSEMI/KEIGAKA. NFI. [Haviland, Milne]

NANZING (1863-70) 621/62 (i.p.s., 210.0 x 27.6', C2cy/300nhp)

Built by Tod & MacGregor, Glasgow (#119), 17/2/62 launched, 26/4 reg. for Meinhard Ernst Robinow (Robinow & Marjoribanks), Glasgow. 20/9/62 registered for B. Harkort with instructions to sell within 18 months. 6/10/62 arrived at Shanghai. Used on Yangtse River and to Ningpo. 3/63 transferred to Chefoo and Tientsin service, with occasional voyages to Hong Kong. 6/63 presumably registered for Trautmann & Co. 1865 reported reg. for Robert Carrick, Donaldson Moffat and William Keswick, Shanghai. 8/68 mgt t/f to North China Steamer Co. (Trautmann & Co. mgrs). 7/70 sold to Tong King-sing (compradore JM&Co.) and others and placed under mgt. JM&Co. 1872 reg. for William Keswick, Hong Kong. 1/1/73 t/f to CCSNC. 11/74 sold to Japanese buyers with delivery 1/75 but 2/1/75 damaged in collision at Nagasaki with German warship Arcona and sale fell through. 2/75 returned to Shanghai and 4/75 sold to CMSNC for Ningpo line r. TAHYEW. Early-1880 re-engined and converted to screw r. HING SHING (mid-1880 resumed service). 12/4/83 bow holed below waterline in collision with junk in Peiho River near Tientsin. 25/5/83 rammed and sunk by 3-masted schooner *Catherine Marden* 35 m. S of SE Promontory (7 lives). 8/83 wreck blown up. [HWD, Milne, clydeships]



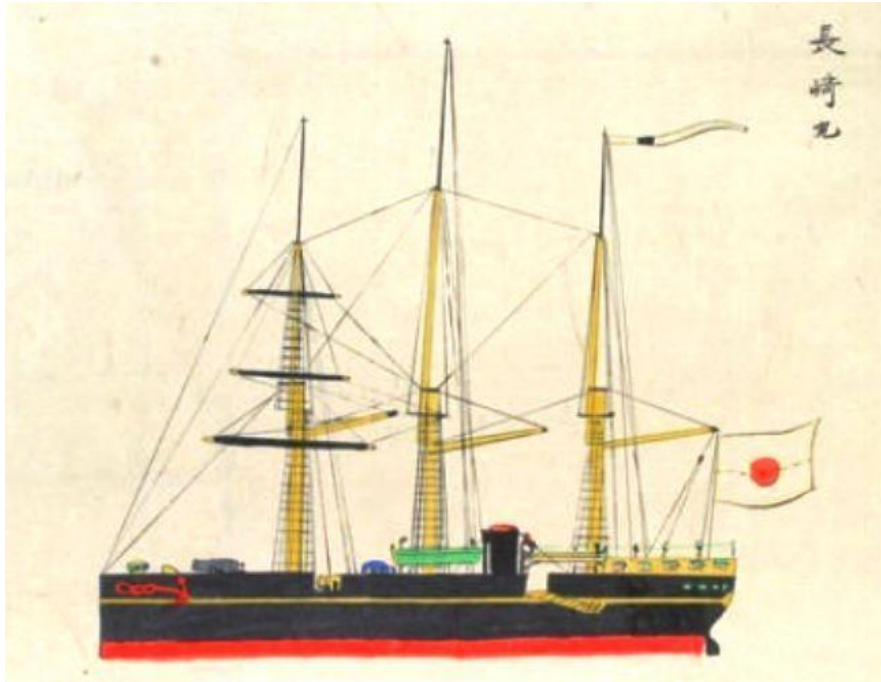
NANZING at Tientsin about 1863 (SK*)



Above 2 photos: NANZING at Nagasaki minus a funnel in 11/74 to 2/75. First photo also shows missing top mast and torn mainsail (Nagasaki Univ 5301, 5299)

SHUN LEE (1863-64) 436/62 (i.s.s. 187.4 x 25.5' C2cy single screw 120nhp)

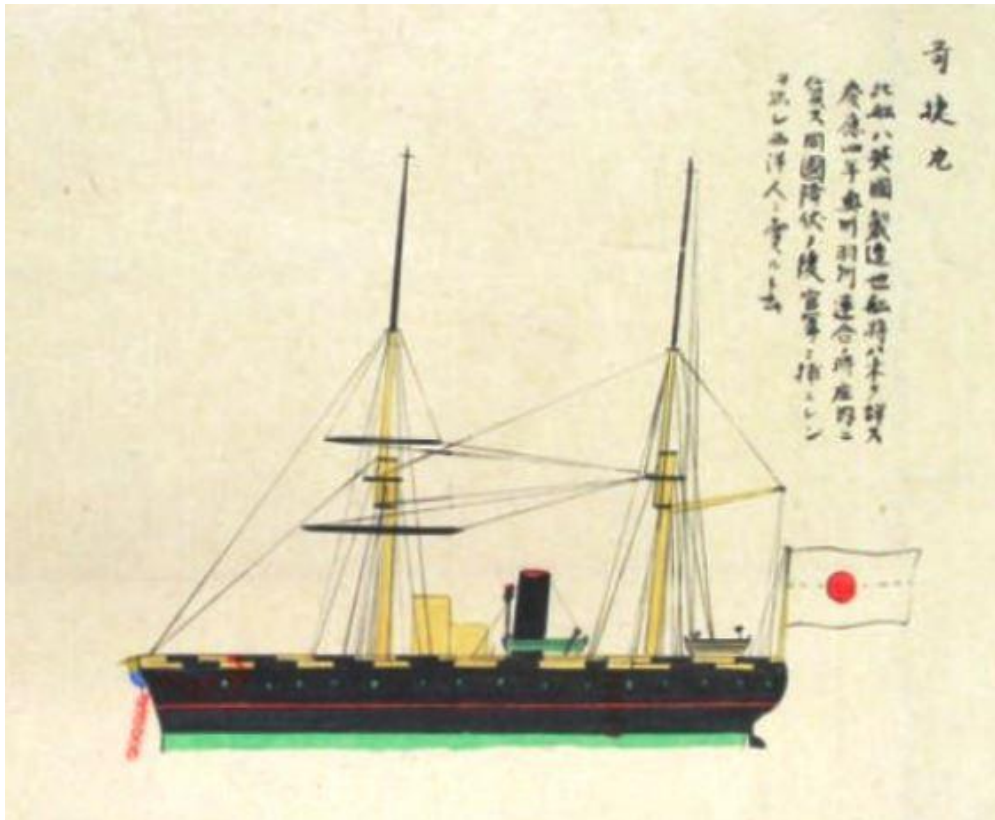
Built by Blackwood & Gordon, Port Glasgow as SHUN LEE. 12/4/62 launched, 22/5/62 trials, 23/5 reg. for B. Harkort & Co, Glasgow. 8/62 arrived Shanghai, reported chartered to General F.T. Ward. Subsequently traded to Ningpo and on the Yangtse (about once per month to Hankow). 6/63 re-registered for Trautmann & Co. by its agent Meinhard Ernst Robinow and placed on coastal service to Hong Kong. 2/64 British registry closed on sale at Shanghai to Tokugawa Shogunate r. NAGASAKI MARU or NAGASAKI MARU No.2. Became part of Enomoto's rebel fleet, 23/10/68 wrecked in storm off Toboshima Island, all crew reached shore safely, and armaments, equipment and personal belongings were saved. [JM&C SHUN LEE extant 1878-79.] [clydeships.co.uk., Milne]



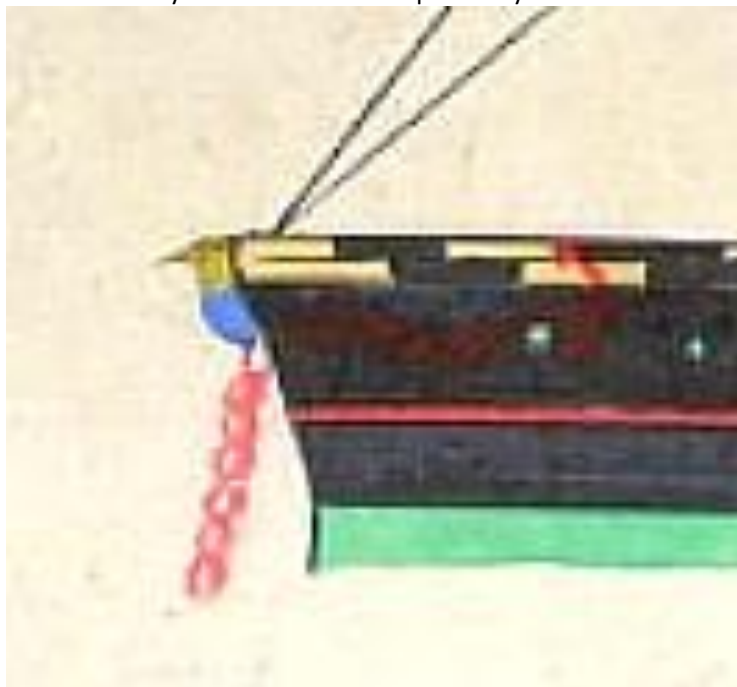
Drawing of NAGASAKI MARU ex SHUN LEE as she appeared in 1867-68, by Y. Tamaoki

YING [YUEN]-TZ[S]E-FEI[E] 燕子飛 (1864-73) 421/64 (i.s.s. 181.5 x 26.1' single screw 100hp)
 Built by Blackwood & Gordon, Port Glasgow as YUEN [YING]-TZ[S]E-FEI[E]. 25/12/63 launched, first reg. for Robinow & Marjoribanks, Glasgow on behalf of Trautmann & Co. By 11/7/64 as YING-TZE-FEI in Shanghai-Chefoo-Tientsin service. 10/70 chartered to Jardine Matheson & Co. 2/71 mgrs Jardine Matheson & Co., Hong Kong. 12/73 sold to James Whittall, Hong Kong. 28/3/75 wrecked on Dodd Island off Amoy while on charter to Douglas S.S. Co. [clydeships]

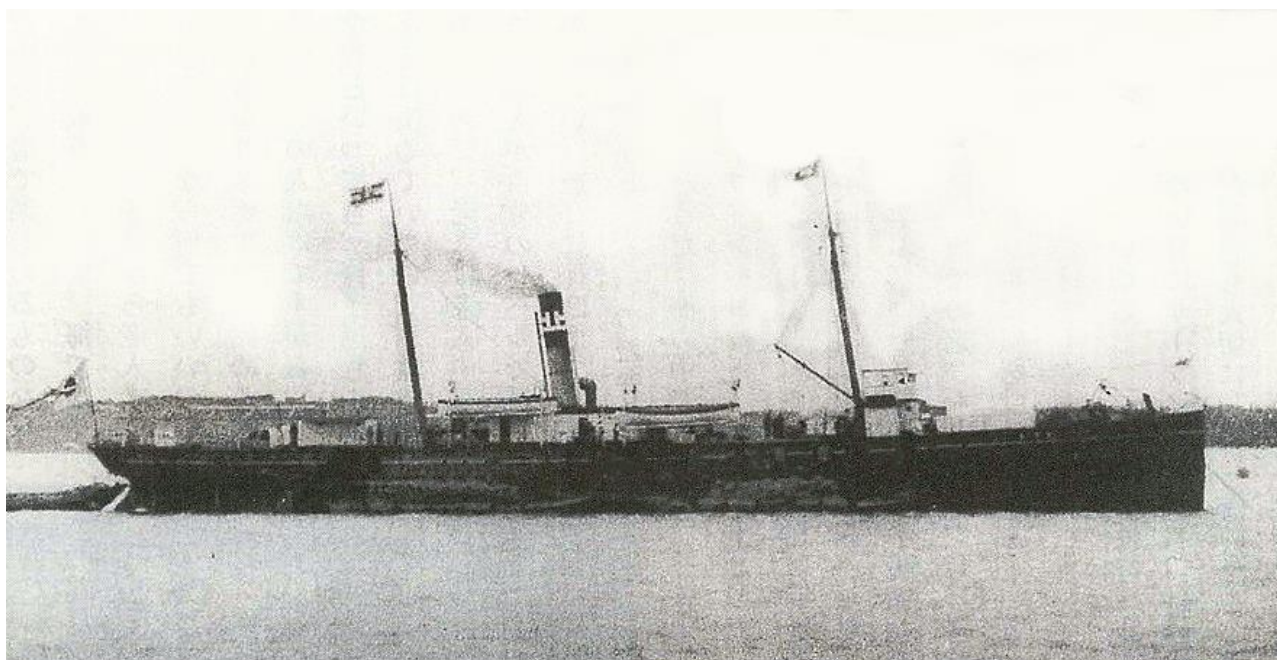
TA PANG NYO 大鵬鳥 (1864-66) 669/64 (i.s.s., 219.2 x 28.2', C2cy 2 boilers/150hp 11.5k)
 Built by Blackwood & Gordon, Port Glasgow (#61) as TA PANG NYO for Shanghai-Chefoo-Tientsin service with accommodation for '200 Chinese passengers'. 26/5/64 reg. at Glasgow to agent Meinhard Ernst Robinow (Robinow & Marjoribanks), then J. Trautmann. c.2/6 sailed Swansea via Mauritius and Singapore for Shanghai. Cape of Good Hope to Bombay in 51 days 4 hours. Arrived Shanghai 19/9 and re-registered. 11/65 voyages Shanghai-Hong Kong. 3-8/66 Shanghai-Tientsin line. 8/66 sold to Tokugawa Shogunate for \$105,000 (13/12/67 reg. closed) r. OHTORI MARU [TA PANG=大鵬= (Japanese) TAIHO or OHTORI (English) 'Great Bird']. 11/66 r. KISHO MARU 奇捷丸. 4/68 t/f to Shizuokahan. By 4/69 sold to Textor & Co. (Ger. flag) r. TA PANG NYO. 5-9/69 in service Shanghai-Tientsin. 10-11/69 HK-Saigon-Singapore-HK. 6/70 Shanghai-Nagasaki. 9/70 sold to Thomas Walsh et al (Walsh, Hall & Co. mgrs) (US flag) for HK-Amoy-Manila line r. LUZON (972 g.t.). 1/10/71 reported arriving Bangkok under sail, having run out of coal. 10/74 voyage China-Japan for Pacific Mail S.S. Co. End 1874 sold to Japanese Gov't for Taiwan expedition. 1/75 sold to Yubin Kisen Mitsubishi Kaisha, Tokyo for new Yokohama-Kobe-Nagasaki-Shanghai line. 12/3/75 as LUZON ran trials at Nagasaki after docking and repairs, subsequently r. TSURUGA MARU 敦賀丸 (996 g.t., passengers 74 2nd, 354 3rd). 7/85 transported H.M. the Emperor from Okayama to Tokyo. 10/85 t/f to NYK. 11/01 sold to Yamamoto Sayemon, Hakodate for Aomori-Hakodate service. 1915 sold to Hokuyo Kisen K.K. Nanao for Nanao-Tsuruga-Otaru service. 1918 owners became Hokuyo Shosen K.K. 1927 sold to Miki Yuzo, Dairen. 192? sold to Hokusen Tanko K.K. (Korea). 12/31 sold to Chai Hua Ting (Hai Lien Co.), Weihaiwei r. YUNG WEI 榮威. 1936? sold to Hsin Tung Hong, Weihaiwei, NFI. 1959 RLR. [Milne, Haviland, Bowen, Yamataka, S. Yamada, M. Yamada, HWD, SK, clydeships.co.uk]



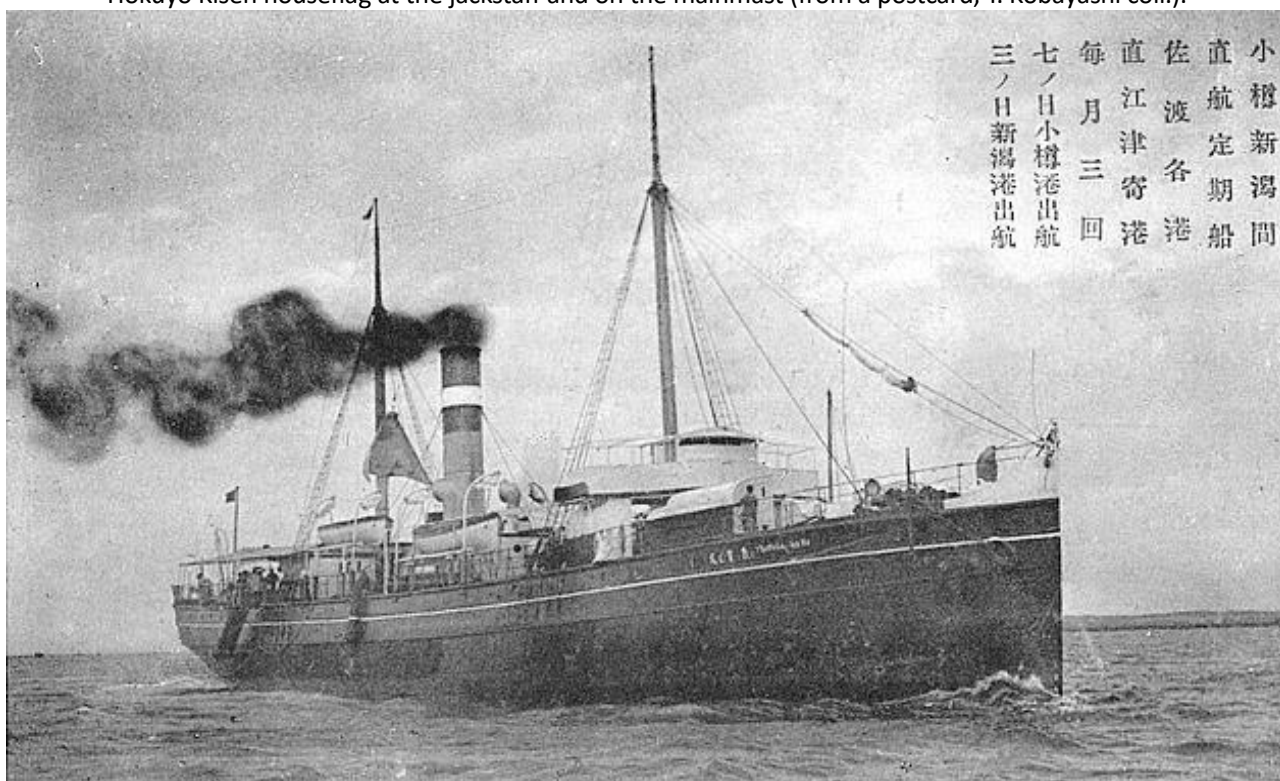
Drawing of KISHO MARU 奇捷丸 ex TA PANG NYO as she appeared 1867-68 by Y. Tamaoki. We are working to understand Tamaoki's archaic notation, but it reads something like: "This ship was built in Great Britain, the Commander was making detailed entries regarding lumber (wood). In 1868 was forcibly borrowed by the Oshu Hanekawa Union, after that entity was defeated was captured by the Bakufu and sold to Westerner(s)".



Closeup of Tamaoki's drawing showing figurehead of a bird, and the usual rusted anchor chains. The mythological Ta Pang Nyo is often depicted in Chinese illustrations as like an eagle, with a yellow head.



TSURUGA MARU photographed in 1915 or early 1916 for a Hokuyo Kisen official postcard. We have edited the image, principally to remove the ship's name in large hiragana lettering on the ship's side which had been added by the company to the image. This view is also used in the Japan Steamships Register books. Blue Peter on the foremast and Hokuyo Kisen houseflag at the jackstaff and on the mainmast (from a postcard, Y. Kobayashi coll.).

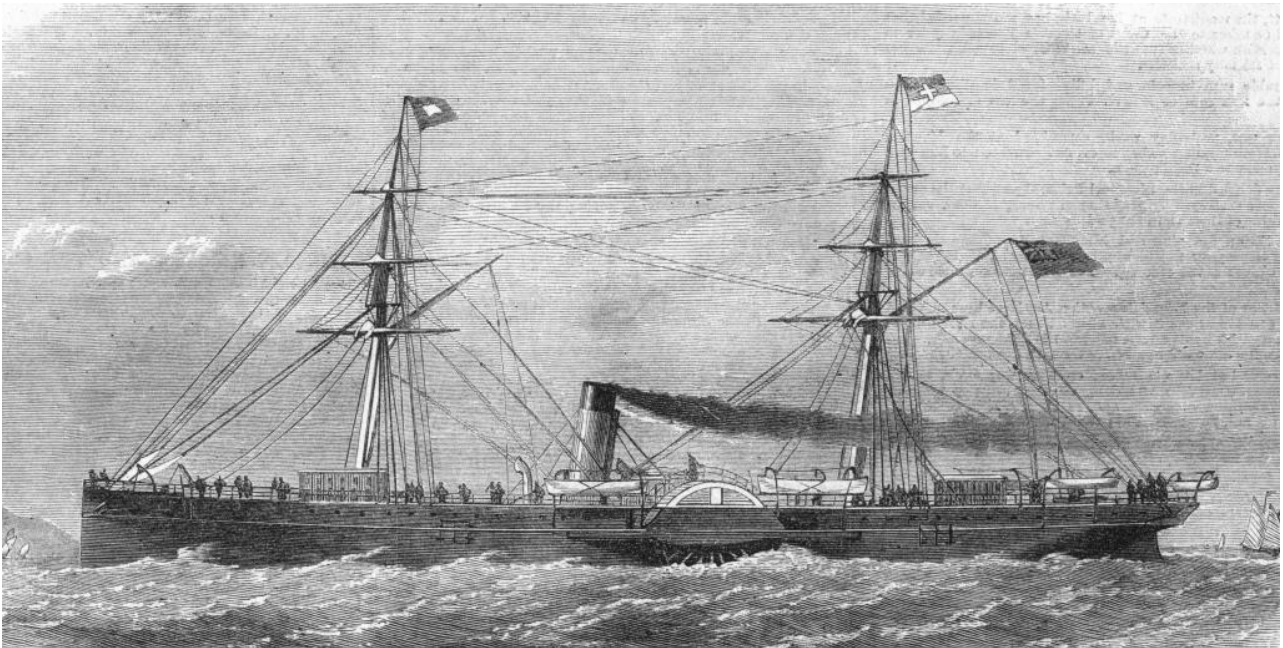


Postcard in Hokuyo Shosen (1918-27) colours bearing the caption "The Otaru-Niigata regular ship TSURUGA MARU calling at ports in Sado and at Naoetsu. 3 voyages per month sailing Otaru on the '7' days and Niigata on the '3' days." The excessive smoke appears to be an artist's enhancement (SK coll.).

SIN NANZING (1869-73) 1142/69 (i.p.s. 225.4 x 32. 5' C2cyx2 250nhp)

Built by Randolph, Elder & Co., Govan (#107) for North China service and launched 21/8/69 as SIN NANZING. 10/69 trials, reg. for Meinhard Ernst Robinow, Glasgow, 10/69 trials. 11/11 sailed Greenock. 3/70 reg. for North China Steamer Co. (mgrs. Trautmann & Co., London), Hong Kong. 2/71

mgrs Jardine Matheson & Co., Hong Kong. 9/73 reg. at Hong Kong to James Whittle. 29/9/74 arrived Shanghai from Tientsin, 4/10 sailed Shanghai for Nagasaki and Kobe, 4/11 Wm Keswick empowered to sell, 26/11 sold at Yokohama for \$122,500 to Japanese Govt Naval Dept, Kanagawa for use as transport in Taiwan campaign r. ???. 1881 sold to William Paterson (Jardine Matheson & Co., mgrs) (Br. flag) Shanghai and 9-12/81 in Foochow line as SIN NANZING No. 2. 1882 converted to screw steamer and re-engined (now 1230grt, 223.0 x 32.2', 1-screw/160nhp) r. NANZING, 1/83 placed in Shanghai-Foochow line. Night 17/7/90 while sheltering from typhoon at anchor with *Strathleven* in Bullock Harbour o/v Shanghai-Foochow, the ships came into collision with some damage, 19/7 proceeded to Foochow. 20/3/91 stranded in fog on Ye Chan Island, Lamma Islands, Hong Kong on voyage Manila-Hong Kong with general cargo and 150 passengers/crew, all rescued. [JM&C SIN NANZING extant 1875-91] [clydeships, NCH]



SIN NANZING showing extensive rigging for the delivery voyage and a houseflag. A second funnel was presumably fitted after arrival in China (*Illustrated London News* 29/1/70).



Painting in Hong Kong Maritime Museum by Yeuqua, inventory date 1873, thought to be a spirited representation of SIN NANZING which had recently come under Jardine, Matheson & Co. management.
