

Wo Fat Sing Company

和發成公司

(Incorporated as Wo Fat Sing Ltd 和發成有限公司 in Hong Kong on 5/10/33)

(By 1911 assuring a regular commercial service
between Hong Kong and Saigon using British-flag ships.)

& precursor shipowner:

Li Shek Pang, Hong Kong (1905-1910)

managed shipowning companies:

Hung Hing S.S. Co. Ltd., Hong Kong (1910-17, 1923-33)

Luen Hing S.S. Co. Ltd., Hong Kong (1910-33)

Lai Hing S.S. Co. Ltd., Hong Kong (1910-36)

Hop Hing S.S. Co. Ltd., Hong Kong (1923-34)

Wing Hing S.S. Co. Ltd., Hong Kong (1923-48)

Cheong Hing S.S. Co. Ltd., Hong Kong (1928-43)

Po Hing S.S. Co. Ltd., Hong Kong (1933-41)

Tai Hing S.S. Co. Ltd., Hong Kong (1933-48)

SHORT HISTORY & ILLUSTRATED FLEET LIST

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This edition published 16 March 2024

The origins of the company that became Wo Fat Sing Ltd. can be traced back to at least 1903 when a Hong Kong ship-owner Li Shek Pang (the surname was probably Li but may possibly have been Pang) acquired the reliable 24 year old Blue Funnel cargo steamer LAERTES which retained its name. The next year the sister vessel TELEMACHUS was acquired, and the fleet had grown to three in 1910 when a rearrangement of ownership was undertaken to companies managed by a Hong Kong operator, Wo Fat Sing. The U.S. Consular and Trade Reports for 1911 state that commerce between Kwangtung Province and Cochin China had resulted in the formation by Chinese interests of two shipping companies, financed and managed exclusively by Chinese, assuring a regular commercial

service by steamships between Hong Kong and Saigon. The larger of the two companies, Soc. Anon. De Nav. Chinoise de le Cochinchine, registered in French Indochina, is quoted as chartering steamers flying the German or Norwegian flags. The smaller of the two companies, preferring to use British-flagged ships registered in Hong Kong, was Wo Fat Sing.

According to the U.S. reports, cargoes and the incessant movement of passengers had resulted in a major commercial stream of activity. Chinese living in Indochina naturally preferred products of their mother country and the cargoes for the most part consisted in the Southward export of Cantonese goods, in order of importance onions, preserves, silk goods, paper and shoes. The report notes that for their return trips, the steamers were able to obtain cargoes of rice for China, sometimes from Rangoon and Siamese ports. With substantive loadings in both directions and lucrative passenger fares, the business was a profitable one, a point especially noted in the reports. A number of other companies, European and local, large and small, competed in this trade but as a Chinese-owned company based in Hong Kong with Canton connections, Wo Fat Sing was able to develop into one of her the most prominent.

Another reason for Wo Fat Sing's success was the high quality of ships operated, British-built although second hand, and their Hong Kong registration requiring British masters and Chief Engineers. From the PHEUMPENH (1905) all the vessels acquired had been built with cabin and 'tween deck passenger capacity, so they were able to offer excellent passenger facilities at competitive prices. Especially notable were the LYEEMOON acquired in 1928 and HELIKON in 1930, each well over 2000 gt with ample cabin accommodation. The fleet grew to five ships before the outbreak of the Pacific War., although from around 1930 it had started to be seriously challenged by the Shun Cheong company.

In October 1933 the company was registered in Hong Kong as Wo Fat Sing Ltd. but by the late 1930s a change in the operating pattern can be discerned, where several ships were evidently entrusted to Shun Cheong Shipping as the operating partner, and unofficially advertised with the three part names beginning with TAI which became a trademark of that organisation. The outbreak of war in December 1941 brought operations to a standstill and many losses and after HALDIS was irreparably damaged in a typhoon in 1947, only HELIKON remained.

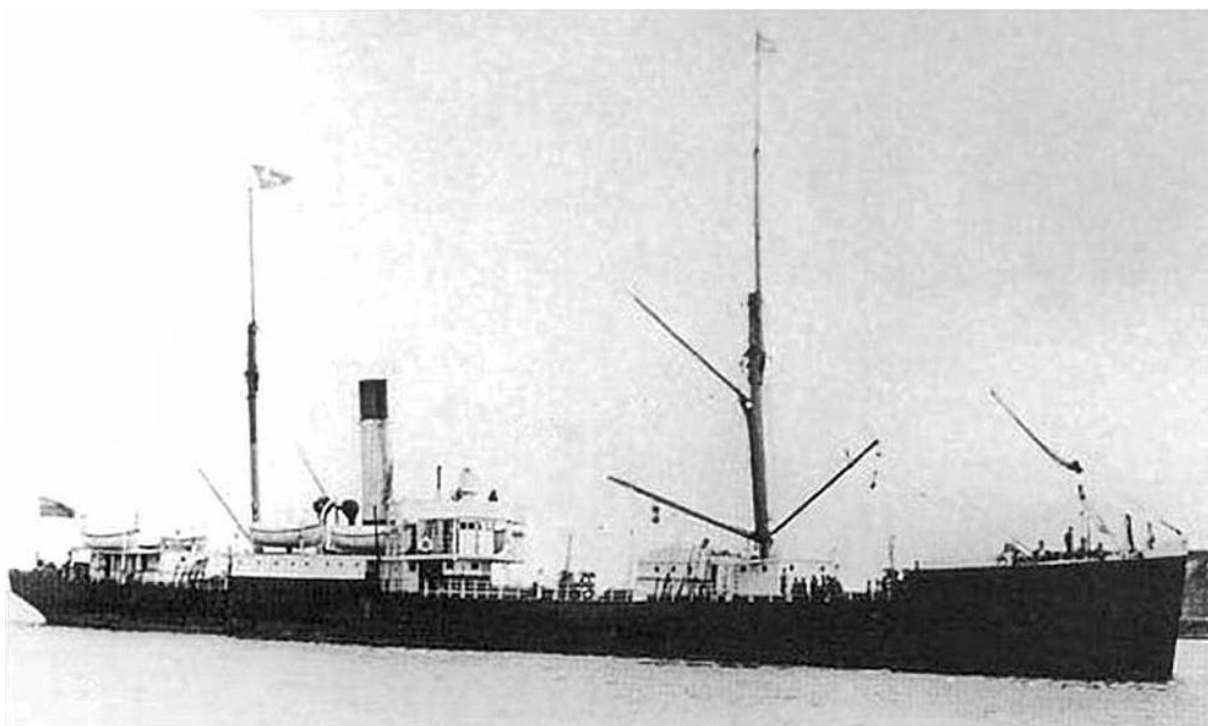
Postwar the rival Shun Cheong Company was energetic and soon predominant among Chinese companies in the Southward trades from Hong Kong and Canton, and the changes of regimes on the mainland in 1949 and in Indochina affected the trading patterns. A demand arose for Hong Kong flag tonnage to be chartered to PRC interests on the China coast, and this proved very attractive for the one remaining Wo Fat Sing ship HELIKON with its excellent passenger capacity. Accordingly it was chartered out to the new government and over a number of years was reported in ports such as Foochow, Wenchow and North China. A final vessel, the small SUNON acquired in 1952, was probably similarly employed. The charters ended and the two ships were sold in 1958-9, having reached the limit of their economic lives and the PRC having started to build new ships.

Wo Fat Sing Ltd. continued its activities in in the sea transport and logistics industry and is currently (2020) headquartered in the Wo Fat Building, Kennedy Town, Hong Kong. As such it has not owned or operated oceangoing ships since 1959.

Fleet List

LAERTES (1903-17) 2183/79

Built by Scott & Co., Greenock for Ocean S.S.Co. Ltd (A. Holt & Co. mgrs), Liverpool as LAERTES. 11/94 t/f to N.S.M. "Oceaan", Amsterdam. 10/01 reverted to Ocean S.S. Co. Ltd. 1903 sold to Li Shek Pang, Hong Kong. 1910 sold to Hung Hing S.S. Co. Ltd (WFS), Hong Kong. 15/12/17 lost in collision in Malacca Straits on voyage Rangoon/Singapore in ballast.



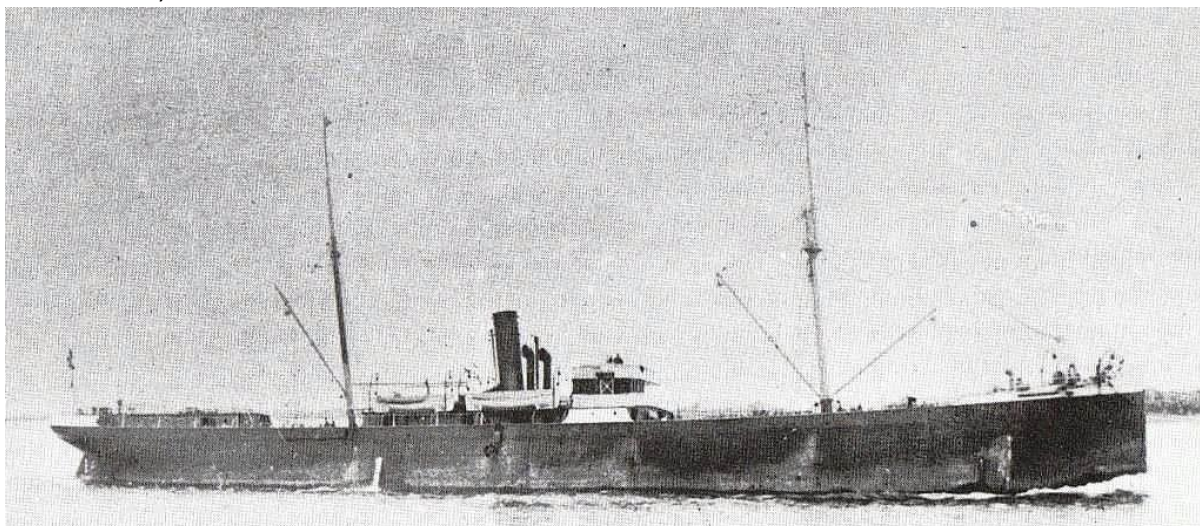
LAERTES (clydeships.co.uk). TELEMACHUS was identical.

TELEMACHUS (1904-36) 2180/80

Built by A. Leslie & Co., Newcastle for Ocean S.S. Co. Lid (A. Holt & Co. mgrs), Liverpool as TELEMACHUS. 1896 t/f to N.S.M. "Oceaan", Amsterdam. 1898 reverted to Ocean S.S. Co. Ltd. 1898 sold to Un Lai Chuen, Hong Kong. 1904 sold to Li Shek Pang, Hong Kong. 1910 sold to Lai Hing S.S. Co. Ltd (WFS), Hong Kong. 27/7/21 arrived Hong Kong from Saigon damaged after being adrift 2 days in typhoon (5 Chinese washed overboard). III/28 laid up after fire. 3/36 sold for further service but broken up in Hong Kong.

ALLEMANNIA (1905-06) 1841/81

Built by Dobie & Co., Govan for Hamburg-Amerika Linie, Hamburg as ALLEMANNIA. 1904 sold to J. Bryde, Tonsberg. 1905 sold to Li Shek Pang, Hong Kong. 1905 sold to Bodo von Fischerz, Hamburg. 1906 sold to Niyemon Kanazawa, Hamadera r. MIKADO MARU. 1913 sold to Chobei Tanaka, Hamadera. 1917 t/f to Tanaka Kozan K.K., Hamadera. 1925 t/f to Kamaishi Kozan K.K., Hamadera. 1932 sold to Naosaburo Akai, Hamadera. 1936 sold to Keiji Onoye et al., Sendai. 19/2/37 wrecked at Rokkasho-mura, E. coast Aomori Prefecture.



ALLEMANNIA was briefly in the fleet (A. Kludas).

PHEUMPENH (1905-29) 1692/78

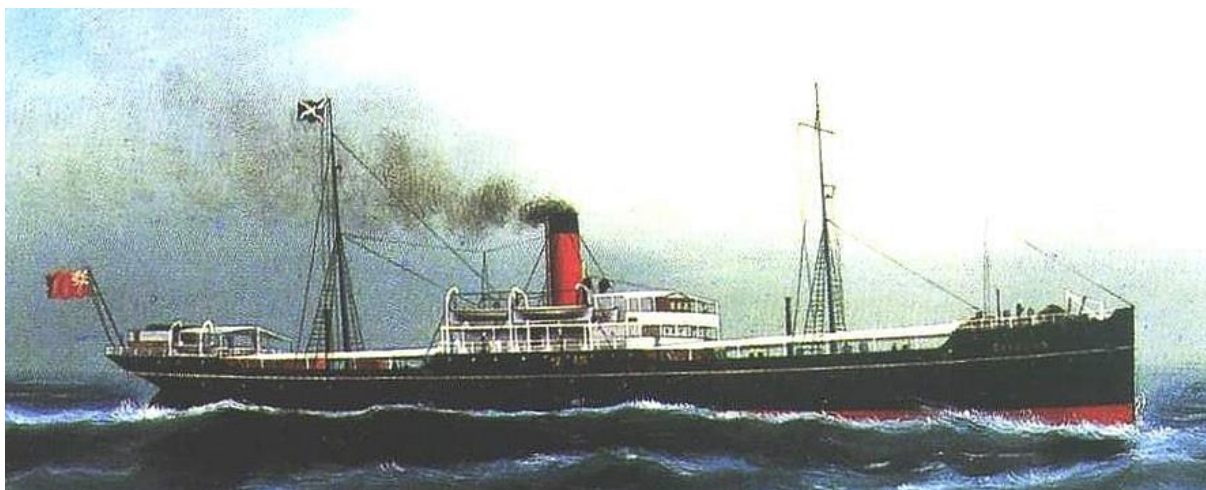
Built by Harland & Wolff Ltd, Belfast for Asiatic S.N. Co., Liverpool as SHAHJEHAN. 1905 sold to Li Shek Pang, Hong Kong r. PHEUMPENH. 1910 sold to Luen Hing S.S. Co. Ltd (WFS), Hong Kong. 1929 broken up at Hong Kong.



SHAHJEHAN <http://www.theyard.info/ships/ships.asp?entryid=122>

APOEY 廣利 KWANG LEE (1919-41)2790/95-12 (T3cyl, 275 nhp, N. Eastern Marine Eng.) 309.9 x 41.1'

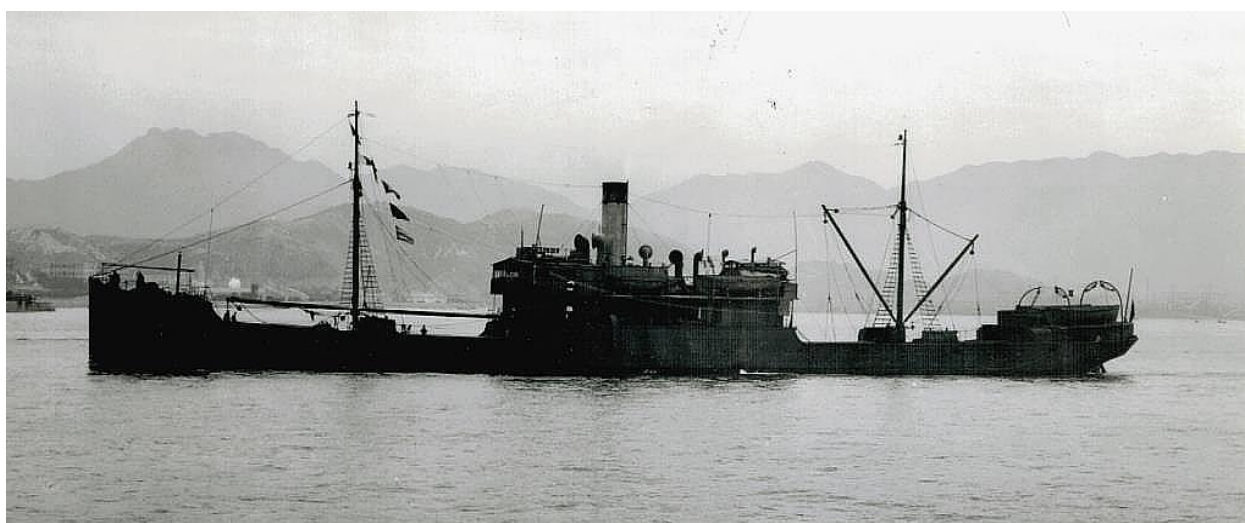
Built by Sir Raylton Dixon & Co., Middlesbrough (#416) for Indo-China S.N. Co. Ltd, London as SUI SANG. 7/19 sold to Lai Hing S.S. Co. Ltd (WFS), Hong Kong r. APOEY. 12/23 t/f to Hung Hing S.S. Co. Ltd. 4-5/30 and 8-9/31 HK-Samoa-HK o/c to Gibb, Livingston & Co., HK. 12/33 t/f to Po Hing S.S. Co. Ltd. 16/11/41 at Hong Kong for overhaul. 21-22/12/41 scuttled at Hong Kong – raised by Japanese and 10/42 recomm. as GYOEI MARU. 曉榮丸 14/1/44 sunk by US aircraft near Hong Kong (20.35N, 113.44E).



APOEY as Indo-China S.N. Co.'s *Sui Sang* (JM&C)

HALDIS 陳平 CAN PENG (1921-48)1700/02 (pass.) |

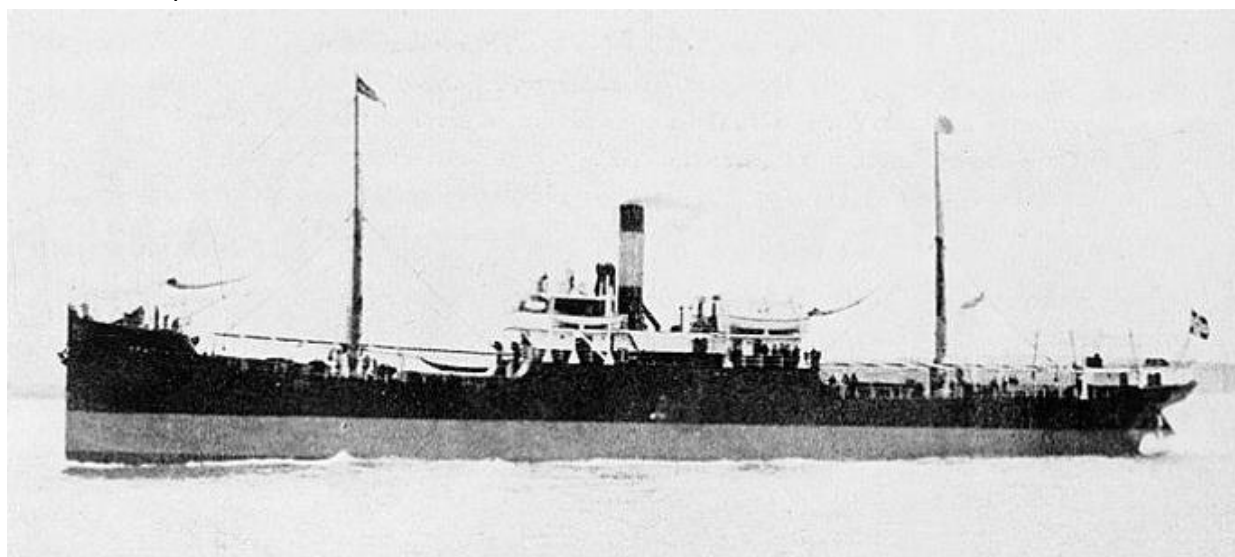
Built by J. Priestman & Co., Sunderland for Bruuusgard, Kiosterud & Co., Drammen. 1921 sold to Luen Hing S.S. Co. Ltd, Hong Kong. 1923 t/f Wing Hing S.S. Co. Ltd, Hong Kong. 27/7/48 extensively damaged when blown ashore at Hong Kong and sold to local shipbreakers.



HALDIS at Hong Kong January 1940 (D. Gammon*).

HALVARD (1922-34) 1701/02 (pass.)

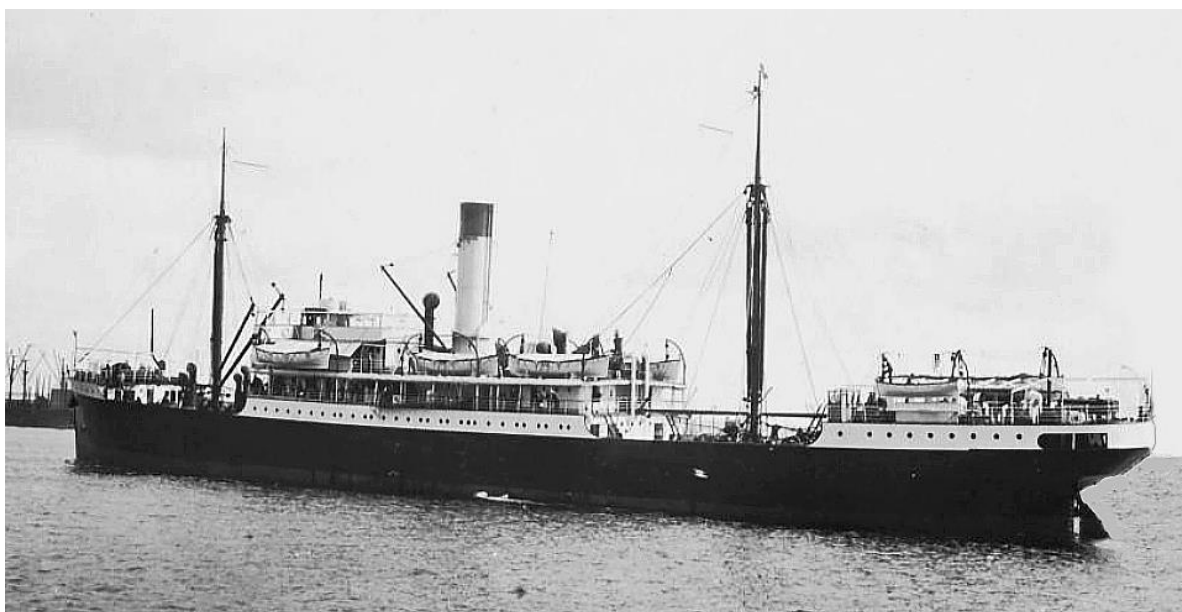
Built by J. Priestman & Co., Sunderland for Bruuusgard, Kiosterud & Co., Drammen. 1922 sold to Lai Hing S.S. Co. Ltd, Hong Kong. 1923 t/f to Hop Hing S.S. Co. Ltd, Hong Kong. 1934 sold to Hwei Tung S.S. Co., Chefoo r. HWEI CHONG 惠昌. 1941 seized by Japanese r. KEISHO GO 惠昌号. 1/5/41 Chartered to Matsuura Kaiun and then believed to Toa Kaiun K.K. and r. RYOKUSEI MARU 緑星丸 27/12/42 at 1223 Attacked while anchored off Huangpu (Whampoa) anchorage, Pearl River below Canton, Kwangtung Province. 7 B25's and many P40's attacked and directly hit ship, which was set on fire. The ship was disabled and abandoned.



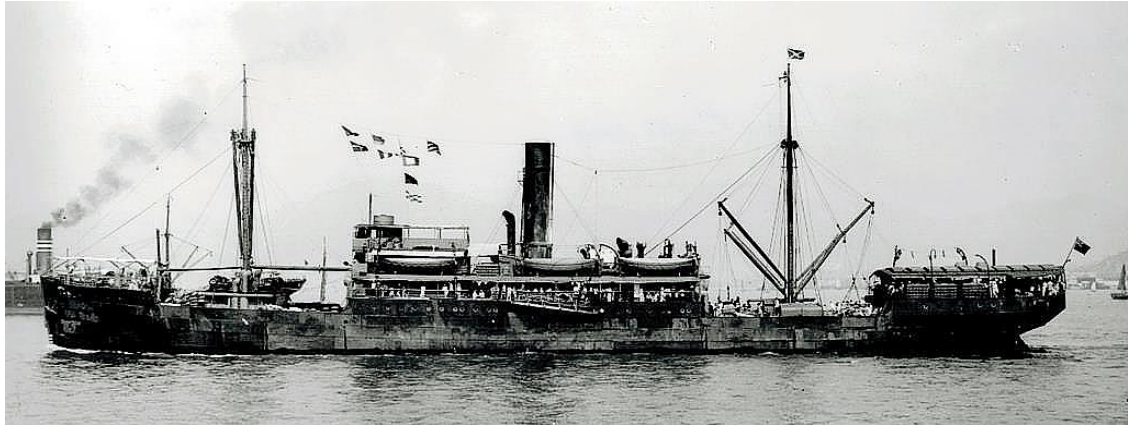
HWEI CHONG as HALVARD (<http://www.skipshistorie.net/Drammen>).

LYEEMOON 鯉門 (1928-43) 2885/08

Built by Scotts S.B. & Eng. Co. Ltd, for Ocean S.S. Co. Lid (A. Holt & Co. mgrs), Liverpool as GORGON. 4/28 sold to Cheong Hing S.S. Co. Ltd (WFS), Hong Kong r. LYEEMOON. 4/1/43 wrecked at Benghazi in gale.



As GORGON (colln John Watt, ANMM/SK edit).



LYEEMOON at Hong Kong, Dec. 1939 (D. Gammon/H. Dick*)

HELIKON 大中華 TAICHUNHWAH (1930-59) 2232/17 (pass.)

Ordered by Hong Kong & Whampoa Dock Co. Ltd, Hong Kong for Bruusgard, Kiosterud & Co., Drammen but completed 9/17 under requisition for Furrness Withy & Co. Ltd (reg. Hong Kong). 1919 t/f to Bruusgard, Kiosterud & Co., Drammen. 1930 sold to Luen Hing S.S. Co. Ltd (WFS mgrs), Hong Kong. 20/7/30 seized by pirates 16 m. S. of Hong Kong - taken to Bias Bay. 13/10/32 seized by pirates near Bias Bay and taken to Hong Hai Bay, where released 45 hours later. 1933 t/f to Tai Hing S.S. Co. Ltd, Hong Kong. Ca.1937-40 on charter to Shun Cheong or affiliate. 1948 t/f to Wo Fat Sing Ltd, Hong Kong. 3/51 sailing Hong Kong for Annam and Saigon. 24/9/52 reported grounded at Wenchow, refloated 30/9 and proceeded to Shanghai. 11/52 reported trading to central and N. China ports. 21/6/55 boarded by Nationalist forces off Foochow. 14/11/59 arrived at Hong Kong for demolition but resold to Pan Norse S.S. Co. S.A. (ben. owner Oriental S.S. Co. - Wallem & Co. Ltd, Hong Kong mers), Panama for further trading. 21/12/61 arrived Hong Kong for demolition by H.K. Chiap Hua Mfy Co. (1947) Ltd - 15/2/62 work commenced.



S.S. HELIKON

大中華

直往安南西貢

三月九日 啓行

三月十五日 啓行

有客牌 貴客搭船付貨請到本公司接洽

永樂街 100 號

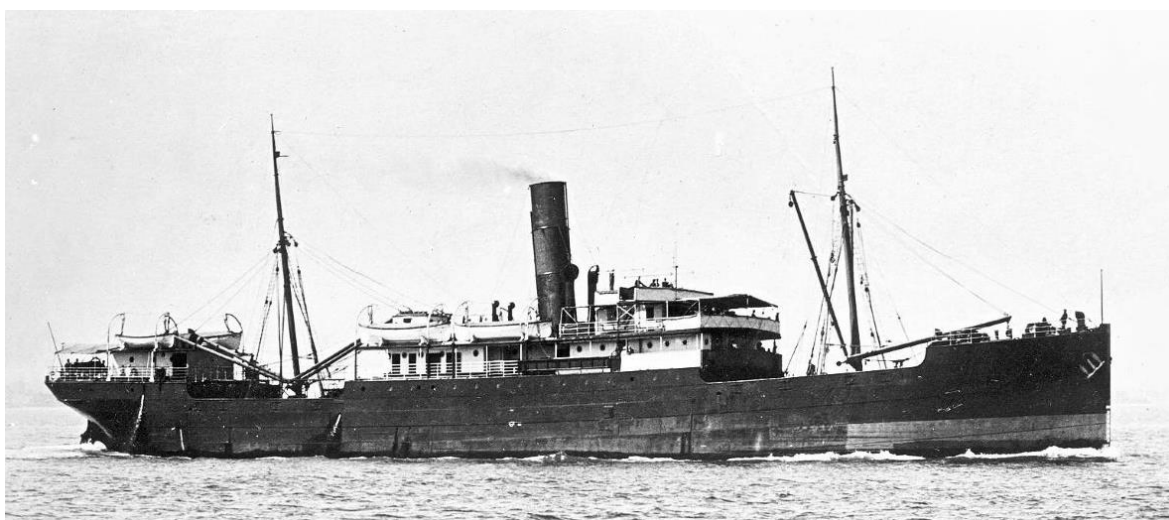
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和發成有限公司

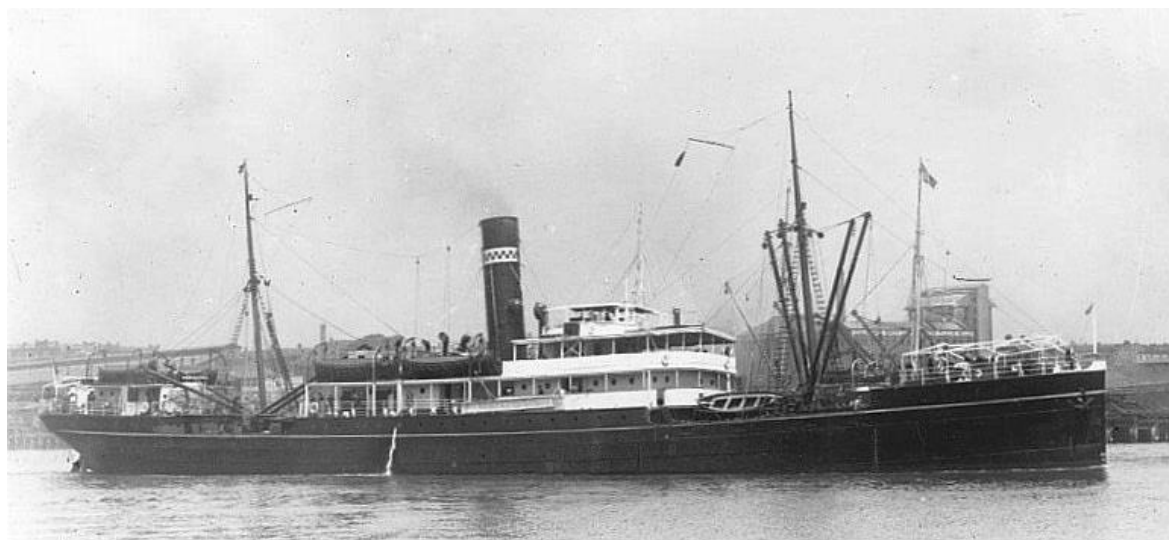
HELIKON bearing the name TAICHUNHWA 大中華- 'Great China' – shown prewar (D. Gammon*-Russell Priest edit); Hong Kong press advertising from March 1951 (Wah Kiu Yat Po 10/3/51).

SHUN CHIH 春潮 (1931-41) 1899/02

Built by Caledon S.B. & Eng. Co. Ltd, Dundee for Melbourne S.S. Co. Ltd, Melbourne as SYDNEY. 11/17 sold to Burns, Philp & Co. Ltd, Sydney r. MELUSIA. 4/27 sold to China Pacific S.S. Co., Shanghai r. SHUN TSZE. 5/10/28 reported running Hong Kong/Saigon overloaded with passengers (327 adults, 65 children, 75 crew -certified to carry 212). 10/31 sold to Lai Hing S.S. Co. Ltd (Wo Fat Sing), Hong Kong, romanised as SHUN CHIH. 12/33 /f to Sing Hing S.S. Co. Ltd, Hong Kong. 1937 to mid-1939 on evident charter to Shun Cheong or affiliate. 21-22/12/41 scuttled in Hong Kong harbour - salvaged by Japanese r. 春湖丸, mgrs Kawasaki Kisen r. SHUNCHO MARU. 8/5/45 sunk by mine off Yoshimi, Yamaguchi Pref. (34.04N 130.5E), 80 passengers and unknown number of crew dead. [Bore the unofficial Chinese name 太平洋 (TAI PING YANG) under likely charter 1937 to mid-39 when reverted to 春潮 (SHUN CHIH).]



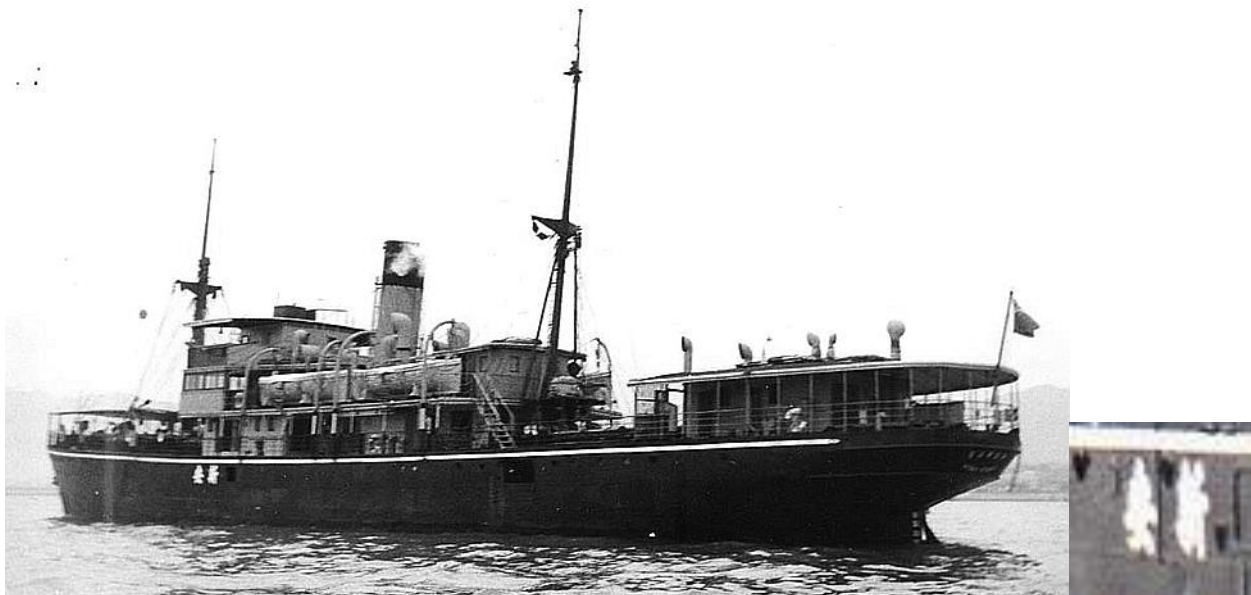
SHUN CHIH pre-1914 as Melbourne S.S. Co.'s SYDNEY (I.G. Farquhar).



Subsequently at Sydney as Burns Philp's MELUSIA (R. Dufty).

SUNON 新安 HSIN AN (1952-58) 1048/24

Built by A. Stephen 色 Sons Ltd, Glasgow for PO S.N. Co., London as BULAN. 1939 req. by RN as patrol vessel. 6/52 sold to Wo Fat Sing Ltd, Hong Kong r. SUNON. 6/58 sold to Tang Seck Fong, Hong Kong. 6/60 sold to Kum Luen Ltd S.A., Panama r. DORA. 1577/61 stranded on Britto Bank (10.30N, 107.42E) on voyage Phnom Penh/Hong Kong - abandoned and looted. CTL.



SUNON (T. Rayner*). Exceptionally for a postwar ship, the name in Chinese lettering on the ship's side was written from right to left.



Postscript: SUNON after sale, now registered in Panama but not yet renamed (R. Gabriel*).