

# **Tonkinoise/Marty & d'Abbadie/Lapicque/Indo-Chinoise/Asiatique**

Originally

**La Soc. Service Subventionne des Correspondences Fluviales au Tonkin, Haiphong**

From 1903

**Cie. de Nav. Tonkinoise (Marty & d'Abbadie, mgrs), Haiphong**

On death of Jules d'Abbadie in 1904 sole manager became

**A.R. Marty, Haiphong & Hong Kong**

Successor manager became

**P.A. Lapicque & Cie., Hong Kong & Haiphong**

which had become a shipowner in 3/16. Until 8/23 acting for

**Cie. Maritime Indochinoise, Haiphong**

After P.A. Lapicque & Co. bankruptcy 8/23 reconstruction as

**Cie. Indo-Chinoise de Navigation, Paris**

Reconstructed 1938 as

**Cie. Asiatique de Navigation, Haiphong**

By Howard Dick & Stephen Kentwell

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**\*May be cited with acknowledgement to the authors at [www.oldchinaships.com](http://www.oldchinaships.com)\***

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We have drawn on the chapter by Bert Becker, 'French Kwang Chow Wan and British Hong Kong: Politics and Shipping, 1890s-1920s' in James R. Fichter (ed.), *British and French Colonialism in Africa, Asia and the Middle East* (Palgrave, 2019), also postings by Hugh Farmer and Stephen Davies on the Industrial History of Hong Kong website.

The merchant firm of A.R. Marty & Cie was established in Hong Kong in 1874 by Auguste Raphael (b. 1841) and his younger brother Auguste Pierre (c.1844), who had joined him in Hong Kong in 1871. To take advantage of commercial opportunities flowing from the French occupation of Tonkin (North Vietnam), in September 1886 A.R. joined with Edouard Jules d'Abbadie (b.1853) to form the partnership of that name with the purpose of managing steamers on the Red River on behalf of the subsidized contractor La Societ  Service Subventionne des Correspondances Fluviales au Tonkin (Messageries Fluviales) as well as operating a shipyard and engineering works at Haiphong to service the fleet. In 1892 Marty & d'Abbadie ordered two passenger steamers (*Hanoi* and *Hong*

*Kong*) from Sunderland Shipbuilding Co. Ltd to provide a weekly passenger/cargo service between Haiphong and Hong Kong in competition with the various small Chinese-owned steamers that primarily served the rice and livestock trade. The shipping venture prospered and over the next six years the fleet was augmented by the smaller *Hailan* and *Hoihao*.

In 1899 Chinese recognition of French control over the enclave of Kwang Chow Wan encouraged Marty & d'Abbadie to purchase from the Chinese Government the two fast sisterships *Hating* and *Hué*. In 1903 the fleet of now five vessels (after sale of *Hating* in 1901) was vested in Compagnie de Navigation Tonkinoise, evidently to facilitate the award of a subsidy. After the death of d'Abbadie in 1904 and expiry of the renewed 10-year river and coastal contract in August 1907, the managers became A.R. Marty & Cie. In January 1909 A.P. Marty, who had also become the Spanish consul, died in Hong Kong. His brother, who in 1906 had moved his residence to Haiphong, died there in December 1914 at age 72. Obituaries of both men are posted by Stephen Davies on The Industrial History of Hong Kong website.

The death of the elder Marty came at a most awkward time, though management of the firm and its shipping fleet was carried on by his successor René Salle. The first complication was that under a new mail contract of October 1912 for a weekly Hong Kong-Kwang Chow Wan-Haiphong-Hoihow-Hong Kong line, Marty & Cie. were obliged to commission two new 2500-grt steamers. Contracts were placed but, because of the outbreak of war in August 1914, the ships were never built. The other complication is that the prolonged war disrupted shipping and commerce, the more so when in 1917 the Hong Kong Government requisitioned ships for the vital rice trade. *Hong Kong* was wrecked near Kwang Chow Wan in December 1917, only the original *Hanoi* and *Hué* remained in service.

Thus in February 1918 the two ships and rights to the trade were sold to Paul-Augustin Lopicque of Hong Kong, whom proceeded to open an office in Haiphong with ownership of the ships vested in Cie. Maritime Indochinoise (CMI). Wright & Cartwright (1908) identified Captain P.A. Lopicque of the French Naval Reserve as the local director of the Hong Kong-Canton ferry line Messageries Cantonaises. By 1912 directories record Lopicque & Co. at 4 Queen's Road, Hong Kong as agents for Messageries Cantonaises, the French homeward line Chargeurs Réunis and insurers Comité des Assurances Maritimes du Havre. In March 1916 Lopicque became registered owner of the former P&O liner *Oriental*, though her management was placed in the hands of shipbrokers George Grimble & Co. while remaining on charter to Ho Hong for the South China-Straits trade. CMI/Lopicque then sold the elderly *Hué* and augmented the fleet by the new French-built *Song-Giang* and the German reparations vessels *Song-Bo* and *Song-Ma*.

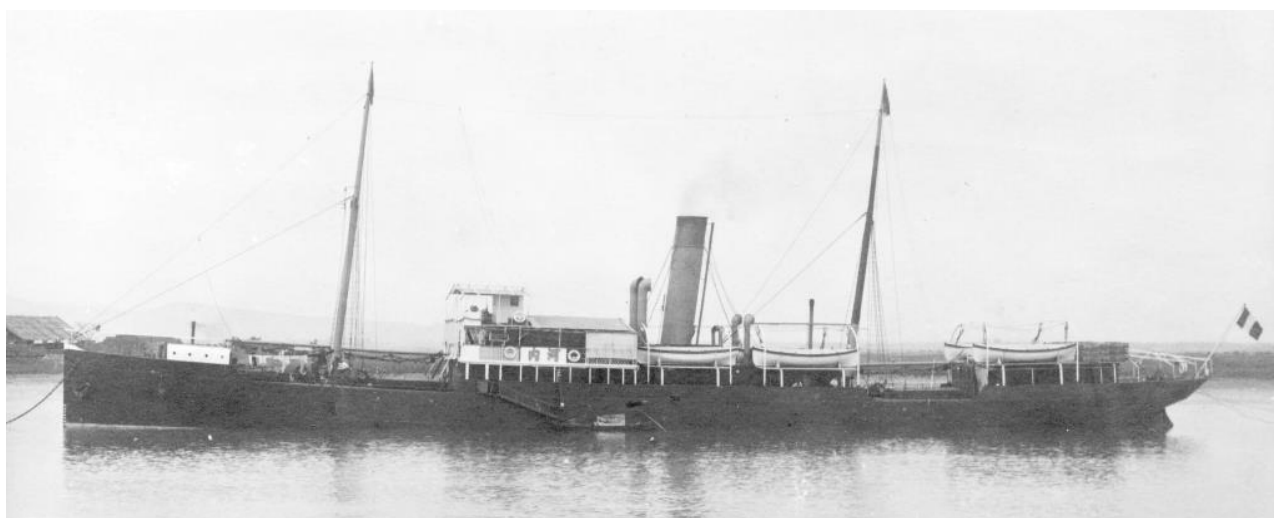
However, in the course of 1923 Lopicque & Co. fell victim to the postwar recession. Not want to lose its footing in the Hong Kong trade and with an eye to maintaining a regular connection with Kwang Chow Wan, the French government mobilized banking and commercial interests in a new syndicate

that was registered in November 1923 as Compagnie Indo-Chinoise de Navigation with its registered office in Paris, though the ships continued to be registered in Haiphong. In 1938 there was another reorganisation as Compagnie Asiatique de Navigation with head office in Haiphong. The last two ships, the German-built *Canton* and *Laos*, were both sunk off the coast of Vietnam in 1942.

Cie. Asiatique was revived in 1946 by Chargeurs Réunis as an Indo-China and later, despite the name, African subsidiary. These postwar vessels are not covered below. It may be noted, however, that in 1965 management was taken over by Shun Cheong S.N. Co. Ltd of Hong Kong. Its two vessels *Tadjouri* and *Asmari* are entries in that list (q.v.).

## ILLUSTRATED FLEET LIST

**HANOI** (1893-31) 1057/93-3 (T3cy/169 nhp by N.E. Mar. E. Co. (Lim), Sunderland)  
Built by Sunderland S.B. Co., Sunderland (#175) for La Societé Service Subventionne des Correspondences Fluviales au Tonkin (A.R. Marty & d'Abbadie, Haiphong (reg. Marseilles) as HANOI for Haiphong-Hong Kong service. 1903 t/f to Cie de Nav. Tonkinoise, Marseilles. 1918 sold to P.A. Lopicque & Cie, Haiphong but soon t/f to Cie. Maritime Indochinoise (c/- P.A. Lopicque & Cie.), Haiphong. 8/23 P.A. Lopicque & Cie., Haiphong in liquidation, 1923/4 t/f to Cie. Indo-Chinoise de Nav., Haiphong. 1931 sold to Central S.N. Co., Shanghai r. HUA TUNG. 1932 sold to Tung Ning Co. (Wang Yung Shanghai mgrs.), Shanghai r. TUNG NING. 1935 sold to Hsing Hwa S.S. Co., Newchwang r. TUNG HWA. 1937 sold to Yung Yuan S.S. Co., Newchwang r. CHEN YUAN. Late 1930s t/f to Manchukou flag as JINGEN GO. 7/44 stranded on Jin-I Island, west coast of Korea and sank [1955 RLR].



HANOI c.1907 (postcard/W. Schell).

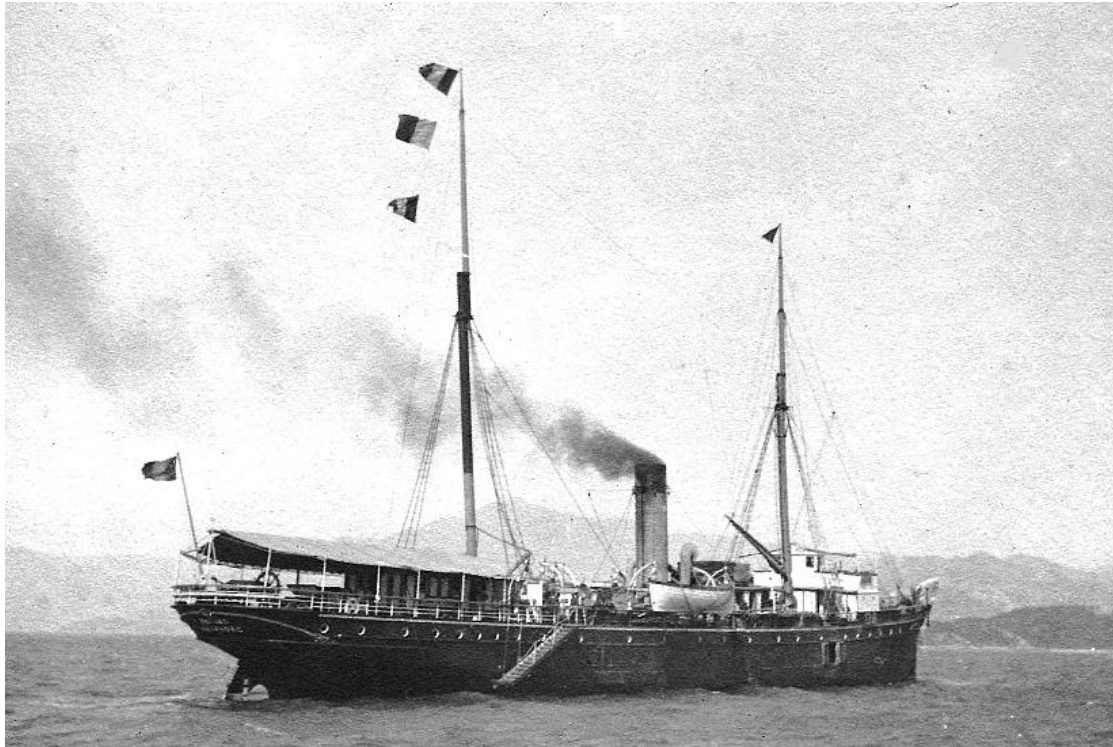
**HONG KONG** (1893-17) 1208/93-5 T3cy/169 nhp by N.E. Mar. E. Co. (Lim), Sunderland)  
Built by Sunderland S.B. Co., Sunderland (#176) for La Societié Service Subventionne des  
Correspondences Fluviales au Tonkin (A.R. Marty & d'Abbadie, Haiphong (reg. Marseilles) as HONG  
KONG for Haiphong-Hong Kong service. 1903 t/f to Cie de Nav. Tonkinoise. 19/12/17 wrecked near  
Kwang Chow Wan on voyage Hong Kong-Haiphong.



HONG KONG (Internet).

**HAILAN** (1897-09) 416/80 (C2cy/62 nhp by M. Paul & Co., Dumbarton)  
Built by R. Chambers Jr, Dumbarton (#15) for C. Hassager, Randers as ACTIV. 1886 t/f to D/S A/S  
Aktiv. Mid-1890s chartered to Marty & d'Abbadie for Haiphong-Hong Kong line. 1897 sold to A.R.  
Marty, Hong Kong r. HAILAN. 1898 t/f to Marty & d'Abbadie, Haiphong. 1909 sold to Dominci Bazin,  
Saigon. 1920 sold to Yuen Fat Hong (listed as Vingfathong Bonham), Hong Kong (Chinese flag) r.  
CHUNGHING. 1929 r. KA HING. 13/12/29 wrecked in 21N, 112E on voyage Kwang Chow Wan-Hong  
Kong.

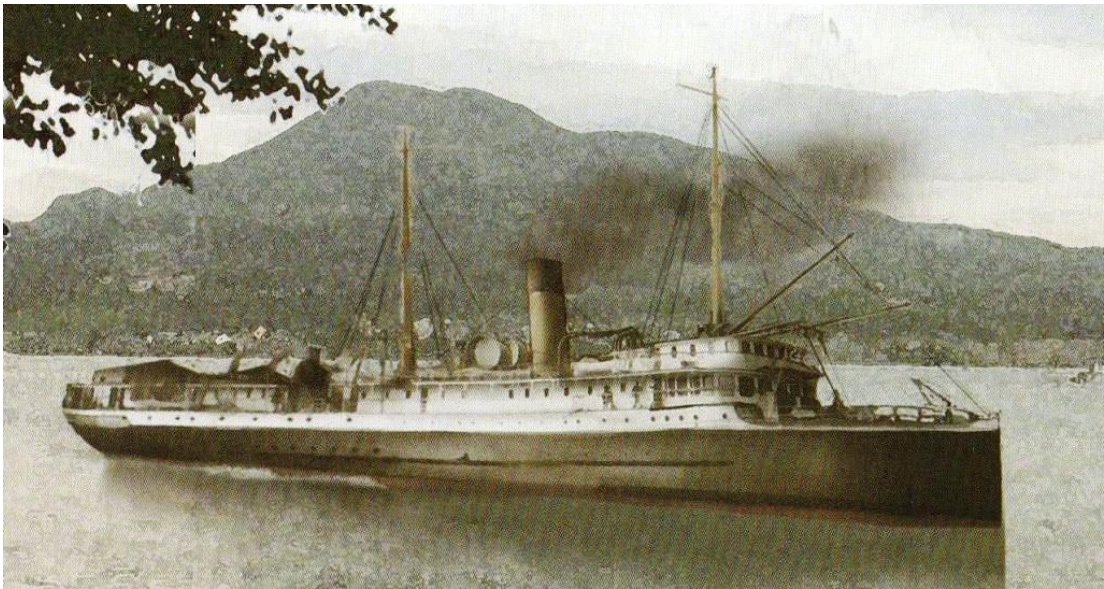
**HOIHAO** (1898-04) 814/80-2 i.s.s. (C-2cy, 120hp)  
Built by Hall, Russell & Co., Aberdeen (#217) for J.S. Lapraik, Hong Kong as FOKIEN. 11/83 t/f to  
Douglas S.S. Co., Hong Kong. 4/95 sold to Francis Cass, Amoy and then resold to Chinese  
Government (Defence & Pay Dept), Nanking. 16/4/96 o/c to Bennertz & Co., Shanghai for Yangtse  
trade and 2/6 del. as SIN FOKIEN (reg. to Chinese Govt, Shanghai) - 29/8 detained by Chinese  
authorities at Chinkiang and 10/9 forfeit. 1/98 released on charter to Bennertz & Co. pending sale  
to A.R. Marty. 5/98 Bennertz case settled allowing sale to proceed subject to repairs. 8/98 del. to  
Marty & d'Abbadie, Haiphong r. HOIHAO. 26/5/04 wrecked on Hainan Head.



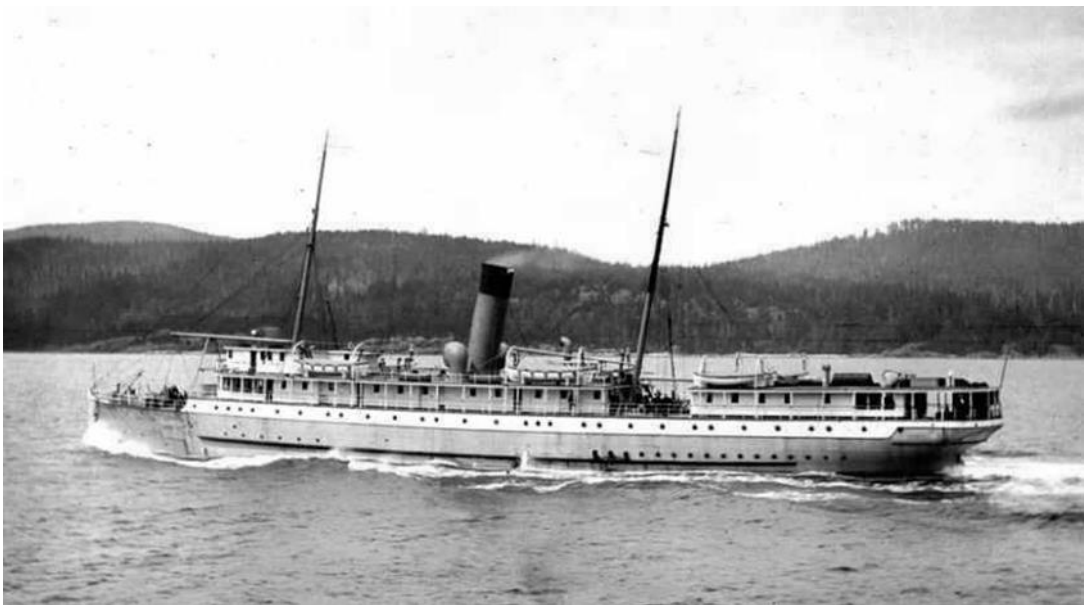
HOIHAO in 1903 (H. Dick coll.)

**HATING** (1898-01) 1394/88-6 (2-sc, T3cy/287 nhp)

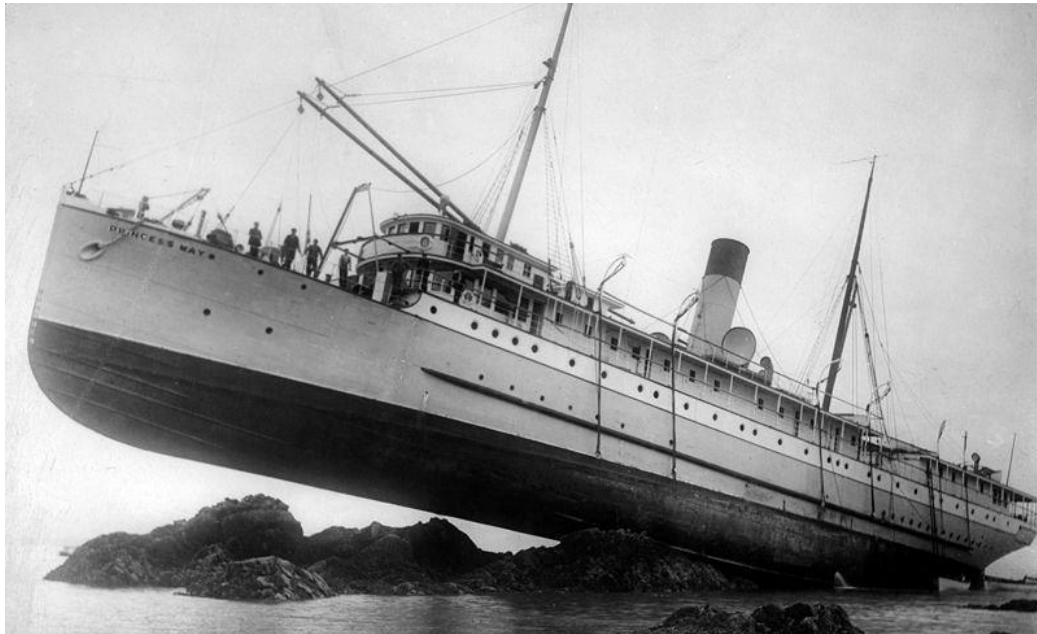
Built by Hawthorn Leslie & Co. Ltd., Hebburn (#278) to order of Russell & Co. (£29,500) and launched for Imperial Mail Line, China as CHIA SHIH but completed for Governor of Taiwan (Liu Ming-chuan) to account of Formosa Trading Corp., Keelung as CASS, 21/6 sailed UK, 8/88 arrived Shanghai. Mgrs initially China Merchants S.N. Co., then Melchers & Co., 6/89 Governor of Taiwan. 1/91 to Hong Kong-Swatow-Amoy-Taiwan run. End-7/94 supplies and troops Canton-Taiwan. By 1895 t/f to German flag (reg. to A.A.L.B. Clonebaugh, Keelung) r. ARTHUR. 6/95 under Chinese fire at Tamsui. 3/95 t/f to Government of China, Nanking r. CASS. 16/4/96 o/c to Bennertz & Co., Shanghai for Yangtse trade and 3/7 del. as NINGCHOW (reg. to Chinese Govt, Shanghai) but 24/8 under arrest at Hong Kong. 12/97 released on charter to Bennertz & Co. pending sale. 1/98 sale to Canadian Pacific Railway Co. Ltd for Victoria-Klondyke run fell through. 5/98 Bennertz case settled allowing sale to A.R. Marty. 8/98 del. to Marty & d'Abbadie, Haiphong r. HATING. 1901 sold to Canadian Pacific Railroad Co. Ltd, Vancouver r. PRINCESS MAY. 5/8/10 ran aground on northern tip of Sentinel Island, Alaska, 3/9 refloated after construction of sliding ways and blasting away rock. 1911 conv. to oil fuel. 1919 sold to Princess May S.S. Co. Ltd, Vancouver but operating in Caribbean. 1923 mgrs Di Giorgio Fruit Corp. Ltd. 1924 mgrs Standard Fruit & S.S. Co. & Di Giorgio Fruit Corp. 1925 t/f to Di Giorgio Fruit Corp. Ltd, Vancouver. 1933 reverted to Princess May S.S. Co. Ltd, mgrs Di Giorgio Fruit Corp. Ltd, registered Kingston, Jamaica. IV/35 scuttled off Kingston.



ARTHUR as depicted by Yao Kai-yang



PRINCESS MAY (originalshipster.com/W.H. Case).



PRINCESS MAY aground at Sentinel Island in 1910.

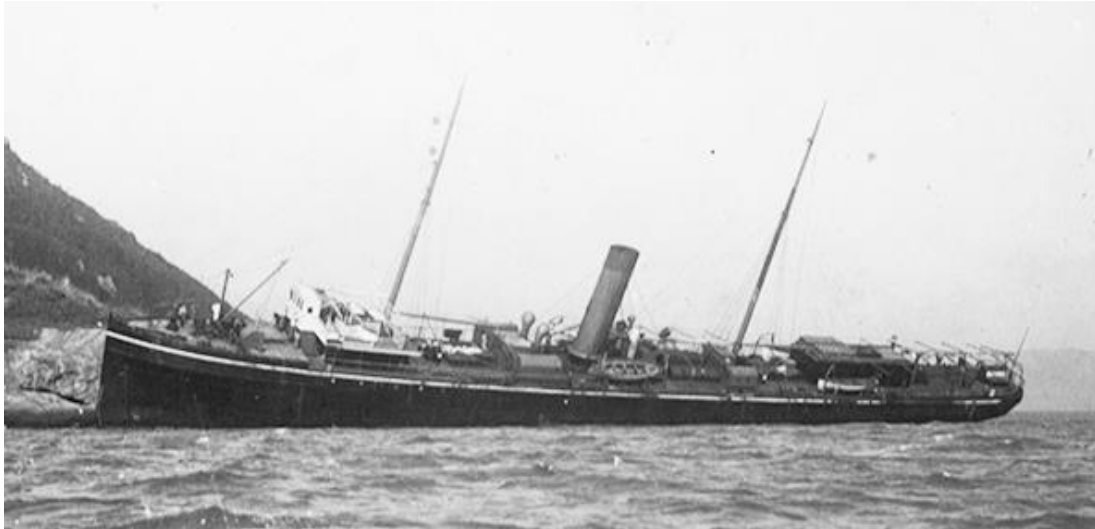


Above two photos <https://www.vintag.es/2018/06/1910-princess-may-wrecked.html>

**HUÉ** (1898-18) 1394/88-6 (2-sc, T3cy/287 nhp)

Built by Hawthorn Leslie & Co. Ltd., Hebburn (#279) to order of Russell & Co. (£29,500) and launched for Imperial Mail Line, China as MEI SHIH but completed for Governor of Taiwan to account of Formosa Trading Corp., Keelung as SMITH, 21/6 sailed UK, 8/88 arrived Shanghai. Mgrs initially China Merchants S.N. Co., then Melchers & Co., 6/89 Governor of Taiwan. 1/91 to Hong Kong-Swatow-Amoy-Taiwan run. 3/95 t/f to German flag (reg. to A.A.L.B. Clonebaugh, Keelung) r. MARTHA. Late 1895 t/f to Government of China (Defence & Pay Dept), Nanking r. SMITH. 16/4/96 o/c to Bennertz & Co., Shanghai for Yangtse trade – 14/6 del r. WO-NING (WOONING) and 26/6 in service after engine repairs by Boyd & Co. but 26/7 returned to Shanghai and laid up for further repairs, then arrested. 1/98 sale to Canadian Pacific Railway Co. Ltd for Victoria-Klondyke run fell through. 5/98 dispute settled allowing sale to A.R. Marty and 8/98 del. to Marty & d'Abbadie,

Haiphong r. HUÉ. 1903 t/f to Cie. de Nav. Tonkinoise. 1918 sold to Tung Hing S.S. Co. (Captain J.R. Braga, mgr), Macao r. SUN TAK. 18/8/23 blown ashore on Green Island, Hong Kong in typhoon. 1926 broken up at Hong Kong [RLR 1927]. [Captain J.R. Braga of Hong Kong moved to Bangkok in 1925 and died there in January 1937 (Straits Times, 23/1/37). Likely he was master and part owner with Chinese backing]



SUN TAK ex HUÉ ashore on Green Island (F. Davidson, UoB RD-s136).

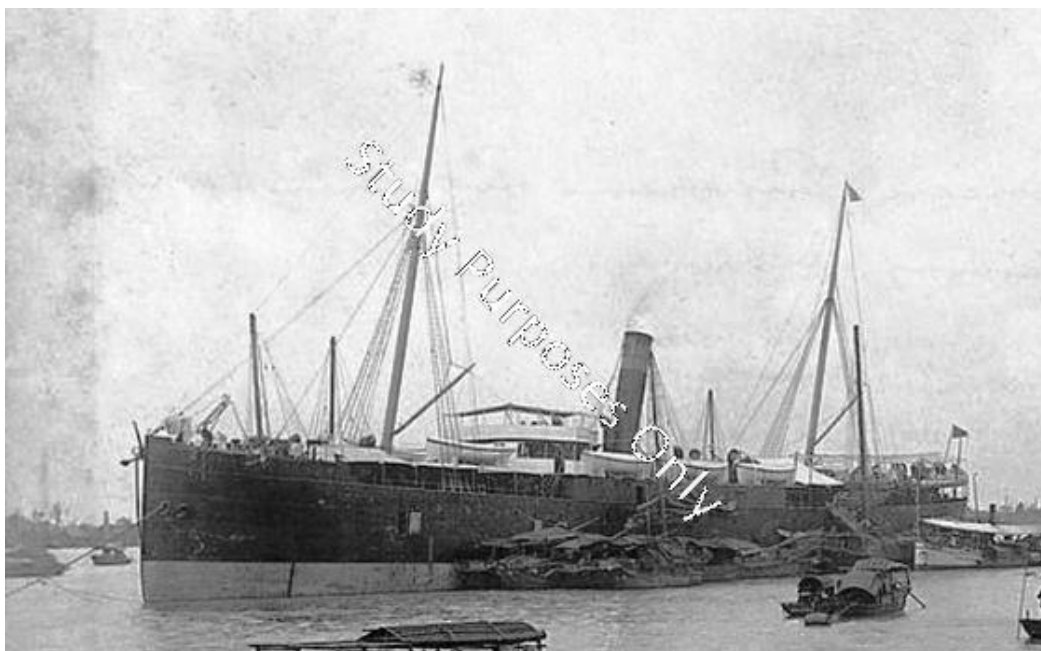
**HONG KHENG** (1916-23) 5284/89-1 (T3cy/749 nhp)

Built by Caird & Co. Ltd., Greenock (#248) for Peninsular & Oriental S.N. Co., London as ORIENTAL. 1904 refitted and modernised. 7/15 sold for £30,096 to Ho Hong S.S. Co., Singapore (reg. at Hong Kong) r. HONG KHENG. 3/16 sold to P.A. Lopicque & Cie. (George Grimble, mgr), Hong Kong. 7/21 t/f to Cie. Maritime Indochinoise, Haiphong (as per LR1924-25) r. SONG-HOI. Following insolvency of owners 8/23 repossessed by La Banque d'Indochine, 10/23 sold to G.T.M. Edkins, mgr Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corp to accommodate bank staff at Yokohama after the Kanto earthquake (1/9/23) r. TAI WAY FOONG. Q2/1924 broken up in Japan.



Presumed HONG KHENG passing Green Island, Hong Kong (Piksplus@Ebay).





Similar vessel minus mast at the Shameen (Alamy.com).

**SONG-HOI** (1921-23) 5284/89     see **HONG KHENG** (1916-21)

**SONG-BO** (1922-32) 1187/12-6 (T3cy/122 nhp by Ottensener Maschf., Altona)

Built by Schiffsw. V. H. Koch A.G., Lübeck (#214) for A. Kirsten, Hamburg as **TITANIA**. 1919 allocated to French Government as reparation, registered as Brest. 1922 sold C.A. Lopicque & Co., Haiphong r. **SONG-BO**, soon t/f to Cie. Maritime Indochinoise, Haiphong. Following insolvency of owners 8/23 repossessed by La Banque d'Indochine and then t/f to Cie. Indo-Chinoise de Nav., Haiphong. 1932 sold to Fook Ning Co., Shanghai r. **FOO TONG**. 1934 t/f to Foo Ning S.S. Co., Shanghai. c.1935 sold to Chin Tong S.N. Co., Shanghai. 1937 sold to Mei Lee S.N. Co., Shanghai, r. **MEI LEE**. 8/37 scuttled at Kiangyin, Yangtse River, as a blockship.

**SONG-GIANG** (1922-35) 1065/22-5 (2-sc, T3cy 'Gharb'-type by Chaléassière, St Etienne)

Ordered from S.A. des Anciens Etablissements Henri Satre, Arles by French Government as **DESSINATEUR** but 11/21 contract t/f to P.A. Lopicque & Cie., Haiphong and completed as **SONG-GIANG**. 8/23 owners insolvent. 1923/4 t/f to Cie. Indo-Chinoise de Nav., Haiphong. 1935 sold to Cie. Côtière de l'Annam (Denis Frères d'Indochine S. A. mgrs.), Saigon. 29/5/44 torpedoed by USS *Flasher* and sunk off the coast of Indo China along with French Vichy naval escort *Tahure*, 40 dead.



SONG-GIANG (Y. Perchoc colln.).

**SONG-MA** (1922-23) 2239/94-6 (T3cy/157 nhp)

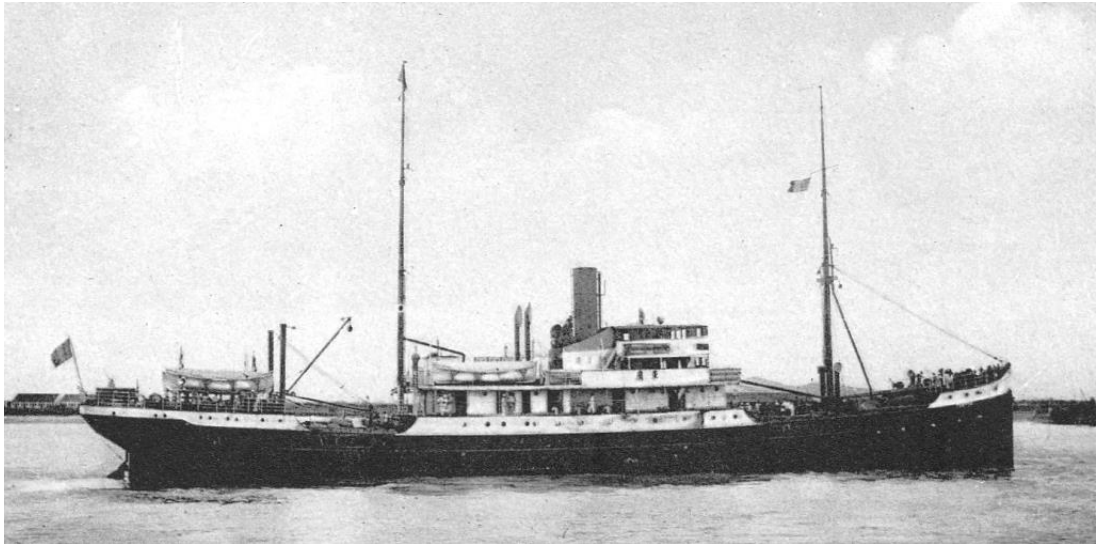
Built by Blohm & Voss, Hamburg for Woermann Linie A.G., Hamburg (#104) as THEKLA BOHLEN. 8/14 laid up at Vigo until 12/19 when awarded to France as war reparation, registered at Marseilles. 1922 sold to P.A. Lopicque & Co., Haiphong r. SONG-MA, soon t/f to Cie. Maritime Indochinoise, Haiphong. 8/23 repossessed by La Banque d'Indochine and sold to J. Pannier, Haiphong r. LIM CHOW. 1931 t/f to S.A. Pannier, Haiphong. 14/4/31 in collision, beached and looted. 12/34 broken up at Hong Kong.

**TONKIN** (1923-34) 1448/15-5 (T3cy/193 nhp)

Launched by Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson, Newcastle (#966) for Pacific S.N. Co., Liverpool as CUSCATLAN but completed as CAUCA. 1923 sold to Cie. Indo-Chinoise de Nav., Haiphong r. TONKIN. 25/4/34 wrecked off Fort Bayard, Kwangchow Wan o/v Hong Kong-Haiphong.

**CANTON** (1928-42) 1188/15-6 (T3cy/218 nhp)

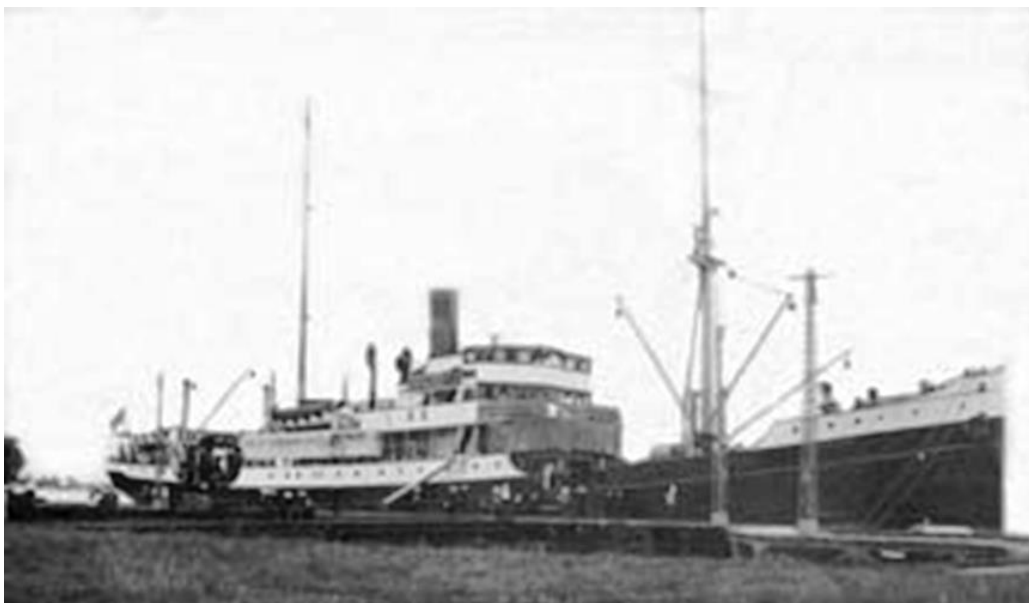
Built by Seebeck A.G., Geestemünde (#352) for D/S Ges. 'Argo' as CONDOR. 1917 resold to Rob M. Sloman, Hamburg. 1923 sold to Det Söndenfelds Norsk D/S, Christiania, Norway r. KONG RING 1928 sold to Cie. Indo-Chinoise de Nav., Haiphong r. CANTON. 1938 t/f to Cie. Asiatique de Nav., Haiphong. 15/4/42 torpedoed by unidentified submarine, but torpedo did not explode. 30/4/42 struck mine laid by USS *Tautog*, off Cape Padaran, Indo China and sank in 11.05N 108.39E, crew rescued by the escorting French sloop *Marne* [a French-flag *Canton* subsequently (12/10/42) rescued crew from fleetmate LAOS]



CANTON (from a postcard/SK).



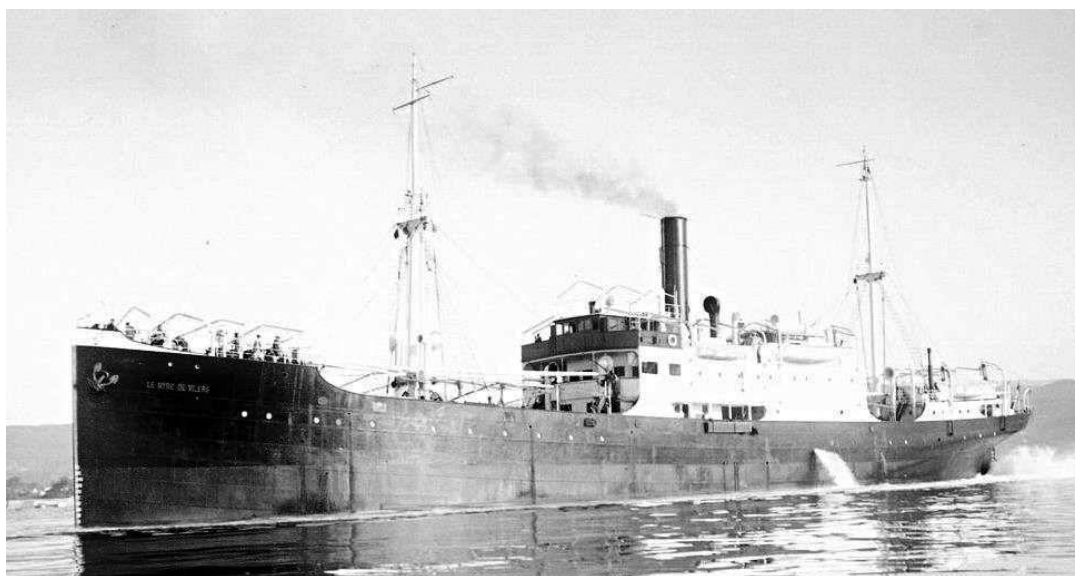
*YouTube Hong Kong in 1930, the Great Victoria Harbour*



<https://www.marine-marchande.net/Perchoc/Perchoc-07/07-Perchoc.htm>

**LAOS** (1938-42) 1467/18-11 (T3cy/163 nhp by Ottensener Maschf., Ottensen)

Built by Nüscke & Co. A.G., Stettin (#245) for Argo-Reederei A.G. (D.D.G. 'Hansa', mgrs), Bremen as TROSTBURG. 1923 sold to Roland Linie A.G., Bremen r. PERA. 1926 t/f to Norddeutscher Lloyd A.G., Bremen. 1926 sold to Cie. des Messageries Maritimes, Marseilles (reg. Diego Suarez) r. LE MYRE DE VILERS. 1928 t/f to Cie. Mar. Indo-Chinoise, Saigon r. GOUVERNEUR GÉNÉRAL PAUL DOUMER. 1935 reverted to Messageries Maritimes. 1938 reported t/f to Union Maritime Méditerranée but t/f to Cie. Asiatique de Nav., Saigon r. LAOS. 11/10/42 overwhelmed by cyclone in Gulf of Tonkin on passage Ha Long Bay-Saigon with coal, two out of 60 crew reported rescued 12/10 by French-flag *Canton* (unidentified).



LAOS as LE MYRE DE VILERS (wrecksite.eu).

#### Chartered vessels from mid-1890s

**ASK** 946/91 C2cy

Built by Burmeister & Wain, Copenhagen for D/S Aktiv (Carl Hassager mgr), Randers as ASK. 1914 sold to A/S Aktiv (V.H. Nisted mgr), Randers. 1915 sold to A/S D/S Thore, Copenhagen r. HEKLA. 1917 sold to A/S D/S Standard, Copenhagen. 25/12/17 sunk by mine in 39.50N, 15.42E on voyage Bone-Leghorn with phosphates.

**FREJR** 676/83 iron C2cy

Built by Lobnitz & Co., Renfrew for A/S Randers D/S af 1866 as FREJR. 1897 sold to A/S Det Jydske D/S, Randers. 1900 sold to Det Forenede D/S A/S, Odense. 10/3/26 demolition commenced at Copenhagen by Baltica-Vaerftet.

**ACTIV** see HAILAN above

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