

Cross-Yangtse Passenger & Rail ferries

Hankou & Hanyang/Wuchang; Nanjing/Pukou; Wuhu/Xikou; Jingjiang/Jiangyin

ILLUSTRATED FLEET LISTS

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We are particularly grateful to Donald Anderson for making available his colour photographs. The notation 'UoB' indicates a photograph has been sourced from Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol (www.hpcbristol.net).

Explanatory Note

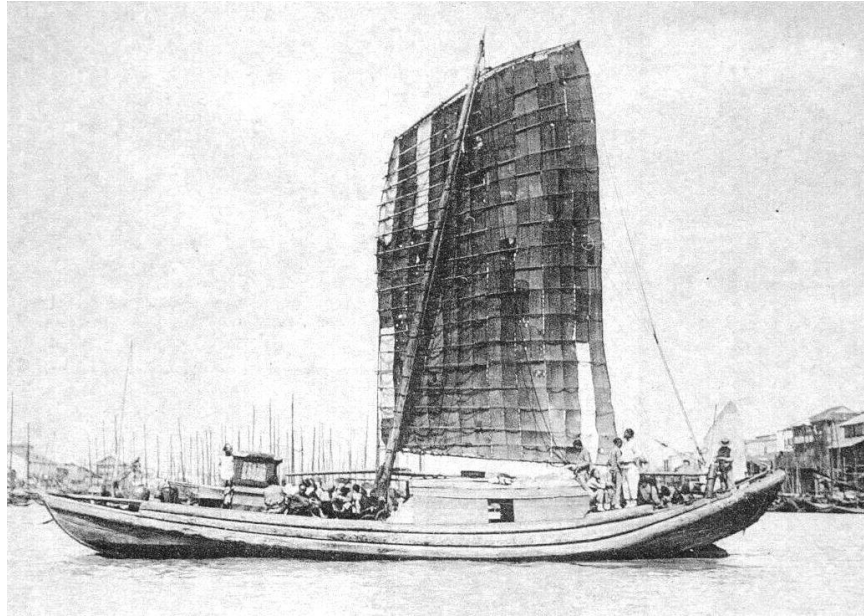
While junks and other craft have always been available for crossing the Yangtse at points over its entire length, this list aims to give the names and photographs of many of the powered ferries, steam and diesel, both passenger and train-carrying, which in the 20th century regularly crossed the river at four main locations. The list is in six sections below, in a broad chronological order of commencement of operations, and a detailed chronological order within each section. Compared to our other lists, the ships are relatively small, and do not appear in international registers, making information hard to come by, but even with the incomplete information which is unlikely to be error-free, we hope this effort can give a meaningful picture of an activity which, due to the construction of many bridges, has now largely become a thing of the past. We would greatly appreciate contributions of missing information, no matter how small, and further pictures.

Passenger Ferries - Wuhan (19th Century–c.2012)

<http://www.whlundu.com/News/Detail/25>

What is now known as Wuhan, the juncture of the cities of Hanyang and Hankou on the north bank, divided by the Hanshui River, and Wuchang on the south bank of the Yangtse River, has long been the largest population centre in China's inland. The earliest recorded history dates to 228 AD when "Xiakou City" was built by Sun Quan of the Eastern Wu on Snake Hill in what is now Wuchang. A temperate, beautiful and thriving area of rivers and lakes, travel and commerce across China's widest river, the Yangtse, has been conducted from time immemorial, and before the arrival of the first military

steamships in the 1850s. The population, then already over 1 million, now 11 million, was served by river junks, which continued to be used well into the 20th century.



Traditional Wuchang-Hankou ferry (from a postcard).

Hankow was opened as a Treaty Port to foreign flag commercial steamers in 1861, but Wuchang and Hanyang remained closed to foreign flag vessels. Doubtlessly the government-owned China Merchants Steam Navigation Co. commenced cross-river steamship services there in the 19th century, but we do not have details. After private Chinese-flag steamship companies were allowed from the late-1890s Feng Qi-jun 馮啟鈞 founded the Lee Kee Company 利記公司 and commenced a service between Wuchang and Hanyang and Hankow using two small steamers, the inaugural sailing being undertaken by *Lee Kiang* 利江.



Early 20th century view of the bund at Wuchang. The main landing point for crossings is mainly out of the picture at the lower left corner, where part of a landing stage, small bum boats, and rickshaws can be seen (postcard, Graham Thompson, coll.).



View several years later from the same angle, taken a little further back and showing in detail the cross-Yangtse ferry terminal where a steam ferry has been hulked and is in use as a staging pontoon. Commercial development is shown toward the top of the photo where premises have now been built out onto the bund plaza (Internet).



At Hankow about 1937 - similarly, former vessel in use as landing stage
(Harrison Forman <https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/agsphoto/id/12522/rec/81>).

It is recorded that that in the mid-1930s, the service underwent rapid development, extending to 6 routes with 7 ferries. “However, the ensuing wars caused the development of ferry to stagnate, and on the eve of Liberation, the wharf and ferry were in dilapidated conditions.” [Wuhan Ferry Company (link above)].

Following the establishment of the People’s Republic in 1949 the larger steamers were consolidated under a single management, and the ships were renamed LUNDU 輪渡 or “Steamer Crossing” with a number, probably numbering around a dozen in all. New ships were added in the 1950s and after, but the 1930s steam-powered vessels remained a mainstay, even after the completion of the spectacular First Yangtse Bridge in 1957, which carries both road and rail traffic between the historic Snake Hill in Wuchang and Tortoise Hill in Hanyang.



First Yangtse Bridge, taken from the present-day location of the Yellow Crane Tower on Snake Hill, Wuchang looking toward Tortoise Hill, Hanyang (centre) and Hankou to the right (SK*)

In December 2012 the first metro line crossing under the river was completed, and the metro network has subsequently developed into several lines with frequent trains and appears to have virtually completely replaced the ferries. In 2014 the Wuhan Ferry company website optimistically stated “In the new century, Wuhan Ferry has given full play to its advantages. Based on traditional ferry services, Wuhan Ferry has opened up new business projects such as two-river tours, zero-point special sailings, and fast routes. In the 114th year of the ferry, 10 new modern-style ferries have joined the ferry fleet. Wuhan Ferry has thus entered a new period of development.”



Morning commute, late 20th century, at low river level (https://www.sohu.com/a/274141244_760385).

As far as is known (2021), currently two ferry lines, the Wuzhong Line and the Midnight Line are known to still operate on a limited basis. The first, from Zhonghua Road Wharf in Wuchang to Wuhanguan in Hankou appears to attract tourists, motorcyclists and persons with substantial baggage, for whom the metro might be less preferable. The Midnight Line presumably operates at night when the metro shuts down for maintenance.

FLEET LIST

(unidentified)

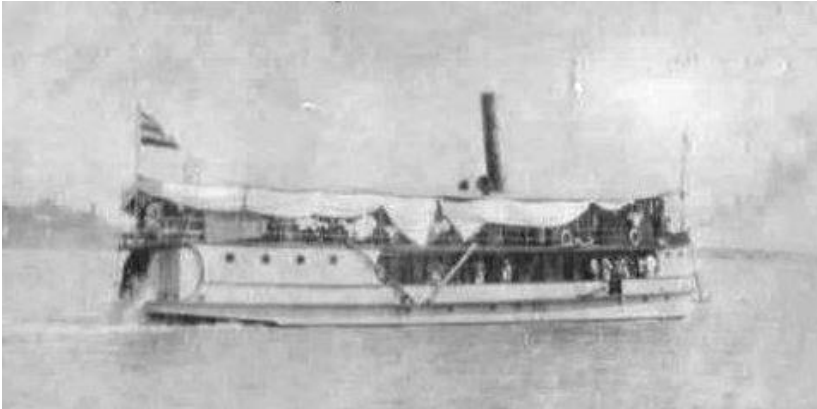


Possible 1890s China Merchants cross-river steamer at Hankou (SK colln).

LEE KIANG 利江

Inaugural steamer of the Lee Kee Company. In 1900. NFI.

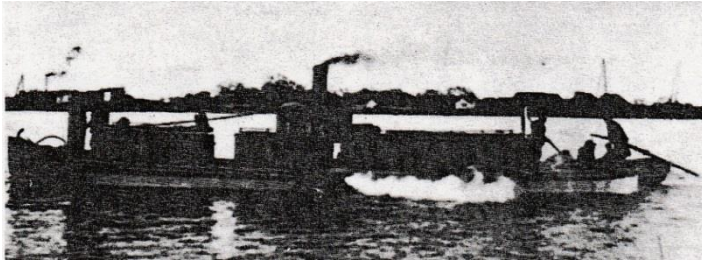
CHI FENG



CHI FENG at Hanyang. Possibly one of the early Lee Kee company steamers (Ebay).

HSIN YEN 新燕 /08 56' 60hp 9k 100 pass

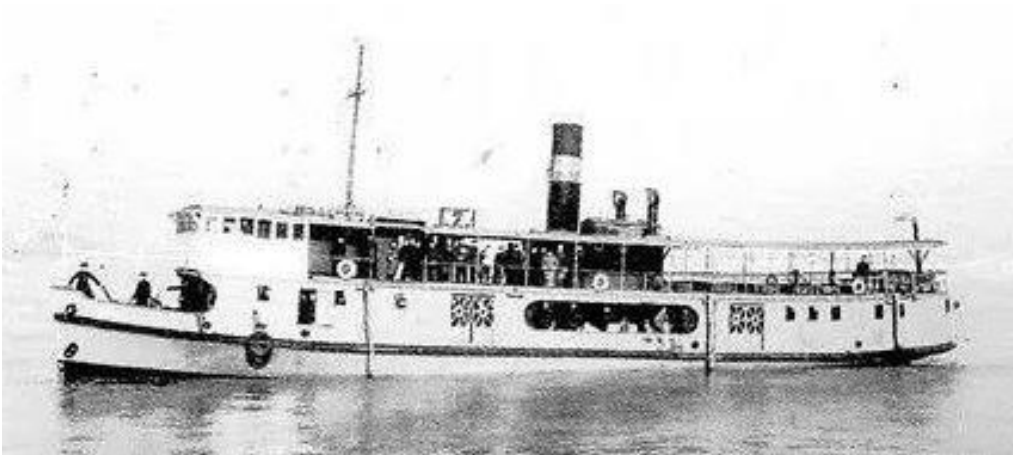
Built by Kousin Shipyard, Shanghai in 1908 for service at Wuhan.



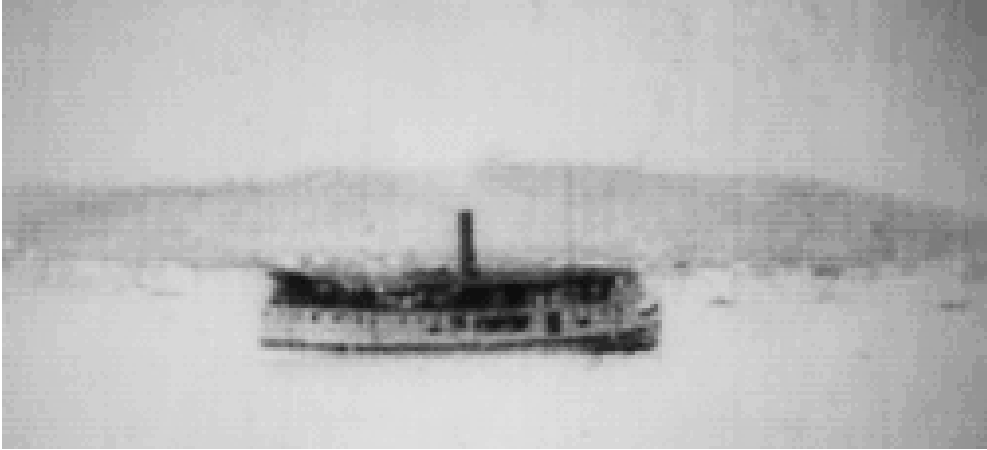
HSIN YEN, a smaller vessel built in 1908 (*Ships of China*).

1930s-built

HANYANG 漢陽



HANYANG, some openings closed during the winter months (hb.qq.com).



Likely HANYANG in front of Tortoise Hill (https://www.sohu.com/a/274141244_760385).



Consistent with HANYANG, in front of the 1924-built House (Customs House Museum).

CHANGYANG 長陽



Generally similar to HANYANG but perhaps slightly smaller (Internet).

(unidentified)

Steam reciprocating engine.



Ca.400t, low freeboard, in front of Tortoise Hill, Hanyang. Kongfz description says “An old photo of the Wuhan Ferry in the Republic of China (the chimneys of Guishan and Hanyang Iron Works are clearly identifiable in the distance)” (book.Kongfz.com/0/243089932).

(unidentified)



Extended design with greater number of windows (blog.sina.com.cn).

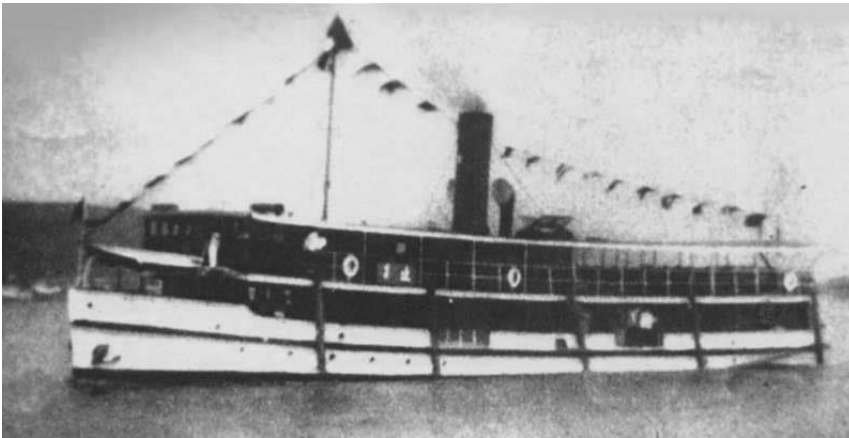
(unidentified)



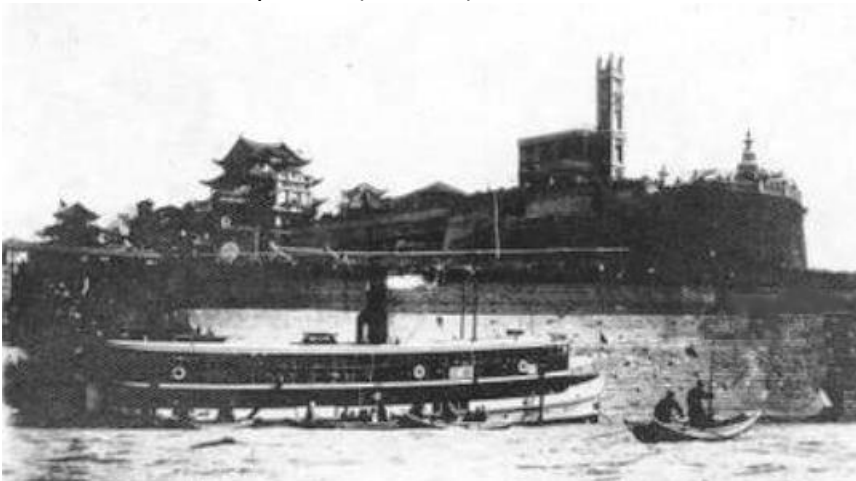
At Hankow about 1937, closeup from 3rd photo above
(Harrison Forman <https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/agsphoto/id/12522/rec/81>).

CHIEN HSIA 建夏

Built 1935 at Wuhan for Wuhan-Hankou service.



CHIEN HSIA on completion (SK colln).



CHIEN HSIA anchored with Snake Hill and Yellow Crane Tower, perhaps a composite image (SK colln).



Probable CHIEN HSIA in front of Tortoise Hill. Grey hull indicates this is a post-1945 view (Internet).

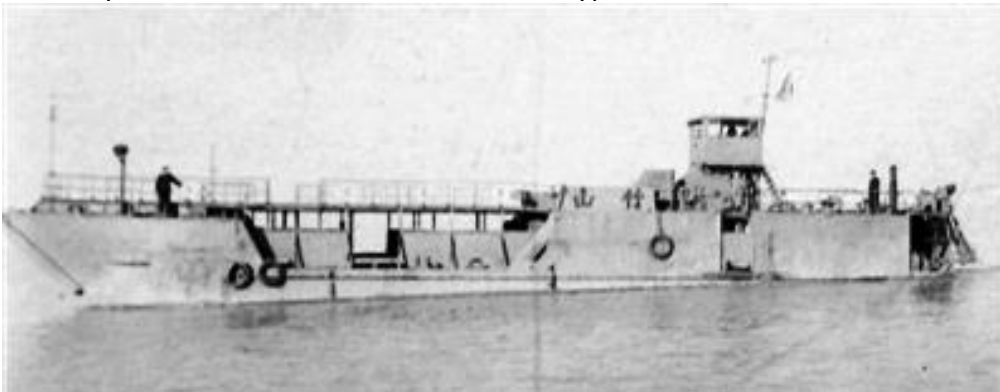
YENAN 延安



YENAN was presumably built in the late 1930s. Grey hull indicates this is a post-1945 view (Internet).

ZHUSHAN 竹山

Probably remodelled US-built 800-ton LSM type.



Post-1949:

LUNDU 1 轮渡 1



LUNDU 1, possibly the former YENAN (Internet).

LUNDU 轮渡 (single digit number, possibly 1)



Photo taken 1976 or later with the new 4000gt DONG FANG HONG 11 class Lower River steamers in evidence (Leroy W. Demery Jr?).

LUNDU 轮渡(number unreadable)

Built with Soviet Volga-style hard chine bow, circa. late 1950s.



Number unreadable at Hankou in August 1984 on the outside of LUNDU 23 (Donald Anderson).

LUNDU 5 轮渡 5



LUNDU 5 at Snake Hill terminal, Wuchang (Internet).

LUNDU 8 轮渡 8
Steam powered.



Above three photos August 1984 by Donald Anderson.

LUNDU 9 轮渡 9

Steam powered. In appearance, slightly elongated version of LUNDU 8.



Above three photos August 1984 by Donald Anderson.

LUNDU 19 轮渡 19

Larger more recent diesel-powered ferry.



LUNDU 19 (sohu.com/a/274141244_760385).

LUNDU 23 轮渡 23



Donald Anderson degahk

LUNDU 23 (Donald Anderson).

JIANG CHENG YI HAO 江城1号



Operating the Wuzhong Line in 2020 (Cui Meng/<https://www.globaltimes.cn/galleries/3359.html>).
Running mate named JIANG CHENG ER HAO 江城2号.



Unidentified, similar to JIANG CHENG YI HAO but without funnels (Internet).

Passenger Ferries - Nanjing to Pukou (c. 1900-c.1973)

As with Wuhan, the traditional method of crossing of the Yangtse from Nanjing city on the south bank to the district of Pukou on the north bank was by river junk, and photographs show vessels perhaps a little larger, but almost indistinguishable from those used further inland at Wuhan.



Pukou landing in the 1920s (Warren Swire Collection/UoB sw5-008).

Well before the 20th century the Nanjing/Pukou segment across the Yangtse had a strategical importance, being at the centre of the overland route from cities in the Shanghai area to Beijing, and Pukou was also the southern terminus of the Grand Canal, a major thoroughfare to the north. However the pressure at this location on resources for crossing the river became much greater with the completion of the Tianjin/Pukou rail sector in 1912 as a British and German initiative. Beijing/Tianjin had been completed as part of the Imperial Railways in 1900, and Shanghai/Nanjing in 1908.

The *Report on the Trade of Nanking for the Year 1908* written by Consul H. King and presented to the British Parliament states:

“... in speaking of Nanking I am including the town of Pukow on the opposite bank of the Yangtse. It seems probable that this place, which is the southern terminus of the Tientsin-Pukow Railway, will ultimately develop into the port, so to speak, of Nanking. I am told that the anchorage over on the Pukow side, that is on the left bank of the river, is better than that of the present port of Hsia Kuan on this side. With proper wharves, jetties, godowns etc., the construction of which is contemplated, there is no reason why Pukow should not become a busy commercial centre...

“The feasibility of conveying trains from the Shanghai-Nanking Railway over the river to the Tientsin-Pukow Railway by means of a steam ferry from the water’s edge at Hsia Kuan across to Pukow is being discussed, but as far as I am aware, nothing definite has been decided. The great variations in the water level of the Yangtse at different seasons of the year would appear to constitute a serious difficulty.”

Thus, on completion the new railway created an immediate need for passengers to disembark one train at Nanjing on the southern bank, cross the river by a Chinese-flag passenger boat, and embark on a train at Pukou on the opposite side. As at 1911 there was only one powered vessel that we know of, a launch TAI SHENG which was soon heavily patronised by the Chinese military and civilians and foreigners alike, but, to the despair of the Manager, Wharves and Ferries, Nanking, S.H. Hollamby, was reported to be unsafe both in terms of the transport of passengers and their possessions which often got “lost”, and in terms of water-worthiness. A larger vessel of perhaps 600 gt, the FEIHUNG was soon ordered by the railway, purpose-built at the Kiouzin (Qiuxin) works at Nantao and commissioned in November 1913 after a viewing at China Merchants Wharf, Hongkew, but there had been a hiatus in which TAI SHEN had been withdrawn for refit, her customs certificate having expired. [NCH 15/11/13 and 22/11/13, courtesy Graham Thompson] A further larger vessel, the CHEN PING, was completed in 1920. There is also evidence of tugs hitching alongside junk hulls for undertaking this crossing.

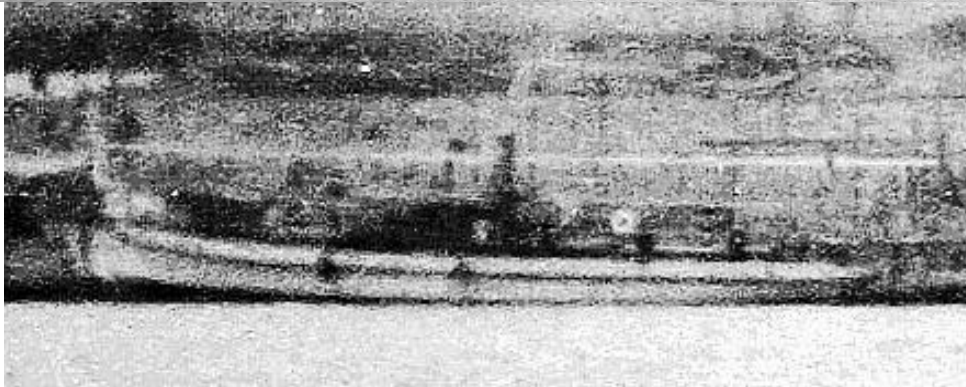
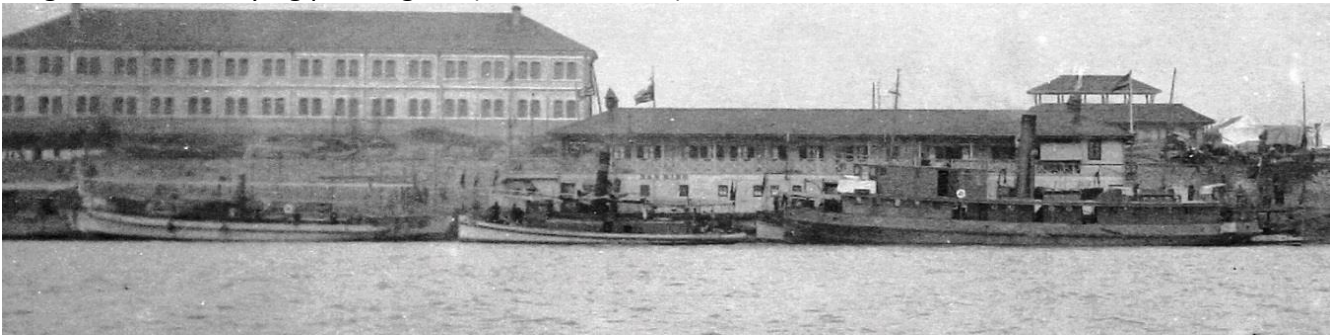
The new railway line was built with 85 stations, of which 31 were in Shandong province. Pukou thus became an important transportation hub connecting Hebei, Shandong, Anhui, Jiangsu and other 11 provinces. Nanjing North Railway Station (Chinese: 南京北站) railway station in Pukou was completed in 1914. Its beige building in an English architectural style. A single-pillar umbrella-shaped promenade that directly led to the platform and an arched rain corridor to the ferry terminal, protected and welcomed travellers both day and night, and it soon became the commercial centre of Pukou. Around the station there were coal berths, and lighters, and there soon sprang up a post office, hospital,

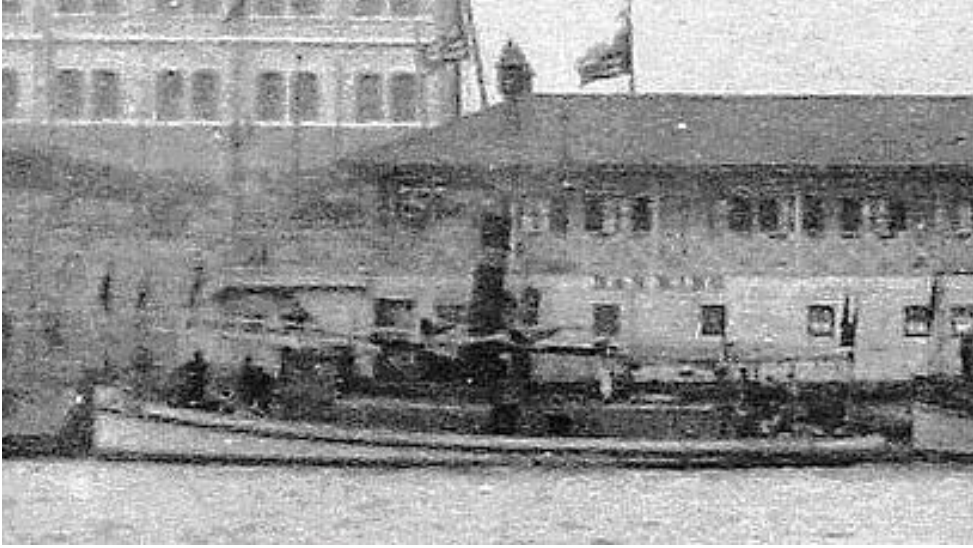
schools, restaurants, and more. A new Zhongshan Wharf (also known as Xiaguan Wharf) was built on the south bank of the Yangtze River in Nanjing.

In 1933 the rail ferry was introduced (see next section) but the passenger ferries remained important, especially for passengers who were not travelling on the long-distance trains. The CHEN PING, renamed JIANG FU survived until 1987, with a similarly-sized running mate JIANG PU, possibly ex-FEIHUNG, and at least one smaller vessel. However, the completion of the Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge in 1968, accommodating both road and rail traffic on different levels, and many other new means of crossing the Yangtze, greatly reduced the demand for travel by regular ferries, and there are currently (2021) only one or two passenger ships in operation, with about 50% of their passengers reported to be tourists.

TAI SHENG

Prior to November 1913 the ferry-launch TAI SHENG was withdrawn for repairs as considered no longer safe for carrying passengers. (NCH 22/11/13.)

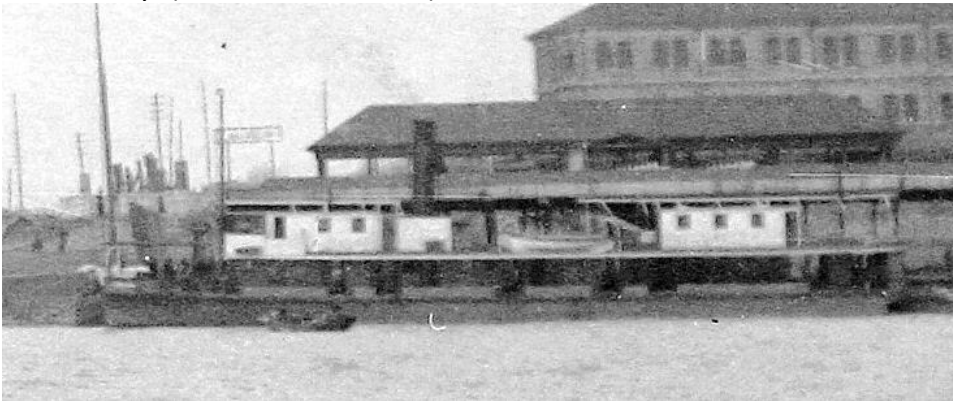




An early photo at Pukou shows three commercial tug-tender type vessels (one obscured by a larger vessel, probably of the Chinese Navy). One of these may be TAI SHENG (Warren Swire Collection UoB sw-05-002).

FEIHUNG

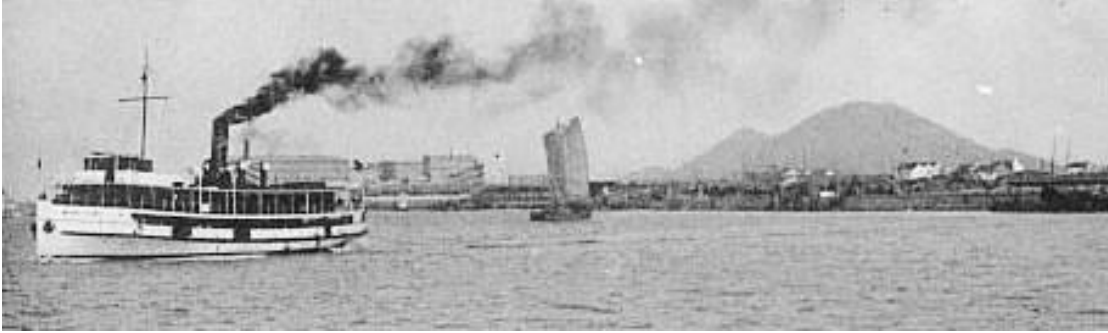
In November 1913 The Kiouzin (Qiuxin) works at Nantao on the Upper Section B of the Whangpoo below the Kiangnan dockyard delivered FEIHUNG to the Tianjin-Pukou Railway for use as a Nanjing-Pukou ferry. (Also NCH 15/11/13).



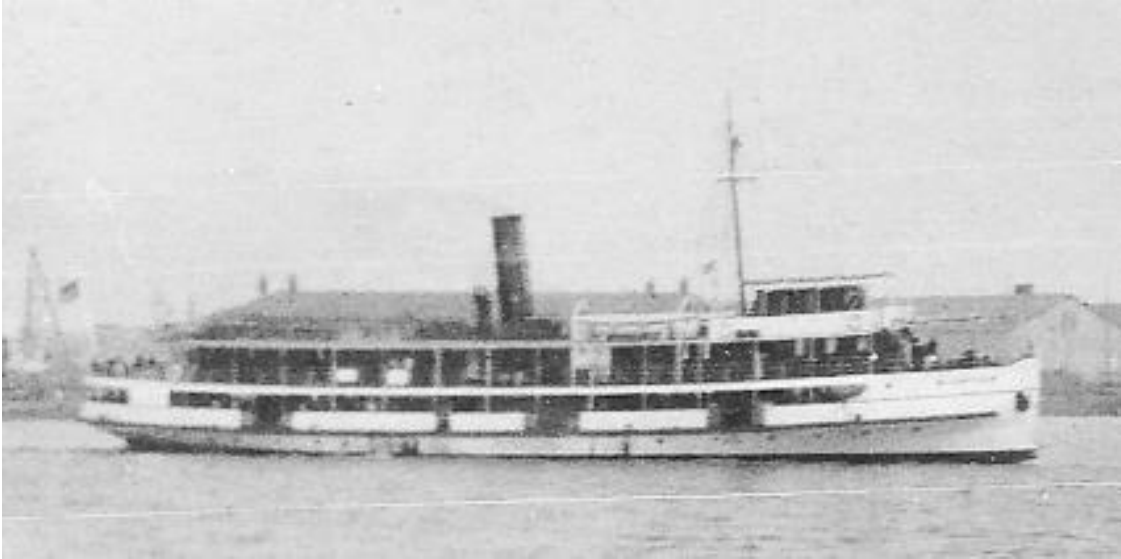
Probable FEIHUNG at Nanking. Bow slightly raised but notable absence of sheer (Warren Swire Collection UoB sw-05-001).

CHENG PING 澄平 (1920-c50) c.600/20

Built 1920. Post-1950 r. CHIANG FU. From 1958 name Romanised as JIANG FU. 1987 withdrawn.



Probable CHENG PING from a postcard (SK colln).



Probable CHENG PING prewar (SK*).



Likely CHENG PING with troops of the 2nd Field Corps travelling to north Nanjing on 12/9/49 (<https://kknews.cc/history/j6b9pp.html>).



JIANG FU ex CHENG PING in the post-1949 era (yycqc.com).



JIANG FU (SK*).

(unidentified)



Unidentified Mercedes diesel tug, towing a barge across the Yangtse to Nanking, reportedly on 17 April 1949 with retreating Nationalist troops and civilians (VGC, quoted on <https://www.dwnnews.com>).

JINGDIAN 京電 ('Nanjing Tug') 49.84/25 23.1x4.25 small coal powered steam tug
Built by Shenbaoji Shipyard, Yangjing for Huang Xingfa for Pukow/Capital Power Plant route as JINGDIAN. 4/49 brought from Xiaguan, 23/4 first vessel to cross with PLA from Pukow to Nanjing, towing barge, with 120 PLA commanders and fighters of the 103rd Division of the 35th Army of the Third Field Army. Subsequently returned to Nanjing Xiaguan Power Plant (formerly the Capital Power Plant) to transport coal, r. JINGDIAN No.1. 1978t/f to Huaiyin Power Plant. 1982 sold to Lianyungang owners r. SUHAI 605 re-engined with diesel engine. 2009 conv. to relic on land in front of Crossing Victory Memorial Hall, Nanjing as JINGDIAN, 11/11 designated national first-class cultural relic. Subsequently restored and housed indoors in new annex.
[\[http://www.803.com.cn/2021/02/18/99875651.html\]](http://www.803.com.cn/2021/02/18/99875651.html)



JINGDIAN (<https://ss1.baidu.com/6ON1bjeh1BF3odCf/it/u=327671448,1424237688&fm=27&gp=0.jpg>).



JINGDIAN exhibited in front of Crossing Victory Memorial Hall. Name is on restored vessel is given in pre-1949 characters, with HAO as a suffix
[\[https://ss1.baidu.com/6ON1bjeh1BF3odCf/it/u=4232500673,599469136&fm=27&gp=0.jpg\]](https://ss1.baidu.com/6ON1bjeh1BF3odCf/it/u=4232500673,599469136&fm=27&gp=0.jpg).

SHUN AN 春安



1930s or 1940s Jinpu Railway launch SHUN AN (Internet).

LING PING 凌平



Tug LING PING transporting troops of the the PLA's 35th Army from Pukou to Nanjing on 24 April, 1949.

(unidentified)



Unidentified Pukou/Nanjing steamer, in April 1949 (above 2: Harrison Forman colln, UWM Libraries).

JIANG FU 江孚(c.1950-87) ???/20

see CHENG PING 澄平 (1920-c50)

JIANG PU 江浦(19??-88)

Said to have been in different employment until major refit in 1960, withdrawn 1988. Possibly the vessel built as FEIHUNG (q.v.)



JIANG PU emerged from a major refit in 1960, withdrawn 1988. (yycqc.com).

FEI PU 飛浦



FEI PU, early 1980s (Leroy W. Demery Jr@flickr).



FEI PU alongside JIANG FU evidently laid up in August 1984 (Donald Anderson).

(unidentified)



Present day Zhongshan (Nanjing)-Pukou passenger ferry. Probably rebuilt FEI PU. (Dreamtime.com).

Rail ferries - Nanjing to Pukou (Oct 1933- May 1973)

http://www.360doc.com/content/20/0726/15/13214028_926818530.shtml

Tianjin & Beijing/Shanghai trains

As explained above, on completion of the Tianjin/Pukou rail sector in 1912 there was still a requirement to disembark the train for the Yangtse crossing from Pukou on the northern side of the river to Xiaguan in Nanjing in the south to connect with the Nanjing/Shanghai line. Passengers at Nanjing North (Pukou) were directed to take a passenger ferry, and board a train again at the then Nanjing main station on the south of the river and vice versa.

It was almost another ten years until the railways were able to complete a rail ferry link, in October 1933. The loading infrastructure (with a slope of up to 1 in 40), capable of working the greatly varying river heights, the locomotive for the ferry, an eight-coupled tank engine fitted with 2 cylinders, and the ferry itself, the *Changkiang* (meaning 'Yangtse') were built in the U.K. The trains loaded on the rail ferries were long distance ones, and passengers could remain in carriages while and after they were loaded on the ferry, to disembark when arriving at the destination of Tianjin or Shanghai 36 hours later. Others chose to break the journey and disembark, using the normal ferries instead, along with the local passenger traffic.

After Japan took over much of China including Nanjing a further two slightly smaller rail ferries, each capable of carrying 12 carriages divided among three onboard tracks, were completed at the Mitsubishi Jiangnan yard in Shanghai, but by 1945, of the three rail ferries, only the Shanghai-built *Pukou Hao* remained, and it is stated that she was on her own until 1955 when her sister, *Nanjing Hao*, which had been sunk during the 1940s hostilities was raised and repaired in Shanghai with a new midships section which made her considerably larger. With the completion of the diesel-powered *Shanghai*, *Jiangsu* and *Jinling* in 1958-9, the ferries were reported to number four in all, three in operation, and one in reserve. The *Jiangsu* and *Jinling* could each carry 19 carriages at a time. *Pukou* was evidently withdrawn, and possibly became an initial Wuyu ferry in 1958.

The completion of the First Yangtse River Road and Rail bridge at Wuhan in 1957 served to ease pressure at Pukou/Nanjing somewhat, and, of course, the opening of the two-level Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge in 1968 in effect meant the end of the rail ferries there. For the first year or so some of the ferries transported freight cars, military trains and other low-priority rail traffic, but from October 1958 all five remaining ferries were reported transferred to two new rail ferry crossings which were gradually set up for the Wuyu ferry. On 5 May 1973 the Pukou/Nanjing rail ferry service was officially terminated and the rails have since been pulled up, although some of the infrastructure is still promoted as a tourist attraction.

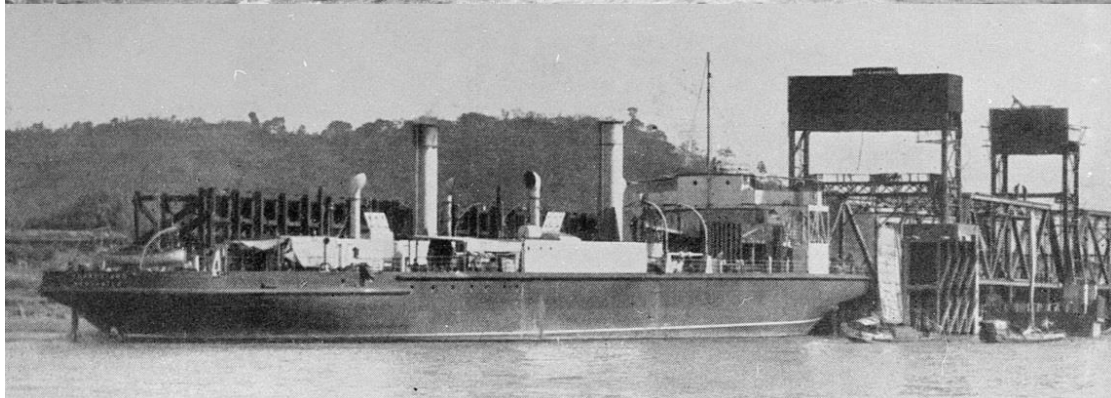
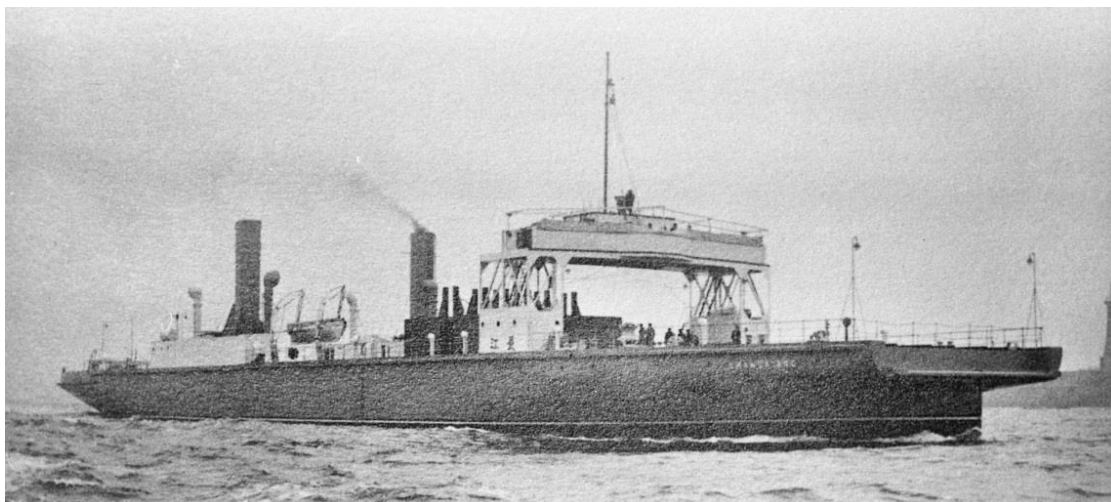
Note 1: China's post-1945 rail ferries were usually named after cities, districts or provinces, and to avoid confusion, especially in communications on the railway network, were given the nomenclature suffix 'Hao', which may be translated as "the" as in "The Pukou".)

Note 2: We have noted above that as the rail ferry service went out of use owing to completion of the

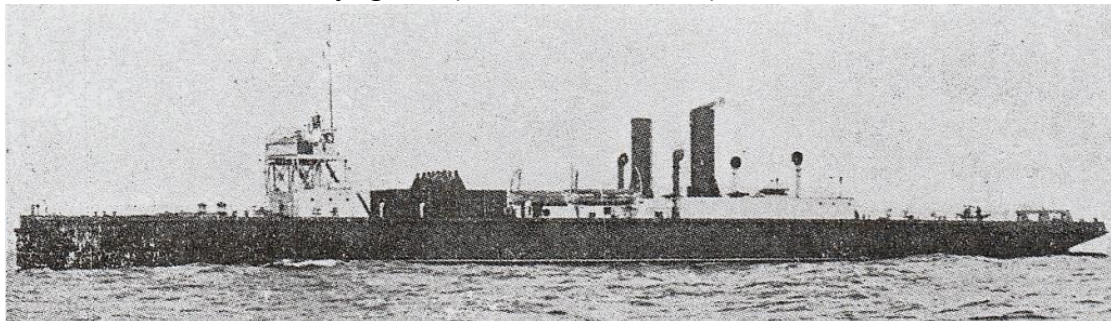
bridge, some of the ferries and other infrastructure were transferred to a succeeding route, and this happened with the Wuhan and later the Wuhu ferries as well. This is noted by cross-entries below for each ship where we are aware that this occurred.

CHANGKIANG 長江 (1933-4?) 2862/33

Built by Swan, Hunter & Wigham Richardson Ltd, Neptune, Newcastle for Chinese Railways as CHANGKIANG. NFI. Miramar states "believed lost in WWII - deleted from LR 1958".



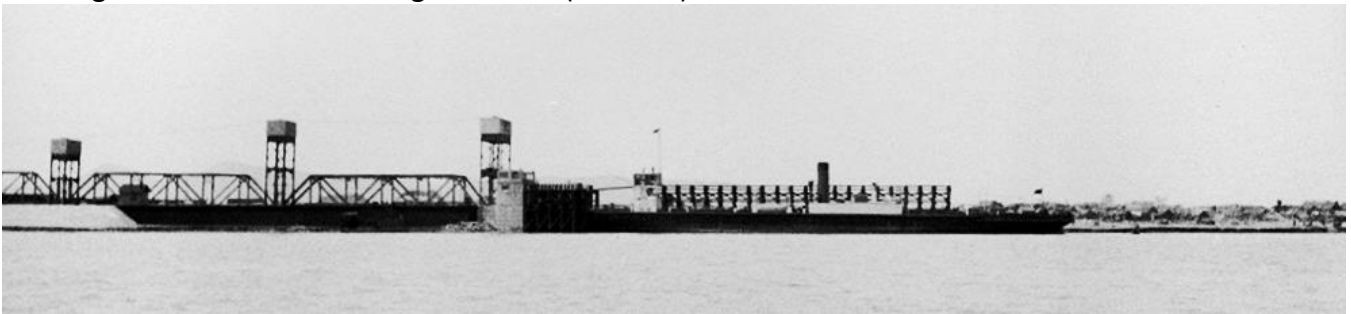
CHANGKIANG on the Nanjing side (both Alan Lee colln).



CHANGKIANG (*Sekai Shosen Yoran* p.277)



Passengers in the 1930s strolling the decks (Internet).



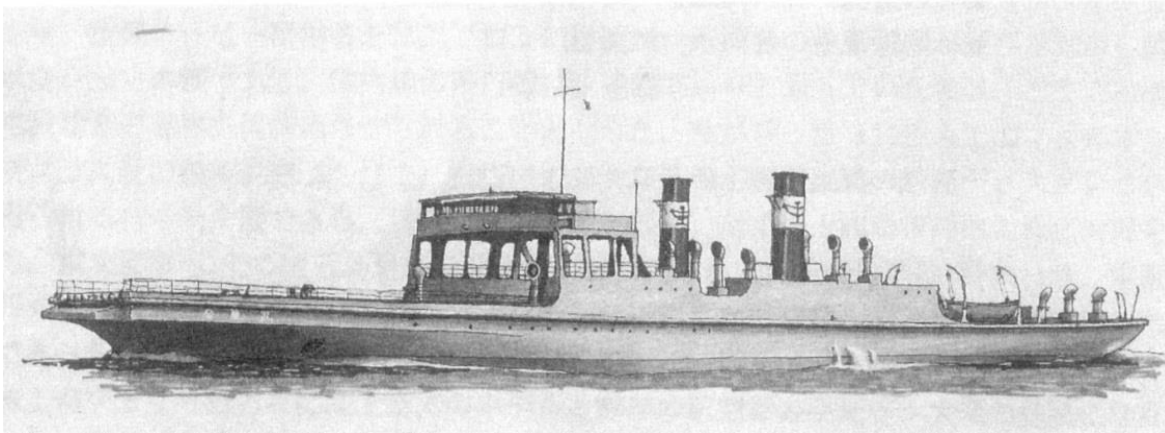
Warren Swire's profile of CHANGKIANG in position at the Pukow terminal (UoB sw29-133)



CHANGKIANG moored at left can be seen clear of eight 500 lb bombs from three Japanese bombers at Pukou, late-1937, although several pieces of shrapnel pierced awnings on *HMS Bee* from where this photograph was taken (William Humpheries@HMS Falcon website).

KINRYO MARU No.1 (JINLING MARU No.1) 第一金陸丸 (1942-49, 1955-??) 2717/42

Built by Mitsubishi Kiangnan. 1945 r. **NANKING HAO** 南京號. Reported sunk as a blockship, also reported c.1949 sunk in Ri Hui Gang, Shanghai. 4/50 raised, 1955 completed repairs and lengthening at Shanghai Shipyard with the new section being built and launched by New SB and E. Works. 1958 name Romanised as NANJING HAO. Ca.1970 withdrawn, evidently transferred to Wuyu, but withdrawn from Wuyu ahead of other ferries. 8/84 seen laid up in Yangtse. NFI.



JINLING MARU No.1 (*Fune to Minato*)



Being repaired in 1955 at Shanghai Shipyard after being raised in two sections (Internet).



NANJING HAO, funnels capped with canvas, laid up in the Yangtse in August 1984. Old (unsimplified) character for HAO (both Donald Anderson)

KINRYO MARU No.2 (JINLING MARU No.2) 第二金陸丸/PUKOW HAO 浦口号 (Ca. 1942-c.58)
2720/c.42

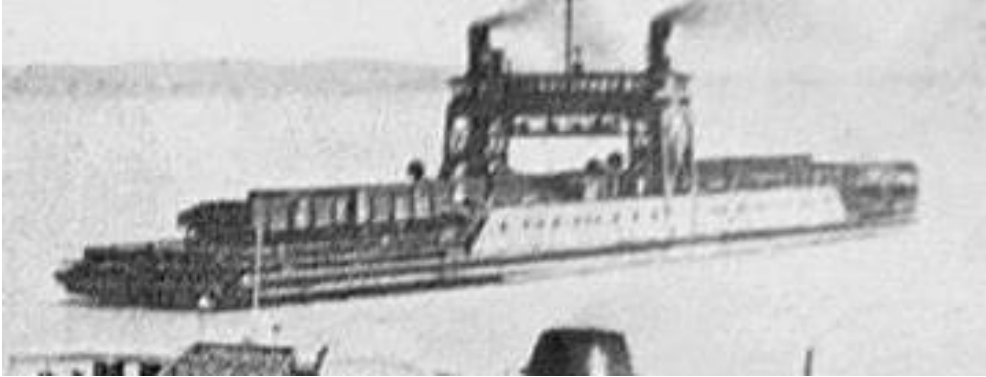
Built by Mitsubishi Kiangnan. 1945 r. PUKOW HAO. 14/4/49 transported PLA army and horses from Pukou to Nanjing. 1958 name Romanised as PUKOU HAO, but c.1958 retired from Nanjing-Pukou route. NFI.



Probable PUKOW HAO in 1958 (Internet).

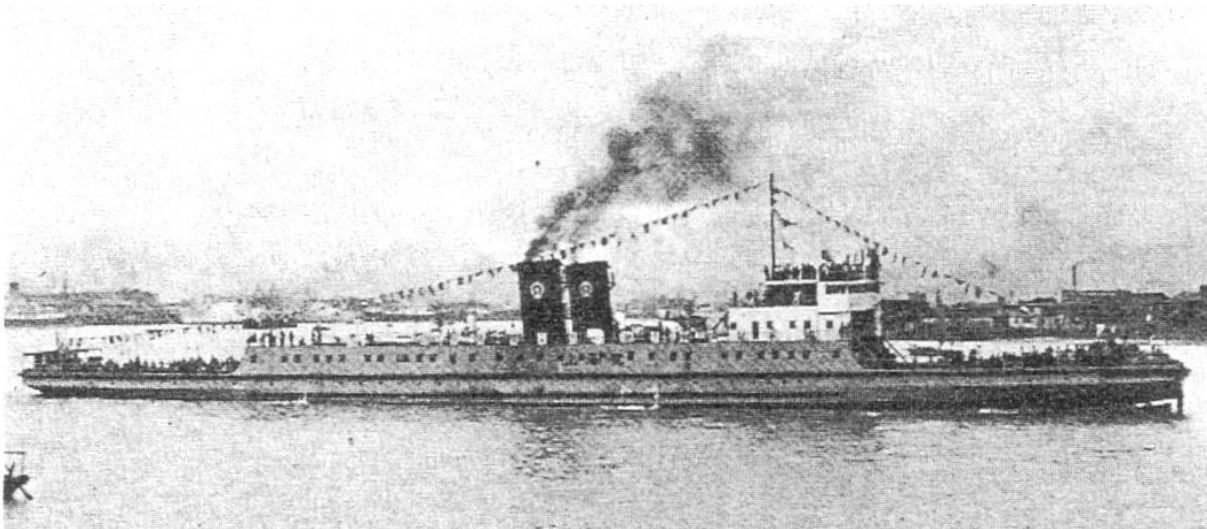
(unidentified)

Possible lengthened/refitted PUKOW HAO.



1950s (http://www.360doc.com/content/20/0726/15/13214028_926818530.shtml).

SHANGHAI HAO 上海号 (1958-??) 4950displ./58 118.7x17.2m. Reported as having diesel engines. Built by Jiangnan. Ca.1970 withdrawn and transferred to Wuyu service. 8/84 seen laid up in Yangtse. NFI.



SHANGHAI HAO (*Ships of China*).



Simplified version of the character HAO used on SHANGHAI HAO (Donald Anderson).

JIANGSU HAO 江蘇号 2978dw 2112displ /59 126.55x17,2 diesel

Built by Kiangnan. Improved version of SHANGHAI HAO. 15/12/62 transported Mao Zedong in his train. Later transferred to Wuyu route.



JIANGSU HAO in August 1984, SHANGHAI HAO moored behind (Donald Anderson).

JINLING HAO 金陵号 2978dw 2112displ /59 126.55x17,2 diesel

Built by Kiangnan. Identical sister of JIANGSU HAO. Later transferred to Wuyu route.



JIANGSU HAO or JINLING HAO in 1966 with a Maoist slogan, sister in background, along with the partially completed Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge

(http://www.360doc.com/content/20/0726/15/13214028_926818530.shtml).

Rail ferries - Wuhan (1936-57)

<http://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1665592177497432126&wfr=spider&for=pc>

Beijing/Canton trains

Perhaps less well known are the Wuhan rail ferries. In 1936 the 1,096 kilometers from Wuchang Xujiapeng to Guangzhou Huangsha on the Guangdong-Han Railway was completed, and the following March, the two railway ferry terminals of the Wuhan rail ferry were completed, along with several rail ferries. From then on, rail cars from Beijing would ferry across Wuhan from Hankou to Wuchang and reach Guangzhou directly. The Beijing-Guangzhou Railway, became a main artery of China's north-south transportation in the 1950s, given that the Taiwan straits were still blocked by the Nationalist blockade.

In its heyday four ferries operated 24 hours per day, enabling up to 2,000 carriages (mainly freight cars, often carrying coal) to be carried per day. In the case of passenger trains, at Wuhan passengers would disembark and take a passenger ferry, rejoining the train on the opposite side of the river. We have some details of the last remaining rail ferry, *Wuhan Hao*, of perhaps 800 tons displacement having two lines of onboard track, maximum capacity 13 carriages. Another ferry transferred to Wuyu, apparently from Wuhan, was named *Beijing Hao*. It may be deduced that a third Wuhan ferry was named *Kwangchow Hao* (in 1958 re-spelt as *Guangzhou Hao*), but we have no precise information. Three ferries other than *Wuhan Hao* were reported transferred to Wuyu, along with personnel.

With the completion of the First Yangtze Bridge at Wuhan in October 1957, the Beijing-Guangzhou rail ferry no longer was essential and the service was suspended, although because the railway across the bridge is but a single line of track, the *Wuhan Hao* was retained as a strategic reserve, and even in 2020 remained crewed and ready to move into action if the need arose. However, the north-south traffic is now obviously well served by other means, including with the completion of many other bridges such as the Nanjing rail bridge in 1968 and nearly 20 road bridges in Wuhan.

WUHAN HAO 武漢號 108x10.08m m 1,300 hp max 13 carriages on 2 tracks. Retained as a strategic reserve, and still existing 2020 with 18 crew divided into 3 shifts 24 hours per day 365 days per year.





WUHAN HAO in semi-retirement

(<https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1627537129573542780&wfr=spider&for=pc>).

BEIJING HAO 北京号 First rail ferry vessel of the name, no details, evidently transferred 1957 or 1958 from Wuhan to Wuyu where 31/10/58 undertook the first Wuyu sailing. 1985 probably withdrawn from service.

Rail ferries - Wuyu (31 Oct 1958 – 30 Sept 2000)

<https://www.163.com/dy/article/C9575UPS0522AF6V.html>

Tianjin & Beijing to Shanghai trains

A second north-south channel of the East China Railway the Wuhu-Xikou - 'Wuyu' - rail ferry link, located about 100 km upstream of Nanking, was established in 1958 connecting the traffic of Anhui, Jiangsu and Jiangxi provinces. The link was developed in two stages. With the completion of the Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge in 1958, three ferries that had operated at Wuhan became available to transfer to the Wuyu crossing. At that time, some employees of the Wuchang Ferry Section also moved to Wuhu with their families. The first Wuyu sailing was on 31 October 1958 by the "Beijing No. 1" rail ferry. The names of the other two ferries are not known, but it is likely that one was named *Kwangchow Hao* (from 1958 spelt as *Guangzhou Hao*).

By 1959, 73,300 freight cars were transported for the whole year, and part of the transport volume of the Jinpu via Nanking Line began to be diverted to Wuyu. In the late 1970s, the ferry *Anhui* was built, though still paved with two tracks and a maximum ferry capacity of 12 freight cars.

However, due to the somewhat limited facilities of Wuyu No. 1 Ferry link, in the winter of 1959, it was decided as a long term project to build a new trestle bridge rail ferry with remote-controlled lifting machinery upstream of the first ferry, that is, Wuyu Second Ferry link. But it was not until 25 May 1985 that the first phase of the Wuyu Second Ferry link was finally completed, and was opened to navigation on 2 August of that year, with the Wuyu First Ferry link immediately going out of service. There were six arrival and departure lines at Nan'an Ferry Station; at North Shore Ferry Station there were six arrival and departure lines and two lead lines.

In the late 1980s, the wharf was expanded and the two-strand track on the ferry became a three-strand track. The length of the ships was now in excess of 130 meters and the width was more than 17 meters, which greatly increased the transportation capacity to 27 freight cars. Transit time across the river was only 13 mins, but a round trip took about an hour, and longer during fog. The trains were virtually all freight trains, carrying, bamboo and timber from Anhui mountainous areas to the north, and coal from Huaibei and Huainan to the south, plus some general cargo.

By the early 1990s, the Wuyu Ferry was at its prime, with 5 main ferries, namely *Beijing Hao*, *Shanghai Hao*, *Jiangsu Hao*, *Jinling Hao* and *Wuhu Hao*, but often only 2 ferries in use at any time. There were also 5 auxiliary vessels (transportation ships, crane ships, tugs, etc.). At peak times, the main ferries provided more than 20 round trips voyages per 24 hours. Annual throughput could exceed 5000 round trips with more than 300,000 train cars ferried.

On 30 September 2000, the double deck Wuhu Yangtze River Bridge with two train tracks on the lower level was opened to traffic, and the Wuhu Railway Ferry was terminated, the final sailing by *Jiangsu Hao* at 1825 on that day. Wuhu is now also served by the Wuhu Yangtze River Second Bridge, and the Wuhu City South Crossing Tunnel. Key elements of the Wuyu rail ferry infrastructure have been retained as relics, but evidently (2021) have not been actively maintained.

BEIJING HAO 北京号 evidently transferred from Wuhan (q.v.), first Wuyu sailing 31 October 1958.

SHANGHAI HAO 上海号 4950displ./58 118.7x17.2m. diesel, transferred from Nanking (q.v.)

JIANGSU HAO 江蘇号 2978dw 2112displ /59 126.55x17,2 diesel, transferred from Nanking (q.v.)

JINLING HAO 金陸号 2978dw 2112displ /59 126.55x17,2 diesel transferred from Nanking (q.v.)

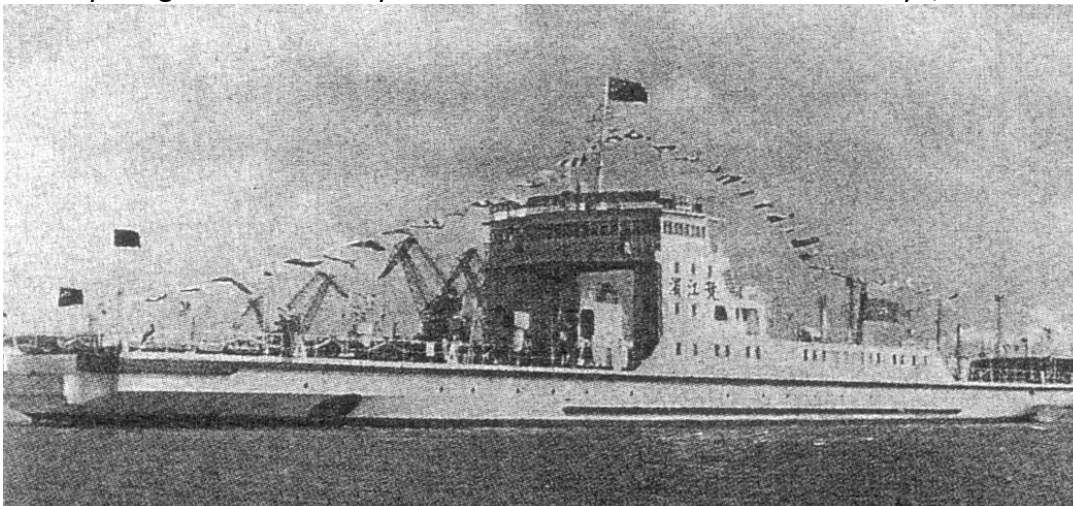


Updated version of one of the two sisters JIANGSU HAO or JINLING HAO from Nanjing transporting freight carriages in front of a bridge at Wuyu

<https://www.163.com/dy/article/C9575UPS0522AF6V.html>

PUJIANG HAO 浦江号 2796displ/61 diesel-electric propulsion

Built by Jiangnan. Presumably two track vessel built for service at Wuyu, but NFI.



PUJIANG HAO (*Ships of China*).

ANHUI HAO 安徽号 Built late 1970s.

Two track vessel built for service at Wuyu, capacity 12 freight cars.



ANHUI HAO (*Ships of China*).

BEIJING HAO 北京号 6086displ./90

Built by ZhonghuaShipyard for Wuyu service. From early 2000s used on Jingjiang/Jiangyin service. Withdrawn by 2019, NFI.



BEIJING HAO (*Shanghai Shipbuilding History*).



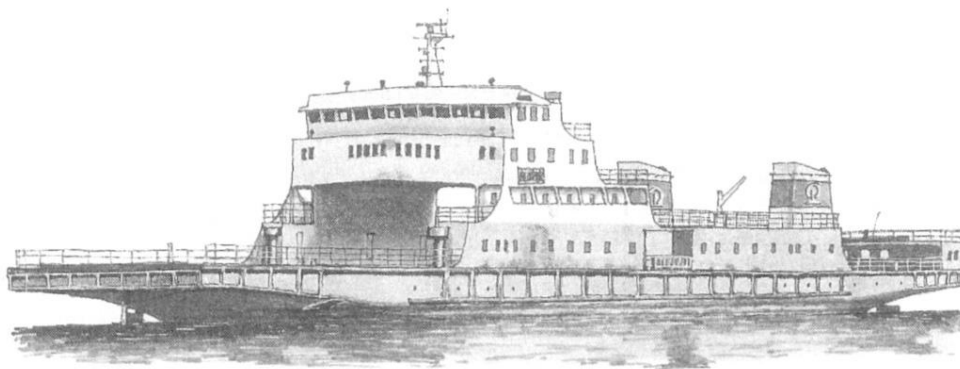
BEIJING HAO (www.sohu.com).



BEIJING HAO (www.sohu.com).

WUHU HAO 燕湖号 6086displ./90-6

Built by ZhonghuaShipyard, identical sister of BEIJING HAO built for Wuyu service. From early 2000s used on Jingjiang/Jiangyin service. Withdrawn by 2019, NFI.



WUHU HAO (Photo and sketch *Fune to Minato*).

Rail ferries - Jingjiang to Jiangyin (21 Oct 2004-16 Dec 2019)

https://www.sohu.com/a/218166933_655962

Beijing to Shanghai trains

Some three years after the closure of the Wuyu rail ferry, another rail ferry service was commenced across the Yangtze at Jinjiang/Jiangyin, about halfway between Nanjing and Shanghai. The Xinyi–Changxing railway or Xinchang railway is a single-track railway and was the first to be built in Jiangsu Province north of the Yangtze River. Construction began in September 1998 and the entire line was completed in April 2005. Passenger and freight service commenced on 1 July. The railway connects with the Longhai and Jiaozhou–Xinyi railways in the north and with the Nanjing–Nantong, Beijing–Shanghai, Xuancheng–Hangzhou railways in the south. A connection to Nantong (a section of the Nanjing–Qidong railway) was added in 2008. As the railway had no bridge or tunnel crossing at the Yangtze River at Jinjiang/Jiangyin, about halfway between Nanjing and Shanghai, trains needed to be ferried across the river from Jingjiang on the northern side of the river (terminal at 31.58-33N 120.18-27E) to Jiangyin on the southern side (terminal at 31.57-16N 120.19-25E).

The necessary shore infrastructure was completed in 2004, and the three track *Beijing Hao* and *Wuhu Hao* which had been used at Wuyu were presumably bought out of layup. A third ferry, the rather longer *Xin Jiang Hao*, was constructed in 2012. Sailing time was about 20 minutes, but the whole crossing process including shunting and reconnecting the carriages would take nearly two hours.



XIN JIANG HAO (bottom left) at the Jingjiang terminal (Google Earth).

By 2018, the through traffic began to fall owing to the efficiency of trains and other traffic using bridges to cross the Yangtze. For passengers, with the development of expressways, road coach transport had become dominant. From April 2018 only *Xin Jiang Hao* remained in service, being finally withdrawn on 16 December 2019. This marked the suspension of all rail ferries in Chinese domestic river basins. It should be noted, however, that the Sinorail Bohai rail, road and passenger ferry inaugurated in 2007 currently (2021) operates six services per day on the 100 nautical mile ocean route between Dalian and Yantai using three vessels, *Zhong Tie Bo Hai 1 Hao*, *Zhong Tie Bo Hai 2 Hao* and *Zhong Tie Bo Hai 3 Hao*, each capable of accommodating up to 50 railway freight cars, 50 twenty-ton trucks, 25 passenger cars and 400 passengers.



Bohai Gulf partial train ferry *Zhong Tie Bo Hai 2 Hao* (Alan Lee).

BEIJING HAO 北京号 6086displ./90

transferred from Wuyu (q.v.)

WUHU HAO 蕪湖号 6086displ./90-6

transferred from Wuyu (q.v.)

XIN JIANG HAO 新长号 /12



XIN JIANG HAO (Internet).



XIN JIANG HAO (www.sohu.com).