

# Iino Shipping Company – Japan’s Shipping Centurion

By Geoff Walker



Iino Shipping Company, a name that is perhaps not that familiar in Europe and the West but, in fact, it is one of the worlds older shipping companies with a history dating back, more than a century, from when it was first established in 1899, making it incorporated for some 120 years. It can, therefore, be categorized as one of Japan’s shipping legends. The correct and current Japanese name for the Company is **Iino Kaiun Kaisha Ltd.**, when it was rebranded as such, in 1944.

Founded by **Torakichi Iino**, who first started transporting Coal in Barges from the Port of Maizuru, Located in the Kansai region on Japan’s main island of Honshu. This shipping operation worked in parallel with a Stevedoring Company he inaugurated at the same time.



Left, a rather formal image of the Iino Shipping Company founder, **Torakichi Iino**.



Map of Japan with Green Spot showing location of **Maizuru Port**.

Little information is available during the periods of conflict involving Japan prior to WW2 other than most Japanese commercial tonnage was seized by the Imperial Japanese Government, and pressed into War Service, in one way or another. Despite the curtailment and commercial dormancy of the business during the Second World War and again, from the major consolidation of Japan’s shipping industry in 1964; the IINO Group has contributed substantially to the development of Japan’s Shipping Industry and is considered a pioneering leader.



An old and scratchy image of the **Takatori Maru No. 1** (1,266 DWT), the Group's first tanker, which was delivered in 1929.



In 1931 the **Fujisan Maru** (13,586 dwt), Japan's largest oceangoing tanker, was delivered to **ino Lines**.

Post - World War 2, the scope for rapid expansion of the Japanese shipping industry existed. This provided "**ino Lines**" with an opportunity to enhance its International and domestic involvement, creating an expansion of the fleet.

In 1951, **ino Lines**, saw great opportunities to open liner services and commenced a service to Bangkok, India, Pakistan, and New York; likewise, in 1957 the liner services were expanded to include West Australian Ports, and again in 1958 with the inclusion of a liner service to Nakhodka. It was also at this point that they inaugurated liner services between North America and Southeast Africa.

The separation of the Liner Service Department was brought about by consolidation of the Japanese shipping industry in 1964, resulting in **ino Kisen Kaisha Ltd.**, later amalgamating with **Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha, Ltd.**, commonly recognized nowadays as simply, "**K Line**". Since then, **ino Lines** has had its focus firmly placed on tankers and tramp cargo shipping operations, including Woodchip carriers.



Left, one of the two ino Line's Woodchip Carriers, **Pax Silva**, built in 2007 and has a dwt of 49,000 tons. Panama flag. She is seen posting an interesting study as she forges ahead at full speed in lightship condition, most likely bound for Australia to load.



Above right, the same vessel pictured loading at the Port of Albany, in Western Australia.

Below, the second Woodchip Carrier in the lino fleet is the **Grove Island**, built in 2020, with a dwt of 49,999 tons. Also, Panama flag.



Recognizing opportunities in the woodchip market during the 1990s, **Iino Lines** entered the trade, despite rapid expansion of electronic technology had forecast a downturn in paper production in Europe and the Americas. Nevertheless, that was not the case in Asia, with Japan, Korea and China markets showing high demand throughout the 1990s and into the 2020s, for woodchips and paper production. Traditional Japanese owners, such as **Iino Lines** and a few others, now dominate this niche market.

1990s, was also a period of significant milestones to Iino Lines with them participated in the Qatar LNG Project, becoming co-owners of ten LNG tankers (built between 1996 and 2000)

In the Small Gas Carrier Division of the Group, **IINO Gas Transport Co., Ltd. (IGT)**, was established in 2007, it being a wholly owned subsidiary of **Iino Lines**.

**IGT** has a fleet comprising primarily of small, sophisticated, pressurized LPG carriers, to facilitate domestic shipping within Japan, and transport in near coastal and regional waters, ranging from LPG carriers (high-pressure type), ethylene carriers (refrigerated type), LNG carriers, and molten sulfur carriers, while cargoes range from low-temperature cargoes to high-temperature cargoes, such as fuel gases including LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) and LNG (liquefied natural gas); petrochemical gases including ethylene, propylene, VCM (vinyl chloride monomers), and molten sulfur.

The **Iino Group's** Small Gas Carrier Division first began transporting LPG in domestic waters using their **Toho Maru**, Japan's first pressurized domestic gas carrier, which was completed in 1960. Currently **Iino Lines** is the leader in the Japanese domestic market, in terms of LPG and petrochemical volume transported. In 2005 **IGT**, introduced their second domestic LNG carrier, the **North Pioneer**.

During 2017 **IGT** introduced their **Taikasan**, an ethylene carrier. **IGT** first commenced operating ethylene carriers since 1967. The introduction into service of the **Taikasan**, marks their 3<sup>rd</sup> generation.



**Taikasan** – Ethylene Carrier of **IGT**



Built for **Iino Line** in 2019, the Panama Flagged Chemical Tanker **Creole Sun** - dwt 49,760 tons.



See left, 1970 heralded the delivery of **Iino Line's Zenkoran Maru NO. 5** (58,931 dwt), the Group's first Panamax dry bulk carrier. This vessel was fitted with gantry cranes, allowing self – discharge.



**Iino's** Dry Bulk Carrier **Pegasus Island** of 88,876 dwtcc. Built and delivered in 2018 and placed under the Panama register. The majority of Iino Line ships are Panama flagged, under companies of ownership registered in the same domain. The **Iino Group** operates a diverse fleet of Bulk Carriers matched to transportation demands to provide reliable transportation services in the dry cargo sector.



The Iino Lines 2020 built Bulker **Carmellia Island**, of 84,854 dwtcc.

Iino Lines VLCC, **SHOHO MARU** was delivered at the end of September 2020, and **YOHO** was delivered in January 2021, both of which use the latest technology to improve propulsion performance and reduce fuel consumption, and to ensure its fleet of double hulled and environmentally conscious VLCCs comply with increasingly stringent environmental regulations.



Iino Line's history with large gas carriers dates back more than 58 years when in 1963 the **Toyosu Maru**, a large oceangoing LPG carrier, joined their fleet, ranking them as pioneers in this sector of the shipping industry. Today, with their long-established experience and understanding of the technologies associated with the transportation of liquid gasses, they have become renowned by clients in Japan, and internationally, as industry leaders. Functioning as a seaborne LPG supply pipeline, their focus on serving the world's major LPG importing countries - Japan, Korea, and China is set to continue.



Above, **Iino Line's Nadeshiko Gas** a VLGC built by Kawasaki Sakaide Works - Sakaide, Japan, in 2013. Currently sailing under the flag of Panama. Formerly also known as, Nad Sheko Gas, plus others. The ship has a GRT of 45812 tons.

The secret to Iino Lines' success has been its professional management style, shrewd and astute investment in developing shipping avenues, and smart collaboration with its prestigious shipping partners. This philosophy continues within the group ensuring it to always stay ahead of the curve, in its strategic planning and positioning of its fleet. As of 2021, the **IINO Group's** modern fleet includes a combination of oil tankers, chemical tankers, LNG carriers, LPG carriers, and dry bulk carriers and woodchip carriers. As of June 2020, the Group's Fleet was as follows, totaling 112 vessels.

<b>No of ships</b>	<b>Dead-weight tonnage</b>	
Oil Tankers	3	914,410
Chemical Tankers	43	1,468,948
Large Gas Carriers	17	1,116,824
Small Gas Carriers	28	64,561
Dry Bulk Carriers	21	1,179,599 (incl 2 Woodchip Carriers)
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>4,744,342</b>

There have been many significant milestones during "**Iino's** long and illustrious existence, but to highlight but a few randomly,

In 2004 **Iino UK Ltd.**, a London-based subsidiary, was established.

In 2006 Iino Lines transferred its chemical tanker operations **Iino Singapore Pte. Ltd.**, a subsidiary company incorporated in Singapore.

In 2014 Iino Lines (U.S.A.) Inc., a Houston - based subsidiary, was established.

In 2019 **Creole Sun** (49,000 DWT), the Group's first methanol-powered engine technology tanker, was delivered.

In 2020 **Iino Line's** 5th Generation **Fujisan Maru**, 312,499 dwtcc delivered. The Group's first vessel fitted with SOx Scrubbers to remove sulphur oxides (SOx) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) from the exhaust gasses generated as a result of combustion processes in marine engines, to implement pollution control.



An icon for Iino Lines, the mammoth 2020 built **Fujisan Maru**, 312,499 dwt, appropriately flagged in Japan and a national icon.

End

References; Corporate and historical references and archives of Iino Lines (Iino Kaiun Kaisha Ltd.) and their subsidiaries, various online data available from the Public Domain.

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