



**Report of Investigation
into the Collision between
the Hong Kong registered container ship
OOCL Southampton and the Chinese
Mainland-registered coastal vessel *Hang
Sheng 18* off east of
Ninepin Group, Hong Kong
on 5 November 2013**



The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Marine Department
Marine Accident Investigation Section

9 Jan. 2015

Purpose of Investigation

This incident is investigated in accordance with the Code of the International Standards and Recommended Practices for a Safety Investigation into a Marine Casualty or Marine Incident (the Casualty Investigation Code) adopted by IMO Resolution MSC 255(84).

The purpose of this investigation conducted by the Marine Accident Investigation and Shipping Security Policy Branch (MAISSPB) of Marine Department, in pursuant to the Merchant Shipping Ordinance Cap. 281, the Shipping and Port Control Ordinance (Cap. 313), or the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance (Cap. 548), as appropriate, is to determine the circumstances and the causes of the incident with the aim of improving the safety of life at sea and avoiding similar incident in future.

The conclusions drawn in this report aim to identify the different factors contributing to the incident. They are not intended to apportion blame or liability towards any particular organization or individual except so far as necessary to achieve the said purpose.

The MAISSPB has no involvement in any prosecution or disciplinary action that may be taken by the Marine Department resulting from this incident.

Table of Contents

	Page
1 Summary	1
2 Description of the vessels	2
3 Sources of information	4
4 Outline of events	5
5 Analysis of information	9
6 Conclusions	12
7 Recommendations	14
8 Submissions	15

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Hong Kong registered container vessel “OOCL Southampton” (OSN) left Yantian China at 2300 local time (UTC+8) on 4 November 2013 and bound for Singapore. At 2343 the main engine of OSN was put to full ahead and the ship’s speed was gradually increased to her maximum of about 21.5 knots.
- 1.2 At 1400 on 31 October 2013, the Chinese Mainland-registered coastal vessel “*Hang Sheng 18*” (HS18) left Qinzhou, Guangxi for Ningbo, China. After taking bunker off Wailingding, at 2017 on 4 November 2013, HS18 resumed sailing to Ningbo with a speed of 6.3 knots.
- 1.3 At 0051 on 5 November 2013, the bow of OSN collided with HS18 at around middle of No.1 cargo hold on the port side. A large amount of water poured into HS18 and subsequently, HS18 sank in approximately position Latitude 22-14.48N, Longitude 114-27.18E, off east of Ninepin Group, Hong Kong. OSN suffered a long scratch on the starboard hull, slight dent on her starboard side shell plate and bulbous bow. All crew members of HS18 were rescued by OSN, 2 of the 12 crew members were slightly injured on their hands in the incident. Minor oil pollution was reported in the incident.
- 1.4 At the time of collision, it was raining and the wind was northeast by east with force 5 on Beaufort wind scale. The sea was about two meters high and the visibility was about 4 to 5 nautical miles.
- 1.5 The investigation revealed the following contributory factors:
 - (i) OSN failed to comply with Rule 6 (safe speed) of the COLREGS¹, she proceeded through a high traffic density area with the maximum speed. Being a give-way vessel in a crossing situation, OSN neither took early and substantial action to keep well clear of the stand-on vessel, nor did she slacken her speed or take all way off by stopping or reversing her means of propulsion to allow more time to assess the situation in accordance with Rule 16 (Action by Give-way Vessel) and Rule 8 (Action to avoid Collision) of the COLREGS; and
 - (ii) HS18 failed to comply with the requirements of the COLREGS, such as when it was so close that collision cannot be avoided by the action of the give-way vessel alone, she did not take such action as would best aid to avoid collision (Rule 17 - Action by Stand-on Vessel) and the action taken by HS18 to avoid collision with OSN was not positive and too late, that did not result in passing at a safe distance (Rule 8 - Action to Avoid Collision).

¹ COLREGS - International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended.

2. Description of the vessels

2.1 *OOCL Southampton*

2.1.1 Ship Information

Flag	:	Hong Kong, China
Port of Registry	:	Hong Kong
IMO No.	:	9310240
Call Sign	:	VRCU7
Type	:	Container Carrier
Year of Built	:	2007
Gross Tonnage	:	89,097
Net Tonnage	:	55,204
Length (Overall)	:	322.97 m
Breadth	:	42.80 m
Summer Deadweight	:	99,678 MT
Main Engine	:	1 set Doosan MAN B&W 12K98ME-C
Engine Power	:	93,120 BHP
Service speed	:	25 knots at 13.0 meters designed draft
Classification Society	:	American Bureau of Shipping (ABS)
Shipbuilder	:	Samsung Heavy Industries Co., Ltd. Koje Shipyard, South Korea
Ship Owner	:	Asset Finance December (M) Limited
Ship Operator	:	Orient Overseas Container Line, Limited



Figure 1 –*OOCL Southampton*

- 2.1.2 She was a fully cellular container vessel (figure 1).
- 2.1.3 The navigational equipment on board consisted of a standard magnetic compass, a gyro compass, an automatic identification system (AIS), a voyage data recorder (VDR), three sets of radars, two set of Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) and three sets of very high frequency (VHF) radios.

2.2 *Hang Sheng 18 (航盛18)*

2.2.1 Ship Information

Flag	:	China
Port of Registry	:	Qin Zhou, Guangxi, China
IMO No.	:	N/A
Call Sign	:	BMGR
Area of trade	:	Coastal
Type	:	Bulk Carrier
Year of Built	:	2008
Gross Tonnage	:	2,981
Length (Overall)	:	98.22 m
Breadth	:	16.20 m
Deadweight	:	4,901 MT
Main Engine	:	1 set combustion engine, 1,765 KW
Classification Society	:	Ship inspection bureau of the People's Republic of China (ZC)
Shipbuilder	:	Zhenjiang Shixing Ship Building Co., Ltd.
Ship Owner	:	Guangxi Hangsheng Shipping Limited

- 2.2.2 The navigational equipment on board included: one set of AIS, two sets of radars, one Global Positioning System (GPS), one set of echo sounder and three sets of VHF radios etc.

3. Sources of Information

- 3.1 The master, duty officer and rating, and ship management of *OOCL Southampton*
- 3.2 The master, duty officer and rating of *Hang Sheng 18*
- 3.3 Hong Kong Observatory
- 3.4 The Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) of Marine Department, Hong Kong
- 3.5 The Harbour Patrol Section (HPS) of Marine Department, Hong Kong

4. Outline of Events

All the times used in this report are local time in Hong Kong (UTC+8)

4.1 Account of *OOCL Southampton* (OSN)

- 4.1.1. OSN left the port of Yantian, China bound for Singapore at about 2300 on 4 November 2013. At about 2343 the main engine of OSN was put to full ahead. The ship's speed was then gradually increased to her maximum of about 21.5 knots, in order to pass ahead of the typhoon "Hai Yan" which was approaching the Philippines. All shipboard navigational equipment were reported to be in good working condition.
- 4.1.2. At 2350 the second officer attended the bridge to relieve the third officer while the master was conning the vessel. After the second officer took over the watch and all was clear. The master handed over the con to the second officer and told him that he would stay at the radio space to send pre-arrival notice for next port, Singapore and the departure report.
- 4.1.3. At 0010 on 05 November 2013, after sending the reports, the master came out of the radio space and watched the traffic on the radar screen. The master told the second officer that he was going to his cabin for a while to change his clothing. The master said that he noticed "*Hang Sheng 18*" (HS18) on the radar before he went down to change his uniform.
- 4.1.4. At around 0032, HS18 was first acquired on the radar and she was on starboard bow of OSN with distance about 7.9 nautical miles. The second officer was monitoring the radar which displayed on 6 nautical miles range scale with off center mode. The automatic radar plotting aids (ARPA) displayed that the closest point of approach (CPA) of HS18 was 1 cable (0.1 nautical miles). The course of OSN was about 185° and the speed was maintained at about 21.5 knots at the material time.
- 4.1.5. At around 0040, the master returned to the bridge, he monitored the X-band radar while the second officer was monitoring the S-band radar. Several vessels included HS18 were crossing over from both sides at forward of OSN (figure 2). HS18 was at a distance of 4.7 nautical miles on starboard bow 2 points (about 23°) and the CPA was still keeping 1 cable.
- 4.1.6. At 0049, the distance between the two vessels was reduced to approximately 1 nautical mile. As no action was taken by the second officer, the master took over the con and ordered wheel "starboard 20", he subsequently realized that a collision was about to happen, the master ordered wheel "hard to port" in order to minimize

the impact to the other vessel according to the master.

- 4.17. At 0051 on 5 November 2013, OSN collided with HS18 off east of Ninepin Group. The main engine of OSN was maintained at navigational full ahead until the collision. As the result of the collision, OSN suffered a long scratch on the starboard hull. Slight dents were found on her starboard side shell plate and bulbous bow. However, the watertight integrity of the vessel was maintained.
- 4.18. At the time of collision, it was raining and the wind was northeast by east with force 5 on Beaufort wind scale. The sea was about two meters high and the visibility was 4 to 5 nautical miles.
- 4.19. At 0115 on 5 November 2013, OSN rescued all the 12 crew members of HS18 and then she proceeded to southeast Lamma anchorage for investigation.

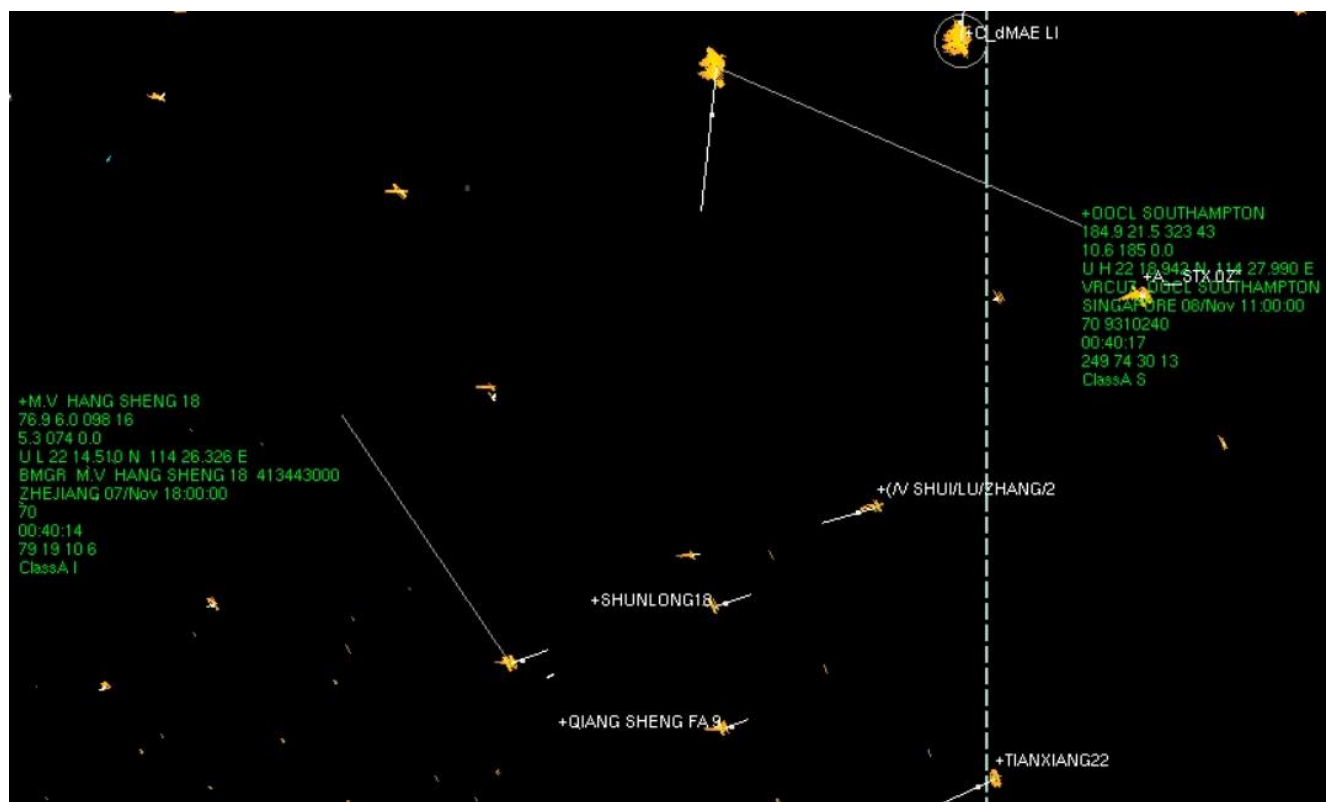


Figure 2 – at 0040 on 5 November 2013, the traffic condition viewed from VTC Radar, the distance between OSN and HS18 was about 4.7 nm

4.2 **Account of *Hang Sheng 18* (HS18)**

421. At 1400 on 31 October 2013, after loading 3,664 tons of paper pulp, HS18 left Qinzhou, Guangxi and bound for Ningbo, China.
422. After taking bunker off Wailingding, at 2037 on 4 November 2013, HS18 resumed her passage to Ningbo. At time of sailing, the bridge team consisted of the master and one able bodied seaman (AB). All navigational devices were in good working condition.
423. At 2330 on 4 November 2013, the third officer came to bridge to take over the watch keeping duty. At 2340 the master left bridge after he hand over to the third officer, thereafter the third officer and another AB were keeping watch on bridge. The ship's course was 072° and speed was about 6.0 knots.
424. According to the third officer, he first acquired OSN on the radar at a distance of about 5 nautical miles. Although the movement of OSN caused his concern, he thought that his vessel was a stand-on vessel and he should maintain his course and speed. He also tried to contact OSN by VHF radio on channel 16, but no answer was received. At about 0045, the third officer visually saw OSN. He also found the course and speed of OSN were keeping unchanged from the AIS and radar, he still maintained his course and speed which were 072° and 6.0 knots respectively.
425. At about 0050, the third officer altered the course by hard over to starboard to avoid the collision, but in vain. In less than 1 minute, at about 0051, the bow of OSN collided with HS18 at the middle of the No.1 cargo hold on the port side. HS18 was then pushed by OSN for a while and slipped off on the starboard side of OSN.
426. The third officer shout "ships collision" and the master rushed up to the bridge. It was found that OSN continued pushing HS18 after the collision and HS18 started heeling to starboard side. The two vessels were apart after OSN going astern. The master of HS18 sounded the general alarm and broadcasted abandon ship to all crew due to the imminent danger.
427. All 12 crew members of HS18 got on the starboard side lifeboat and left HS18. They were all rescued by OSN successfully. Two of them were found slightly injured on their hands.
428. A large amount of water poured into the ship through the damaged hull and subsequently, HS18 sank in approximately position Latitude 22-14.48N, Longitude 114-27.18E, off east of Ninepin Group, Hong Kong.

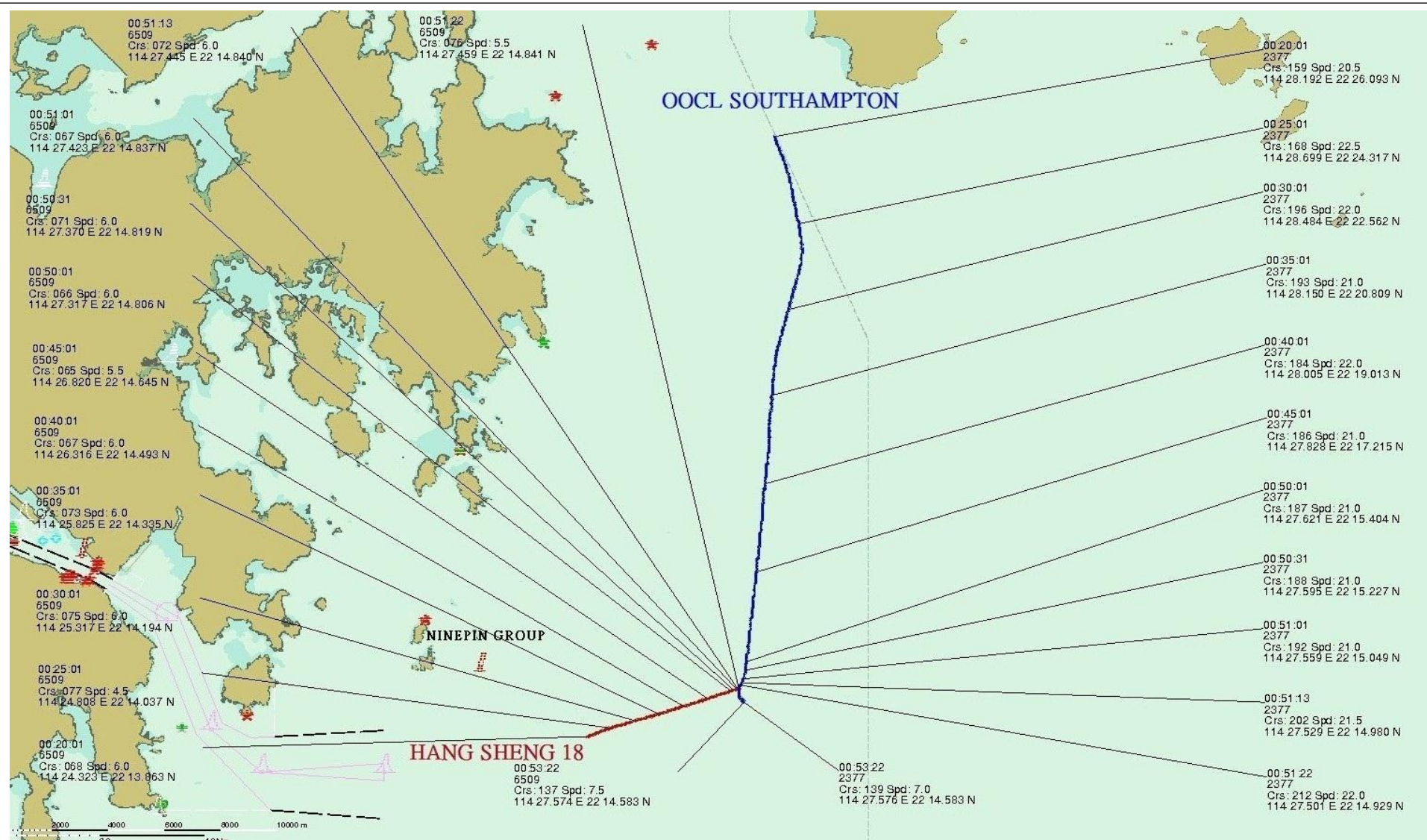


Figure 3 - the Radar Plot of the two vessels before the collision (off east of Ninepin Group, Hong Kong)

5. Analysis of Information

5.1 Certification and Experience of Personnel

5.1.1 The master of *OOCL Southampton* held a valid Master Certificate of Competency (COC) issued by Australia and a Class 1 Licence (Deck Officer) issued by the Marine Department of the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. He had about 32 years seafaring experience on ocean going vessels and he had worked for the current company since 1990. He joined *OOCL Southampton* as the master on 10 April 2013.

5.1.2 The officer of the watch (OOW), i.e. the second officer of *OOCL Southampton* held a valid second officer COC issued by the Maritime Safety Administration (MSA), the People's Republic of China (PRC) and a Class 3 Licence (Deck Officer) issued by the Marine Department of the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. He had a total of 44 months seafaring experience including 11 months as the second officer. He joined *OOCL Southampton* as a second officer on 26 October 2013.

5.1.3 *OOCL Southampton* was manned with 28 crewmembers and all the crew members held relevant valid certificates. The ship's manning met the requirement of its Minimum Safe Manning Document.

5.1.4 The master of *Hang Sheng 18* held a valid Master COC issued by MSA, PRC. He had more than 20 years seafaring experience and he had been working as a master for various vessels since 1995.

5.1.5 At the time of incident, the OOW of *Hang Sheng 18*, i.e. the third officer was 24 years old and he held a valid third officer COC issued on 09 July 2012 by MSA, PRC. According to the seafarer's service record and his statement, he had 2 years seafaring experience. He started as a sailor in 2011 and he joined *Hang Sheng 18* on 10 October 2013 working first time as a third officer. Until the time of this incident, he had less than one month experience as a navigating officer. Guidance and supervision by senior officer on board in keeping navigating watch especially in such dense traffic were essential.

5.1.6 *Hang Sheng 18* was manned with 12 crewmembers and all the crew members held relevant valid certificates. The ship's manning met the requirement of its Minimum Safe Manning Document.

5.2 Certification of the vessels

5.2.1 Both the ship's statutory and safety management certificates of *OOCL*

Southampton were issued by ABS. They were all valid at the time of accident.

- 5.2.2 The ship certificates of *Hang Sheng 18* were issued by ZC. The Minimum Safe Manning Certificate (MSMC), the Document of Compliance (DOC) for the ship management company for safe operation of vessel and the ship Safe Management Certificate (SMC) were issued by Guangxi Maritime Safety Administration, the People's Republic of China. All statutory certificates for the vessel were valid at the time of accident.

5.3 **Weather and Visibility**

- 5.3.1 According to the Hong Kong Observatory and the masters of both the vessels, at the time of the collision, it was raining and the wind was northeast by east with a force 5 on Beaufort wind scale. The sea was about two meters high and the visibility was 4 to 5 nautical miles. The weather condition was not considered to have any detrimental effects on the occurrence of the accident.

5.4 **Actions taken by *OOCL Southampton* (OSN)**

- 5.4.1 At 2343 on 04 November 2013, OSN's main engine was put to full ahead and the ship's speed was then gradually increased to her maximum of about 21.5 knots. She intended to pass ahead of the typhoon "Hai Yan" which was approaching the Philippines. She proceeded at the maximum speed through a high traffic density area which was specified by the company as "dangerous area" according to the master's statement. The company required that the master should stay on the bridge for supervision of matters related to safety of navigation. The actual relevant high traffic in this incident was recorded by the Vessel Traffic Center (VTC) (figure 2). Therefore it was considered that OSN did not sail at a safe speed in accordance Rule 6 (safe speed) of the COLREGS.

- 5.4.2 At about 0032, HS18 was first acquired on the radar and she was on starboard bow of OSN with distance about 7.9 nautical miles. The master also saw HS18 on the radar before he went down to change his uniform. At around 0040, the master came back to the bridge, HS18 was a distance of 4.7 nautical miles on starboard bow 2 points (about 23°) and the CPA was remained 1 cable and no change. It was obvious that 1 cable of CPA was too small for a container vessel with length overall of 323 meters and certainly the risk of collision existed. Both the duty officer and master were aware of small CPA of HS18 according to their statements. However, no action was taken in ample time. As a give-way vessel in a crossing situation, OSN neither took early and substantial action to keep well clear of the stand-on vessel, nor did she slacken her speed or take all way off by stopping or

reversing her means of propulsion to allow more time to assess the situation in accordance with Rule 16 (Action by Give-way Vessel) and Rule 8 (Action to avoid Collision) of the COLREGS.

5.5 Actions taken by *Hang Sheng 18* (HS18)

5.5.1 According to the third officer, he first acquired the target of OSN on the radar at a distance of about 5 nautical miles. Although the movement of OSN caused his concern, he thought that his vessel was a stand-on vessel and he should keep course and speed.

5.5.2 At about 0045, the third officer visually saw OSN. He also found from Radar and AIS that OSN did not take action to avoid collision. He neither took such action as would best aid to avoid collision nor did he call the master for help at the material time. On the contrary, he maintained the course and speed. Therefore HS18 failed to comply with Rule 17 (Action by Stand-on Vessel) of the COLREGS.

5.5.2 At about 1 minute before the collision, the third officer of HS18 altered the course by hard over to starboard, but in vain. The action he took was not positive and too late, that did not result in passing at a safe distance in accordance with Rule 8 (Action to Avoid Collision) of the COLREGS.

5.6 Fatigue and alcohol impairment

5.6.1 There was no evidence to suggest that alcohol or drugs were taken by any of the crewmembers of both vessels involved in the collision.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The Hong Kong registered container vessel “*OOCL Southampton*” (OSN) left Yantian China at 2300 on 4 November 2013 and bound for Singapore. At 2343 the main engine of OSN was put to full ahead and the ship’s speed was gradually increased to the maximum of about 21.5 knots.
- 6.2 At 1400 on 31 October 2013, the Chinese Mainland-registered coastal vessel “*Hang Sheng 18*” (HS18) left Qinzhou, Guangxi for Ningbo, China. After taking bunker off Wailingding, at 2017 on 4 November 2013, HS18 resumed sailing to Ningbo with a speed of 6.3 knots.
- 6.3 At 0051 on 5 November 2013, the bow of OSN collided with HS18 at around middle of No.1 cargo hold on the port side. A large amount of water poured into HS18 and subsequently, HS18 sank in approximately position Latitude 22-14.48N, Longitude 114-27.18E, off east of Ninepin Group, Hong Kong. OSN suffered a long scratch on the starboard hull, slight dent on her starboard side shell plate and bulbous bow. All crew members of HS18 were rescued by OSN, 2 of the 12 crew members were slightly injured on their hands in the incident. Minor oil pollution was reported in the incident.
- 6.4 At the time of collision, it was raining and the wind was northeast by east with force 5 on Beaufort wind scale. The sea was about two meters high and the visibility was 4 to 5 nautical miles.
- 6.5 The investigation revealed the following contributory factors:
- (i) OSN failed to comply with Rule 6 (safe speed) of the COLREGS, she proceeded through a high traffic density area with the maximum speed. Being a give-way vessel in a crossing situation, OSN neither took early and substantial action to keep well clear of the stand-on vessel, nor did she slacken her speed or take all way off by stopping or reversing her means of propulsion to allow more time to assess the situation in accordance with Rule 16 (Action by Give-way Vessel) and Rule 8 (Action to avoid Collision) of the COLREGS; and
 - (ii) HS18 failed to comply with the requirements of the COLREGS, such as when it was so close that collision cannot be avoided by the action of the give-way vessel alone, she did not take such action as would best aid to avoid collision (Rule 17 - Action by Stand-on Vessel) and the action taken by HS18 to avoid collision with OSN was not positive and too late, that did not result in passing at a safe distance (Rule 8 - Action to Avoid Collision).

6.7 Other safety factor:

The third officer of HS18 had little experience (less than one month of third officer experience) as a navigating officer. Guidance and supervision by senior officer on board in keeping navigating watch especially in such dense traffic were essential.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The owner/management company of *OOCL Southampton* is recommended to issue notice/circular to draw the attention of their masters and officers to the findings of this report and remind them to comply with the COLREGS at all times. The owner/management should inform the corrective actions taken to the Shipping Division and Marine Accident Investigation Section of Marine Department.
- 7.2 A copy of the report should be sent to advise the owner/management company and the flag administration of *Hang Sheng 18* about the findings of the accident.
- 7.3 A Merchant Shipping Information Note (MSIN) should be issued to promulgate lessons learnt from this accident.

8. Submissions

- 8.1 In the event that the conduct of any person or organization is commented in an accident investigation report, it is the policy of the Marine Department to send a copy of the draft of the report, in part or in its entirety, to that person or organization for their comments.
- 8.2 The draft report has been sent to the following parties for comments:
- a) The owner/management company, the master of *OOCL Southampton*.
 - b) The owner/management company, the master and third officer of *Hang Sheng 18*.
 - c) The Maritime Safety Administration of the People's Republic of China (Beijing).
 - d) The Shipping Division of Hong Kong Marine Department.
- 8.3 No submission was received from the above parties.