

“ I Remember” letter read at Centennial Celebration. May 1937 at Gotemba Japan.

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In the summer of 1882, when on my way to Hakodate with several other missionaries from Tokyo and Yokohama to spend our vacation, a university professor and an English consul with his lawyer also being of the company, the following incident occurred.

So large a company of foreigners going north on a coast steamer, the only kind available at that early date, was very unusual. As the weather was fair and the boat steady, our captain, a Dane who spoke perfect English, thinking to give his foreign guests a pleasure, ordered dinner served on deck. The long table, set in the end of the boat, looked very inviting. But at the moment the bell was rung the boat gave a very peculiar motion, listing to one side; the engine ceased throbbing, and we were standing still, swaying gently from side to side. Someone remarked, “Well! we have been looking for whales all day and now we have found them, or they have found us!”

Then we saw the captain hurrying down from the bridge, a strange look on his face, and met by some of the gentlemen who came hurrying towards us saying, “The boat has struck a rock! Get ready for the life-boats!” Then rushing to the table they caught up knives and were soon helping to lower the boats. When, after some difficulty, a boat was lowered and brought to the steps let down to it, the foreign ladies, two gentlemen missionaries, the purser, and two or three Japanese were ordered into it and directed towards the shore, which we were told was some distance away, and could not be seen on account of an evening haze which surrounded us.

There had been no confusion; every one seemed stunned, coming as it did at the end of a perfect summer’s day. We learned later that the boat had scraped against a hidden rock which tore out twelve feet of the side opposite the engine-room, and in eight second [sic] the fires were out, the fireman communicating with the bridge and seeking to make his escape.

But the dear Lord, who watches over us all, had more work for His children who

were on that boat. There was deep water all about us; but after the side was torn out, the boat was carried forward by its own momentum and landed on the top of a pinnacle rock which went through the bottom and held it until we had all escaped.

After starting in the direction indicated, we learned that the Japanese gentlemen were not boatmen but first-class passengers, and that no one was familiar with the coast in that region. The foreign gentlemen and the others took turns in rowing, and after wandering about for sometime [*sic*] we arrived at the shore near a fishing village to which we had been directed. There was some difficulty landing, as the

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people had never seen foreigners before and objected to having a boat load dumped on them. But after the purser had satisfied them that we were harmless, had been wrecked, and would pay them for whatever they furnished us, we were allowed to go on shore and were treated very kindly.

As it was now dark, a bonfire was built to guide the other boats ; some of which arrived much later, saying they could not find the village, and had decided to return to the ship, which had hung out lanterns ; but coming out into the open from behind a rock had seen our fire. The captain did not arrive until one o'clock, having found difficulty in persuading some of the passengers to leave the boat.

There being no suitable place to lodge us we were given the temple. No foreign food could be had, but an abundance of rice and fish was provided, and someone had brought a loaf of bread and a tin of milk from the boat ; that was given Dr. and Mrs. Booth for their small son. We ladies and some of the gentlemen spent the day wondering

how we were to get away from the place, and in rescuing our clothing which was scattered about the village on lines to dry, or seen walking about on fishermen, who readily gave it up when claimed, saying they did not know to whom it belonged, and thought it better to take it than have it go to the bottom of the ocean. It was rather pitiful, as well as amusing, to see a lace trimmed summer dress being worn by a man. My own possessions, not being in a heavy foreign trunk, but in a *kori* marked in Japanese, was [*sic*] not opened but brought safely to the temple where its contents found use, then and later.

There had been a messenger sent to Sendai, some fifty miles inland, with a telegram for the boat company in Yokohama, and we waited expectantly to be rescued. A boat arrived the following day, but much to our disappointment we were told that it had come to rescue the broken boat and not the passengers. But the boat having already slid from its mooring and gone down with only the top of the mast visible, the rescuers said they must return to Yokohama to report, but would carry, free of charge, any who wished to return. The foreign party, however, learning that a regular Hakodate going boat would be passing in a day or two and could be sent in for us, decided to wait for it. In due time it came, and after giving a day to helping salvage as much of the broken boat as possible, carried us on to Hakodate, where we were received by our friends with great sympathy and kindness.