[page 53]

**Korea’s Inhospitable Shores: Shipwrecks of Cheju Island**

ROBERT NEFF

“....Alone, alone, all, all alone,

Alone on a wide wide sea!

And never a saint took pity on

My soul in agony....”1

The word Choson has often been translated as the Land of the Morning Calm, but in the eyes of many Westerners, especially in the 1800s, Choson Korea was viewed as an almost mystical land that was violently disposed to anyone with the misfortune to be cast upon its shores. Hendrick Hamel’s famous account of the treatment he and his companions received at the hands of the Koreans has often been cited as proof of Korea’s ill treatment of shipwrecked survivors. The account is clearly biased in that it emphasizes the negative aspects of Korean behavior and de-emphasizes the hospitality afforded to the Dutch, which was superior to that they would have received in northern Japan. The later accounts of Western contacts with Korea that are often used to validate Korea’s hostility towards foreigners are few, but the many accounts of kindness shown to the shipwrecked survivors are often ignored or merely mentioned as a footnote.

Most of these early encounters took place in the waters around Cheju Island. Cheju Island, also known in the past as Quelpart Island, is located about sixty miles off the southwest coast of the Korean mainland where the shallower and warmer East China Sea meets the deeper Korea Strait and the Kuro-siwo (Black Stream of Japan).2 As a result, this area is notorious for typhoons, especially in late summer, and in the past often claimed Korean, Chinese and Japanese ships caught out at sea. Many of these ships simply disappeared beneath the sea’s punishing waves, but[page 24] others managed to make their way to the rocky coasts of Cheju Island where they and their crews were smashed upon the jagged rocks.

After Japan opened to the Portuguese, Spanish, English, and later the Dutch, it was only a matter of time before Western ships started wrecking off the coast of Cheju. Most of these shipwrecks occurred in the same area - the southwestern coast, pushed by the currents and the winds of the typhoons that often plagued the China Sea. These extraordinarily powerful storms claimed many ships in the past and still occasionally claim large modem ships.3

While the wreck of the Sperwer and the subsequent journal of Hendrik Hamel are well-known to most people with an interest in Korea, the other wrecks covered in this article are virtually unknown to all but a small number of scholars. It is these accounts that show the true attitude of the Cheju Islanders, as well as the rest of Korea’s, towards the Western shipwreck survivors and not the often repeated and unsubstantiated claims that Koreans were hostile to all Westerners unlucky enough to be thrown up on their shores.

**The First Shipwreck**

Perhaps the first Westerner to set foot on Korean soil was a Portuguese or Spaniard who was shipwrecked off Cheju Island’s coast in 1582. According to the Annals of Ching T’ak, he called himself Ma-ri and was dressed in black clothing. He was taken to China by the annual embassy, but what became of him is unknown. It has been speculated that he was a Catholic priest, but Father Manuel Teixeira has suggested that Ma-ri was a Portuguese sailor, possibly from the Sao Sebastiao, a junk that was bound for Japan in 1577 when it was caught in a storm and forced into Korean waters where it was attacked by the Koreans who slew most, if not all, of the crew. Perhaps he was a survivor of the attack, but if so, where was he for the five years following the attack?4

It seems highly unlikely, but another Portuguese ship in 1578, bound from Macao to Nagasaki, was caught in a typhoon and wrecked off the coast of Korea, probably along Cheju’s coast.5 Is it possible that this ship was the Sao Sebastiao?

[page 55] **Hendrik Hamel and the Sperwer**

Perhaps the most infamous shipwreck in Korea is the Sperwer that wrecked off the west coast of Cheju on August 15, 1653. It is not my intention to write much about this incident because it is so well documented in one of the survivors’ [Hendrik Hamel] journals and by several modern researchers in their excellent books and on their websites, but I will give a brief account.6

The Sperwer [Sparrowhawk], under the command of Captain Reijnier Egberstz, had a crew of about 35 men and was bound for Nagasaki, Japan, from Formosa (Taiwan). In addition to the cargo, there were around 30 passengers, probably employees of the Dutch East Indies Company, who took passage aboard the ship. The ship encountered a powerful typhoon and was forced towards Cheju Island. In the middle of the night the island was sighted, and like many of the victims over the next few hundred years, they immediately lowered their anchors, only to discover that the anchors could not gain a stable purchase. The ship was slammed onto the jagged rocks and by morning only thirty-six of the sixty-four people aboard had survived the shipwreck.

The survivors found themselves tossed onto the desolate shores, the wreckage of their ship still being battered by the winds and sea. When the winds at last died down they were able to make a crude tent from one of the sails, but were unable to build a fire to warm themselves. They thought they were alone on the island, but this proved to be an erroneous assumption.

After they were discovered the following day by a small group of Koreans they were able to finally make a fire, but they also gained the attention of the local officials and a band of 100 armed Koreans was sent to watch over them. The following morning an army of 1,000 - 2,000 Korean soldiers arrived and eventually escorted them to the island’s capital.

The survivors were well acquainted with the natives of Formosia who were infamous for their head-hunting and cannibalism; thus, they feared a similar fate from the Koreans who were also reported to be extremely hostile to foreign intruders. However, for the most part the shipwreck survivors were treated well, and in some ways treated like Koreans. They desired to return home, but were prevented from doing so[page 56] by the Korean government. They were surprised to discover that they were not alone - there was another Dutchman, Jan Jansz Weltevree, who was captured along with two other companions [at this point already dead] by the Koreans when they had gone ashore seeking water.7 He, too, had tried to convince the Korean government to release him so that he might return home, but had been told by the Korean king: “If you were a bird you might fly there. We do not send strangers away from our country. We will take care of you, giving you board and clothing and thus you will have to finish your life in this country.”8

The survivors were not willing to spend the rest of their lives in Korea and some began planning their escape, but their attempts failed and they were severely punished. The survivors were warned by Weltevree that the Japanese would kill them if they made their way to Japan because of Japan’s anti-Christian sentiment. Nonetheless, the men were determined to escape. It wasn’t until the first week of September 1666 that eight of the surviving sixteen managed to escape to Japan, and to notify the Japanese authorities that there were still other surviving members being held in Korea. The following year, the remaining eight survivors, through the aid of the Japanese, were allowed to return to Japan, but one chose to remain in Korea - his fate after 1667 is unknown.

It was the survivors of the Spewer and their accounts that gave the world its first in-depth information on this unknown part of the world, and also the start of the Koreans’ reputation for being inhospitable to foreigners who they either killed or held against their will.

The fascination with Korea is evidenced by the large number of copies of Hamel’s and subsequent books written about the incident. Yet, many of the subsequent incidents of shipwrecks on Korea’s coasts were unreported except for a single column or article in the local newspapers. It is some of these accounts that we will examine next.

**Victims of a Mutiny**

On a windy late-summer day in 1801, a large ship, Western in appearance, suddenly appeared off the west coast of Cheju Island. As the Koreans watched from their hiding places they were surprised to see five men, two of them black, row ashore in a smaller boat carrying casks or buckets and begin to search for water. The winds were severe and the [page 57] large ship began to sail away, firing its cannons as it departed.

After the ship left the Koreans confronted the five men. The men were dressed in bright colored clothing, blues, yellows, reds, and white; some had earrings; all had rosaries, and four of them had shaven heads. The Koreans were able to communicate with them through sign language and learned the men’s names and ages: Venancio (22), Ferdinando (25), Andre (24), Fernando (32), and Mariano (32). The last two were probably black slaves from Macao.10

After a short time the five men were taken to the mainland and then transported to China with the tribute embassy in October 1801. One of the men soon fell sick and died while en route to China. In China, the Chinese government refused to accept them, claiming that it did not know their home country and thus could not repatriate them. The Koreans were forced to bring the remaining Westerners back to Cheju Island. For the next five years there are some accounts of the men sprinkled through the Korean records. In 1805, one of the men died from an illness, leaving but three.11

Throughout the Choson Era, Cheju Island was the scene of frequent shipwrecks. Some of these shipwrecks will be covered in other parts of this book, but in 1806 another ship wrecked on the island, this time a Spanish or Portuguese ship sailing from the Philippines. The Korean Governor tried to get this ship’s crew to take the three Portuguese with them when they left, but they refused. There was another attempt to have the Portuguese sent to China, but whether they ever departed or what their final fates were is lost in the past.12

Their subsequent fates as well as the history of these men is a matter of speculation, but they were possibly from the Portuguese brig Sto Antonio. Thirty passengers, some of them slaves, and ten crew members, departed Timor bound for Macao. At some point in the journey, the crew mutinied and murdered their captain and officers. How many passengers and crew were killed in the mutiny is unknown, but at least fifteen were alive when the ship stopped at Cheju Island. The survivors had no knowledge of navigation and were forced to drift at the mercy of the elements; their arrival at Cheju Island was fortunate and the men probably went ashore to get water, but because of the wind the ship was unable to remain and was blown away. The ship then drifted to the Japanese Goto[page 58] Islands and the ten remaining survivors were rescued after they convinced the Japanese officials that they were not Christians. Of these survivors, several were sent back to Macao to stand trial for their roles in the mutiny.13

**Giuseppe Santori and the Wreck of the Bianca Pertica14**

Genoa, during the 19th century, was one of the leading merchant centers in Europe. It was a vibrant city known for its trade and its sailors and their exploits throughout history, perhaps the most famous of whom was Christopher Columbus. This incident is about one of Genoa’s citizens and the small and unintentional role that he played in early Korean-Italian relations.

Giuseppe Santori15 was not a famous man; in fact, we know almost nothing about him. We know that he was an Italian from Genoa, in his late teens or early twenties, who, like many young Italian men, chose the sea as his source of livelihood and adventure.16 He was a sailor aboard the large Italian two-masted barque, Bianca Pertica,17 which was commanded by Captain Tancredis, who, again, almost nothing is known of. Considering the size of the ship, 666 tons, the thirteen man Italian crew Captain Tancredis hired seems too small to sail a ship of this size very far into the open sea, but that is just what they did - they traveled to the distant and exotic Far East.

Exhaustive searches have failed to reveal where and when the Bianca Pertica departed Europe, or conclusively what its cargo might have been, but circumstantial evidence suggests that it might have carried ‘Cardiff coal’18 from Wales. A similar Italian barque, Emilio V, commanded by Captain Merella, arrived in Nagasaki on June 28, 1878, from Cardiff, England, with a load of coal and, in the months that followed, transported lower quality coal between Nagasaki and Hong Kong on at least two occasions. Considering that there were very few Italian ships operating in the Japanese waters, it seems more than a mere coincidence that these two ships would arrive at Nagasaki when they did Perhaps these ships were chartered by the same company.

According to the ‘Arrival and Departure’ page of Nagasaki’s English newspaper, on September 8,1878, the Bianca Pertica arrived in Nagasaki from Hong Kong. I assume that this was her first trip to [page 59] Nagasaki because there are no other records of her visiting the port. Besides, the lack of Asians amongst her crew and the crew’s inability to communicate in Chinese seems to indicate that the ship was new to the Far East.

Nagasaki was the first Japanese port opened to the West and on several occasions served as a forward port for Western navies operating in the Far East, Nagasaki was a rough port with a large transient population of sailors and merchants who supported an infamous thriving entertainment industry composed of drinking establishments and brothels, and thus is it not surprising that the local newspaper noted “naval officers regard Nagasaki as their favorite resort on the Eastern Station.”19 The Italian community in Nagasaki was very small, probably only six or seven people, but there were at least two hotels operated by Italians, the Hotel de Garibaldi, and its chief competitor, the Belle Vue Hotel, owned by C.N. Mancini and his wife,21 It is unknown if any of the Bianca Pertica’s crew stayed in either of these hotels, but as we’ll later see, the owner of the Belle Vue Hotel played a role in the ship’s story.

Because Italy had relatively few commercial interests in Japan, and very few Italian ships visited Nagasaki, there was no Italian consulate in the city; all consular activities were handled by Mr. A.E. Olarovski,22 the Russian Consul, who also held the position of Italian Acting Consul.23 I was unable to find any records that indicate Captain Tancredis, or for that matter, Captain Merella of the Emilio V,ever visited the consul, and considering the consul later seemed unaware of the Bianca Pertica’s fate, it is my opinion that neither ship’s captain did. More than likely, they weren’t even aware that there was an Acting Italian Consul and, having no need of assistance, did not bother to enquire. The Duke of Genoa complained of Italy’s lack of interest in the Far East when he visited Japan two years later and gathered and brought back to Italy a great amount of information and specimens from the Far East in an effort to awaken Italians to the opportunities in the Orient. His efforts appear to have been unsuccessful for even as Korea opened up its land and markets to the West in 1882, a British Government document noted there were no visits by Italian merchant ships to Japan in 1882.24

The crew probably spent most of the ten days finding a customer, reloading the ship, drinking, visiting the infamous brothels, and [page 60] purchasing mementos to take home. On September 18, 1878, after taking on supplies, the Bianca Pertica departed Nagasaki, Japan, bound for Hong Kong with a shipment of Nagasaki coal consigned by a local merchant, Tankosha.25 Nagasaki was important not only to the West as a naval base in the northern Far East, but also as a supply of dependable and high quality coal which came from the nearby Takashima mines.26 As more and more navies and shipping companies switched from sailing vessels to steamships, the importance of coal quickly became apparent and Nagasaki was “the only place in the East where coal was mined in any quantity.”27 This coal was often exported to Hong Kong and other major seaports to be used by commercial and naval ships, and it commanded a good profit. I believe that the Bianca Pertica was brought to the Far East to serve in the same manner as the Emilio V, a transport to carry coal from the coal mines of Nagasaki to Hong Kong, and then return either empty (with ballast) or carrying a cargo of general goods - probably the captain’s personal venture.

The day of Bianca Pertica’s departure was a beautiful summer day and showed promise of an easy voyage. A light breeze from the east filled its sails and conveyed the ship through the calm waters at a lively pace. However, to the east the sky grew darker as the day progressed and the wind increased in ferocity and, though they might have noted it, none could have imagined the danger that they were in.

August and September are prime months for typhoons in the region, and although typhoons are fairly common in these waters, this particular one was unusually strong. Bianca Pertica’s captain, unaware of the strength of storms in these waters, did not heed the warnings and continued on his course, confident that his ship could endure a summer storm. He was not the only one. There were other captains far more familiar with these waters, who were caught unprepared and suffered similar results as we shall see later on in this chapter.

As the day progressed, so too did the wind’s strength, and by evening the light breeze that had filled the sails of the ship quickly developed into a violent typhoon force wind that threatened to overwhelm it. Captain Tancredis, realizing his ship was in danger, ordered the crew to take in part of the sails, but as the storm continued to strengthen, part of the main-sail was blown away from its riggings and flapped wildly in the[page 61] howling wind. Realizing that the sail could be blown away or cause additional damage to the ship, Tancredis ordered the crew to quickly secure it. The men sprang to the task, but as they were complying with his orders, a sudden burst of wind blew away the fore top-sail and snapped its yards.

In an effort to protect his ship, Captain Tancredis, with his remaining sails, turned the ship with the eastern wind at his stern and sailed west in an attempt to run from the worst of the storm. The maneuver was not without its dangers. As he turned the ship, huge waves began to crash over the sides, and water poured into the lower deck, further endangering the ship by slowing its response to the helm. The captain ordered the crew to man the pumps; throughout the night, and exposed to the elements, the men pumped in a desperate effort to remain afloat.

Morning brought a little relief: the storm still raged, but the water in the holds had been pumped out sufficiently that Captain Tancredis felt safe to leave only four men to continue bailing and pumping while the rest of the crew tried to bring in the remaining sails. With the ship rising and falling in the surging waves, the men cautiously made their way to the riggings, and began to pull in the sails, but suddenly the wind shifted from the east to the south, and blew away the remaining sails. The ship was without sails and thus at the mercy of the wind; it began to drift to the north.

Again the ship was awash in the sea and water began to fill the cargo holds, causing pieces of coal to be swept about the ship, further endangering it. The pumps were again manned by the entire crew, but at around 10 o’clock that night, it was discovered that the pumps were clogged with small chunks of coal and rendered inoperable. Unable to do anything while the seas were raging and the pumps clogged, the captain ordered the men to return below decks, where they were greeted with six feet of water, which had flooded the holds, making the already dire situation more desperate and miserable.

Perhaps the men reassured one another that they had seen the worst of the storm, and that it would soon die down, but instead of the storm weakening, it only grew stronger. Sometime in the early morning of the 20th, the waves washed over the decks so violently that every timber in [page 62] the ship shook and groaned and the railings were smashed and washed away. It was now impossible for them to work with any safety on the decks. The ship was still filling with water, and the pumps were still clogging with the floating coal.

Captain Tancredis ordered the pumps moved to the forward part of the ship, in an effort to avoid the floating debris. The effort failed. They continued to reassure one another that the captain would get them through the ordeal, and probably joked that in the future they would all tell their children and grandchildren about this great voyage to the Far East, but deep in their hearts and left unspoken, all feared that the ship was doomed. However, it wasn’t until the boatswain, Pascuale Chelini,28 announced that they “all were lost” that the facade of hope and confidence collapsed and each was forced to face the reality of their situation. Unable to steer the ship because the ship was bereft of sails, the holds were filled with water, and the pumps were inoperable, the ship was completely at the mercy of the merciless sea.

With this realization each man made ready to meet his fate in his own way. Santori later recounted that “part of the crew were crying, some praying, and some, seeing no hope, got drunk in despair.” Captain Tancredis, a true leader, tried to reassure the men that they would all be saved and that the ship would reach shore before nightfall, but amongst the men, all hope was gone and his reassurances fell upon deaf ears. Even though many of the men were demoralized, the captain continued to maintain his confident composure and tried to set an example for the rest of his crew to emulate.

Throughout the day the waves relentlessly battered the ship and the holds continued to fill - the ship was slowly sinking. The men continued to battle the sea, but at the same time began gathering food and water in the event that their worst fears should become reality. At 4:30,the doomed ship’s bow began to sink beneath the water and the men moved to the aft of the ship where they unlashed the lifeboats in anticipation — they did not have long to wait. The ship suddenly sank violently when a large wave slammed into it, and even though the men had anticipated the ship’s demise, none had expected it to occur so quickly. Some of the men were able to get into the boats, others, clutching pieces of splintered wood, were swept away by the waves,[page 63] their screams for help smothered by the howling of the wind. Captain Tancredis, true to the romantic notion of heroic duty, refused to abandon the ship, and instead opted to go down with it.

Santori, and two of his mates, Pilade Taddei29 and Leone Bacchione, were able to get into a lifeboat, and desperately sought to rescue the remaining members of the crew before they were swept away by the waves. In the howling wind they were unable to hear the calls for help, and the driving rain and towering waves made it difficult to see, but they were able, only with a great deal of difficulty, to rescue Cesare Paoli, the chief mate, and Pascuale Chelini, the boatswain.

For several hours the men battled the storm, as the gloominess of day gave way to the darkness of night. As senior man aboard the boat, Chief mate Paoli assumed command and directed their bailing efforts while he continued to assure the men that with the winds they would soon reach the coast of Korea and safety, but at present they had to ensure that their small life boat remained afloat. They struggled to bail water out of the boat, but almost as quickly as they bailed the sea rushed in and refilled it. They bailed for as long as they could, but the men had not slept in more than two days, and one by one, they fell into an exhausted sleep.

They were awakened when a large wave overturned their boat and cast them all into the foaming sea. Although suddenly thrown into the sea, they recovered their senses enough to swim back to their overturned boat, clutch the sides and hold on as the seas tossed them about. However, after a short time, chief mate Paoli, exhausted and perhaps older, was unable to maintain his grip any longer, and, although the men risked their own lives trying to prevent it, he was washed away. Eventually, the survivors were able to right the boat and haul themselves aboard where they huddled together in an attempt to keep warm while they assessed their situation. The effort and strain upon them was fantastic, especially for the boatswain, Chelini, who was described as being “more dead than alive.” Except for the will to survive, they were left with nothing: no food, no water, not even oars to paddle the boat.

There was no time to dwell upon their losses. Although the storm had weakened, the lifeboat threatened to sink under the endless pounding of the waves. They tried to protect the violently shivering Chelini from the wind and rain to the best of their ability, but they could spare little time to[page 64] administer to his needs as they worked throughout the night bailing water from their precarious sanctuary with their bare hands. It was in the dim light of the morning, during the lull of storm, that they discovered the boatswain had slipped into unconsciousness and had died quietly in the darkness of the night. They now only numbered three.

On the morning of the 21st, the storm abated and they found themselves drifting in the ocean current towards Quelpart Island. Prior to the chief mate dying, he had told them that he believed the island was some fifty miles away to the north and that they should try and reach the island if no other options were available.

That day and the following the life boat continued to drift towards the island. Gone were the dark rain clouds and the cool winds, only to be replaced with a clear sky and a furious summer sun beating down upon them mercilessly, blistering their skin with its heat and compounding the misery of their thirst. On the 22nd, Piladi, unable to endure the heat and thirst any longer, became “very ill and delirious,” and raved with visions that only he could see, further tormenting his fellow survivors. Perhaps it was merciful to all that he died the following day.

Finally, on the 23rd, the rocky coast of Quelpart was sighted some twenty-five miles off in the distance, but almost mockingly the wind changed direction. The life boat was no longer drifting towards the island but, in fact, was drifting away from the island. Santori noted later in an interview: “As we had no oars, no sails, and no provisions of any sort, we did not know what to do.” The Italians could only stare at the island as they drifted further away, but they did not abandon hope, confident that God would watch over them.

The following morning the wind once again changed direction - this time it blew from the east and pushed them back along the island’s coast. In desperation, the two surviving sailors, Santori and Bacchione, pried a long piece of wood from their boat and made a makeshift mast and a crude sail from their clothing and that of their fallen comrades. It was probably at this point that they buried at sea the bodies of their fallen comrades in an effort to lighten the boat.

Their efforts were successful and slowly the craft inched closer and closer to what were deemed inhospitable shores by most sailors, but to the desperate castaways a sanctuary. Half naked, they were cruelly [page 65] abused by the beating sun, blistered skin burned by the irritating sea spray. They sought shelter in the shadow of the their sail, and although it did provide some relief it did nothing for the burning thirst that tormented them and threatened to drive them mad. On the morning of the 25th, after nearly twenty-four hours of sailing with a makeshift sail, they found themselves just about ten miles from the rocky shores of Quelpart, but their progress was slow, and doubt and fear again replaced jubilation and hope.

On the morning of the 26th, the burning sun greeted them with Quelpart’s southwestern shores just six miles in the distance. For six days they had been without fresh water - the only water they had was probably in the form of rain (but with no containers it is doubtful that they gathered much) or the morning moisture; their lips were cracked, their tongues swollen, and the desire for water outweighed reason. It seems almost ironic to suffer from thirst while upon a vast body of water, the very water itself tempting you to drink from it, its coolness beckoning you. Only a strong man could possibly resist the temptation for long, but eventually all fail. Against Santori’s hoarse protests, Bacchione, “unable to stand the thirst any longer, drank a quantity of salt water, which did him much harm.”

As Bacchione lay sick upon the floor, retching and writhing in pain as his kidneys Tailed, the wind died, and the sail of their boat became useless upon the calm sea. Santori pulled down the mast and converted it into a paddle in an attempt to paddle the boat to shore. At first, Bacchione assisted as much as he was able, but as his condition worsened, he soon told Santori that he had no more strength to assist in rowing and then went and lay down at the bow of the boat. Delusional, retching, and burning with fever, he died later that night, leaving Santori alone.

Fortunately, fate is fickle and on the 27th a warm wind began to blow. A grateful Santori once again reassembled and raised his makeshift sail. It is interesting to note that although he was concerned about lightening his craft, he did not bury Bacchione’s body at sea. Perhaps, as morbid as it might sound, he found some comfort in it - a mute companion to share his ordeal.

Throughout that day and the following day the wind held and he steadily drifted closer to the tantalizing coast. On the morning of the 29th [page 66] he awoke to find himself only 40 yards from the shore, but unbelievably the current shifted and started to carry him away from the shore. Weak and probably delirious, he jumped overboard without a moment’s hesitation, leaving his last comrade, dead, to drift on the sea alone.

Santori was extremely fortunate: a large percentage of sailors during this era could not swim, and considering that Santori’s ordeal began on the 18th, and he had been without any measurable amount of water for nearly nine days, the mere fact that he was able to keep his head above water clearly demonstrates his strong will to live. Jumping into the water was clearly an act of desperation, but one that spared his life.

Santori was too exhausted to actually swim, and was only able to maintain his position, as the current threatened to pull him back out into the rough sea, due to his frantic desire to live. For nearly two hours he weakly treaded water, convinced that he was going to die, but unwilling to surrender his life. Fortunately for him, a large swell swept him upon one of the huge jagged volcanic rocks that lined the shore like teeth - ready to rend ship or man to pieces. Lying upon the rock he was safe for the moment from the sea, but he was “more dead than alive,” and was unable to move from his position, thus still being at risk of being swept back into the sea by another swell.

His struggle to safety was not without witnesses. A group of Koreans watching from shore ventured out on to the rock and carried the water-logged and exhausted Italian to safety. His rescuers wore white clothing and spoke a language that he could not understand. In his exhausted and thirst-induced delirium he probably thought they were going to kill him, for he had undoubtedly heard tales of the Koreans unfriendliness and brutality to strangers. The Koreans questioned him, but considering his condition, he lapsed into unconsciousness soon after his rescue. The Koreans took good care of him: they built a fire to warm and dry him, and then gave him food and water. Santori does not state how long he remained with these Koreans, but he undoubtedly spent at least a couple of days with them in recuperation.

He was probably treated in a similar manner to the shipwreck victims before and after him - given shelter and food, but carefully watched to make sure that he did not wander from his sanctuary.30 Word was sent to the capital of Cheju Island and at least one minor official and[page 67] several soldiers were sent to take charge of him. It is highly doubtful that he spoke Chinese, so when he was healthy enough it was conveyed to him through body language and pantomiming that he was to be moved, but where he was to be moved to and for what purposes, he was unable to discern.

A pony was brought for him to ride, and like many of the foreigners before and after, the local population gathered along his route to catch a glimpse of him. As he was being escorted along the coast we can only speculate as to what he was thinking, but there must have been some fear. After all, Korea had the reputation of being hostile to shipwrecked victims, and all who were aware of Hamel’s saga knew that he and his mates had been kept in Korea against their will..

According to Santori’s reckoning, he was escorted for nearly fifty miles along the coast before he finally reached his eventual salvation. Before we discuss the next part of his adventure we must look at another shipwreck - the Barbara Taylor.

**The Barbara Taylor 31**

The Bianca Pertica was not the only ship to encounter the storm. The typhoon had ravaged the northern coast of China and the southern coast of Japan, raining terror and destruction on everything in its path. At least two Japanese junks and the British barque, Barbara Taylor, were driven aground on the southern shore of Cheju Island, while other ships, more fortunate and further out at sea, managed to return to port damaged - some of them severely.32

The Barbara Taylor was a small 352 ton schooner with a crew of twelve men commanded by Captain John Taylor. The Barbara Taylor often traveled between ports in Japan and China, and occasionally even to Vladivostok, mainly transporting general goods. On September 9th it departed Shanghai, China, bound for Vladivostok, Russia, with a consignment cargo consisting primarily of bales of tea and some general mercantile items that were highly prized in the Russian port It was around the twentieth that the Barbara Taylor encountered the storm at its full fury. The sails were blown away in the heavy gales, blowing the ship in a northerly direction. Captain Taylor had few options and guided his ship to the rocky coast of Cheju Island. As the ship neared the jagged coast, [page 68] Captain Taylor observed a small sandy beach at the base of a small hill, guarded by a line of jagged rocks just off shore, but it appeared to be the only place that sanctuary could be found. With little other choice, he guided his ship towards the beach, striking the rocks in the late evening. With the shore so tantalizingly close, but the water so rough, it was decided to send a volunteer with a rope to shore in hopes of belaying a lifeline on shore so that the remaining sailors could pull themselves ashore one by one. Chief Mate George Grieve volunteered for the dangerous task, jumped overboard with the rope and swam to shore. As he drew near the shore, he observed a large group of Koreans on the beach watching the victims of the shipwreck. He sought their assistance in helping to secure the line, but the Koreans menacingly gestured for him to go away by pointing to the sea and then drawing their hands across their throats, staring at him as if they were ready to immediately pounce upon him and cut his head off. Unarmed, outnumbered, and exhausted from his struggle to reach shore, Grieve realized that there was little he could do to prevent the Koreans from killing him, so he turned his back upon them and continued to assist aiding his fellow survivors to shore. Soon the entire crew was standing in the relative safety of chest-deep water. With no other option, they turned and approached the Koreans.

The Koreans had observed the ship and its plight from afar, and when they realized that it would attempt to land they rushed to the shore to prevent the foreigners from landing. However, once it was discovered that the men were truly shipwrecked, the Koreans quickly offered them assistance. The men were helped ashore and were led to a low stone fence where the Koreans sheltered them from the elements by building a low wall of bundled hay around them while suitable quarters were sought. Soon they were led to a vacant hut and a fire was lit so that they could warm themselves.

Although this was not the first time that foreigners had had the misfortune of wrecking upon the shores of Cheju, the local Korean population crowded around the hut gazing upon the foreigners as if they were exotic “wild animals.” Within an hour of their confinement, they were served a porridge made from corn meal that they readily gulped down. The entire time that the Barbara Taylor’s crew remained in Korea they were well provisioned 一 mainly with rice, but also with the luxury of [page 69] meat in the form of chickens.

For two days the crewmembers were kept in the hut, a source of entertainment for the local population who were kept at bay by the village headman and his servants who carefully guarded them while awaiting word from the capital. Soon a Korean official with a retinue of soldiers arrived from the capital and took charge of the foreigners. It was only with their arrival that Captain Taylor and his men were allowed to return to the wreck with an escort of Korean soldiers and salvage what clothing they could. While at the ship Captain Taylor discovered that part of the ship’s cargo had escaped the ravages of the sea and, through his Chinese interpreters, beseeched the Korean official to have the intact cargo removed from ship and protected. “After a great deal of correspondence with headquarters they commenced to discharge cargo, but when they found it was tea after taking 50 packages they stopped. Giving me to understand they could not eat tea and that no tea was used on the island; would not be able to pay for the labour.” Captain Taylor pleaded with them to save the cargo and that upon returning to Nagasaki or Shanghai he would have rice sent to the island. His pleas were eventually accepted and the cargo was quickly unloaded and stored.

After several days of pleading to meet with the island’s governor, Captain ray lor and two of his Chinese crewmembers were sent to the island’s capital on horseback, escorted by a “guard of about 100 men on horseback and on foot, banners flying, trumpets blown, drums beating and considerable quantity of other music.” Word that the procession of soldiers and the foreigners would soon pass through had been sent ahead to all the villages along the fifty mile route to the capital, along with the command to have fresh mounts and supplies ready. Not all villages were ready when the procession arrived, and the headmen of these villages were seized by their top-knots and placed in a prone position upon their bellies. Then “summary justice” was administered by the lash, the number determined by the Korean official. The Korean in charge of administering the lash on several occasions used the lash too sparingly and consequently “received punishment himself on account of leniency to the delinquents.”

There was no real road that they traveled over - it was more like a series of paths, but after two days of travel, they finally arrived on October 1st at the main gates of the capital city, where they were kept [page 70] waiting for sometime before the gates were opened. Captain Taylor and his two crew members were not the only ones who had been brought to the city. They were joined by five Japanese, who were members of two Japanese junks that had been driven ashore during the same storm that had wrecked the Barbara Taylor.

Captain Taylor later noted that “the whole inhabitants of the city turned out in their best clothes” to watch him and the other shipwrecked victims enter into the city “just the same as though a show of wild beasts had been on exhibition.” Armed with spears, soldiers lined the streets as the foreigners were escorted to the governor’s house, where they were ordered to dismount and “walk bowed half down to the ground for about ten paces,” then were forced to bow three times and then “walk ten more paces more and go through the same ceremony.”

Finally they were led into the governor’s chambers where Captain Taylor and his two Chinese sailors were on one side, and the Japanese on the other. While served vast amounts of cakes, fruits, and drinks, they were questioned by the Korean officials. Captain Taylor, with the assistance of his Chinese steward, was able to explain to the Korean governor that it he were allowed to proceed to Japan he would be able to bring back assistance to remove his crew and the cargo of his ship, and he would gladly pay with rice for all the effort and expense that the Koreans had incurred in saving the crew and cargo. The Korean Governor listened politely to the men and then had them taken to a small house in the city where they were confined - prohibited from leaving, but well taken care of, while the Korean Governor decided what to do with them. There was no furniture to speak of in the house, and they were forced to sleep on the bare floor, the Japanese on one end, and the Chinese and Captain Taylor at the other end. Each night they were visited by Korean officials who continued to gather information about them while the governor waited to hear from the government.

Finally on October 3rd,after two days of confinement, it was announced that Captain Taylor and the Chinese were to be returned to their vessel to gather what they needed before he and one Chinese crewman were to be conveyed to the least damaged Japanese junk, after which they and the Japanese would sail to Nagasaki. After being escorted back to his ship by another large military escort. Captain Taylor and his [page 71] Chinese steward quickly gathered some clothing, reassured the rest of the crew that they would return as soon as possible, and then were taken nearly twenty-five miles to the Japanese junk where they departed “the island with a favourable breeze.”

The Japanese junk sailed from the island to the Goto island group, then to the small city of Hirado, and then finally, after eight days of travel, arrived at Nagasaki where Captain Taylor told his story to all that would listen. He stated that he and his crew had been well treated by the Koreans, but almost immediately his story was distorted and exaggerated, even by the local English language newspapers. The Japan Gazette reported that the shipwrecked survivors were “being held in durance vile on an uncivilized island” and that “the natives immediately locked up every one on board in jail,” and had “roughly treated” them. Captain Taylor had been summoned by, and then forced to crawl in the presence of the high official of Cheju.34 However, the paper did note that the Captain denied that his crew had been ill-treated and felt that they had been placed under a guard to protect them from the natives “who he saw were not an agreeable looking lot and every man was armed.”

Captain Taylor notified the British Consul of the accident and immediately sought transport to Cheju Island in order to rescue his crew and to recover as much of the cargo as possible. Finally, after a couple of days of searching, he found a ship that could be chartered - the 906-ton Norwegian steamer S.S. Hakon Adelsten, under the capable command of Captain Bergh, with a crew of twenty-two men. The Hakon Adelsten might have been available when no other ship was because of a recent cholera scare. Just a little over two months previously, the Hakon Adelsten had been quarantined for several days because of suspicion that members of its crew were infected with cholera - eventually this proved to be false, but the efforts of the acting Norwegian and Swedish Consul, Victor Roehr, were required to verify that the ship’s crew was healthy. Naturally this caused some damage to the reputation of the ship and may have caused some potential customers to seek other transport for fear their cargo would be quarantined.35

Preparations soon commenced. Cheju Island is located relatively close to Nagasaki so few supplies were needed. The rice that Captain Taylor had promised and some trading goods to be used as gifts for the[page 72] local Korean government were loaded, but the majority of the holds were left empty for the Barbara Taylor’s cargo of tea. A number of small wooden boats known as dambies were also brought to be utilized in transporting the goods from the wreck to the Hakon Adelsten. The rescue party consisted of Mr. Paul, the British Consul’s representative; Mr. Ringer, agent for the ship’s owners; Mr. Takeda who acted as the interpreter; Mr. Gower; Mr. Mancini, the Italian restaurant and hotel owner; and twenty Japanese coolies who were to provide the brawn for the recovery of the cargo.36 The officials at the Japanese Customs House were also notified that the ship was bound for the “hitherto almost unknown” island of Cheju to rescue a “European crew being held in durance vile on an uncivilized island.”37 Even though this was deemed a rescue operation, the Japanese Customs House displayed little charity and demanded an export duty on the dambies before they left Nagasaki, and an import duty when they returned to Nagasaki. 38

On the afternoon of October 21st (Monday), the Hakon Adelsten left Nagasaki bound for Cheju Island. The weather was clear and the sea calm. Thus, the steamship sailed quickly through the perilous Straits of Korea and arrived off the southeast coast of Cheju the following morning. For a couple of hours they followed the rocky coast west until they finally spotted the wreck and the small huts and tents that served as the living quarters for the shipwrecked survivors. Using their telescopes they were able to spot the survivors amongst the white-clothed Koreans and were relieved to note they appeared to be in good health.

When the Koreans sighted the approach of the Hakon Adelsten they immediately notified the local officials and began to make preparations to meet with the rescue party. Captain Taylor, Mr. Paul, and the Japanese interpreter took their places in a small boat and were rowed towards the wreck, seeking a safe place to land as most of the shore was lined with jagged masses of volcanic rock that would easily rip the bottom from the boat. They found a small sandy spot where they were able to safely beach their boat and were greeted by a great crowd of Koreans: the common people dressed in white and the officials in blue and scarlet. As soon as Captain Taylor landed he was embraced by some of the exuberant Korean officers who showed him “every sign of the kindliest feelings and friendship.”39

[page 73]

The landing party was escorted to the wreck where they were welcomed with Korean music and met by other local Korean officials and the survivors of the Barbara Taylor. It was at this point that they discovered there was another Westerner mixed in with the Barbara Taylor’s crew: the young Italian sailor Guiseppe Santori, the only survivor from the Bianca Pertica. Giuseppe Santori probably arrived a few days after Captain Taylor had departed for Japan. The injuries the young man had sustained during his own harrowing shipwreck had healed and he was in relatively good health considering his ordeal. The sight of Mr. Mancini must have brought great relief to the young sailor, and Mancini undoubtedly took the young man as his personal responsibility.

The chief Korean official was an old man who was regally dressed in a long garment of dark brown satin with scarlet and yellow sleeves and trousers of blue silk which greatly contrasted with the white and straw colored clothing of his subjects. Around his neck was a necklace of coral and amber, and he held a baton in his hands as a sign of authority. He claimed to be 67 years old, but because he was missing one eye and several of his upper front teeth he appeared older. Although his appearance was rather severe, he was nonetheless kind to his Western visitors and, through the translator, welcomed Captain Taylor’s return and expressed his willingness to assist him in recovering his cargo, although he would appreciate it if the Japanese were not allowed to come ashore.

Captain Taylor and Mr Paul in turn thanked the Korean official for taking such good care of the survivors and for protecting the goods and the wreck from the elements and theft. After the short meeting, Mr. Paul informed the official that the landing party would return to the Hakon Adelsten in order to make preparations and would return in the early afternoon. The translator was left behind to answer the Korean official’s questions; what these were is unknown, but they probably related to the Westerners’ origins and general questions about Korea and China. True to his word, Mr. Paul and an even larger party of Westerners returned in the afternoon bringing with them gifts as appreciation for the Koreans’ kindness. Thirty bags of Japanese rice (the payment promised by Captain Taylor), pieces of shirting, a bundle of Japanese umbrellas40 and two bottles of gin were brought and presented to the Korean chief official. Except for the gin, which the old official promptly drank and declared[page 74] “that it warmed his heart,” all gifts were refused. Despite Mr. Paul’s and Captain Taylor’s continued entreaties, the Korean official would not change his mind, and eventually the two Westerners were forced to accept the official’s refusal.

As the afternoon wore on the weather changed from the calmness of autumn to the storminess of late summer. The wind began to howl from the south, making the sea choppy and turbulent, and it was decided that the wrecked cargo would be transported the following morning when the sea was calmer. The landing party then returned to the Hakon Adelsten to wait out the storm, but prior to their leaving they gathered up their earlier proffered gifts, except the umbrellas which they intentionally forgot on the beach knowing how much the Koreans valued them. Although it is not stated, because the Hakon Adelsten was a small ship with cramped quarters most of the Barbara Taylor’s crew probably remained ashore in the huts and tents that had served as their homes while awaiting their rescue.

Aware of the dangers of storms in the region, captain Bergh ordered the Hakon Adelsten to raise anchor and then sailed a couple of miles off the coast and waited out the stormy night. The following morning the steamer returned to its anchorage, but the sea was still rough, causing the steamer to drag its anchors several times. However, time was of the essence and it was determined that, despite the choppiness of the sea, at least part of the Barbara Taylor’s cargo could be loaded.

At the old Korean official’s bidding, nearly 100 Korean men were sent to the wreck where they assisted in transporting the merchandise to the beach where the Japanese coolies loaded it onto the dambies and then transported it to the steamship. Several Korean policemen, their clothing blue and white and armed with short clubs, ensured that the Korean men worked quickly and diligently and that there was no pilfering of the cargo. Those who failed to work quickly were often chastised and corporally punished with staves and clubs, an event that in the Westerners’ opinion occurred with alarmingly frequency. Within a short time a large quantity of the dried tea and other goods had been moved to the beach, and then on to the Hakon Adelsten.

Before the Hakon Adelsten had departed Nagasaki it was speculated that the Barbara Taylor would be salvaged, but after [page 75] examining the wreckage of the ship, it was determined infeasible and it was decided to salvage what they could from the ship. While the cargo was being transported from the wreck by the Koreans and Japanese, the crew of the Barbara Taylor, along with several members of the rescue party, went aboard the wreck and started to strip the ship of all the salvageable items such as copper, yards, ropes, blocks, and any of the cargo that had been overlooked or not unloaded.

Mr. Paul had invited several of the Koreans to visit the Hakon Adelsten in the afternoon. The high official and three young women attendants were accompanied by a large number of Korean men, who, because of the large number and the roughness of the sea, had some initial difficulties boarding the ship. Once aboard, however, the events went smoothly. The Koreans brought two bottles of native wine and a few dozen hams as gifts for Mr. Paul and Captain Bergh, but these were refused on the grounds that the Koreans had not accepted the Westerners’ gifts. Only after the Koreans explained that they would be severely punished if the gifts were not accepted did Mr. Paul reluctantly agree to accept them.

The Korean visitors were given a tour of the ship and were quite impressed, especially with the steam whistle that startled several of them when it was sounded for the first time. They were given refreshments and especially enjoyed the gin “which they drank without water, by the half tumbler, and without even winking, calling out chiotah, chiotah [the Korean word for good].”41 Some of the visitors over imbibed in the refreshments, including the old high official who drank half a bottle by himself and became somewhat drunk. The event soon became festive; some of the crew of the Hakon Adelston played their musical instruments to the delight of their Korean guests. The Koreans reciprocated by bringing out their own musical instruments and began to play and sing. Korean women were rarely observed by Western men. Those few that had been observed were usually elderly and generally not pleasant to gaze upon. Thus, the crew especially delighted that the Korean official had brought his young girl attendants. However, it was soon discovered to everyone’s amazement and disappointment that the three young women with long braided hair and white flowing clothing were in fact young beardless boys who were male attendants to the high official.42 The [page 76] ribald thoughts and banter that the crew had exchanged amongst themselves quickly died down.

As the hour grew late the Koreans were again set ashore and the operations of recovery ended for the day. Because the weather had improved throughout the day the ship remained at anchor in the bay that night. Captain Taylor was satisfied with the day’s progress and was convinced that the recovery of the cargo would be completely finished the following day, but he did not take into account the will of Mother Nature. The following morning, Thursday, work began at daybreak, but within a few hours it became apparent to all that another storm was blowing in and that the recovery operations at sea would be delayed. Captain Taylor remained on shore to continue the salvage operations on land while the rest of the crew re-boarded the Hakon Adelston and rode out the rough weather a few miles out at sea. During a lull in the storm, they returned for only a short time in the evening to recover Captain Taylor and then returned to their position off the coast.

They passed the night eating Italian food which Mr. Mancini had prepared in an effort to pass time, and probably in deep conversation, discussing their adventures on the island. The poor weather improved during the night and at daybreak on Friday morning they returned to their anchorage off the wreck and began to finish their recovery of the Barbara Taylor and her cargo.

Another Korean delegation arrived at the Hakon Adelston during the early morning - many of them had recently arrived from the capital of Cheju Island and had come not only to pay a visit to the Westerners, but also to return the umbrellas that had been purposely left on the beach. The Korean delegation, ironically, had brought with them dried awabi, a hundred pounds of awabi shells, chickens and two small live pigs as gifts for their Western guests. Flabbergasted, Mr. Paul refused to accept these gifts unless the Koreans accepted a gift from the Westerners. A compromise was reached: the Koreans would accept the umbrellas, and Mr. Paul would accept their most recent gifts. The delegation’s visit was short, on account of the sea still being a little rough, and several of the Koreans, unaccustomed to boats, became very sea-sick and ill.

Throughout the day the salvage operations continued. The sails, rigging and ropes were stripped from the wreck, and even the masts were [page 77] chopped down and conveyed to the steamer After all that could be salvaged from the wreck was safely stowed aboard the steamer, the Westerners met with the Koreans for the last time. They expressed their great appreciation to the High Official for all that he and the Korean villagers had done in aiding the survivors and for keeping the wreck and its cargo safe- even refusing compensation for all their efforts. The Korean official replied that he and his people were only doing their duties and that payment was not desired or acceptable. Koreans in many of their encounters with shipwreck victims noted that it was a natural act to treat victims humanely and to safe-guard their goods. The high official did state that once the steamer left he planned on having the wreck set ablaze so that the natives of the island would not be tempted to pilfer it.

After saying their final goodbyes, the crew of the Barbara Taylor and the sole survivor of the Bianca Pertica were loaded aboard the Hakon Adelston at 5 in the evening. After securing all the boats, dambies, and stowing all the gear, the steamer departed at 5:30, dipping its flag three times and sounding the whistle as a sign of respect. It was not surprising that the steamer, shortly after leaving the island of Cheju, encountered severe weather It was in the middle of the night that one of the crew members thought he heard someone screaming for help. A quick check was conducted to see if anyone was missing, but all were accounted for, and the ship continued to sail on to Nagasaki. It was in the morning, when the coolies gathered together for their breakfast, that it was discovered that one of the coolies was missing, and it had probably been his screams that had been heard the previous night after the hapless man was washed overboard.43

The Hakon Adelston arrived in Nagasaki later that day, and upon its return one of the Westerners, a crew member of the Hakon Adelston, countered the earlier allegations made in the newspapers regarding the Koreans’ reputation for killing foreigners. Cheju Island had ‘‘hitherto been looked upon with dread by the storm-tossed mariner on account of the supposed cruelties inflicted by the inhabitants on shipwrecked sailors.”44 He stated that the Koreans had been extremely kind to the shipwrecked survivors and that not one “unpleasant remark” had been made towards any of the Westerners while on the island. He summed it up by saying that he “would gladly revisit and thoroughly explore it [Cheju Island] could[page 78] permission be obtained.”

The young Italian sailor, Giuseppe Santori, stayed in Nagasaki for a short time, probably at the Belle Vue Hotel which was owned by Mr. Mancini, and recounted his adventure aboard the Bianca Pertica to the local newspaper. He then proceeded to Shanghai, China, and except for his account reprinted in the local newspapers in Shanghai and Nagasaki, disappeared from the pages of history. He doesn’t appear in any of the directories for China, Japan or the Philippines that year or in the following years, so he probably returned to Europe on one of the many steamers that operated out of Shanghai. He did, however, play his own small part in future Italian attempts to establish relations with Korea as will be seen later in this book.

The wreck of the Barbara Taylor and the kind treatment the survivors received from the Koreans provided the British Minister, Harry S. Parkes, with the opportunity in November of the same year to send one of his staff, Ernest Satow, aboard a British warship to Cheju and Pusan to thank the local Korean governments for the kind treatment they had provided. He was not very successful. The Koreans made it clear that it was only natural that they should have treated the shipwreck victims in the manner they had, and that thanks and compensation were not needed. Mr. Satow tried to present the local authorities at Pusan with a letter from the British government, but they refused to accept it, making it clear that the Koreans did not wish to have relations with the British.45 Parkes and Satow were later criticized by the British government for using a warship to convey the thanks, if that was what their true purpose was.46

As for Captain John Taylor, a Naval Court was convened in Nagasaki and he was found guilty of only “certain errors in judgment,” and given a reprimand, but not held liable for the loss of his ship.47 He was lucky - Captain Watt of the British brig Mary wasn’t.

**The Schooner Mary48**

In Nagasaki in late June 1881, Captain Watt and his wife purchased the small three-masted 240-ton schooner Mary for 4,100 taels.49 Captain Watt’s background is unknown; perhaps he was a captain on another ship and had used his savings to purchase the Mary so that he and his wife could be the masters of their own fates. The seas of the Far East[page 79] were filled with these small shipsm, many owned and commanded by men accompanied by their families, who braved storm and pirate infested seas in an effort to make their fortunes. Few were successful and, unfortunately, Captain Watt and his wife were not one of the few.

The Mary often traveled between the ports in northern China, Japan and Vladivostok, and was occasionally chartered by large companies such as Jardine Matheson & Co., so it was probably making a good profit. The crew undoubtedly remained with the ship even after its sale and consisted of ten Chinese (three from Canton and seven from Chefoo), and one Englishman named W.T. Guy, who was the chief mate.

It is difficult to determine where the Mary traveled after Captain Watt purchased her because there were two schooners of about the same size named Mary operating in the same waters - the other commanded by Captain T. Cubbin - but more than likely it continued to follow the same route that it had prior to Captain Watt’s purchase. We do know that on September 18, 1881, the Mary departed Chefoo, China bound for Vladivostok with 60 tons of general goods, 90 tons of ballast, and twenty three Chinese passengers. The weather was fine, with a light breeze blowing, and the ship slowly made its way across the Yellow Sea and along the coast of Korea until it reached Cheju Island on the morning of the 23rd. It is unknown how familiar Captain Watt was with these waters, especially during the summer typhoon season, but he chose to sail the relatively narrow channel between the Korean mainland and the island, perhaps thinking it would be safer or, more likely, just taking the quickest route. He could not have known that this trip would be his last.

On the afternoon of the 24th storm clouds started gathering and a strong wind blew from the northeast, causing the Mary to tack back and forth. As the day progressed the storm grew in strength, the wind howled and the rain beat down, causing the sea to turn into a tempest and forcing the ship to bring in most of its sails as a precaution. By nightfall the storm was blowing at full force and the darkness and rain made it almost impossible to see. At three in the morning Captain Watt summoned his crew and ordered the sails brought in and the anchor dropped in an effort to keep the ship from smashing into the rocky coast, but it was too late. Just as soon as the anchor was dropped the ship struck some submerged rocks and was stuck firmly in place. Unable to ride the waves, the waves[page 80] soon started washing over the deck of the ship and any actions on the deck were nearly suicidal. It was decided to ride out the storm until morning.

The morning light revealed that the Mary was about sixty yards off shore, but the sea was still rough and it was decided to wait until high tide before attempting to have one man swim ashore with a rope so that the ship could be abandoned safely. When the tide was at its highest, the chief mate, W.T. Guy, jumped into the water and swam to shore with a rope around his shoulder Fortunately, he made it with nothing more than a badly bruised shoulder, but as the crew aboard the Mary hauled upon the rope in an effort to make it taunt and secure the rope slipped and, despite their best efforts, they could not get another rope ashore.

The ship could no longer take the constant pounding of the sea and began to break apart One of the Chinese crew members and a passenger jumped into the water and tried to swim to shore, but they were carried away by the waves and drowned. Most of the crew and passengers climbed out on the jib boom while the Captain and his wife climbed up onto the bow sprit, seeking sanctuary from the grasping waves. Their efforts were in vain: unable to endure the sea’s pounding, the ship broke apart, washing those on the jib boom ashore, but dropping the Captain and his wire into the roiling maelstrom - they were not seen again.

As the survivors were struggling to reach shore, several Koreans appeared on the beach and began to assist them. When no more survivors could be found, the Koreans took those whom they had rescued to a small hut, built a fire, fed them wheat gruel, and sent word to the high official of a nearby village of the survivors’ plight. The high official soon arrived and commanded that the survivors be taken to the village where they were given food and shelter in one of the small huts. Exhausted from their ordeal, they slept through the night. The following morning the survivors returned to the beach and discovered that their ship was completely destroyed. They salvaged what they could, and with the Koreans’ assistance gathered the battered bodies of their ship mates and buried them, sixteen Chinese were buried that morning, their names and the location of their graves lost in time, and two other Chinese were never recovered, their bodies lost at sea. In all there were seventeen survivors: G.T Guy was the only Westerner; there were three Chinese from Canton and thirteen from Chefoo.

[page 81]

Throughout the rest of the day they gathered what items they could salvage from the ship and then returned to the village where they spent another night. The following morning they were met by a procession of small ponies and soldiers. Each of the survivors was mounted upon a pony with two Koreans who acted as handlers and guards. They left early in the morning and arrived at the island’s walled capital at around noon where they were given an audience with the island’s highest official. He demanded to know who they were, and for what purpose they were on the island. The Chinese from Chefoo engaged in most of the communication which was done through written Chinese, declaring that they were from Chefoo bound for Vladivostok, and that the Westerner was an Englishman. They further went on to explain that all Englishmen were bad.

Once the island’s magistrate’s questions were answered to his satisfaction, he commanded a feast be arranged to honor his guests. Word was also sent to Seoul asking the central government what was to be done with the survivors. A house was given to the survivors to use as their own while they awaited word from the capital They were treated relatively well, especially the Chinese, who took every opportunity to speak poorly of the Englishman and of Westerners in general.

Finally, after seventy-one days of waiting, word arrived that the survivors were to be moved to Tatao and then sent on to Nagasaki. They departed in a Korean junk accompanied by two Korean officials and their suite. According to W. T. Guy, they traveled in the junks for nearly twenty days before arriving at their first destination, Lam Hoi (Nam Hae?). Here the Korean officials from Cheju turned them over to the local Korean officials and then departed. For nearly twenty days they remained at Lam Hoi as reluctant guests, well-treated by the Koreans. The Chefoo Chinese acted haughtily, demeaning their Cantonese companions and, of course, Mr. Guy, against whom they seem to have harbored strong negative feelings.

Again they boarded two junks and were accompanied by two Korean officials. They were told that they were bound for Ma Loong Chuen, and from there would be sent to China or Japan. For forty-one cold, wet, and miserable days they were confined to the junks with little food, often going hungry. When they finally arrived at Ma Loong Chuen they were again faced with a long stay, this one nearly two months, while[page 82] the Koreans apparently waited for instructions on how to send the survivors on the next leg of their journey. Finally word came down that they were to proceed, again, in two small junks for He Chu (Haeju?). Fortunately for them, they encountered a Chinese fishing boat after a day’s sailing, and after a quick conference between the Korean officials and the Chinese captain, it was decided that the fishing boat would take them to China if they were supplied with their own food and water.

Crowded aboard the small Chinese fishing boat, they were fortunate not to encounter rough seas and reached the Chinese mainland about seven days after leaving the Korean junks. Once on the mainland, Guy walked and, later, rode a mule to Chefoo, where he reported the loss of the Mary to the British Consul and with the help of the foreign community, recuperated from his seven-month ordeal in which he had “suffered great privations.”51 What became of him is unknown.

**Conclusion**

It is unknown how many ships have wrecked off Cheju’s coast over the centuries; undoubtedly great numbers of Japanese and Chinese ships have been stranded on the island, and there is the possibility of ships from Okinawa, southeastern Asia and the Middle East52 having been stranded on the shores of this island as well. If so, the records, if they exist, are still undiscovered, perhaps lying undisturbed in some library or museum.

Cheju Island’s position ensured that it would be one of the first if not the first, Korean territories visited by Westerners. The only real opportunity for Westerners to encounter Korea was via Japan. However, Japan was closed to the West, except for the small Dutch trading post at Dejima Island, in Nagasaki Bay.53 As the West expanded into northeast Asia, particularly after the opening of Japan by Perry’s expedition in 1853, it was only a matter of time before Korea would be confronted by Westerners, especially missionaries and traders.

Thus it is no surprise that most of the Western ship wrecks off Cheju Island’s coasts occurred during the late nineteenth century. The Mary was probably not the last shipwreck on Cheju Island, but it does appear to be the last Western shipwreck on the island reported in the English language newspapers of Japan and China prior to Korea being [page 83] opened to the West.

Korea, especially Cheju Island, had a reputation for being hostile to shipwreck victims, but the accounts given in this article are evidence that the shipwreck victims were well treated; in some cases, they were treated better than shipwreck victims on the coasts of Japan and China. The West used the excuse of poor treatment afforded shipwreck survivors to demand that Korea negotiate treaties and to pry open its closed doors. Western enlightenment and improvements were eventually introduced after the Hermit Kingdom’s doors were pried open by force and diplomacy but it came with a price: the eventual fall and loss of Choson Korea.

**Notes**

1 Samuel Taylor Coleridge from The Ancient Mariner

2 Bernadou, John Baptiste, “Korea and the Koreans,” The National Geographic Magazine Vol. II No. 4 1890 (reprint), p. 239

3 On September 10, 1980, one of the largest ships in the world, the Derbyshire, a container ship, sank off the coast of Japan during a violent storm. It has been suggested that the ship sank due to a small hatch at the bow of the ship inadvertently left open, while another theory is the ventilation covers were not able to withstand the beating of the sea and water leaked into the holds causing the catastrophic accident that claimed the lives of the 17 crew members.

4 Father Manuel Teixeira, “Two Texts on Mysterious Contacts in Korea,” Portuguese-Korean Historical Studies 2001, pp. 97-98

5 Hahn, Sangbok D., “Portuguese Cartographic Influence on Korea in 16th Century,” Portuguese-Korean Historical Studies 2001, p. 22

6 Ledyard, Gari, The Dutch Come to Korea. An Account of the life of the first Westerners in Korea (1653-1666); Vibeke Roeper and Boudewijin Walraven, ed., Hamel’s World: A Dutch-Korean Encounter in the Seventeenth Century ; http://www.henny-savenije.pe.kr/

7 It is unclear where they were captured, but Cheju Island seems a likely candidate. Nahm, Andrew C., Introduction to Korean History and Culture, p. 126

8 Vibeke Roeper and Boudewijin Walraven, ed., Hamel’s World: A Dutch- Korean Encounter in the Seventeenth Century, p. 116

9 In August 1719,two Dutch East Indies ships, the Catharina and Meeroog, while en route to Japan apparently encountered a typhoon in the Straits of Korea and [page 84] sunk. There are no reports of any survivors landing in Korea. Courtesy of Hugh Brown.

10 Father Manuel Teixeira, “Two Texts on Mysterious Contacts in Korea,” Portuguese-Korean Historical Studies 2001, pp. 93-97

Park Seong-Rae, “Portugal and Korea: Obscure Encounters in the Pre-modern Period Before 1900,” Portuguese-Korean Historical Studies 2001, pp. 43-44

11 Park Seong-Rae, “Portugal and Korea: Obscure Encounters in the Pre-modern Period Before 1900,” Portuguese-Korean Historical Studies 2001, pp. 43-44

12 Park Seong-Rae, “Portugal and Korea: Obscure Encounters in the Pre-modern Period Before 1900,” Portuguese-Korean Historical Studies 2001, pp. 43-44

13 Father Manuel Teixeira, “Two Texts on Mysterious Contacts in Korea,” Portuguese-Korean Historical Studies 2001, pp. 93-97

14 This is based mainly on the account of the accident as given in The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, November 6, 1878 and repeated in North China Herald, November 21, 1878.

15 The original newspaper gives his name as Guiseppe Santori, but following the advice of two Italian friends; I have chosen to write his name as Giuseppe Santori

16 According to the Japan Daily Herald, Tuesday, November 19, 1878, page 2, Giuseppe Santori was a “young Italian sailor,” and I am assuming that he was in his late teens or early twenties.

17 The exact name of the ship is unknown: some accounts claim that it was Bianca Porzia.

18 This high quality coal was prized by naval ships for its clean burning resulting in very little smoke in comparison to other coal which gave off a very dark and thick cloud of smoke which could be used to alert an enemy of the ship’s location.

19 The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, October 23, 1878

20 “Commercial Reports of Her Majesty’s Consuls in Japan 1882[C-3799],”

21 Japan No. 4 (1883), pp. 46 lists only six Italians with two business establishment in Nagasaki on December 31,1882. In fact, there are no other Italians listed in this document. For a short history on Italians at Nagasaki see Lane R. Earns “Italian Influence in the ‘Naples of Japan,’ 1859-1941,” http://www.uwosh.edu/home\_pages/faculty staff/earns/italian.html

21 C.N. Mancini arrived at Nagasaki in 1864 and remained in the city with his wife and family until about May 1879 when he and his family moved to Hiogo [Kobe], Japan. The summer of 1880 was extremely hot, and at the end of August, like many of the residents of the city, he sought relief by going on a picnic with [page 85] his family and friends. The sun proved too much for him and he passed away of a heatstroke. Lane R. Earns, “Italian Influence in the ‘Naples of Japan,’ 1859-1941,”,http://www.uwosh.edu/home\_pages/faculty\_staff/earns/italian.html

22 Also spelled as Olarovsky.

23 “From 1870 to 1874, a consular agent from the Netherlands (initially, the Dutch merchant W. F. Gaymans) oversaw Italian concerns in Nagasaki. From 1875 to 1892, and then again from 1916 to 1924, the Russian Consul served as Acting Consul for Italian affairs. The years 1893 to 1915, saw the German Consul in charge of Italian interests, and finally from 1925 to 1939, the British handled Italian concerns.” The North China Herald, August 31, 1880; Lane R. Earns, “Italian Influence in the ‘Naples of Japan,’ 1859-1941,” http://www.uwosh.edu/home\_pages/faculty\_staff/earns/italian.html

24 Commercial Reports of Her Majesty’s Consuls in Japan 1882[C-3799],” Japan No. 4 (1883)

25 The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, September 18, 1878, and The North China Herald, November 14, 1878

26 The Takashima mines were located on four small islands located about ten miles southwest of Nagasaki. These mines were long used by the Japanese, but it wasn’t until Thomas Glover, a Scottish merchant living in Nagasaki, in 1868 became part owner of the mines and introduced machinery. Unfortunately the early efforts did not generate enough profits and in 1870 Glover & Co. went bankrupt and the mines were then passed on Bauduin, a company in Netherlands, until 1874 when it was purchased by Shojiro Goto, who, in turn, later sold it to the Mitusbishi Steamship Company. The mines remained a vital industry to Japan until their closure in 1986.

27 James Hyde Clark, Story of China and Japan, pp. 117

28 The original newspaper gives his name as Chelini Pasquaili, but following the advice of two Italian friends; I have chosen to write his name as Pascuale Chelini.

29 The original newspaper gives their names as Piladi Taddei and Bacchione Leoni, but following the advice of two Italian friends; I have chosen to write their names as Pi lade Taddei and Leone Bacchione.

30 Open Letter from Tamaso di Savoia [Duke of Genoa] to the Governor of Torai- fu [Pusan], August 3, 1880

31 This is based mainly on the accounts of the accident as given in the The Japan Daily Herald, November 19 and 26,1878.

32 The Japan Gazette, October 18, 21 and 23,1878

[page 86] 33 The Japan Gazette, October 23, 1878

34 The Japan Gazette, October 18, 21 and 23,1878

35 The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, August 28, 1878. The incident occurred on the morning of August 19, when Johannes Olsen, a twenty-two year old stoker, became violently sick and Dr. William Renwick, who had been treating Olsen for his chronic diarrhea for nearly three weeks, was summoned to the ship. Dr. Renwick felt that it would be better for Olsen to be admitted to the Govern Hospital in Nagasaki and sent him there, but he did not send Olsen’s medical records with him. There Olsen was misdiagnosed as having cholera by Dr. Van Leeuven, and “sent in the dead of night to a temporary hospital about five miles away, over one of the roughest roads in the neighbourhood, at which so-called hospital he was left to the mercy of the Japanese till the time of his death, they all the time believing the case to be one of cholera, of which disease they entertain no little dread.” The Japanese Governor demanded the ship be placed in quarantine to protect Nagasaki’s community, and it was only after Dr. Renwick’s protests and the medical investigation of the crew conducted by the Acting Swedish and Norwegian Consul and three medical officers from the United States and England,that aside from the twenty-three year old stoker Ole Antonsen - who suffered mild common diarrhea, the ship’s crew was healthy. The paper noted that the scare “ended in nothing worse than a pecuniary loss to the owners of the Hakon A deist en and a difference of opinion amongst our medical authorities.”

36 It is unclear why Mancini went with the rescue party, as he obviously was unaware that the Italian ship had sunk. The North China Herald, November 14, 1878,reported that Mr. Olarovski, Russian Consul at Nagasaki who also took care of the Italian concerns stated: “Giuseppe Santoro, who was found on Quelpart island by Mr. Mancini, who had gone to that place for the purpose of bringing aid to another shipwrecked vessel.”

37 The Japan Gazette, October 31,1878

38 The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, November 13, 1878

39 The Japan Daily Herald, November 19, 1878

40 Umbrellas were highly prized by the Koreans who saw them as status symbols.

41 The Japan Daily Herald, November 19, 1878

42 Korean males wore their hair long and in braids until they were married. A male was not considered an adult, regardless of his age, until he married. Upon marriage he wore his hair in a ‘top-knot’ and was afforded all the respect and rights of an adult. Later, after Korea had opened to the West, recently-arrived[page 87] Westerners often mistook these young boys as pretty women and were ridiculed by their more knowledgeable friends. One of the men who accompanied the rescue mission to Cheju Island noted that “the women seemed to be very hard- worked in the fields; they were studiously kept away from us, and I must confess I did not see a pretty one.” The Japan Daily Herald, November 26,1878

43 This coolie was lost during the night when he fell overboard during rough seas. Due to some confusion it was not realized that he was lost until the following morning when the Japanese coolies assembled for breakfast. The Japan Daily Herald, November 26,1878

44 The North China Herald, November 21, 1878; The Japan Daily Herald, November 19,1878; The Japan Gazette, October 18,21, 31 and November 14, 1878

45 Deuchler, Martina, Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys, pp. 109-110

46 Choi, Mun-hyung, “Korean-British Amity and Its Historical Significance,” Korea Journal, April 1984, pp. 10

47 The North China Herald, November 21, 1878

48 This is based on the account of the accident as given in the North China Herald, May 5, 1882.

49 The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, July 2, 1881

50 Ironically, Captain T. Gubbins died of dysentery at Chefoo, China, a little over a month after Captain Watt was lost in the shipwreck. The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, November 12, 1881.

51 The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, May 6, 1882. According to this short article he spent nearly eight months in Korea.

52 Ha, Tae-Hung, Korea -Forty Three Centuries, p. 62

Nahm, Andrew C., Introduction to Korean History and Culture, p. 76

53 The Portuguese and Spanish were the first to visit Japan and were soon followed by the English and Dutch. Due to the anti-Christian sentiment in Japan, the Spanish and Portuguese were expelled after their missionary activities were discovered. The Portuguese tried to re-establish trade with Japan in July 1640 when they sent Paes Pacheco and his entourage from Macao, bearing documents pledging to repay the Japanese merchants, to Nagasaki aboard a Portuguese merchant ship. The Japanese were less than pleased and decided to teach the Portuguese a lesson. Pacheco and his entourage of 60 men were executed, only seventeen servants were allowed to return to Macao by a Chinese junk, and the Portuguese merchant ship was burnt. By 1641, only a small number of Dutch [page 88] were allowed to dwell in Japan and only on Dejima Island. There was little opportunity for Western ships to explore the waters off Japan for fear of offending the Japanese and being expelled from Japan. Fei, Chengkang, Macao 400 Years, pp. 103.