

Nangasacki, there was a crucifix in the way, and we were told to step on it. We disliked to do it. They then told us that it was no harm; but if we did not do so, they would think that we were Portuguese, and it would be told to the governor. We tried to avoid stepping on the crucifix, but a man having hold of each of our arms, forced us to trample on it.

That when my shipmates, McCoy, Bull, and Boyd, about the fourteenth of December, who had run away the night before, were arrested and brought back to the prison yard, tied with cords and put in stocks, they were left to lie in the yard all night. I wanted to give them some covering, and so did the rest of my shipmates, but the Japanese would not let us do it.

That the Japanese officers always wanted us to bow down to them, after the manner of the Japanese, with our heads to the floor. This we told him was not the fashion of our country, and we could not do it. We always treated them with respect, after the manner of our own country. They were very particular, when visiting the prison, to make John Bull bow down to them; he being supposed to be the chief man among us.

That when we were all taken to the common prison in Nangasacki, we found two cages prepared for us—one for Bull, McCoy, and Boyd, and the other one for the rest of us. We had to enter our cage through a very small opening, getting down upon our hands and knees, and crawling through.

That I think there was something wrong about the death of Goldthwait. We all thought that he had been poisoned. Up to the moment of his sickness, he was a healthy man, and of a lively disposition. The Japanese put the body of Goldthwait in a box and carried it away, making merry on the occasion.

That two days before we came to the ship, late in the afternoon, an interpreter and an officer came and told us that we were to be sent away. We had suspected this for a number of days, but we had no certain information of the fact until this time.

his  
MELCHER + BIFFAR.  
mark.

Sworn and subscribed before me, this thirtieth day of April, eighteen hundred and forty-nine.

JAMES GLYNN,  
*Commanding U. S. ship Preble.*

In presence of—

SILAS BENT, *Acting Lieutenant U. S. Navy.*  
HENRY WILSON, *Purser U. S. Navy.*

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Before me, James Glynn, commanding the United States ship Preble, personally appeared, this thirtieth day of April, eighteen hundred and forty-nine, Ranald McDonald, who, being duly sworn, deposes as follows:

I was born in Astoria, Oregon; I am now twenty-four years of age. I shipped at Sag Harbor in the whale ship Plymouth, Captain Edwards, on a whaling voyage, on the second day of December, eighteen hundred and forty-five. Being off the island of Japan, I left the ship at my own desire, agreeably to a previous understanding with the captain. He was to furnish



me with a boat, etc., and drop me off the coast of Japan, under favorable circumstances for reaching the shore.

Ranald McDonald further deposes, that on the twenty-eighth day of June, eighteen hundred and forty-eight, after losing sight of the Plymouth, I hauled on the wind, standing to the northward and eastward for the land. In entering a bay I observed some rocks ahead. I endeavored to tack, but failed. I then wore to the southward and westward, just clearing the rocks. I kept on the wind until I cleared them. I then ran free to the northward and westward, standing for the opposite side of the bay. I passed through a channel in the reef, and anchored under a shelter, where I tried my pistols by shooting a sea lion. I then got under way, and stood for the bottom of the bay, where I landed, having understood from the captain that it was inhabited; but finding no inhabitants I made an experiment of a premeditated design, which was to see if I could capsize my boat and right her again. In this I succeeded to my satisfaction. I then ascended the heights to take another look at the ship. With a view to lengthening my absence from the ship, I remained two nights in this bay. In the mean time I made an excursion into the interior, but I saw nothing of interest.

That knowing there were inhabitants on the island of Timoshee, (or Dessey of the Japanese,) about ten miles distant, I put to sea on the third day to go there, with a view of representing myself as destitute.

That between the two islands, about ten o'clock in the morning, I turned out the reef in my sail, capsizing my boat intentionally, making no effort to save anything but my chest, which I wanted for ballast, and for trimming my boat. My rudder was let go also. Unstepped my mast, righted my boat, re-stepped my mast, set my sail, and stood towards the land. I saw a vessel that day about six p. m., to the northward. That night I spent in the boat, lying off and on. Next morning early I approached the land, and was becalmed. I first discovered smoke, and when day broke saw some natives launching a boat. They came towards me, within a hundred yards. On my beckoning they approached me timidly, and I jumped into their boat, fastening the painter of my boat to theirs, and made signs to go ashore.

On landing they took hold of my wrists, one on each side, in a gentle manner, put sandals on my feet, and led me to a house. Here a breakfast was provided for me in their best manner; and they also gave me dry clothes. I remained in this house eight days, when four Matsmai officers arrived from Soya. These officers took me to the capital of the island, situated on the seashore, to the northward and westward. There I was imprisoned. At first my apartment was quite small, but on my remonstrating they enlarged it by moving the partitions.

After remaining here thirty days, an officer arrived, and took me to a town called Soya, on the island of Yesso, distant about twenty-five miles. I was placed in prison in Soya, and remained there about fifteen days, waiting for a junk, which I was secretly told they expected from Matsmai. This vessel not arriving, I was placed in a small boat, and after a day's journey met a junk, and was taken back to Soya, where I was delayed four or five days longer; after which I was put on board this junk and sent to Matsmai. On the passage, stopped to get wood and water. On board this vessel I was permitted to go about abaft the mast. I arrived at Matsmai, after a passage of fifteen days, on the sixth day of September. Here they put me in confinement, where I remained until the 1st of October.



Whilst here I learned that I had been preceded by other fifteen Americans, who had made attempts to escape. Here they gave me sweetmeats, and in all other respects treated me kindly. I was given a rude spoon, which had been manufactured and left by one of the party of fifteen Americans who had been imprisoned here before me. On the first of October I left in another junk for Nangasacki; arrived at Nangasacki on the fifteenth; remained on board two days, and landed on the seventeenth. I was taken, in the first place, to a small enclosure adjoining the town-hall. Here I was met by an interpreter, (Morreama Einaska,) who told me that in front of the first door of the town-house I would see an image, and to put my foot on it, telling me that this image was the "devil of Japan." In passing the door I put my foot on it, but was not able to see it clearly, in consequence of the crowd, who pressed me forward. It appeared to be a metallic plate, of about a foot in diameter, on which I thought I could see a representation of the Virgin and infant Saviour. In the town-house I was requested to kneel, after the Japanese fashion, upon a mat. I attempted one knee, but they insisted upon my getting down on both knees; which I finally assented to. Soon after this I heard a *hissing* noise, and was told by the interpreter that the governor was coming, and that I must make "compliments to him;" which was to bend low, and not look up. I made a low bow to the governor, though not before I had taken a look at him.

The Japanese inquired my name, my place of birth, and port from whence I sailed, and my place of residence. I answered them Oregon, New York, and Canada, with the hope that in the event of an American or English vessel arriving here, either of them would take an interest in me, and that I might be restored to my own liberty, and for the opportunity of giving information to the people of the United States that some of their countrymen were imprisoned in Japan, and in all probability would remain in prison for life. They then inquired the name of the ship I had left, the name of her captain, and my reasons or motives for leaving the ship. I told them that I had some difficulty with the captain. They finally asked me "if I believed there was a God in Heaven." I answered, yes; that I believed in the "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." I was then told I had permission to leave the hall; and I was then taken in a *cago*, attended by a number of soldiers, to my prison, which I was told was a sort of temple, or priest's house. I remained in this prison up to the present time. During this time, I was taken to the town-hall twice, and also questioned on several occasions at my prison. The day after being put in this prison I asked for my books, particularly my Bible. The interpreter told me, with a good deal of fervor or interest, "not to speak of the Bible in Japan; it was not a good book." During these interviews the object of their questions appeared to be to ascertain if I had any influential friends at home who would seek for me. If I had, they would send me away; if I had none, then they would imprison me for life in Japan.

About the seventeenth of April I heard signal-guns. (About three months before, I was told that when the Dutch ship, or any ship, appeared approaching the coast, the guns would be fired.) I was told by my guard, secretly, that these guns announced the approach of a yearly Dutch ship, and they were also fired to call in the troops from the neighboring towns and districts. On this occasion there were fired six guns;



two were in close succession, being repeated at longer intervals. In the hands of the same soldiers, the next morning, I saw sheets of paper, with writing on, which did not appear to be a letter. On inquiry, he told me it was a list of soldiers who had arrived at Nangasacki from some neighboring cities. The number he gave me was "thirty-five hundred and four." I asked how many soldiers there were in Nangasacki on ordinary occasions. He said that the ordinary number was six hundred and fifty; but on this occasion he thought there were about six thousand, besides an unknown number of attendants or followers—an extraordinary force.

On the afternoon of the twenty-fourth, the chief "Serai Tatsnosen," accompanied by the interpreter, "Morreama Einaska," came to me in my prison, and told me that as a new governor and a number of gentlemen had arrived from Yedo, they had concluded to send me to the Dutch factory. After a while, they asked me if I knew the reason of this. I replied, "No." Then they told me that a vessel had arrived from my country. As I had hailed from three different countries, I asked if the ship was from "Oregon;" that having been assigned as the place of my birth. They said "No, from New York." I told them that was the place I sailed from. From thence I was taken to the Dutch factory at Decima, and delivered over to the Dutch superintendent of trade, where I was kindly treated. The superintendent sent me to the ship. I have heard other cannon fired before the arrival of the *Preble*, which I suppose was a salute on the arrival of the winter fleet of Chinese junks. I was told there were five cannon in Soya, but I never saw any except those I saw on coming from Nangasacki. The troops that I have seen in Japan were clothed in a coat of mail, with hats of paper, japaned, broad-rimmed, low-crowned, and fitting close to the head. These hats did not appear to be worn for defence. They were armed with two swords, and, in addition to these, with bows and arrows, and also with match-locks, (the ignited match being carried at the waist.) I never saw any mounted cavalry, but heard of such being in the country. The match-locks were with very short breeches to the stock, which was brought against the cheek in firing, as shown to me by one of the soldiers. In firing, they kneel upon the right knee, throwing the left foot forward, keeping both eyes wide open.

The common people appeared to be amiable and friendly, but the government agents were the reverse.

During my imprisonment I had a number of scholars among the Japanese interpreters, which probably procured me more kindness than I would have otherwise met with. "Morreama" speaks better English than any of the Japanese I heard attempt it. Two or three of the other interpreters speak a little English. I was told that there was an abundance of mineral coal in Japan, and some not far from Nangasacki.

That I was fully under the impression that the fifteen men, whoever they might be, who had preceded me from Matsmai, were still in Japan, and doomed to perpetual imprisonment; and that I believed that their liberation depended entirely upon the success of my efforts to return to civilization, and send them relief.

Upon the arrival of the ship there appeared to be a general excitement among the government agents. On the morning of the twenty-sixth of April, the interpreter came to my prison, and exhibited a letter, translated



into English, purporting to be a communication to the commanding officer of the *Preble*, requiring him to leave the harbor of Nangasacki, on the reception of the fifteen men.

The interpreter wished me to give him the relative rank of the captain of the ship, by counting in the order of succession from the highest chief in the United States. First, I gave the people, which they could not comprehend, then the President of the United States, the Secretary of the Navy, commodore, post captain, and commander. This rank appeared to be sufficiently elevated to excite their surprise.

RANALD McDONALD.

Sworn and subscribed before me, this thirtieth day of April, eighteen hundred and forty nine.

JAMES GLYNN,  
*Commanding U. S. ship Preble.*

In presence of—

SILAS BENT, *Acting Lieutenant U. S. Navy.*

HENRY WILSON, *Purser U. S. Navy.*

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*Notes made at an interview had between Commander James Glynn and different Japanese officers, at Nangasacki, Japan.*

[No. 1, A. ]

UNITED STATES SHIP PREBLE,  
*Nangasacki Roads, April 18, 1849.*

Memoranda of an interview with a Japanese boarding officer, named "Morreama," who spoke in English.

This Japanese officer appeared on board, with seven assistants. He said his object was to acquaint the commander of the ship that, "by the laws of Japan, our anchorage must be a certain place," which was pointed out on the chart, until he could communicate our arrival to a high chief in Nangasacki.

To the above Commander Glynn objected, alleging that his present anchorage, as well as the one pointed out, was very unsafe, and that, to secure his ship in case of a blow, it was necessary that he should *anchor inside the harbor*, and he intended to get under way and stand in immediately on their departure.

After some talk, the mutual conclusion was, that the ship should stand in as proposed; and that, when she should be abreast of the island of Happenberg, the chief referred to above should point out a safe and suitable anchorage inside.\*

Before leaving the ship, immediately when the affair of an anchoring was settled, this Japanese officer suggested that they should remain on board and accompany the ship inside.

To this Commander Glynn gave an indignant refusal, and the subject was immediately dropped.

The officer asked Commander Glynn—

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\*On getting abreast of the isle of Happenberg, the same Japanese officer hailed us from his boat, and told us that the ship had "full permission to anchor where she wished."