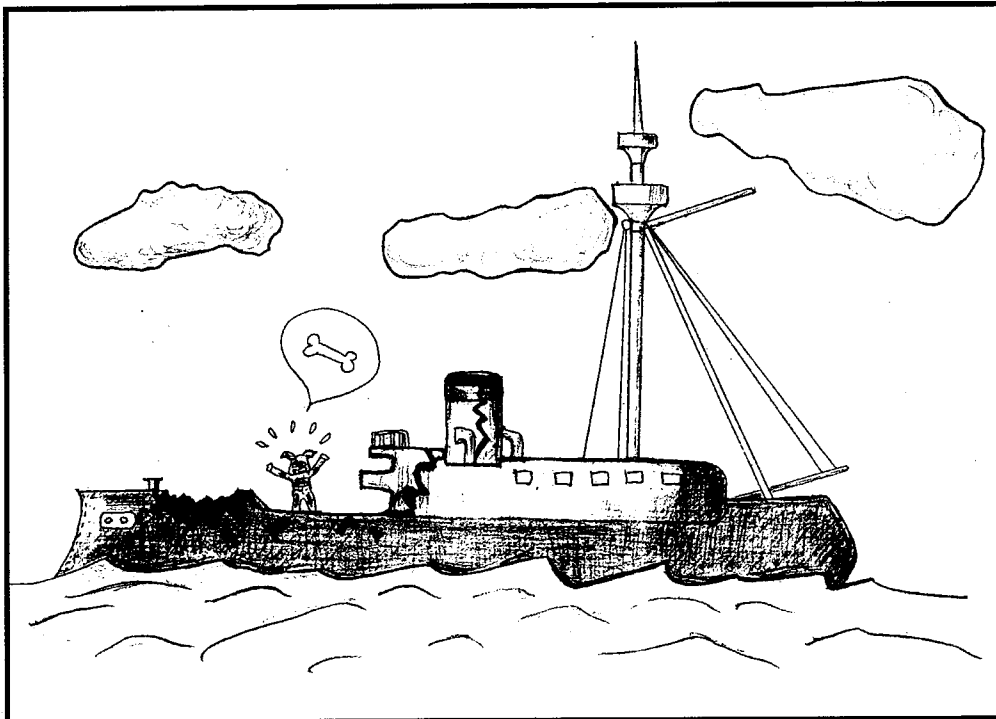


ホケッツ物語 —— 世界中の人々に感動を与えた犬の話



今年4月遺棄されて流される燃料オイル輸送タンカー上に取残され、24日間海上を漂った後、ハワイ沿岸警備隊のタグボート乗組員に救助されたのは小さな白いテリア系雑種犬。窮地に陥った犬の救出活動が難航しているとのニュースは、人々の気を

もませたが、最後には救助されて無事、陸地に……めでたし、めでたしというお話。

物語の発端はというと——インドネシアのタンカーInsiko 1970号上で起きたエンジンルームの火災によって、乗組員1人が死

亡。船は動力を失い連絡もとれないまま漂流すること18日間。11名の生存者は通りかかったノルウェー客船に救助されたものの、ホケッツという名前の犬(台湾で話される福建語で「幸福」という意味)が置き去りにされてしまいました。理由は、ハワイの検疫条件が厳しく、120日間も拘束されるからとか……

メディアは、すぐにホケッツの置かれた苦境に注目し関心を持った人々はなぜ犬が見捨てられたのかをいぶかってどんなことがあっても助けようと思い始めました。悲運なInsiko 1970号の船長であるご主人も、愛犬の無事を気づかう発言をしました。彼はホケッツを子犬のときから飼っていて彼女には船こそがホームだったと述べています。

ハワイ・ヒューマン・ソサエティは、HSUS(米国ヒューマン・ソサエティ)の支援を受けてAmerican Quest号という船をチャーターし、5日間の捜索と救出作戦を依頼しました。しかし、1日につき9000ドルの費用をかけたにもかかわらず、漂流するタンカーは見つかりませんでした。数日後、アメリカの漁船がレーダーでInsiko 1970号を発見したものの、現場に近づくことはできません。嵐は11

Hokget- the dog which touched the hearts of people around the world

After being stranded at sea aboard a derelict drifting refueling oil tanker for 24 days, a small white terrier mix was rescued by the crew of a Hawaiian US Coast Guard's tugboat in April this year. The story of the dog's plight and several abortive efforts to rescue her kept everyone in suspense until, in a fairytale ending, she was eventually brought onto dry land.

The story began when an engine room fire aboard an Indonesian tanker, the *Insiko 1907*, killed a crew member and left the ship adrift without power and communications for 18 days. The 11 crew survivors were eventually rescued by a passing Norwegian cruise liner but Hokget, meaning 'happiness and good' in Hokkien, (a Taiwanese dialect), was left behind, due it was said to the problem of the 120 day Hawaiian quarantine requirement.

But soon the media seized on the plight of Hokget and concerned people began to question why she had been left behind and that all efforts must be made to rescue her. Her owner, the captain of the fated *Insiko 1907*, also expressed his concern for her safety. He had had her from a tiny puppy and the ship was the only home she had ever known.

The Hawaiian Humane Society supported by HSUS, (the Humane Society United States), chartered a boat, the *American Quest*, for a five day search and rescue operation, costing US\$ 9000 per day, but the drifting ship couldn't be found. Some days later an American fishing vessel spotted the *Insiko 1907* by radar but couldn't reach her. Stormy weather raged for eleven days threatening to drive the wreck with its cargo of fuel oil onto coral reefs of the Johnson Atoll

which would have meant an environmentally catastrophic oil spill. It became a race against time to save both Hokget and prevent the ship from reaching the Johnson Atoll. A US Coast Guard plane finally located the ship and spotted Hokget on the deck. They flew as low as they safely could and threw her food.

The *American Quest*, this time chartered by the US Coast Guard, put out to sea. Locating the *Insiko 1907*, they boarded and found Hokget hiding among a pile of old tires. In a dangerous situation and with limited time, one of the crewmen managed to secure her and take her on board the tugboat which proceeded to tow the wreck back to Hawaii. Hokget appeared wearing a red flower lei, in front of a horde of newspaper reporters and cameramen who were waiting to greet her return before she was whisked away to the Animal Quarantine Station to be quarantined for a statutory 120 days. The pet food manufacturer Iams Co donated a lifetime supply of food to the gallant little dog. After release from quarantine she will be cared for by friends of the *Insiko 1907*'s captain until he is able to take her home with him again.

The rescue of Hokget cost the Hawaiian Humane Society, the HSUS and the US Coast Guard US\$185,000 which was almost twice as much as the additional US\$100,000 cost of towing the *Insiko 1907* back to Hawaii. But these societies were virtually assured, thanks to the generosity of sympathetic donors that, well before Hokget reached dry land, they would recover their investment.