

The Miracle of the Princess Tai Ping



An incident off the coast of Taiwan with great significance to Tin Hau Temple Hawaii, happened in the early hours of April 26, 2009. It truly rates as a miracle as described by the survivors of the Princess Tai Ping disaster.

The Princess Tai Ping was a replica of a 15th century Ming Dynasty 53-foot wooden sailing warship. After the construction of the ship was completed in 2006, it embarked on a goodwill journey starting from Taiwan, to the West Coast of the United States, and back to Taiwan, stopping at several coastal cities along the way. On its homeward voyage, the Princess Tai Ping stopped in Honolulu for nearly two months on January 1, 2009. Prior to their departure the crew was instructed by Skipper Nelson Liu and Assistant Angela Chao to visit the Tin Hau Temple in Honolulu, pay respects to the goddess Tin Hau, and ask for her blessing for a safe voyage back to Taiwan. Tin Hau is also known as the Goddess of the Seas and the Savior of Seafaring People.

About 30 miles south of its homeport in Taiwan, the Princess Tai Ping had to sail through a raging tempest. They were passing by a Liberian tanker which was about 2 miles away. For unknown reasons, the tanker sharply changed its course and headed directly towards the Princess Tai Ping. Skipper Nelson Liu immediately called the tanker and informed them that they were on a collision course, but it was too late and the tanker sheared the Princess Tai Ping in half and sailed away. The disaster occurred in the gloomy darkness of early morning, April 26, 2009, 2:30am Taiwan time. Most of the crew was gathered on the stern of the Princess Tai Ping and after the tanker sheared the boat in half, all were in the water clinging to the wreckage. By a miracle, in the darkness of the ocean, a crewmember found their emergency beacon floating among the debris. Upon activation of the beacon, distress signals were transmitted across the Pacific Ocean. U.S. Coast Guard in Hawaii and the West Coast intercepted the signals and relayed it back to the Coast Guard station in Taiwan. Still floating in the waters at dawn, another miracle happened. Crewmembers found a bright yellow cape which was part of the garment that adorned the statuette of Tin Hau which was housed in a shrine on the stern of the Princess Tai Ping. The crew used the brightly colored cape to flag down the Taiwan Coast Guard rescue team that arrived at first light. After six hours clinging on to the wreckage, all crew members of the Princess Tai Ping were flown to nearby hospitals for observation, most just sustaining minor injuries. On May 19, 2009, many of the crew made a pilgrimage to Tin Hau Temple Hawaii to give thanks to the goddess Tin Hau for their safety and life-saving rescue.

Mahalo to the crew of the Princess Tai Ping for sharing their miraculous experience:

Skipper Nelson Liu, Taiwan

Assistant Angela Chao, Taiwan

Tang Yu-Quan, China

Professor Thomas Cook, USA

Larz Stewart, Honolulu, HI, USA

Jason Arnold, Honolulu, HI, USA

Jack Durham, Honolulu, HI, USA

John Hunter, Honolulu, HI, USA

Liz Zeiger, Honolulu, HI, USA

Kinjo, Okinawa, Japan

Mori, Okinawa, Japan