

U.S. Ship Niannes
Kukodadi June 8th 1855

Dear Do

I have done so much since leaving Hong Kong that I can not particularize and I hope you will be pleased with a mere summary of ^{my} researches & I hope ^{too} you will not look upon it as any mark of disrespect when I say that I am employing a rainy day for this business. We reached this place yesterday which proved rainy a pretty fair specimen of a spring Northeaster in New England and today is worse - so I have not been ashore. We had a rather slow passage out of the China sea & through Formosa channel but the sea was smooth & the weather delightful. Before reaching Doohor I spent a few hours on Agendau while the Capt & the Astronomer were taking observations. At Doohor I made considerable additions to my former collections. Meanwhile my assistant who had been transferred to the steamer at my request was collecting on the Amakirina group S.W. of the main island. We spent less than a week here and stood away northward surveying all the small islands stretching onward to Japan. At Cosima we entered a spacious bay and anchored spending several days. You may take it for granted that I lost no time that could be profitably employed ashore. This was at the southern end of the island. The bay is only one of the expansions of a strait between the principal and a smaller island Inunosima. At the northern end of the island we found another spacious bay with arms perfectly landlocked extending inward from it.

As this harbor again I made good collections during our short stay of three or four days. Leaving Cosimah we made a running survey of the other island of the chain stopping our anchor till we reached Simodah. Here the hills and incultivable vallies are almost in a state of nature - no goats to eat the bushes nor cattle the grass nor hogs to root up the ground. Many things occur here to remind me of home. The vegetation was so luxuriant and the variety so great that I was never able to penetrate inland more than a mile or two. I had not here the very best facilities Capt. R. ~~had~~ ^{had} pointed the broad pendant - then Mr. Roe became (nominally) Capt. hence there were two privileged boats and one of ours had previously been given to the steamer. So I often had to wait for a chance to go ashore & to accept any even such as were not the most desirable & convenient. Some of the officers are accommodating others don't care a fig whether I ever go ashore. I try to give a little trouble as possible but I shall have to complain if gentlemen who do nothing can at any time get a boat to go on a visit or a picnic. I can't get one to go ashore on duty. We lost two excellent officers one transferred to the steamer one sent home sick and received two indifferent ones - a couple of school-girls. We spent more than a week at Simodah. It is a miserable apology for a harbor with a long unpleasant smell which keeps the ship constantly rolling with no protection from a southerly wind which blows directly into the harbor. We found here some Yankee adventures come to seek a fortune accompanied by their wives & children. Boats were employed in affording facilities for giving visiting cards between the ship & these people on shore. At Simodah was deprived of

the use of the boat which had served him to dredge in and of the services of his assistants who was sent to watch the tide-gauge and in supreme disgust our Zoologist's hitherto indefatigable brough about most of the time and did little but go to the bazaar & purchase Japanese curiosities. I collected a considerable number of algae but the ~~larger~~ ^{larger} kinds were not well preserved. Henceforth I mean to neglect the ~~larger~~ ^{such} ~~kind~~ till just as we are going to sail & then lay in a good stock to which at sea I can pay particular attention by changing them often. In this way I have saved some very nicely which were taken between Simodah & this place. We are now coming into the region of the Lemniscum & I took in the Strait of Sagarum an Algacum 11 ft long and a foot broad of which I have saved sections and long slender branching Sargassum. I am going to have a net made to drag for such things along side the ship in all moderate winds at sea. We had a tedious time getting through the Strait of Sagarum meeting a strong tide which with a light wind we were unable to stem. Then tide meeting the swell caused a rip or short choppy sea so great & remarkable as to surprise all the officers who had never seen the like. It was ~~very~~ ^{never} calm yet the waves broke with a noise almost like the breakers on a beach.

June 19th Another rainy day. On the north side of the harbor is a marsh which I have found rich in caixia, some Ranunculi and other km dwd plants a few mosses, mollets, a utricularia, Ranunculus &c. On the other side or that of the town are orchids umbellifera a Paris three Polygonata a Eriogonum, Gagea a broad-leaved onion three ^{Asclepias} perovskias, Staphylea three sp. Eucalyptus, Vaccinium, Rhododendron &c.

The authorities will not consent to allow Mr Reas to remain here to engage in mercantile business and he has about come to the conclusion to return to California. The *Carolus* & *Broto* in which they came will depart in a few days so far as any commercial benefit to our country are secured by *Adm. Perry's* treaty it is all moonshine. The authorities will sell at enormous prices but buy nothing and the people are not allowed to sell or buy or even to receive as a gift the most trifling article. Democratic principles will doubtless be instilled among the people by slow degrees - but until this is the case we may not expect to have much regular commercial intercourse with Japan. We are now approaching midsummer yet raw chilly winds prevail and though the middle of the day is merely comfortable the mornings & evenings are unpleasantly cool. On the outside of the marsh mentioned above is a large extent of land gently ascending to the hills much like our western prairies & in exactly the same state of nature, composed of as rich soil as ever "crow flew over" and covered with a most luxuriant vegetation of grass ferns *Polygonata* and a few scattering bushes of *Placagnum* *Lourea* &c. The sight of such large tracts of rich soil entirely unoccupied by man or beast has much lowered in my estimation the character of Japan for great prosperity and civilization. In truth the people are more abject slaves than any negroes in our country. Can you give introductory letters to any scientific gentlemen in San Francisco - Pray tell me too the distinction (if any) between "*alaxis*" & "*axillaris*" as used by *Endlicher* & others.

Very truly Yours Charles Wright

(past flowering) of a *corolla* growing in the hill with foliage like *Lerna nutans*
P.S. I send the only capsule-form of a *corolla* growing in the hill with foliage like *Lerna nutans*

P.S. June 24th Just at night we were thrown into a very pretty state of excitement by the sudden appearance on board of the master of the Hancock with the intelligence that she was aground in the strait of Sangar. A lookout sent aloft soon reported her afloat & in pretty rapid motion in the direction of the harbor. The messenger had been landed and came across the isthmus a distance of a few miles only. The bottom was sand & the sea smooth & it is hoped that she sustained no material injury.

Four days ago I undertook a trip to the mountains N.E. of our anchorage distant about ten miles. I had nearly reached the top when I was driven back by rain. I found a Magnolia & a Horse-chestnut besides mosses & many other plants. Day before yesterday I succeeded better & reached the summit and was well repaid by finding *Cornus Canadensis*? an *Aralia* several *Ericaceae* mosses Lichens &c. &c. Moreover I killed a cub-bear which I brought in as a trophy of my skill (no great feat however) in pistol shooting and a hawk also whose wing I broke.

11 P.M. The Hancock is in and reports as having sustained no injury. Yesterday I made a pretty good collection of the larger Algae to work upon when we go to sea which may be tomorrow though probably not till the day following. The C.E. Fiske sails day after tomorrow taking away all the Yankee adventurers and our letters. The former will not soon attempt another commercial speculation in Japan me jidai

C.M.

The Stowship and our family my books



Wright, Charles. 1855. "Wright, Charles June 8, 1855." *Charles Wright correspondence with Asa Gray*

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