

SYNOPSIS

On April 16, 1600, the monks of the Monju-ji monastery at the mouth of the Oita River in the Japanese city of Funai open their eyes to a strange sight. A sinking Dutch vessel called the *Liefde* stumbles into the bay and anchors after a long trip across the South Atlantic to the Strait of Magellan, then up across the Pacific Ocean. It would sink shortly after it landed.

The *Liefde* is the only one of five Dutch merchantmen that has left the Netherlands 19 months before. The others have either sink without a trace or turn back. On the *Liefde* itself, of the crew of 100 that had begun the voyage, only 24 are still alive. Six of those were dying. All are sick from scurvy, exposure and myriad illnesses. They were filthy, hairy and certainly barbarians for the Japanese eyes. However a person still survives. He is a remarkable mariner named William Adams, the first Englishman who comes to Japan.

In Japan, Adams has to survive from being imprisoned and executed as suspecting as pirates. However, he is being released after he is succeeded to impress Tokugawa Ieyasu (the most important ruler of the country) with his navigational skills and knowledge in building ships. Eventually, Adams becomes Ieyasu's right-hand, as he is honored as a samurai and given a large country estate. Adams lives the remaining 23 years of his life in Japan as an honored and well-respected man.