6 Tokugawa Colonialism and the Symbolism of Modern Statehood

> While I was stationed on this island, we sent out a pilot whenever a whaler or other ships from different countries appeared outside the harbor, in order to inform them of the hidden reef and their anchoring place. Since Mr. Webb lived in Kiyosaki village, from where one can easily see the harbor entrance, I handed him our national flag (*kokki*). I ordered him to go and guide the arriving vessels as soon as they were sighted.
>
> Obana Sakunosuke, *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*, 1863

It was past noon by the time the shogunal steamboat *Kanrin-maru* finally dropped anchor at the whaling colony of Port Lloyd on January 18, 1862. The head of the expedition, Magistrate of Foreign Affairs Mizuno Tadanori, and his translator Nakahama Manjirō proceeded immediately to the shore, where they were greeted by a startled group of Bonin Islanders. Mizuno was a plain-spoken man with little sense for beating around the bush, so he proceeded readily to declaring that this island was to be considered a part of Japanese soil (*Nihon-chi no uchi*), but that the settlers need not fear being dispossessed, for they were now "just like the people of Japan."[1] Over the next several days, the magistrate interviewed each head of household and asked them to sign a statement that they would "respect the law proclaimed by the Japanese envoys and are willing to live on good terms with the Japanese who will immigrate. They will pay tribute to the *Tycoon* of Japan in exchange for the guarantee to keep their fields."[2] What followed over the next seventeen months was a display of scientific modernity and administrative power that made for a unique instance of Tokugawa colonialism in the Pacific.

Though small in scale and ultimately short-lived, the shogunate's colonial venture to the Bonin Islands became a formative moment in

[1] *Nantō kōkai nikki*, cit. in Tanaka, "Kaisetsu," 1983, 53–54; 246–47.
[2] *Sadame*, pp. 12–13, in: OVBE, Great Safe, Comp. 2, 2–5.

Japan's frenetic reorganizations on the eve of the Meiji Reform. The project of incorporating a remote group of islands with a few dozen foreign settlers raised questions of race and climatic compatibility, while the discovery of introduced plants and animals inspired new narratives of biological kinship and historical claim. This chapter discusses how administrators and scholars in the shogunal service brought about tools and concepts in the service of control in a formerly unexplored and ecologically shifting environment. The botanist Abe Rekisai took a special interest in the plants the foreigners had introduced from around the Pacific, and he observed that their mere presence revealed a history of migration and kinship.[3] Observations of environmental change also inspired new narratives of Japanese settlement, colonization, and claim: Local magistrate Obana Sakunosuke redomesticated feral chickens which, he believed, were the remnants of an earlier Japanese colony, while he theorized that boars must have grown tusks after the retreat of civilization.[4] The changing environment of introduced and invasive species merged Japanese *honzō* botany with novel notions of biological change.

Unlike the adjacent frontier of Ezo, where commercial development and, by the mid nineteenth century, state-led initiatives incorporated local populations into the economic polity of Japan, the Bonins had never been inhabited and remained utterly inaccessible to Japanese explorers for the previous two centuries. With the breakneck expedition to this "forgotten colony" – a term with which Ishihara Shun alludes to the episode's unfitting implications for the grand narratives of modern Japan – the shogunate in fact joined a colonial scramble for the Pacific.[5] The systematic incorporation of "foreign" islanders into the administration, the relocation of ethnically Japanese subjects, as well as the exploration and indexing of resources on shore and at sea reflect an ongoing redefinition of territorial and cultural boundaries of "Japan." Ethnicity and the status order were no longer the cardinal criteria that spatially demarcated the reach of the *bakuhan* state, but malleable definitions of

[3] *Nansho kōki*, p. 93, ed. in Suzuki, "Ogasawara shotō no kaishū jigyō ni okeru Abe Rekisai (2)," 2012.

[4] *Ogasawara-tō yōroku*, vol. 1, entry 3, p. 17, in: OVBE. *Ogasawara-tō yōroku*, vol. 1, entry 3, p. 69, in: OVBE, Acc. No. Great Safe 3-3-11.

[5] Sociologist Ishihara Shun argues that the Bonin Islands remained a colony until the collapse of the Japanese Empire in 1945: Following a strategic pattern tested in Ezo, the Meiji government assimilated the archipelago by funding immigration and land improvement. As will be explained in Chapter 7, by 1882, dwellers of all descents were granted Japanese nationality to avoid conflicts with extraterritoriality. Nevertheless, imperial legislation continued to discriminate against naturalized islanders or *kikajin*, in 1898 by banning international trade, the main business for English-speaking islanders in the archipelago Ishihara, "Wasurerareta shokuminchi," 2007b, 63–65.

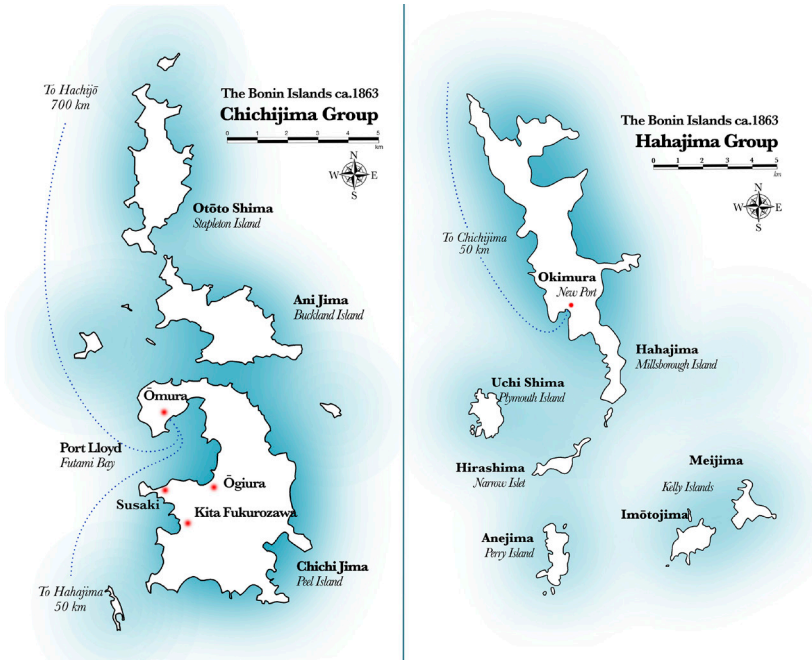

Figure 6.1 Map of the Bonin Islands with English and Japanese toponyms. (Author's design.)

subjecthood legitimized their expansion to an overseas territory.[6] This expansion hinged on the empirically argued idea of transitional climates: since the Bonin Islands were to constitute an extension of the islands off Izu province, it was presumed that settlers from Hachijō, the nearest location within Japan, would be best suited to farm and inhabit their southern climes.

A strong emphasis was put on the scientific and techno-centric symbolism celebrated by Western empires. Legitimate subjection of territory was seen as revolving around a cultural transformation of land by specific forms of agriculture, an idea that came out of the *kokudaka* system's agrocentric understanding of economic prosperity and was affirmed by Western tenets of frontier settlement. Yet the cultural hierarchies constructed in the process were highly exploratory. Shogunal botanists and

[6] David Howell argues that individual and political identities of early modern Japan were defined through polity, status, and "civilization." Performances of otherness were also practiced in quasi-colonial Ryukyu. Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, 2005, Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 1999, 19.

scholars of "Dutch learning" dispatched to the site were keen to source settlers and stoppers-by for intelligence on the most suitable methods of farming and whaling while Japanese make-do projects faltered. Unlike earlier projects of land reclamation within, as they had been tackled with varying intensity throughout the period of Tokugawa rule, the incorporation of a contested overseas colony was burdened with the symbolic significance of colonial expansion. The new boundaries of Japan were affirmed in an internationally comprehensible language of sovereignty, one that was voiced in resource administration, harbor controls, and the minute mapping of land and sea. Encounters between Japanese officials, scholars, and farmers with foreign migrants and travelers in practice turned the islands into a shogunal entrepôt of species, knowledge, and technology, an open harbor without a treaty. The brief colonial experiment ultimately faltered in the crisis-ridden summer of 1863, when the shogunate had to reshuffle its shrinking resources. The experience, however, provided a laboratory for political, economic, and biological globalization at a crucial moment in the shogunate's imperial reorientation amidst a colonized Pacific.

Kaitaku as a Model for Japanese Colonialism

The question of whether the expedition to the Bonin Islands was an act of colonial expansion or merely the reclamation of a Japanese periphery hinges on a terminology developed in the context of Western imperialism. The term *kaitaku* or "opening," which was used to describe the colonization of formerly incorporated territory emerges from domestic land clearing projects in early modern contexts. Both *kai* and *taku* signify "opening," but in the classical language, *kai* could also mean "putting something to use" or, as it were, to open up its potential.[7] This embodies the urgency of land reclamations in the eighteenth century, when expanding caloric output helped alleviate Malthusian crises. Over the early modern period, an ever growing population created pressure on an internal frontier of forests, marshlands, and valleys. Under the Japanese *kokudaka* system, population growth was moreover seen as a marker of good government, and it rewarded domain lords whose status was determined relative to the theoretical productivity of their domains.[8]

[7] *Kanjigen* further lists "to free," "to warm," or "to move" among the meanings of *kai* (開). This resonates with the Meiji slogan *bunmei kaika*, often translated as "civilization and enlightenment," which could alternatively be rendered as "civilization and utility." *Kanjigen* smartphone version 2.2.4.; *Pleco Dictionary*, *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten*.

[8] Ochiai has shown that increasing tax revenue by population growth motivated daimyo in the eighteenth century to run anti-abortion campaigns. Ochiai, "The Reproductive

Though the incorporation of the Bonin Islands in some way rested on this logic, the stakes were of a completely different nature.

Only with the colonization of Taiwan in 1895 was the modern Japanese term for colony, *shokuminchi*, commonly used in the context of Japanese expansion.[9] The early modern term for "colonization," *kaitaku*, also remained in use until the mid-Meiji period with regards to the colonial development of Okinawa and Hokkaido. The word *shokuminchi* was introduced to the Japanese language through Shizuki Tadao's 1801 translation of Englebert Kaempfer's *History of Japan* to describe Western expansionism. The characters *shoku* "to proliferate," *min* "population," and *chi* "place", which Shizuki chose for his new creation emphasize the relocation and expansion of a settler population rather than the subjection of Natives and extraction of resources. Yet as the term's use in hypothetical scenarios for Japanese overseas expansion by Hayashi Shihei, Satō Nobuhiro, Tōjō Kindai, and other early nineteenth-century authors discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 illustrate, by 1861, the choice of vocabulary was a conscious one. A semantic distinction of *kaitaku* and *shokumin* for analytical purposes would therefore be misleading.

The expedition to the Bonin Islands was announced to foreign representations in Japan as a "preparatory inspection of the islands in Izu Province and opening (*kaitaku*) of the island Ogasawara,"[10] suggesting that the expedition would be a mere detour on a domestic routine inspection. The modern term *ryōyū* for "sovereign possession" does not appear in primary sources from this context, even though some Japanese historians keep framing the expedition as an assertion of *ryōyū* over "national territory" or *ryōdo*.[11] In practice, any notion of national belonging remained structured in the fragmented geography of Japanese identities. As an ostensible extension of the shogunal lands of Izu province, the Bonin Islands were put under the authority of the shogunal intendant Egawa Tarōzaemon. Regardless, both the vocabulary of agrarian development used in Japanese sources and the islands' annexation to the shogunal lands of Izu province contradict the symbolic meaning and

Revolution at the End of the Edo Period," 1999, 204–10. James Scott remarked that rice-based states regarded population density as "the key to authority and power." Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 2009, 42.

[9] *Nihon kokugo daijiten* 2007.

[10] Cit. in: Tanaka, "Kaisetsu," 1983, 244.

[11] E.g. Tanaka, *Bakumastu no Ogasawara*, 1997, 1982, Suzuki, "Kindai iseki no tayōsei," 2010, 258–62. The Japanese legal term for "state sovereignty" is *shuken* 主権; the concept *ryōyū* 領有 was coined in the Meiji period and is centered on exclusive "ownership" of national territory (*ryōdo* 領土).

the transformative character the Pacific expedition unfolded in Japan's self-representation among the colonial powers of the modern Pacific.

As Takahiro Yamamoto has argued, the formation of Japan's modern borders was a decades-long process that embraced the incorporation of Ezo, Ryukyu, and the Bonin Islands between the tumbling of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the early Meiji period.[12] Catherine Phipps moreover writes that "Japan holds a unique position in world history in that it added to its territorial holdings while its sovereignty was compromised through asymmetrical treaties."[13] Without needing to affirm narratives of Japanese uniqueness, the colonial experiment in the Bonin Islands underlines the dynamic and open-ended nature of the reforms tackled under the shogunate over the 1850s and 1860s, and it casts doubt on the necessity of collapse and modern reemergence under the terms of the Meiji Reform.

Early on, the Japanese hired islanders familiar with the territory for different administrative tasks. Obana's report, submitted after the Japanese retreat in 1863, documents that the local magistrate entrusted the British settler Thomas Webb with piloting foreign ships to the harbor and gave him a Japanese "national flag (*kokki*)."[14] Like the *hinomaru* flag of the rising sun that hails from the mast of the steamboat *Kanrin-maru* in Figure 5.5, or the flag the expedition hoisted on "Mount Asahi" above the bay immediately upon arrival, Webb's flag represented Japan as a national actor vis-à-vis foreign vessels and governments. This symbol had just emerged around that time. Suzuki Jun points out that it was the newly founded Shogunal Navy that had introduced this flag, flying it on vessels, but Mount Asahi is likely the first instance where it was used to demarcate shogunal control on shore – or be it, the "national" territory of Japan.[15] Manjirō's schooner *Kimizawa Number One*, which was not a naval vessel when it sailed to the islands on a whaling voyage, was signaled with the combination of conventional attributes: Flying the crest of its owner Egawa Tarōzaemon, the vessel also raised a lampion with the words "shogunal service (*go-yō*)" that marked the supreme nature of its mission.[16] The display of the *hinomaru* specifically in interaction

[12] Yamamoto, *Demarcating Japan*, 2023, 7–9.
[13] Phipps, "Sovereignty at Water's Edge," 2020, 149.
[14] *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*: 57–58, NDL. Webb was an American settler who came to the Bonin Islands in 1847 and was appointed councilman by Perry in 1853. As the owner of a Bible, he acted as the spiritual authority on the island and was responsible for funerals and memorial services. Cholmondeley, *History of the Bonin Islands*, 1915, 32, 99, 122.
[15] Suzuki, "Kindai iseki no tayōsei," 2010, 261. The practice of claiming islands by hoisting a national flag had previously gained currency among Western empires which the officials of the shogunal navy studied.
[16] *Zushū Heda-mura ni oite o-uchitate ainari sōrō schooner-sen…*, in: EGAN.

with foreign vessels calling at the Bonin Islands underlines how the naval symbolism that painted over the fragmented structure of the Tokugawa state gained its national meaning through international encounters in the maritime frontier.

The delineation of Japan's sovereign space coincided with the empire's gradual expansion into an intentionally vague frontier space. In fact, it is questionable whether Japan could at any point be considered a nation state as it transformed from a regional *bakuhan* patchwork into an expansive, multi-ethnic empire.[17] The island of Ezo had been gradually incorporated into Japan's commercial sphere since the seventeenth century, though less by formal expansion of the *kokudaka* system than commercially and by contact on the ground, as Brett Walker has shown.[18] Despite the successful mapping of the northern frontier as far as the Amur Delta, it was not until 1869 that Japan formally annexed Ezo, and only in 1875 was a binding border across the Sea of Okhotsk negotiated with the Russian empire.[19] Likewise, the Ryukyu Islands' ambiguous status as a de facto colony of Satsuma domain lasted until 1872, when Japan unilaterally declared the kingdom a domain (*han*) and later, a prefecture.[20] The Bonin islands, while part of early modern Japan's virtual geography, differ from these territories in that they had no history of gradual integration into Japan's commercial and political realm and had moreover been claimed – though not controlled – by the British and the United States.[21]

In the first place, asserting claims over a place that had been officially named "No-Man-Land" meant to demonstrate effective rule and providing care for the new subjects. A few days after his arrival, Mizuno asked the American settler Nathaniel Savory, whom he had recognized as the most influential person in the settlement, whether the island was home to any cows or deer. Savory replied that "there are no cows or deer, but goats. However, those goats have not been here forever, I have brought them over from my country and I released them."[22] Mizuno

[17] David Howell, for example, points to the ambiguous status of the Ainu in Ezo under the Tokugawa, while Mark Caprio emphasizes the pervasive assimilation policies to culturally incorporate the Ryukyu islands into modern Japan. Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, 2005, 110–12; Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea*, 1910–1945, 2009.

[18] Walker, "Commercial Growth and Environmental Change in Early Modern Japan," 2001, 11–12.

[19] Yamamoto, *Demarcating Japan,* 2023, 227–9.

[20] *Nihon daihyakka zensho*, keyword *Ryukyu han*.

[21] Chapman, "Claiming the Bonin Islands," 2017, 501.

[22] *Ogasawara-tō go-takkai ni tsuki go-yō dome*, ed. in Tanaka, "Kaisetsu," 1983, 61.

replied that "even if you have released those goats, they are feeding on grass and trees from Japanese soil (*Nihon no tochi*), and can therefore not be considered freely available (*jiyū*)."[23] The unwavering magistrate clarified that the use of goats and other natural resources had henceforth to be approved by the Japanese local authorities, but immediately, he assured that the fields the settlers were currently farming would remain tax exempt.

What legitimized such sudden claims remained a central question throughout the venture, and Mizuno put an emphasis on the benevolent rule the shogunate meant to bring to the stateless frontier community. When a thief stole and ate a few of Savory's ducks a few days later, Mizuno readily compensated Savory in the name of his government. Savory was at first unwilling to accept the money, but Mizuno responded: "Since you are permanently living on this island, you are just like the people of Japan. The people are like a child and the government is like a parent … You should accept this as a gift from parent to child, without hesitation."[24] These acts affirmed the pretension of benevolent rule in the manner of a filial relationship between government and subjects.

Benevolence or *jin* (Chin. *rén* 仁) is perhaps the most central principle of Confucian Learning, as it is foundational for all social relationships. The concept has been translated as humanity, kindness, benevolence, or human-heartedness, but as a theory of government, it constitutes the foundation of legitimate rule.[25] During the shogunal administration of Ezo in the first half of the nineteenth century, this framework of benevolent rule had been recast as a frontier policy toward the native Ainu population, as Brett Walker has shown. In response to a sharp population decline that jeopardized Japanese influence in the region vis-à-vis Russian advances, the shogunate in 1857 ran a pervasive smallpox vaccination campaign. As the vaccinator Kuwata Ryūsai wrote upon his return, the extension of "benevolence" to the "barbarians" of Ezo should have introduced them to a more civilized and healthier lifestyle.[26] Following a similar line of thought, Mizuno stationed several physicians in the Bonin Islands.

The offer of medical care and physical protection may not have been unwelcomed among the settlers, given the islanders' experiences with pirate raids. In 1849, the islands were raided by the crews of two ships

[23] Ibid.
[24] *Nantō kōkai nikki*, cited in Tanaka, "Kaisetsu," 1983, 247.
[25] Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, 2000, 213–15.
[26] Walker, "The Early Modern Japanese State and Ainu Vaccinations," 1999, 157.

that stole "all they could get hold of," and cajoled the crew of a third vessel at anchor to abandon their ship. The pirates stole a sum of $2,000 in cash and a value of $2,000 in livestock from Savory alone, moreover abducting his underage wife, as one visitor recorded two years after the fact. Savory's wife, "a young girl born on the island," seemed to have little reason to feel attached to her husband, "for by all accounts she gave information as to where his money and valuables were hid, and departed nothing loth."[27] When the American commodore Matthew C. Perry came to the islands in 1853, he stipulated a legal "constitution" for the colony, installing the settlers Nathaniel Savory, James Motley, and Thomas H. Webb as Chief Magistrate and Councilmen, the islands' formal authority at the order of the US Navy (see Chapter 5). This council was supported by a navy captain who was stationed there "for advice and instructions."[28] In his travel report, Perry later claimed that the constitution he had written up for the colony was "an interesting specimen of this original effort at constitution-making by wanderers from many lands, civilized and savage … prepared, concurred in, and adopted by [them] in assembly."[29] It is more likely that Perry or his middlemen presented the islanders with a ready-made text.[30] For Savory, who until the islands' takeover by Japanese in 1862 continued to hoist the stars and stripes over his bamboo hut, the position at the order of the US Navy affirmed his status and authority in the community.[31] Unlike the ship-jumpers who fled the harsh conditions aboard a whaler by absconding into the hills until their ship had departed, Savory had all reasons to welcome protection and cooption by the powerful commodore. On these local power structures the Japanese expedition sought to rest its administration.

Ruling a Shipboard Society

The settlement of Port Lloyd was a fluctuating community of migrants and travelers from all around the Pacific, Africa, and Western countries.

[27] Cholmondeley, *History of the Bonin Islands*, 1915, 26–28.
[28] "Letter from Matthew C. Perry to Nathaniel Savory," in: *Untitled collection of Documents created during Commodore Perry's visit to the Bonin Islands, 1853*, pp. 11–12, in: OVBE.
[29] Perry, *Narrative of the Expedition*, 1856, 383–85; "Constitution of Peel Island." In: *Untitled collection of Documents created during Commodore Perry's visit to the Bonin Islands, 1853*, p. 4, in: OVBE.
[30] A blueprint held at the local archive of Ogasawara Village on which date and signatures left blank for the councilmen suggests that the council was handed a prefabricated text. *Untitled Collection of Documents Related to Matthew C. Perry's Visit to Ogasawara*, 1853. In: OVBE.
[31] *Ogasawara-tō go-takkai ni tsuki go-yō dome*, ed. in Tanaka, "Kaisetsu," 1983, 57.

Daniel Long counts seventy arrivals on eighteen vessels by 1837, though many temporary settlers chose to leave within a few years.[32] Many settlers were former whalers dropped off by their ships when they had fallen ill, and many may have illicitly abandoned their crews to evade the harsh conditions of life aboard a whaler. It is documented that some suffered abduction and enslavement, but a few may have migrated intentionally. A man called Charlie "Kanak" who owned some land in Port Lloyd was born on an unspecified Pacific island in 1822, and had been working on British and American whaling vessels for several years before he settled down to farm.[33] Others, again, came to break land, or to marry into a settler household. A family of ten living in Hahajima at the time had apparently set over from a Pacific island on an American vessel in 1860, three years after a woman from their community had married a German settler on the island.[34] The circumstances under which Pacific Islanders migrated to the Bonins are not documented in detail, but given indications of "blackbirding" and especially trafficking of women in various instances, it must be assumed that not all did so out of their free will, as we will see again in Chapter 7.

The frontier community fluctuated significantly with the coming and going of whale ships and traders. Among the thirty to forty individuals that resided in the islands at any time over the previous three decades, patriarchal hierarchies persisted with ethnic mixing in marriage and eclectic households. As an effect, the community was quickly turning into a pan-Pacific melting pot. Biographical records suggest that by 1862, at least 23 percent of the population were of mixed race and born in the islands, whereas only eight out of forty-eight can unambiguously be identified as Euro–Americans.[35] As Chapter 7 will show, the trend toward ethnic mixing persisted thereafter, as visitors and administrative records in the late nineteenth century suggest. Perhaps concerned about legal conflicts that could arise from the foreign citizenship of some islanders under the extraterritoriality principle stipulated in the unequal treaties, Japanese administrators recorded extensive interviews with those white men who dominated the settlement and possessed citizenship of Western states. As was customary in Japanese population records, only heads of household were interviewed, with wives, children, and other dependents, as well as unrelated co-inhabitants only listed in

[32] Long, *English on the Bonin Islands*, 2007, 43.
[33] *Sadame*, pp. 12–13, in: OVBE.
[34] Ibid., pp. 15–17.
[35] Individual biographical outlines of each head of household were written down in *Sadame*, in: OVBE.

passing – usually omitting even the names of female individuals. The male-biased records created by this implementation of a Japanese family model buttress the perceived prominence of "Euro–American" settlers among the community.

Within a mere three decades, the cultural baggage of each settler had merged into a creole culture reflected in various economic and cultural practices. The islander Thomas Webb, to whom Obana had handed a Japanese flag and ordered to act as the harbor's pilot, navigated around the island in an outrigger canoe and caught fish with a spear in shallow places.[36] Like most settlers, he dwelled in a grass-thatched hut similar to traditional Hawai'ian dwellings, neatly suited for the warm and humid climate in the islands – which the Japanese liked to compare to the earthfast dwellings found "in our Imperial Country in the ancient age of the gods."[37] The Hawai'ian Language, which had served as the quotidian language in the settlement's first decade, was slowly giving way to new creole versions of English that absorbed influences of Portuguese and other languages spoken in the mixed migrant households.[38] The settlement of Pacific travelers was socially and culturally in flux as it merged the heterogeneous cultures of the shipboard into an original local identity.

The emphasis of Japanese administrative records on the councilmen Thomas Webb, Nathaniel Savory, and Thomas Motley, as well as a few other men, illustrates how new Japanese administration incorporated preexisting structures of local power. Policing the islands had previously been an interest of the United States, primarily to suppress ship-jumping. As a lawless space, the Bonin Islands offered an opportunity for sailors to flee rough and often abusive relations aboard and wait out the next opportunity to sign on. James Scott, who studied the mountainous uplands of Southeast Asia, described such stateless frontiers as "a rough and ready homeostatic device; the more a state pressed its subjects, the fewer subjects it had … Mobility allowed farmers to escape the impositions of states and their wars."[39] Much alike, the ship-jumpers who passed through or gathered in the colony were subverting the onboard hierarchies on which the capital-intensive whaling industry relied. When Perry steered to the Bonins in 1853, he was determined to shut down this escape route.

[36] *Nansho kōki*, pp. 96–111, ed. in: Suzuki, "Ogasawara shotō no kaishū jigyō ni okeru Abe Rekisai (2)," 2012.
[37] Ibid., 107.
[38] Long, "Evidence of an English Contact Language in the 19th Century Bonin (Ogasawara) Islands," 1999, 255–57.
[39] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 2009, 4.

Figure 6.2 Landscape painting of Ōgiura village by Miyamoto Gendō, 1862. The grass-thatched dwellings in the lower right contrast the Japanese houses and administrative buildings on the left. *Ogasawara-tō zue furoku ikkan*, p. 8, in: OVBE, Acc. No.: great safe 6–6–13.

Mizuno set up a temporary administrative headquarter right above the home of "councilman" Savory, where he also had his men erect a memorial stela for the ill-fated Japanese sailors who had died on these remote islands in the past.[40] As more land was cleared, local magistrate Obana relocated the offices across the bay to Ōgiura, the junction between the earlier settlements around the bay and the plains to be cleared in the island's southern valleys. Ōgiura's location oversees both the bay's entrance and the two "foreign" villages, and was thus well situated as a center of control (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2). This created two distinct spaces of settlement. Most Japanese settlers resided near the administrative offices in Ōgiura and farmed newly opened fields in the south of the main island, avoiding conflicts over agrarian space with the inhabitants of "Ōmura" and "Okumura" villages, as the Japanese began to call Port Lloyd.

The assertion of harbor control under the *hinomaru* with the help of Thomas Webb communicated the Japanese takeover to the international

[40] *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*: 18–19, in: NAJ.

community. Even though the number of whaling vessels cruising the Japan Ground had been declining since the 1850s, the harbor of Port Lloyd was still visited frequently by foreign vessels for trade, refueling, or to disembark the sick (see Chapter 3). The islanders actively solicited their services, as the logbook of the New Bedford whaler *Navy*, illustrates: "a boat came off, they said they had botatoes, hogs, ducks, chicken &c … [we] started for the shore on Peel Island. The Jappanese has taken possession of the Island, one Jappanese Man of war in port."[41] The report Obana later submitted to the shogunate stressed the potential of expanding trade with foreign sailors:

> Each captain reported to the office and expressed his delight about Japan developing (*kaitaku*) this island. Until now, they brought along some of their products and were helped out with things they lacked on their ships. If there also were prostitutes, this island would certainly flourish. Despite the number of whaling and trading vessels in the nearby seas, they only land in our harbor to fill up wood and water. For other purposes they do not land here. If we had enough to supply whatever other products they lack, they would probably all stop by.[42]

During the seventeen months of his tenure, Obana counts visits of nine American and two Hawai'ian whaling vessels, as well as one large Russian steamboat that anchored at Port Lloyd for about two weeks.

Mizuno himself had forged plans to develop the islands into a Japanese whaling base, and he picked up Perry's proposal for a coaling station.[43] The Bonin Islands at this point functioned as an open harbor, but one without a treaty and at a safe distance from Japan proper – during the negotiation of the Ansei treaties in 1858, Mizuno had urged to keep interaction with foreigners limited to "outlying ports like Nagasaki and Hakodate," adding that "even if they go elsewhere, it is my hope that the shogunate will designate places some distance removed from Edo."[44] Having inspected the Bonin Islands personally, Mizuno returned to Japan and arranged for medical personal to be sent to the Bonins and

[41] *Ship Navy 1859–63*, p. 155, entries of April 4–5, 1862, in: NBWM, Acc. No.: Logbook 155.

[42] *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*: pp. 114–16, in: NAJ.

[43] Hirano, "Bunkyū nenkan no Ogasawara-tō kaitaku jigyō to honzōgakusha tachi," 1998, 23. *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*, pp. 58–59, in: NAJ. The excitement about the islands' economic potential did not necessarily reflect the attitude of the entire Senior Council, but was rather the project of a progressive faction. Conrad Totman has made the case that during what he calls the "Bunkyu Reform," occurring contemporaneously with the colonial expedition, the shogunate sought to make concessions to the xenophobic faction for the sake of national cohesion. Totman, *The Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, 1862–1868, 1980, 64.

[44] Cited in Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism*, 2004, 40.

provide legitimizing services to its new subjects.[45] This would not only substantiate Japan's claim over the Bonins, but support the infrastructure for international traffic, seasonal whaling, and agrarian development.[46]

Transitional Geography of Climate and Body Politic

Mizuno was well aware that climatic circumstances could jeopardize the colonial project. In Japanese natural philosophy, climate was seen as an important factor in shaping the character and physical properties of local populations, as also the numerous *fudoki* or "treatises on climate and culture" of different regions within Japan underline. The concept of *fūdo* is most easily translated as "climate," but in practice, it encompasses a much wider set of assumptions on the relationship between culture and environment. In the context of eighteenth century *kokugaku* thought, for example, the precept that health needed to be cultivated in the context of climate, diet, and other aspects of the local constitution inspired the search for domestic medical products administered according to a Japanese "ancient medicine (*kohō*)," allegedly better suited for Japanese bodies and environments.[47] The connection between human health and native climatic conditions was empirically confirmed through the observation that travelers risked contracting a "climate disease" or *fūdo-byō* in zones colder or warmer than their native place. *Fūdo-byō*, too, was a bucket term for all sorts of place-specific diseases to which local populations seemed to be more resistant than outsiders. As one map of the notoriously malaria-infested Yaeyama region in Ryukyu warned: "If the islanders drink the water from places other than Ishigaki, they will unavoidably fall ill, so they are extraordinarily cautious."[48] What Europeans may have called "tropical disease" in Japan also applied to sicknesses contracted in cold places. Daigo Shimpei, the founder of the whaling settlement on Iturup, for example, succumbed to "climatic disease" in the winter of 1802.[49] Though complicated by germ theory in the late nineteenth century, this geo-deterministic line of thought culminated in the twentieth century with Watsuji Tetsurō's *Climate and Culture* of 1935, a seminal treatise about the "climatic character" of the Japanese. Obana Sakunosuke's *Essentials on the Climate of the Island Ogasawara* – the official chronicle of all explorations

[45] So stated in the recruitment letter sent to Abe Rekisai in the fifth month of 1862. *Ogasawara-tō e sashitsukawashi sōrō ishi no gi ni tsuki ai-ukagai sōrō kakitsuki*, ed. in: Hirano, "Bunkyū nenkan no Ogasawara-tō kaitaku jigyō to honzōgakusha tachi," 1998, 23.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Trambaiolo, "Native and Foreign in Tokugawa Medicine," 2013, 305.
[48] *Ritei zu*, in: ACLA.
[49] Itabashi, *Kita no hogeiki*, 1989, 52–55.

undertaken during the colonization – underlines that understanding the climatic conditions was seen as the key to colonizing an overseas territory.

To reduce climate-related risks, Mizuno chose to transplant people from the nearest location within Japan to the Bonin Islands, a closer place in the transitional geography of climates. Half a century before the colonial experiment was put into practice, shogunal adviser Satō Nobuhiro had suggested to use subjects from Tosa province in Shikoku as the most physically apt for the islands "straight south from Japan," but once commodore Perry's mission report had been brought to Japan in 1860, it was clear that Hachijō was geographically much closer (see Figure 1.3).[50] Relocating farmers from this arid isle to the Bonin Islands seemed to be a good idea based on climatic and structural considerations.

Mizuno was especially conscious that the soil of the Bonin Islands would not yield much at first and therefore proposed that paupers be first sent to settle in the islands. At a preparatory meeting for the expedition, the magistrate stated:

> If we convince children and dependents of Hachijō islanders to move to Ogasawara, there will certainly be individuals who volunteer. This would be [favorable, since] those people, in contrast to the peasants of the mainland, only rarely eat grain as their main nutrient. I hear they live in abject deprivation.[51]

As discussed in Chapter 2, Edoites thought of Hachijō as an isolated and exoticized world at the limit of the human realm. Surrounded by rough and dangerous seas, Hachijō is a volcanic island with limited water resources and little arable soil at its center and along its southern shores. Since sufficient quantities of rice could hardly be grown there, the island was subject to a special form of silk-based taxation.[52] Since the eighteenth century, the shogunate initiated programs to relocate Hachijō islanders to Honshu for construction and land reclamation projects. Under the supervision of senior councilor Tanuma Okitsugu in the 1780s, a major number of such *dekasegi hyakushō* or "migrant working commoners" worked to drain a vast area of wetlands in the northeastern Kantō Plain for new agricultural land.[53] With

[50] *Kondō hisaku*, pp. 106–10, in: NDL; Perry, *Narrative of the Expedition*, 1856, 290.
[51] *Nanshinsaku to Ogasawara guntō*, pp. 81–82, in: NDL.
[52] Igawa, "Kinsei," 1973, 167–68. In early modern Japan, taxes were usually levied from village communities and paid in rice. For regions that were unable to grow rice for climatic reasons, marine products (in Hokkaidō) or silk cloth (in Hachijō) could substitute rice. Howell, *Capitalism from within*, 1995, 58, 95, 101.
[53] Tanaka, *Bakumastu no Ogasawara*, 1997, 68. Tanuma also thought about colonizing the Bonin Islands, presumably with the intent of relocating Hachijō islanders. Hall, "Modern Trends in Tokugawa Japan," 1950, 125.

Hachijō, the shogunate was confident to fall back on a repository of laborers willing to emigrate.

In the spring after Mizuno's expedition, the shogunal steamboat *Chōyō-maru* set course for the Bonin Islands, delivering agrarian tools and a stock of rice and grain seeds for the settlers.[54] In fall, eleven married couples and eight minors whose marriages had been arranged in advance were relocated from Hachijō. They were joined by eight craftsmen to assist with land improvement activities.[55] The thirty-eight Japanese immigrants outnumbered the thirty earlier inhabitants of the archipelago slightly. As we shall see, this *fūdo*-determinism is distinct from Western race theories derived from biblical or natural history, but it emerged from a more timeless understanding of static relationships between peoples and places, as seen in the countless early modern *fudoki* gazetteers.[56]

Cartographic Occupation

The promise of agrarian settler colonialism to expand taxable land was prominent in the colonial agenda. In an early phase, the Japanese settlement was focused on "opening" as much arable land as possible. Within only a year and a half, the thirty-eight settlers had expanded the agrarian space on Peel Island by 37.5 percent, to approximately 9.6 hectares.[57] In some instances, land was bought from previous owners, but for the main part, the Japanese cut down shrubs and forests on narrow plains along the creeks in the southern half of the island (see Figure 6.3).

Of more immediate relevance were mapping, naming, and indexing the new territory. The name Ogasawara replaced the formerly used toponym *Munin jima*, or "No-Man-Land," which had been the islands' official name since the seventeenth century – a tacit rebuttal of the widely circulating narrative of Ogasawara Sadayori.[58] As explained in Chapter 3, the new name for the islands was derived from the Ogasawara family's notorious claim to have owned the island since the sixteenth century. The shogunate had examined and rejected the claims of Ogasawara Sadatō

[54] Tōkyō-fu, *Ogasawara-tō sōran*, 1929, 15.
[55] Tanaka, "Kaisetsu," 1983, 249–50.
[56] E.g. *Wakan sansai zue*, in: NDL; *Kakitō fudoki*, in: WUL.
[57] Tōkyō-fu, *Ogasawara-tō sōran*, 1929, 15.
[58] To my knowledge, the first official use of this toponym in shogunal documents dates to 1838, when an expedition with Watanabe Kazan and other prominent intellectuals was supposed to be dispatched to the islands. This mission was cancelled at the last minute due to internal upheaval. *Kaitō tsuide Ogasawara-tō e makarikoshisōrō gi ni tsuki gonaii ukagai sho*, in: EGAN.

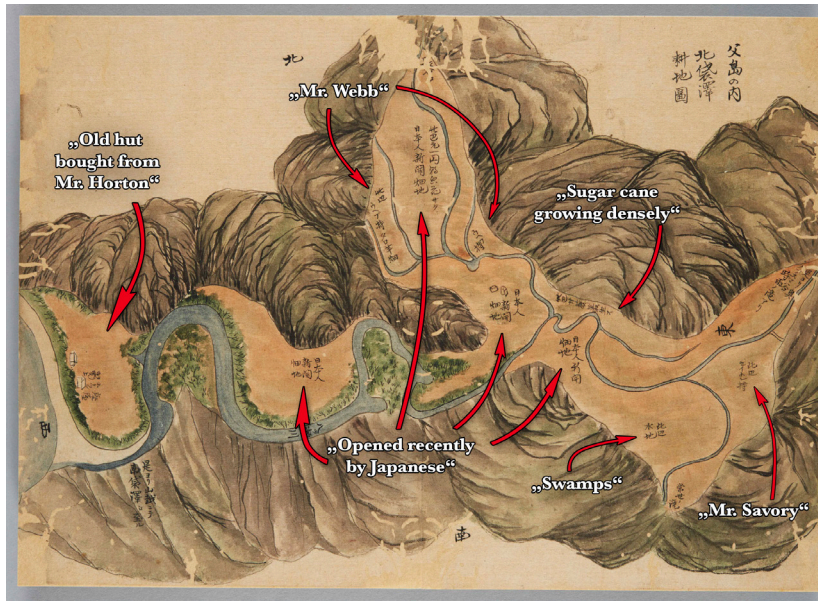

Figure 6.3 Plots of land in Kita Fukurozawa Valley, Peel Island (Chichijima). Based on: *Ogasawara-tō zue furoku ikkan*, p. 39, in: OVBE, Acc. No.: great safe 6–6–13.

who, in the 1720s, claimed that his ancestor Sadayori had obtained permission from no lesser than Toyotomi Hideyoshi himself to colonize the islands between 1593 and 1626.[59] Even though the shogunate had declared these claims unfounded in the eighteenth century, this widely known narrative was the best material available to substantiate a territorial claim. When Savory asked whether Mizuno knew of the British claim over the island, the magistrate stated resolutely that "three hundred years ago, we built houses here … This continued for two hundred years, but then we interrupted it in the year of the rooster [1753]."[60] But dusting off and pepping up these stories, or the assiduous documentation of land, plants, and people could hardly disguise the utter lack of familiarity with the colony.

While some of the new toponyms were descriptive of geographical characteristics – such as *Iimori san* for a mountain shaped like an overfilled

[59] *Nanshinsaku to Ogasawara guntō*, p. 62, in: NDL. Ogasawara Sadatō's story is summarized in the central text block on Tōjō Kindai's 1843 map, *Izu shichitō zenzu*, in: APC.
[60] *Nantō kōkai nikki*, cited in Tanaka "Kaisetsu," 1983, 245.

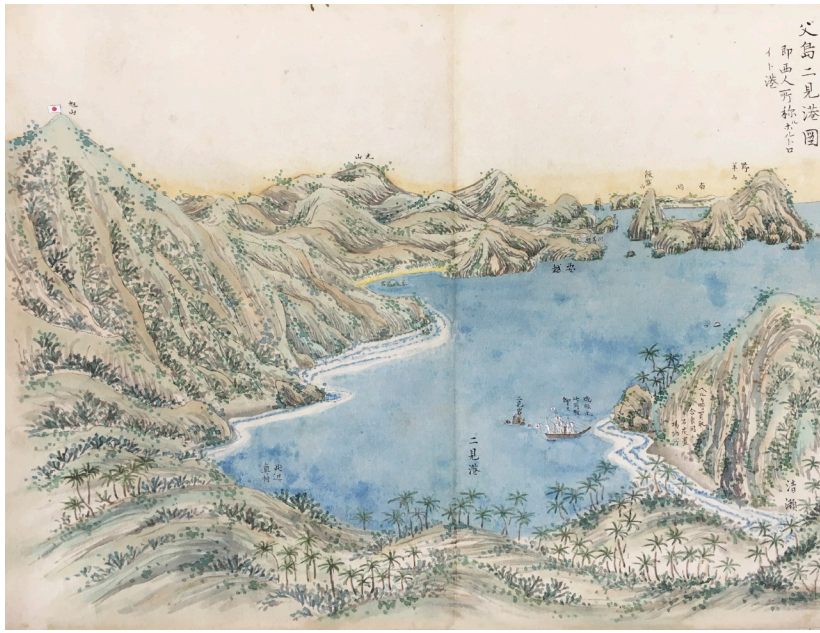

Figure 6.4 The *Kanrin-maru* anchoring between the Futami Rocks and a place said to be the patch of land Commodore Perry had purchased in 1853. Note the *hinomaru* flag atop the mountain peak on the left. *Ogasawara-tō sōzu*, vol. 1, p. 32, in: NAJ.

rice bowl – others referenced more specific tropes of Japanese culture and geography. A pair of twin rocks in the middle of the harbor reminded the explorers of the famous *Meoto* rocks near Futami Okitama shrine in Ise, thereby inspiring the new name for "Futami Bay" (see Figures 6.4 and 6.5).[61] It is not quite clear where the names of each island were first used, but resonating with the Neo-Confucian family allusion for relationship between ruler and ruled, individual islands were named after family roles. The names *Chichijima* or "Father Island," *Anijima* or "Big Brother Island," as well as *Otōtojima*, the "Little Brother" of the northern group appeared in Mori Kōan's largely fictional map of 1752, as did *Hahajima*, the "Mother Island," *Anejima* "Big Sister," and *Imōtojima* "Little Sister," in the southern group.[62] The maps produced by navigator Ono Tomogorō and his staff of cartographers and artists completed the family by adding a "Niece Island" *Meijima* and a "Marriage Arranger Island" *Nakōdo shima*

[61] *Ogasawara-tō sōzu*, vol. 1, p. 32, in: NAJ.
[62] *Ogasawara-tō chizu, ichimei Munin Jima*, in: NAJ.

Figure 6.5 Ono Tomogorō's map of Chichijima and surroundings, 1862. Note the English annotations to the Japanese toponyms, which indicate that the map was used to communicate with Anglophone settlers. *Ono Tomogoro's Map of Chichijima*, in: OVBE.

further north. Historical references were woven into maps and views as well. Miyamoto Gendō's landscape paintings, for example, showed the *Kanrin-maru* flying the *hinomaru* near the beach Perry was said to have purchased for his coaling station, and Miyaura or "Shrine Bay" was named after the – ahistorical – shrine Ogasawara Sadayori was said to have built there in the sixteenth century.[63] Above all of this, on the peak of mount Asahi, hailed the flag of the rising sun (Figure 6.4).

The maps drawn by the shogunal explorers showcased mapmaking skills according to exact, triangulated geometry, yet they were distinctively Japanese in style.[64] Captain Ono Tomogorō and his assistant Tsukamoto Akitake mapped the archipelago from the sea. Tomogorō, who had navigated the *Kanrin-maru* across the Pacific on its mission to America in 1860, was known for his skillful use of the "lunar distance" method to determine longitude, an extremely demanding mathematical task that could take hours to execute.[65] Sailing around the islands, they recorded the coastlines with high precision. At the same time, silhouettes of coastal mountains and the map's emphasis on coastlines call to mind Inō Tadataka's famous map of Japan, compiled half a century prior (see Chapter 3).[66] Wherever their ship went, they fathomed the depth, leaving traces on the map like footprints in the snow. A fine line marks the border of navigability by delineating waters of less than four *hiro* or 7.2 meters in depth. Water depths had been measured in Japan since the 1840s. The Japanese perfected their hydrographic maps around major harbors and with the assistance of foreign experts once the port openings announced heavier traffic in 1860, but Futami Bay may have been the first underwater landscape mapped with such precision by an exclusively Japanese team.[67] By ensuring safe navigation in the bays, the new authorities prepared to expand traffic also at this Pacific entrepôt.

[63] This shrine already appears on Hayashi Shihei's map of 1785, see Chapter 3. *Sangoku tsūran zusetsu*, in: WUL, Acc. No. ru-03-01547.

[64] Maps of the Tokugawa period, often designed by urban authors and directed at travelers on land, usually emphasized roads and the places travelers encountered on their way, rather than graphically depicting relative distances between different points on the map. This emphasis on the road network can also be observed in Inō Tadataka's geofigurative maps, where the hinterland is generally left blank.

[65] Fujii, *Kanrin-maru kōkaichō Ono Tomogorō no shōgai*, 1985, 2–5.

[66] On Inō Tadataka's comprehensive map of Japan's coasts and highways, see Suzuki, "Seeking Accuracy," 2016, 129–32.

[67] Suzuki Junko discusses a map of Ise Bay compiled between 1862 and 1865, a prestigious project in which the Japanese proved their ability to conduct hydrographic mapping for the first time without foreigners being involved. Earlier maps of the newly opened treaty ports had been made by or in collaboration with Westerners. Ise Bay, being a sacred place, had to be mapped without granting access to foreigners. Suzuki, "Seeking Accuracy," 2016, 129–32.

Agrarian Transformation

Upon his return to Japan, Mizuno hired several physicians to be stationed in the Bonin Islands. Besides providing care to foreign and Japanese settlers, the physicians' tasks included exploring and indexing useful plants, and facilitating their introduction to Japan. The *honzō* botanists Kurita Manjirō and Iguchi Eishun, however, who had accepted the mission reluctantly, petitioned for repatriation after merely three months on site. Along with a collection of 180 leaves – not seeds – they sent the remark that:

> according to our examination of grasses, trees and other species, no products whatsoever are found on this island that can be of national benefit (*kokueki*) … Needless to say, by contrast to the mainland (*naichi*), this island's climate is very warm and there are only the two seasons of spring and summer; therefore, after our stay of two to three months, no further product discoveries are to be expected, no matter how hard we search.[68]

Since the early eighteenth century, mercantilist ideas had inspired the introduction of foreign species to Japan, and chiefly medical plants such as ginseng from Korea, to substitute costly imports.[69] The utility of potent plants in Japanese *honzōgaku* or "materia medica" was often evaluated based on specific features of previously known flora, a research method that blinded the two botanists to the medical and agricultural practices of the Bonin Islanders. Kurita and Eguchi dutifully submitted a list of medical plants that could potentially be introduced to that desolate place – by the next unfortunate scholar appointed to this position.

In late summer 1862, the botanist Abe Rekisai came to the islands, one of the intellectuals in the entourage of Egawa Tarōzaemon prosecuted a quarter-century earlier because of their plans to clandestinely explore the Bonins for "useful" (*go-eki*) plants (see Chapter 4.)[70] Rekisai brought along thirty-two seedlings of medical plants, which he tried to grow in the Bonins.[71] The preliminary plan Mizuno had forged

[68] *Letter from Kurita Manjirō to the shogunate*, sixth month of 1862, ed. in: Hirano, "Bunkyū nenkan no Ogasawara-tō kaitaku jigyō to honzōgakusha tachi," 1998, 16–18.

[69] This led to a greater effort to "inventory the realm" that resulted in what Marcon identifies as the largest botanical encyclopedia in world history, encompassing 638 Volumes. Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan*, 2015, 145–49.

[70] The plans are written down in a *Letter from Imai Torakazu to Abe Rekisai*, ed. in: Hirano, "Bunkyū nenkan no Ogasawara-tō kaitaku jigyō to honzōgakusha tachi," 1998, 20.

[71] A list thereof can be found in *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*, pp. 40–41, in: NAJ. *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*: 41–42, in: NAJ.

Figure 6.6 Painting of an Ogasawara Tako by Miamoto Gendō (1863). *Ogasawara-tō sōzu*, vol. 2, p. 29, in: NAJ, Acc. No. 271-0519.

before his trip envisaged a settlement based on the cultivation of rice and various types of grain and beans (*gokoku*).[72] Oranges, peaches, and plums were added to this plan after Mizuno's visit. Cedar, pine, bamboo, and cypress were to be grown for construction materials.[73] It is not clear how many of these plants were actually brought to the islands during the brief duration of this first attempt at colonization.

Roughly a month after his arrival, Rekisai's field notes turned toward unknown plants the botanist discovered in the islanders' gardens, such as pineapples or the Ogasawara Tako, an endemic tree whose leaves were used to weave hats and baskets (see Figure 6.6).[74] Rekisai started paying regular visits to the "foreign" settlers' homes to cure

[72] *Gokoku* 五穀 ("five grains") is a general term for grains, as the specific five species the term refers to changed over time and varied regionally. In the late Edo period, the term generally referred to rice, wheat, soy beans, and two types of millet. *Kokushi daijiten*, keyword *gokoku*, 2019.

[73] Chapman, *The Bonin Islanders*, 2016b, 63.

[74] *Nansho kōki*, pp. 92–93, ed. in: Suzuki, "Ogasawara shotō no kaishū jigyō ni okeru Abe Rekisai (2)," 2012.

various maladies, and the settlers, who welcomed his help, usually rewarded his services, treating the doctor to coffee and roasted potato, experiences he recorded meticulously in his diaries. His excitement was utterly elitist. Contrasting the foreigners, Rekisai described the Japanese settlers as "idiots (*oroka*) who don't even understand what a grape or an apple is, they cannot recognize the great and lasting benefit of exotic fruits and trees, they are fools without an exception."[75] With preference, the scholar spent his days in the company of foreign islanders and mingling with international crews who equally appreciated his medical services.[76]

Meanwhile, island magistrate Obana reported the discovery of oranges, bananas, yams, taro, pineapples, and many other plants the foreigners had brought to the Bonins. The observation that the islands had become enriched with useful species from distant countries brought a new plan on the Japanese agenda: What could be grown in the Bonin Islands could perhaps be cultivated in Japan, as well. The islanders introduced Obana to one particularly tasty fruit:

> The thing they call *pineapple* is similar to our *omoto* and carries fruits on a stem. It is about five to six *sun* [15–18 cm] in circumference and its zest looks like fish scales. When ripe, it turns yellow and tastes good, it is juicy like a pear. It would be good if we had this in our country, but I have not seen any of them yet.[77]

Rekisai had a similar idea when he came across a wild-growing pineapple on an excursion inland, as he later reported: "When I returned to Japan, I collected the sprouts and gave them to Hanado Chōtarō who nourishes them in his greenhouse. Judging from the fact that they grow sprouts from the ripe fruit, they must be *hōri* pineapples, and, given their taste, we may call them *yellow pear*."[78]

In order to relate and categorize his discoveries, Rekisai ordered the botanical works of Linnaeus, D. L. Oskamp, and J. A. van de Water from Edo.[79] The attempt of understanding these introduced plants in an international context of slightly familiar plants soon became a process of negotiating empirical observations against diverging, speculative theses. Just the naming of new discoveries imposed discussions of kinship and thereby, historical entanglement.

[75] Ibid., p. 118.
[76] Ibid., pp. 135–37, and *Zusho kōki*, in: NDL.
[77] *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*, p. 39, in: NAJ.
[78] *Nansho kōki*, p. 90, ed. in: Suzuki, "Ogasawara shotō no kaishū jigyō ni okeru Abe Rekisai (2)," 2012.
[79] Hirano, "Bunkyū nenkan no Ogasawara-tō kaitaku jigyō to honzōgakusha tachi," 1998, 29.

About the endemic Ogasawara Tako, Rekisai wrote:

> Mr. Ono called it *tako tree*. This product was first brought [to Japan] from Ryukyu in the year Bunsei 6 [1823]. As I write in the second volume of my *Cultivation of Trees and Grasses*, it is the same as the *atani* [adan tree] mentioned in the *Chronicle of Chūsan*, or the "*hōri*" pineapple in the *Gazetteer of Taiwan*, or the "yellow pear" mentioned in the *Historical Outline* [*of Taiwan*, 1752] … As for Mr. Ono's *tako tree*, the local Englishmen call it *rowara*.[80]

Ono moved on to categorizing the *tako tree* as a family of three apparently related plants he called *screw rowara* (according to its Hawai'ian name *lau hala*),[81] *wild bashō*, and *vine rowara* (pineapple). The *screw rowara*, he related to its Ryukyuan relative, the adan tree, and thereby filled in a missing piece to connect the adan, the pineapple, and the banana altogether to the basho tree found in Japan. Japan's vassal state of Ryukyu had served botanists as a subtropical archive since Arai Hakuseki's *Survey of Southern Islands*, a role the Bonins assumed for Rekisai. Rekisai constructed this surprising kinship between the Taiwanese pineapple, the Japanese *bashō* – a Japanese type of banana tree – and the *tako* tree of the Bonin Islands based on a similarity of leaves and the hexagon patterns on the fruit.

Fieldwork in the Bonin Islands brought together a variety of sources and theories that had to be reconciled, but ultimately, empirical observations made the difference. By the time of his return, Rekisai had identified eighty-nine species which he categorized as "same as in Japan," "somewhat different than in Japan," and "nonexistent in Japan."[82] Most of the thirty-two species he had brought from Japan for experimental plantation, however, died off. The experiment led to frustrating results as much of his garden was eaten away by mice and other introduced pests – raising questions about the origin of mammals on the islands and the clues they offered about histories of human presence.[83]

Temporalities of Natural History

Briefly after the advent of humans, rats were proliferating wildly in the Bonin Islands, competing with endemic animals over local herbs,

[80] *Nansho kōki*, p. 93, ed. in: Suzuki, "Ogasawara shotō no kaishū jigyō ni okeru Abe Rekisai (2)," 2012.

[81] Long, "Evidence of an English Contact Language in the 19th Century Bonin (Ogasawara) Islands," 1999, 273.

[82] *Nansho kōki*, p. 185, ed. in: Suzuki, "Ogasawara shotō no kaishū jigyō ni okeru Abe Rekisai (2)," 2012; *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*, pp. 50–53, in: NAJ.

[83] A list thereof can be found in *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*, pp. 40–41, in: NAJ. *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*: 41–42, in: NAJ.

shrubs, and trees, or preying on indigenous birds, snails, and other small animals.[84] Governor Obana Sakunosuke also noticed a problem of deforestation – a typical effect of goats roaming wild – but in the good manner of a colonial administrator, he readily attributed it to the islanders' unchecked consumption of construction wood.[85] While such landscape change was hardly understood in its ecological dimension at the time, the foreign descent of introduced species soon provided the base for arguments about ownership and historical claims.

Fascinated with the idea that animals released on the island turned hills and shrubs into a pantry, Obana joined the islanders on a hunt. In his report to the shogunate, he described his observation of feral pigs on the southern Hahajima Island as follows:

> Feral pigs. They have tusks and some are like wild boars, however they must have descended from pigs that turned wild. Therefore, none of them are ferocious, and if one leads a hound to hunt them, they are easy to catch. Their taste is no different from that of pork. There are many of them near the northern bay of Hahajima. During his inspection, Lord Mizuno caught four of them in one day, and when Obana Sakunosuke's men were on the island, they again released several tens of domestic pigs. They must have proliferated since.[86]

The description of these dark-skinned feral pigs with tusks suggests that they were likely the offspring of "Polynesian" pigs brought from Hawai'i.[87] In a different place, Obana continues:

> [In Chichijima,] I also raised chickens and pigs and by the spring of 1863, they had multiplied to 340 or 350.… When we had to leave the island, I released all of them as they were. They will multiply prodigiously over the years to come. Of course, I prohibited the barbarians to hunt the pigs in the mountains for three to five years. We agreed that for the future, we should have them learn to be natural wild boars like the boars in Hahajima.[88]

Rather than assimilating the environmental constitution to Japan – where people only rarely ate the meat of mammals – Obana started redesigning the natural environment of the islands according to a business

[84] Sugiura, "Impacts of Introduced Species on the Biota of an Oceanic Archipelago," 2016, 161–62.
[85] *Ogasawara-tō yōroku*, vol. 2 entry 40, pp. 94–96, in: OVBE.
[86] *Ogasawara-tō yōroku*, vol. 1, entry 3, p. 69, in: OVBE.
[87] Linderholm, "A Novel MC1R Allele for Black Coat Colour Reveals the Polynesian Ancestry and Hybridization Patterns of Hawaiian Feral Pigs," et al. 2016, 6. "Polynesian" pigs had only gone feral in Hawai'i when traditional forms of economy and religious taboos transformed in the early nineteenth century, first making them available to hunters. Fischer, *Cattle Colonialism*, 2017.
[88] *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*, pp. 42–44, in: NAJ.

plan oriented at the trade in foodstuffs with the emaciated crews of international whaling vessels.[89]

Obana's descriptions of local flora and fauna also express the expectation that earlier Japanese presence has left traces in the composition of the natural environment. About a strange type of wild chicken, he wrote: "Chickens. They are numerous in villages, mountains, and fields, but most of them are wild. Their feathers are black and their flight imitates that of a pheasant. Certainly, they are the thriving [offspring] of those that Shimaya Ichizaemon had released."[90] Ichizaemon had obtained the mission to explore the islands in 1675 after a group of castaways had managed to return from there (see Chapter 3). His expedition examined the islands for useful resources, mainly with a focus on plants and mineral ores, but no mention was made of an introduction of plants or animals to the uninhabited islands.[91] The ahistorical introduction of chickens Obana describes, anyway, reflects an increasingly dynamic understanding of human and natural history that emerged from the eclectic environment of this Pacific entrepôt, in material and discursive terms.

An Entrepôt of Knowledge and Technology

In early January 1863, the entry of a group of whales into the bay of Port Lloyd announced the start of the whaling season. The islanders became busy at once and soon the whaling vessels started pulling in.[92] Nakahaman Manjirō, who had earlier served as Mizuno's interpreter, had been expected back with the schooner *Kimizawa Number One*, but bureaucratic issues had delayed his departure from Edo. Mizuno had been particularly impressed about the scene of five whales that entered the harbor, playing around in the shallow waters.[93] In Japan, such scenes had long become a rare sight, and even though foreign whalers had

[89] One decade prior, Perry's men had already unloaded several cows, sheep, and goats on the islands, prohibiting the islanders strictly to hunt them for five years. *Letter from Matthew C. Perry to Nathaniel Savory, June 17, 1853*, p. 10, in: OVBE. It was technically difficult to introduce large mammals by ship, but since the Pacific voyages of James Cook, introducing "useful" species to places overseas had become a symbolic act in the ostensible interest of civilizational development. Fischer, *Cattle Colonialism*, 2017, 18–22.

[90] *Ogasawara-tō yōroku*, vol. 1, entry 2, p. 17, in: OVBE.

[91] *Muninjima no kakitsuki*, pp. 16–19, in: APC. Ichizaemon's travel report describes thirty-six types of plants, animals, and minerals, of which he presented several samples to the shogun.

[92] *Zusho kōki*, p. 185, ed. in: Suzuki, "Ogasawara shotō no kaishū jigyō ni okeru Abe Rekisai (2)," 2012.

[93] Ibid.

long been struggling with declining catch in the region, too, the whaling grounds of the Bonin Islands seemed abundant to the Japanese.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Japanese and Western whaling techniques differed in important ways. Japanese whaling businesses processed whales into a variety of products sought-after on Japanese markets, including whale bone and string tools, and fertilizers.[94] For technical reasons, this whale hunt, carried out with small rowing boats, was tied to a shore-borne infrastructure and could only occur within a distance of fifteen to twenty kilometers from the coast. This necessitated the coordination of several hundred people distributed over thirty to forty boats, usually orchestrated with flags, fire, and smoke signals from an elevated lookout on the coast.[95] Western whaling vessels, by contrast, harpooned whales far offshore solely to extract whale oil on expeditions that lasted several months or years. This industry was exclusively interested in the valuable whale oil that could be tried out at sea – the animal's flesh and bones were thrown overboard. Harvesting the perishable products in demand on Japanese markets remained technically impossible in pelagic zones until the invention of onboard cooling facilities in the twentieth century.

Even before the first settlers had arrived from Hachijō, preparations were made for a Japanese whaling campaign.[96] In the summer of 1862, the merchant Hirano Renzō from Niigata had chartered Egawa's schooner *Kimizawa Number One*.[97] Hirano offered the vessel and the necessary funds to Manjirō for his whaling enterprise, yet Manjirō sailed at the order of Egawa Tarōzaemon, with shogunal credentials.[98] The voyage was experimental in nature, but it contributed to the shogunate's naval strategy. As shogunal inspector Hattori Kiichi remarked, pelagic whaling should "bring eternal benefit to the nation (*kokueki*)," or at least help finance naval expansion.[99] The authorities ordered Manjirō to sell the meat of whales caught at any nearby harbor, but to bring oil and bones back to Japan.[100] Manjirō's training had long become outdated, and he

[94] Arch, *Bringing Whales Ashore*, 2018, 102; Walker, *Toxic Archipelago a History of Industrial Disease in Japan*, 2010, 47–52.
[95] Yamashita, *Hogei*, 2004, 159–69. *Kansei yon nen goyō dome*, in: EGAN.
[96] *Nanshinsaku to Ogasawara guntō*, p. 85, in: NDL; Tōkyō-fu, *Ogasawara-tō sōran*, 1929, 15; Fujii, *Kanrin-maru kōkaichō Ono Tomogorō no shōgai*, 1985, 81–83.
[97] *Zushū Heda-mura ni oite o-uchitate ainari sōrō schooner-sen*…. In: EGAN.
[98] *Nakahama Manjirō den*, pp. 337–40, in: OVBE. Hirano's sponsorhip amounted to over 700 gold *ryō*. *Kujira ryō goyō dome*, pp. 7–10, in: EGAN.
[99] Letter from Hattori Kiichi and Mizuno Tadanori to the shogunate, August 14, 1862, ed. in: Yoshihara, *Bōnan hogei*, 1982, 59.
[100] Letter from Nakahama Manjirō to the shogunate, October 28, 1862, in: Yoshihara, *Bōnan hogei*, 1982, 60. Egawa forwarded Manjirō's request on whether to sell the oil

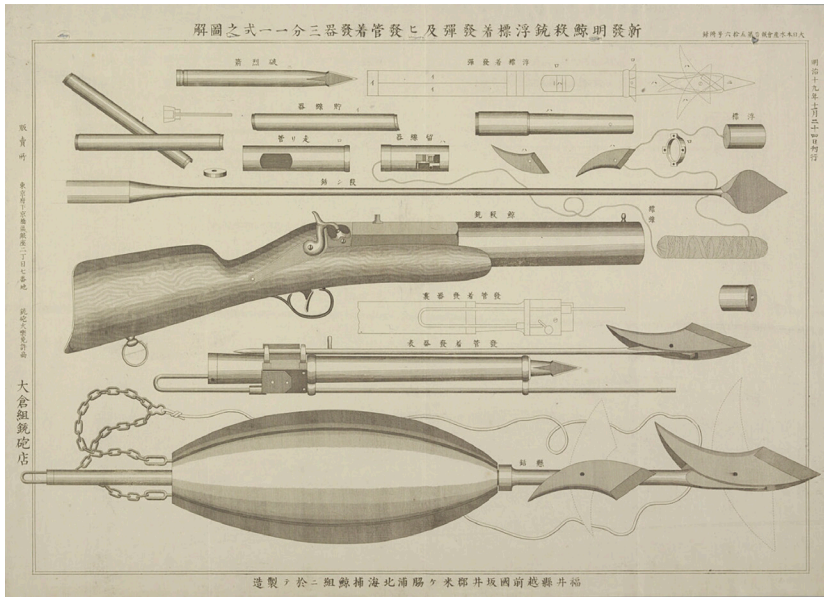

Figure 6.7 Depiction of a bomb lance model from the early 1870s in the collection of botanist Tanaka Yoshio, the later chief of the office for agriculture and founder of Ueno Zoo. *Shin hatsumei kujiragoroshi jū*, p. 165, in: TUGL, Tanaka Yoshio Fund.

relied on the islanders to introduce his cadets to the most up-to-date whaling techniques. In the meantime, American whalers had developed more effective methods, killing whales with explosive harpoons, the so-called bomb lance method patented in 1861.[101]

Manjirō bought a harpoon and ammunition, and hired a group of foreign settlers. One whaler even relocated from Hawai'i when he heard that the Japanese would hire foreign experts at lavish salaries.[102] Within a month, the crew of hired foreigners and Manjirō's cadets caught two sperm whales and successfully harvested ninety-six barrels of oil near Anejima island.[103] Manjirō's expedition was somewhat haphazard, as a letter indicates, which he submitted to the

produced to the *kanjō bugyō*, the finance department of the shogunate. *Geiyu sono hoka torihakaraikata no gi*, in: EGAN.

101 Fujii, *Kanrin-maru kōkaichō Ono Tomogorō no shōgai*, 1985, 82–83; Arch 2018, 73–75.

102 Yoshihara, *Bōnan hogei*, 1982, 61; Fujii, *Kanrin-maru kōkaichō Ono Tomogorō no shōgai*, 1985, 68, 82.

103 Yoshihara, *Bōnan hogei*, 1982, 61.

shogunal finance department after his vessel's return. Manjirō inquired what he was supposed to do with the gained oil – whether to sell it at Yokohama, or to store it away until further notice.[104] The competition over whales continued with radically different methods and in a formerly unfamiliar environment.

Pelagic whaling was a wasteful industry and the bomb lance exacerbated the probability of killing and then losing the prey. Abe Rekisai, the botanist, described his experience on a brief whaling trip with a foreign crew as follows:

> We sailed near the whale and hit one *bomb lance* directly into it … we chased it and as we hit it [again] in the stomach, I heard the explosion inside. The fish hit waves in pain and sank in a horrible spectacle. The foreigners also say it certainly died."[105]

The bomb lance technique had been the industry's last blow before the classical whaling industry collapsed. It was a technique efficient at killing, one that accelerated the decimation of whale populations (see Figure 6.7).

With Japan's integration into globalizing markets, gearing up for the race for resources meant learning from globally active competitors. Relying on such formal interaction with foreign captains, Obana compiled a list of whale species the foreigners had caught around the Bonin Islands, and enumerated the market price of each species' oil per barrel in dollars. The oil of killer whales was traded for sixteen dollars per barrel, a right whale's oil for twenty, and the precious sperm whale oil for up to forty-five dollars per barrel.[106] Obana could relate only three of the nine species listed in English to a Japanese name, suggesting that some of the species the foreigners caught offshore were not yet familiar to the Japanese. The Japanese were used to catching coastal baleens, but many of the pelagic toothed whale species were rarely found in shallower whale grounds. Had governmental planners spoken indifferently of "whale fish (*geigyo*)" in correspondence with Nakahama Manjirō, the officials sent to the Bonin islands meticulously recorded names and characteristics of each species as understood from interviews with foreign whalers.[107] English dialect differences and non-native accents among whalers may have affected Obana's categorizations: the previously known humpback whale was inadvertently subdivided into a *homubekki* (13.2 m), *hōbekki* (20 m), and *himubekki* (13.2 m) type in Obana's records.[108] The systematic

[104] *Geiyu sono hoka torihakaraikata no gi*, in: EGAN.
[105] *Zusho kōki*, p. 179, ed. in: Suzuki, "Ogasawara shotō no kaishū jigyō ni okeru Abe Rekisai (2)," 2012.
[106] *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*, pp. 109–10, in: NAJ.
[107] *Kujira ryō goyō dome*, in: EGAN.
[108] *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*, p. 56, in: NAJ.

appropriation of marine knowledge and technology had turned the colonial enterprise into an intelligence project on technological, geographical, and biological essentials for Pacific expansion.

Tokugawa Colonialism at the Crossroads

In the summer of 1863, foreign pressure mounted against the shogunate over the murder of an English merchant near Namamugi village. As the shogunate was at first unwilling to pay an indemnity of 440,000 Mexican silver dollars to Britain, roughly one third of its annual revenue, Japan and an alliance of four Western powers found themselves on the brink of a war.[109] In August, the British attacked Kagoshima from the sea, and Japan's international political predicament worsened dramatically.[110] In this context, the shogunate could no longer guarantee the safety of its subjects and risked another naval humiliation in the Bonin Islands. Prudently, they called back all settlers and bundled the disintegrating shogunal capacities in the mainland.[111] The land and supplies the settlers had developed during their short stay were divided among the non-Japanese islanders with the understanding that this retreat was only temporary.[112]

The colonial experiment in the Bonin Islands – even though small in scale and aborted after only a year and a half – shows how Tokugawa Japan, despite facing humiliation through unequal treaties and even a Russian aggression against the island of Tsushima in 1861, managed to assert a territorial claim against Western competitors on its Pacific side.[113] The project was symbolically significant as it displayed the same visual language of colonial power and technological modernity to which the Japanese had been subjected less than a decade prior, with the arrival of the American squadron of black ships at Uraga. Yet this language of power followed a distinctively Japanese grammar. Neo-Confucian ideals of government pervaded rhetoric and legal practice on the ground, while a strong emphasis rested on the agrarian development or "opening" of land. An emphasis was put on the administrative control of resources, supported by an apparatus of administrative and academic personnel who primarily inventoried the colony's novel climate and produce.

[109] Totman, *The Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1862–1868*, 1980, 68–73.
[110] Mōri, "Satsuei Sensō," 1992, 344–45.
[111] Totman, *The Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1862–1868, 1980*, 68–81. A greater austerity program was begun in the previous year to concentrate resources on military modernization and political cohesion.
[112] Tanaka, "Kaisetsu," 1983, 250.
[113] On the Tsushima Incident of 1861, see Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism*, 2004, 77–84.

The islands' exploration offered ways to construct diachronic connections of different kinds. Discoveries of familiar, yet strangely exotic species raised questions about the historical kinship of social and natural environments in the southern colony. Certain animals commonly kept in Japan seemed to have assumed savage traits since their alleged introduction by Ogasawara Sadayori or Shimaya Ichizaemon centuries prior, while others, brought hither by foreign migrants, showed striking similarities with possibly related species in Japan. Efforts to index flora and fauna intersected with the construction of a historical narrative that put territorial claims on a scientific footing. These projections were highly speculative, but they provided a historical and cultural compass.

Expansion beyond the older frontiers of the early modern *bakuhan* state necessitated a fundamental redefinition of ethnicity, national space, and Japan's appearance on the international stage. Proficient in foreign languages, the islanders fulfilled an indispensable role in the interaction with international sailors.[114] The Bonin Islanders were declared subjects of the "*tycoon*" – noticeably appearing with his foreigner-proof cognomen – forming a new type of subjects located beyond the conventional status order of Japanese and frontier populations.[115] For Japan's fragmented realm of shogunal and domain lands, this generalized subjecthood helped universalize territorial claims vis-à-vis foreign governments as "national," an idea that was only forming at that time. Likewise, the *hinomaru* flag of the shogunal navy, which was first used in the Bonin Islands to mark a national territorial claim, elevated the shogunate into the position of a national government.

[114] *Ogasawara-tō fūdo ryakki*, pp. 113–14, in: NAJ.
[115] *Sadame*, in: OVBE. Other frontier subjects such as the Ainu or the Ryukyuans, by contrast, were required to perform otherness in language, hairstyle, and dress. Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, 2005, 3–4.