3 The Invention of Japan's Pacific

> East of Japan is the vast and boundless ocean, the largest in the world, where all land ends.
>
> Nishikawa Joken, *Nihon suido kō*, 1720

> As we investigate the conditions in foreign countries, it must be noted that these countries are located on the same, one globe, and that many countries on this globe are undergoing tumultuous change. Commonly, the globe is divided into the four parts of Asia, Europe, Africa and America, [but] … in recent years, we have come to subsume the islands of the Great Pacific as *Australy*, making it five continents.
>
> Watanabe Kazan, manuscript to *Gaikoku Jijōsho*, late 1830s

The expedition of Shimaya Ichizaemon to the Bonin Islands in 1675 is an all but forgotten episode in the Tokugawa shogunate's ambivalent maritime history, but it encapsulates the possibilities and political contradictions that accompanied every new discovery. It is hard to know who Ichizaemon really was, for his name was not that of one man but of three and no toponyms, monuments, or public buildings carry it into the public sphere today. It is associated with two eminent navigational texts, a handful of maps and charts, and a major voyage that plays a central part in this book. The three lives of Ichizaemon – the eldest, his son, and his grandson – fade into each other in the technical language of expedition reports, budget negotiations, or in the brush strokes that turned the coasts of northern Honshu into legible, cartographic information. Ichizaemon the eldest was among the most skillful seafarers of his time and his junk, the *Fukokuju*, at over forty meters, among the largest ever built in Japan.[1] It was thanks to the brush of his grandson Ichizaemon that the once-celebrated navigator's methods were recorded and circulated, but it remains unclear which of the three

[1] Matsuo, *Ogasawara shotō o meguru sekaishi*, 2014, 62–68; *Enpō ni kinoetora doshi Zushū taiyō munin jima o-tazune*…, transcr. in: Urakawa, "Enpō ni-nen toradoshi Taiyō munin-jima," 2010, 108–09.

Ichizaemons it really was who steered into the open Pacific to return with the map of a newly charted island territory.[2]

Trained aboard the heavy vermillion seal ships that cruised to Southeast Asia under a special licensing system in the early seventeenth century, the captain was approaching seventy years of age when the shipping magnate Suetsugu Heizō – also a fourth generation heir to his name – reached out in the summer of 1674 with a mission so daunting no other captain had the courage to accept it.[3] Ever since a crew of castaways had returned from an uninhabited island south of Japan roughly four years prior, Heizō was corresponding with shogunal authorities to launch an expedition to the newly discovered island. According to the castaways, the isle was part of an archipelago rich in fresh water and trees of all sorts, and it boasted an unknown extent of flatlands "that could be converted into fields."[4] Within just a few weeks, Ichizaemon's *Fukokuju* was headed toward Hachijō, where she recruited the necessary hands and restocked on provisions before setting sail for the open ocean.[5]

The islanders of Hachijō knew well the dangers that lurked out at sea. Some told of a god called "Red Whale" who drove sailors insane and created hallucinations luring them ever farther from the shore.[6] The Sino-Japanese encyclopedia *Wakan Sansai Zue* of 1712, again, has it that the seas east and south of Japan were covered in islands of all sorts, home to outlandish peoples and eerie creatures. Only rarely did drifting sailors return alive to report about the strange island of women, or, farther east, the land of immortals. Drifters had to fear encountering the *Shakuhakō* tribe, said to enslave strangers and sell them to neighboring islands, or worse, the *Kinbu*, a tribe believed to pin strangers on bamboo skewers, roasting them alive. More curious than scary were the bird people born with wings, or the *Senkyō* people with a gaping hole in their chest, through which they inserted a pole to carry those of high status around.[7] For some historians, this vernacular imaginary, placing Japan amidst a sea of sinister and exoticized islands, has provided evidence for arguments about early modern Japan's distorted conceptions of the outside world or ignorance about geography. But rather than filling a "cognitive blank,"[8] the fantastic imaginary speaks to a general curiosity

[2] Akioka, "Ogasawara shotō hakken-shi no kihon shiryō 1," 1963, 14–21.
[3] Matsuo, *Ogasawara shotō o meguru sekaishi*, 2014, 53.
[4] *Ashūsen muninjima hyōryūki*, transcr. in: Yamashita, *Ishii Kendō korekushon*, 1992, p. 196.
[5] These accounts are based on a collection of correspondence by Suetsugu Heizō manuscript copied by the historian Watanabe Kurasuke under the title *Muninjima*, in: NMHC.
[6] *Hachijō jikki*, vol. 1, pp. 29–30, in: Kondō, *Hachijō jikki*, 1964.
[7] *Wakan Sansai Zue* vol. 14, pp. 22–31, in: NDL.
[8] Yonemoto, "Maps and Metaphors of the 'Small Easter Sea'," 1999, 170.

among the reading public, however starkly contrasted with the sober, empirical gaze of official cartographers.

This chapter follows Ichizaemon's expedition and the maps it produced, which circulated across subsequent discourses and reframed the political geography of the northwestern Pacific. Though the shogunate ultimately rejected proposals to develop the newly discovered islands after Ichizaemon's return, his report was read and reproduced widely over the next two centuries, in and outside Japan. Over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Japanese intellectuals drew up visions of the Pacific and of Japan's ambitions within it. The process merged empirical knowledge with political anxieties, and these naturally evolved over time. "Japan's Pacific" was formed in response to both domestic ideological transformations and geopolitical shifts abroad that, by the mid nineteenth century, had entangled the archipelago in a rapidly contracting Pacific world. Japanese geographers were embedded in global networks of knowledge, allowing them to incorporate new discoveries and debate novel concepts. The very distinction of an "ocean" from a "sea," or the world's subdivision into continents, were informed by European exploration, and yet the selective adaptation of such categories was really a repurposing of classical Chinese terminologies. Rather than being translated, metageographical concepts such as *Taiheiyō* – the modern word for "the Pacific" – were reversely constructed and critically tested against competing concepts. As a result, Japan's liminal position between the Pacific rim and the island Pacific inspired original interpretations of oceanic geography and provided opportunities to project a distinctively Japanese agenda onto the region.

Early European views of the Pacific were modeled on an Atlantic understanding, focused on the act of crossing between the continental rims that confine the ocean. Japanese imaginations of the Pacific, by contrast, projected an archipelagic view of the ocean, implying a malleable extension of Japan's own insular realm. An oceanic view of Japan itself gained currency through debates that, beginning with the late eighteenth century, called for a geopolitical reorientation toward the archipelago's maritime environs – partly in response to Russian incursions into the Sea of Okhotsk. Over the final decades of the eighteenth century, the boundaries of Japan's Pacific expanded in the imagination of explorers and armchair travelers from Hachijō to the Bonin Islands, and from the Kuriles to Kamchatka. This required new terminologies. If *Taiyō* described the "vast ocean" beyond Japan's inter-island seas, the more specific "Southern Sea," or *Nankai*, became the repository of uninhabited but theoretically Japanese islands to the south, based on their alleged proximity to the Nankai-dō region of western Japan.

The greater "South Sea" or *Nan'yō*, meanwhile, would gradually expand to encompass the Philippines, Hawai'i, and even the shores of Australia. These discourses brought about essential terminologies around which later expansionism evolved.

Over the latter half of the Tokugawa period, geographers negotiated a specific view of space and spatial belonging by testing metageographical containers for the archipelago's oceanic environs. The technologies at work in propagating a Japanese "geo-body" involve cartographic categorization, communication, and spatial enforcement. These "operations of the technology of territoriality,"[9] to use Tonchai Winichakul's phrase, culminated in Japan in the late nineteenth century in media such as standardized school maps, but the chief categories at work had been in the making for at least a century by that time. Geographical information was collected on the ground in cutting-edge cartographic projects such as Mamiya Rinzō's expedition to the Amur Delta and Inō Tadataka's exhaustive triangulation of all Japan over the first two decades of the nineteenth century.

The global circulation of graphical and textual maps, and of the conceptual projections they embodied, connected these explorations to a global geographical discourse. This enabled, for example, the compilation of "the most advanced world map published anywhere,"[10] as Kären Wigen writes, by the astronomer Takahashi Kageyasu in 1810. The Japanese intelligence reflected in such maps, especially pertaining to the geography of Sakhalin, the Bonin Islands, and Japan proper, was classified of course, but even more so was it sought after by Europeans. As a result, the visions of oceanic geography Japanese intellectuals created came about in an ongoing dialogue with Western explorations, yet they propagated distinctly Japanese conceptualizations of the Pacific.

Regional Perspectives and Multiple Pacifics

Although both "the South Sea" and "the Pacific" were inventions of European explorers in the early sixteenth century, the first coherent depiction of the Pacific basin appeared on an Asian map, as a fusion of Chinese and European data. The Jesuit Matteo Ricci printed his iconic, Sinocentric world map in Beijing in 1584, whence it circulated to Japan and was augmented and reprinted multiple times over subsequent decades (Figure 3.1). Ricci honored important Chinese conventions by placing the entire Pacific between the Eurasian and American

[9] Thongchai, *Siam Mapped*, 1994, 16.
[10] Wigen, "Japan and the World in Tokugawa Maps," 2021, 341.

Figure 3.1 Matteo Ricci's world map with the Pacific at its center. This 1602 version was used, reproduced, and modified in Japan, where it gave rise to an entire genre of *Bankoku sōzu* maps that, hung vertically with east at the top, were centered on Japan and the Pacific. *Kunyu wanguo quantu*, in: UML.

continents, centering China and confining Europe to the world's western periphery.[11] Though Ricci introduced the radically new organizing principles of continents and coordinates, as well as a long list of novel toponyms, some of the metageographical concepts he applied were already familiar to his Chinese audience.[12] Eurasia was surrounded by a "lesser" and a "larger" Western Sea, located near India and west of Europe, as well as a "lesser" and a "larger" Eastern Sea off Japan, and along the American west coast, respectively.[13] All of these toponyms were tied to specific maritime regions. The label "peaceful sea," coined by Ferdinand Magellan around 1520, is apparent in the designation *ninghai* west of Chile, but this toponym, as well, refers to a specific sub-region within an ocean that seems, otherwise, unconnected.[14]

While "the Pacific" emerged on Asian maps as a mere graphical convenience, its function of shifting the cartographic focus east also helped Japanese geographers emancipate their archipelago from the continent. The Sinocentric and Buddhist cosmologies prevalent in medieval and early modern Japan resembled the ancient European model of a landmass at the center of a world ocean, surrounded by a number of peripheral islands and archipelagos (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2). Yet in Europe, these terraqueous geographies changed radically over the course of the sixteenth century or so. As John Gillis summarizes it, "before the fifteenth century, the Ocean led nowhere; in the next centuries people would see it led everywhere."[15] The discovery of a West Indian "archipelago" first emancipated Europe from its marginal position in the *Orbis Terrarum* and instead shifted the continental peninsula to the center of a maritime world. Yet it was not until the sixteenth century that the designation of "continent" was first applied to the Americas, ultimately invalidating the model of three continents, and dividing the world ocean into multiple, specific oceans.[16] Oceans, in other words, became for the aquatic realm what continents represent for the terrestrial world.

In Japan, the ocean consisted of a patchwork of regional seas. The "offshore" *nada* (灘) was a concrete location related to onshore geography, as in Hyūga-*nada*, Kumano-*nada*, or Genkai-*nada*. The term for

[11] Unno, "Cartography in Japan," 1994, 404–10.
[12] The 1584 version of Ricci's world map is lost, but by 1608 seven subsequent editions had propagated Ricci's novel representation of the world in China and its neighboring countries. On the innovative aspects of Matteo Ricci's *mappa mundi* in the Chinese context, see Elman, *A Cultural History of Modern Science in China*, 2009, 29–34.
[13] Endō, "The Cultural Geography of the Opening of Japan," 2007, 28. Endō renders these as "near" and "far" Eastern Sea.
[14] *Kunyu wanguo quantu*, in: UML.
[15] Gillis, "Islands in the Making of an Atlantic Oceania, 1500–1800," 2007, 22.
[16] Lewis and Wigen, *The Myth of Continents*, 1997, 24–25.

Figure 3.2 Japanese map of the Buddhist world Jambūdvīpa with the Indian subcontinent in the south, China in the east, and Mount Sumeru surrounded by nine rivers at the center. Japan is represented by the densely labeled and heavily outsized archipelago in the northeast, Europe constitutes an archipelagic outskirt in the northwest. *Nansenbushū bankoku shōka no zu*, dated 1710, in: UTL, Acc. No.: ne-040-348.

"oceans," or *yō* (洋) as it appears in more macroscopic categories, by contrast, descends from ancient cosmologies that place the terrestrial world in the middle of four oceans, one for each cardinal direction.[17] Though comparable in principle to the flowing *oceanus* that surrounded the three continents of the known world in European antiquity, the metageographical property of *yō* underwent a different reconfiguration through early modern globalization. If Europe's oceans became the aquatic counterpart to the three, then four, and ultimately seven continents, *yō* was a metageographical category in its own right, the structure of an archipelagic world. If the western ocean *seiyō* and the eastern ocean *tōyō* became tantamount to the countries of the western and eastern

[17] Lewis, "Dividing the Ocean Sea," 1999, 190.

hemispheres – occident and orient – respectively, the southern ocean *Nan'yō* became a recipient of a vaguely defined southern archipelago that eventually encompassed Hawai'i, Australia, and Southeast Asia.[18] The renaming of the "Pacific Sea" *taihei-kai*, as it was first coined in 1810 by Takahashi Kageyasu, into a "Pacific Ocean" or *taihei-yō* by mid-century, can be read as a reconfiguration of a maritime metageography of four oceans with the growing number of continents that categorized the terrestrial realm.[19]

Polycentric approaches to global history have helped put regionally distinct perspectives on the Pacific in conversation with experiences of trade, migration, and colonial exploitation.[20] "The Pacific" was not simply a "Spanish Lake,"[21] as O. H. K. Spate claimed in the 1970s, but rather, it constitutes a single, culturally specific possibility among myriad ways of conceptualizing the ocean. In Matt Matsuda's words, "Pacific worlds are not synonymous with just one declared and defined 'Pacific,' but with multiple seas, cultures, and peoples, and especially the overlapping transits between them."[22] Macroscopic views of a contoured Pacific basin express the commodifying gaze of voyaging empires, while regional or local seas may express different sorts of practical familiarity. The Polynesian sea of *Vasa Loloa*, for example, is defined by genealogical connections around Tonga, Sāmoa, and Fiji, while the sea *Moana-nui-a-Kiva* encompasses Māori networks from New Zealand to the Cook Islands.[23] In Asia, maritime geographies evolved around fisheries and sailing routes, following trade networks from the Sea of Okhotsk to Southeast Asia, as is illustrated, for example, by the framing of those seventeenth-century portolan charts that span from Japan to Java and the Bay of Bengal.[24] Likewise, the Chinese version of a "South Sea" or *nanyang* expanded along migratory movements to Southeast Asia and describes the scope of ethnic ties across the South China Sea and the Southeast Asian "archipelago" in the modern language.[25] In practice, multiple Pacifics came about that developed historically conditioned meanings in regional contexts.

[18] The contemporary term *Tōnan Ajia* was also used since the early twentieth century, but it did not replace *Nan'yō* in the general discourse until after World War II. Tsuchiya, *Nan'yō bungaku no seisei*, 2013, 9.
[19] *Shintei bankoku zenzu*, in: LOC.
[20] E.g. see Perez Garcia and De Sousa, eds., *Global History and New Polycentric Approaches*, 2018; Armitage and Bashford, *Pacific Histories*, 2014.
[21] Spate, *The Spanish Lake*, 1979.
[22] Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds*, 2012, 2.
[23] Salesa, "The Pacific in Indigenous Time," 2014, 48.
[24] E.g. *Kōmō kairo zu*, in: BYU.
[25] Tremml-Werner, *Spain, China, and Japan in Manila, 1571–1644*, 2015, 85.

The Expedition to the Bonin Islands, 1675

Shimaya Ichizaemon, the explorer, had no word for "the Pacific," yet he knew where he was headed when he took off for Hachijō in late 1674. Unlike most sailors at that time, Ichizaemon sailed according to astronomical observations, a rare and mathematically demanding skill that helped him keep his bearings long after passing familiar landmarks. Having sailed to Siam twice under a Japanese and a Dutch captain, Ichizaemon's methods were rooted in both Iberian and Dutch traditions that mingled in Asian waters at that time, but with the abolition of the vermilion seal ship system in 1633, this complicated method was replaced by more rudimentary practices of sailing at view, or dead reckoning by extrapolating one's position based on direction, speed, and time of travel. After the demise of the grand voyages, Ichizaemon wielded artilleries in the battle of Shimabara in 1638, before he was assigned to domestic inter-city routes.[26] For his services to the shogunate, the captain was granted nominal samurai status, a detail that reveals more than anything his low birth and career by merit.[27]

Perhaps it was the quest for the Isles of Silver and Gold that motivated the shogunate to grant the expedition. Most probably rooted in Marco Polo's accounts of the gilded land Cipangu, the islands steeped in legend had since nourished European interest in Japan, and eventually entered the virtual geography of Japan itself.[28] Even Abraham Ortelius, on his Pacific map of 1589, featured the Isle of Silver as a northern twin to Japan.[29] At least three futile attempts were launched by the shogunate and the northeastern Mito domain to find the islands east of Honshu.[30] Several foreign expeditions sought them, beginning with the Spanish explorer Pedro Unamuno in 1587 and, more prominently, Sebastian Vizcaino in 1611–1612.[31] Even though Vizcaino reported upon his return to Spain that "there are no such islands in the whole world,"[32] the Dutch continued the search until the mid

[26] Kramer and Kramer, "The Exploration of the Bonin Archipelago," 2019, 63.
[27] Akioka, "Ogasawara shotō hakken-shi no kihon shiryō 1," 1963, 20.
[28] Endō, "The Cultural Geography of the Opening of Japan," 2007, 27.
[29] Oka, "Elusive Islands of Silver," 2016, 20–23.
[30] Matsuo, *Ogasawara shotō o meguru sekaishi*, 2014, 71.
[31] Kawai, "A Brief History of Recognition of the Kuroshio," 1998, 524. Other expeditions include João da Gama (1589–1590), Álvaro de Mendaña (1567–1569 and 1595–1596), Pedro Fernándes de Queirós (1605–1606), Mathijs Quast and Abel Tasman 1639, Maarten de Vries 1643, and Vitus Bering 1741. See: Spate, *The Spanish Lake*, 1979, 107–08; Padrón 2020, 19; Kawai, *Kuroshio sōgū to ninchi no rekishi*, 1997, 66–67; 191–92. On the Isle of Gold, see Kobata, *Nihon to Kingintō*, 1943.
[32] Spate, *The Spanish Lake*, 1979, 108.

eighteenth century.[33] Engelbert Kaempfer, a German physician stationed in Nagasaki in the service of the Dutch *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) in the early 1690s, believed that the Japanese had long incorporated the islands into their realm and jealously concealed their location, "chiefly from the Europeans."[34]

Suetsugu Heizō was certainly in for a gain, financial or political. A cunning merchant and politician in Nagasaki, Heizō offered to provide means and expertise as an investment into his relationship with the shogunate. Suetsugu's grandfather Heizō Masanao had replaced Murayama Tōan in the office of the Nagasaki Magistrate in 1619, suing his predecessor over his outlawed Christian faith. In the powerful position of Nagasaki Magistrate, Heizō expanded his influence over trade with Taiwan, where he positioned his business as a fierce competitor to the Dutch VOC.[35] The Suetsugu family remained in business even after the maritime prohibitions had banned overseas travel for Japanese seafarers. Holding tight to their office, the clan maintained access to international trade networks by way of partnering with foreign intermediaries. In 1669, the shogunal finance department asked Heizō to build a Chinese-style junk large enough to ply the Kuroshio along the southern route from Nagasaki to Edo, avoiding the strong tidal currents of the narrow Inland Sea.[36] This significantly increased the shipping speed. Owned by Heizō and operated by Ichizaemon, the junk *Fukokuju* was further assigned shogunal service mapping and inspecting the coast of northeastern Honshu in 1671, before it was decided that she be dispatched to the newly discovered islands in the south.[37]

Setting out, Ichizaemon observed good progress at first, and within a few days' sail, he must have covered half the way to his destination. Abruptly, however, the southerly summer winds grew stronger and forced his mission back to the Ise Peninsula.[38] After this initial setback, Ichizaemon launched a second attempt in the fourth month of the following year, 1675. From Hachijō, the voyage followed a chain of uninhabited rocks. When the last

[33] *Dai Nippon Shiryō*, part 12, vol. 12, p. 15. Spate, *The Spanish Lake*, 1979, 106.
[34] *The History of Japan* by Engelbert Kaempfer, pp. 68–69, in: GET.
[35] To gain shogunal support for his struggle for influence in Taiwan, Masanao at one point even staged an embassy of Indigenous Taiwanese to Edo, though his project failed to elicit a shogunal expedition to Taiwan. Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun*, 2014, 222–28.
[36] *Muninjima*, pp. 4–10, in: NMHC.
[37] This junk *Fukokuju* (富国寿) was so large and outlandish that its arrival drew masses of spectators to the harbors. See: Kramer and Kramer, "The Exploration of the Bonin Archipelago," 2019, 62–64; Tanaka, *Bakumastu no Ogasawara*, 1997, 7; Matsuo, *Ogasawara shotō o meguru sekaishi*, 2014, 62–68.
[38] Kramer and Kramer, "The Exploration of the Bonin Archipelago," 2019, 64.

landmarks fell out of view, Ichizaemon shifted to the offshore sailing technique of following specific rhumb lines or "loxodromes" – oriented at known stars – to a specified latitude, whence he changed direction to search the vast sea at view. On the twentieth day at sea, they spotted a large island with a protected harbor, where they landed the next day.[39]

This route is visualized in the top left corner of Ichizaemon's *Map of Munin Jima*, with which Tanaka Hiroyuki presented me at his Tokyo home in the summer of 2016, as described in the preface to this book (Figure 3.3). The name "Munin" island, from which the English toponym "Bonin" is also derived, is a generic term for "uninhabited island" – today read *mujintō* – as it was yet to be determined which of the many fabled islands in the ocean this one corresponded to. With the map came a manuscript booklet of twenty-five pages titled *Notes on Munin Jima*. The route log describes landmarks passed with daily travel distances on a rummaging course east and west. In absence of coordinates, a system Japanese geographers only adopted a century later, it was the appearance of Hachijō on the map that connected the remote archipelago to places familiar to Japanese readers.[40]

The captain created a third map, one unlikely to have circulated widely, given its complexity. This map was featured in a 1963 publication by the renowned collector Akioka Takejirō but has not been located since. A portolan chart in the style of the early modern navigational charts used in the Mediterranean, it showed the path from Edo Bay to *Munin Jima* along rhumb lines that run from points of navigational interest to specific stars and off to the poles (see Figure 3.4).[41] Portolan charts were developed in the Mediterranean in the late Middle Ages and brought to East Asia by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. Following a known star, rhumb lines intersect with each longitudinal meridian at the same angle. While latitudes could be determined easily based on the altitude of celestial bodies, longitude could only be extrapolated based on distance traveled. Angles between stars and meridians were therefore crucial to determine one's bearings. The course would only be changed on a new star at intersections of multiple rhumb lines as indicated by the

[39] Urakawa 2010, 106–07; *Muninjima*, in: NMHC, pp. 11–12; *Muninjima no kakitsuki*, in: APC. Also see Kramer and Kramer, "The Exploration of the Bonin Archipelago," 2019, 64–65, who use a different set of sources.

[40] The string of islands was possibly added in the process of multiplication, since Ichizaemon had better means of contextualizing his discoveries. It is absent from the two other known copies of Ichizaemon's map, at Shimabara's Honkōji temple and at the Nagasaki City Museum of History and Culture. Matsuo, "Honkōji Shozō 'Muninjima No Zu'," 2018, 71.

[41] Akioka, "Ogasawara shotō hakken-shi no kihon shiryō 1," 1963, 10; Akioka, "Ogasawara shotō hakken-shi no kihon shiryō 3," 1967, 107–12.

Figure 3.3 Shimaya Ichizaemon's detailed map of the Bonin Islands, 1675, or copy thereof. *Muninjima no ezu*, in: APC.

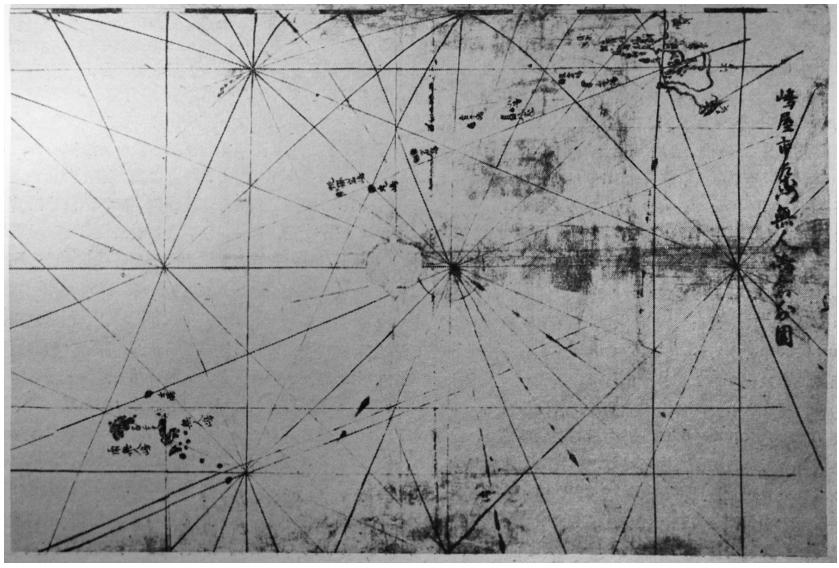

Figure 3.4 Ichizaemon's context map with the Bonin Islands in the bottom left; Edo Bay and the Bōsō Peninsula are visible in the top right corners. Reproduced from: Akioka 1967, 107.

chart. Ichizaemon's three maps, the text, the chart, and the detail map, therefore facilitated navigation at distinct scales.

The three elements also combined the differing standards of European-style portolan charts, East Asian visual elements, and narrative geography. Unlike the characteristically road-centric maps that circulated among the broader readership in early modern Japan, portolan charts were essentially sea-centric. Typically, they enlarged places of particular interest or waters difficult to navigate, such as the islands around the harbor of Canton, while representing punctual distances between the harbors at a more or less consistent scale.[42] Yet the scale and shape of islands and coastlines was no major criterion for the maps' geometrical usability. Once land was sighted, detail maps would help users navigate according to characteristic landmarks.

This is the purpose of the detail map, which also overemphasizes bays and inlets to capture the characteristics of the shoreline, deflating the island proper to a skinny crescent, as sea-centric maps tend to do. Drawings of mountain silhouettes depict the coastline as seen from the sea, while the inland, of little use to navigation, is left blank. The coasts

[42] Shapinsky, "The World from the Waterline," 2016, 16–19.

are populated by rocks, shoals, and, in one instance, indications of water depth. In order to accommodate all of the islands on one sheet, the maritime space between the two main groups was contracted, with the note that "there are approximately twenty *ri* [78 km] between them."[43] The map furthermore highlights beaches in white and flat lands in yellow, with estimates of possibly clearable surface. Ichizaemon's maps are strictly empirical in that they exclusively describe and name islands visited by the expedition, according to visual characteristics. The captain's objectifying gaze disenchanted and isolated the islands from vernacular versions of geography.[44] With that, they are an exceptional example for the malleable nature of cartographic conventions and navigational faculties several decades into Japan's so-called period of national seclusion.

Abandoning No-Man-Land

Upon his return, Ichizaemon reported to Shogun Ietsuna that he "discovered an island larger than the province of Sado some three hundred *ri* or 1,200 kilometers from Hachijō."[45] In reality, Sado Island is thirty-six times larger than the largest of the islands Ichizaemon had mapped, and such gross exaggeration could hardly be a mere error for a captain so well-traveled in the Sea of Japan. Rather, it highlights the enthusiastic tone of his report: "The soil is unexpectedly fertile and there are no inhabitants … large trees are numerous and fish abundant; there are a great many kinds. Since these are not afraid of humans, [my men] caught them by hand!"[46] Though an explicit intent to colonize the islands remains unspoken in Ichizaemon's report, his meticulous descriptions of flat and arable zones, and his assessment of freshwater quality, wood, and mineral resources put the consideration on the table. Along with a list of perishable produce the explorers identified, Ichizaemon presented the shogun with an assortment of wood specimens, minerals, shells, and live birds. "In addition," he observed, "there are many more trees, but no [others] that we know."[47] Though he presented his findings in the bureaucratic style of a shogunal servant, the captain was clearly inclined to further pursue his explorations.

The shogunate, however, decided otherwise. While Ichizaemon was out on his mission, a politically motivated campaign had commenced against his sponsor Suetsugu Heizō, concerning smuggling. Evidence had

[43] *Munin Jima no ezu*, in: APC, no Acc. No.
[44] Ibid.; *Muninjima no kakitsuki*, in: APC, no Acc. No.
[45] *Muninjima no kakitsuki*, p. 4, in: APC, no Acc. No.
[46] Ibid., p. 5.
[47] Ibid., p. 14.

surfaced that an assistant of Heizō's, a certain Kageyama Kudayū, had purchased a foreign-built junk and employed two Chinese captains on an illicit trade route to Cambodia. A large-scale investigation dispatched over four hundred officials from Edo early in the next year, and found that the junk, fitted out with double walls, had carried maps, swords, and other weapons to Taiwan. Taiwan was under the control of the Zheng Clan, a Ming loyalist fraction that had grown into an influential regional power, holding out against the mainland's new Qing dynasty. As Timothy Romans and Xing Hang have suggested, however, the shogunate had long since decided that meddling in the conflict had become too risky, both for geopolitical reasons and in consideration of domestic stability. Indeed, it was a collaboration between the shogunate and western Japanese daimyos that turned against Suetsugu.[48] When the investigators further discovered a warehouse stuffed to the rafters with enough weaponry to outfit an entire army, the noose tightened around the merchant-bureaucrat. His assistant Kudayū pleaded guilty and was crucified, while Heizō and the Suetsugu family had their entire possessions expropriated and were exiled to the island of Iki in the Tsushima Strait.[49]

Although the incident illustrates the shogunate's anxiety for domestic stability, recent scholarship has come to view Heizō's removal primarily in the context of a changing geopolitical environment in East Asia. In expanding both commercial and political power in Nagasaki, the Suetsugu family had turned from a Tokugawa retainer into a self-interested actor, a mediator between Japan and its strategic partners overseas. The Suetsugu's international trading and lending network had turned into a veritable "domain" that encompassed diplomatic and commercial relations to China, Korea, Taiwan, and various colonial and Indigenous states in Southeast Asia.[50] Most importantly, the family maintained a close alliance with the Zheng Clan of Taiwan, whose star had been in decades-long decline, leading up to their final destruction at the hands of the Qing dynasty in 1683.[51] As Xing Hang has pointed out, this informal alliance had involved breaches of bans on overseas engagement on earlier occasions, but with the decline of Zheng power since the 1660s, direct support of the rebel state turned into a geopolitical liability. Signs of decline in silver output from Japanese mines and subsequent measures to curb currency

[48] Hang, "The Shogun's Chinese Partners," 2016, 129; Romans, "Mysterious Ships, Troublesome Loans, and Rumors of War," 2018, 513–14.
[49] Toyama, *Nagasaki Bugyō: Edo Bakufu no mimi to me*, 1988, 149–51; Hang, "The Shogun's Chinese Partners," 2016, 129–30.
[50] Romans, "Mysterious Ships, Troublesome Loans, and Rumors of War," 2018, 508.
[51] Hang, "The Shogun's Chinese Partners," 2016, 129–30.

outflow had affected the shogunate's commitment to the Zheng. With Suetsugu's disposal, Tokugawa foreign policy became durably centered on more immediate strategic goals.[52]

The decision to halt any further Pacific explorations was personal in nature, and yet consistent with the shogunate's conservative strategy of consolidating power. Any retainer entrusted with administering the remote outpost could have subverted shogunal control and jeopardized Tokugawa hegemony. The junk *Fukokuju* was confiscated but remained in shogunal service, and the islands, which Heizō had called *Ogasawara*, were to remain nameless and referenced only as *Munin Sima* or "No-Man-Land," a generic term for uninhabited isles. With the passing of Ichizaemon's generation, the practical knowledge of long-distance navigation – and with it the techniques of celestial navigation and portolan mapmaking – sank into oblivion.[53] The report and maps Ichizaemon had created, however, circulated in manuscript copies and over two hundred years continued to inspire readers throughout Japan to fantasize about discovery, adventure, and entrepreneurialism in the vast ocean.

The Bonin Islands in Japan's Virtual Geography

As a legacy of Ichizaemon's expedition, these "Munin" Islands came to occupy a disproportionately prominent place in Japan's imagination of the Pacific, and by extension, in European ideas about the region. It happened time and again that castaways returned from uninhabited islands and inspired private and state-led initiatives for new expeditions, as listed in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. In 1719, it was shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune himself who ordered the preparations for an expedition to the Bonin Islands, perhaps in connection with his massive project to inventory Japanese flora.[54] An island magistrate of Niijima reported to Edo that he had interviewed a sixty-year-old commoner named Chōhei who had sailed with Ichizaemon's expedition forty-four years prior. Chōhei was therefore familiar with the technical exigencies of such an expedition and could tell of the islands' abundance, but he added that "all of this is long ago; I have now reached an advanced age and suffer from illness, and it is possible that the [island's] produce differs from my

[52] Romans, "Mysterious Ships, Troublesome Loans, and Rumors of War," 2018, 508–10; Hang, "The Shogun's Chinese Partners," 2016, 112, 120–25.

[53] *Muninjima*, in: NMHC, pp. 4–10; Akioka, "Ogasawara shotō hakken-shi no kihon shiryō 1," 1963, 21–24.

[54] Tsuji, *Ogasawara shotō rekishi nikki*, 1995, 16; also see *Nanshinsaku to Ogasawara guntō*, p. 72, in: NDL, acc. no. 348–86. On Yoshimune's sponsorship for botanical surveys, see Marcon, "Inventorying Nature," 2013.

approximate description."[55] Subsequent reports from Hachijō indicated that other sailors also declined recruitment for the perilous expedition, and the project was formally abandoned by 1728.[56] Another expedition

Table 3.1 *Edo period attempts at expeditions to the Bonin Islands*[57]

Year	Captain or initiator	Outcome
1675	Shimaya Ichizaemon	Successful
1702	Ogasawara Chōkei	Halted
1722	Yamada Chi'emon	Aborted
1733	Ogasawara Minbu	Illicit and missing in action
1774	Hattori Genroku	Halted
Ca. 1793	Tanaka Ihei	Failed
1839	Hagura Geki	Halted
1862	Ono Tomogorō	Successful

Table 3.2 *Edo period drifters reaching the Bonin Islands (survived and reported only)*[58]

Year/month	Vessel origin
1643/6	Echizen
1669/12	Awa (Shikoku)
1685/3	Hizen
1690/5	Echizen
1691/11	Hyūga
1719/11	Tōtōmi; returned to Japan in 1738
1736/1	Edo
1736/3	Edo
1785/1	Tosa
1787/11	Settsu
1789/12	Hyūga
1815	Izu
1839/11	Mutsu
1841/1	Tosa

[55] *Enpō ni kinoetora doshi Zushū taiyō munin jima o-tazune*…, in: Urakawa, "Enpō ni-nen toradoshi Taiyō muninjima o-tazune," 2010, 108–09. This report was resubmitted by the authorities of Niishima in 1793 to Uraga and again to Edo in 1800, when new interest in the Bonin Islands flared up during the 1790s, perhaps as an effect of Hayashi Shihei's works. Also see *Nanshinsaku to Ogasawara guntō*, pp. 72–74, in: NDL.
[56] Tsuji, *Ogasawara shotō rekishi nikki*, 1995, 17.
[57] Based on Kimura, "Muninjima no chizu," 1965, 434.
[58] Based on Kimura, "Munin jima no chizu," 1965, 434, and Yamashita ed., Ishii Kendō korekushon, 1992.

was attempted on the order of the shogunate in 1773, when the officials Hattori Genroku and Yamashita Yosō departed from Hachijō with a crew of thirty-two, only to be blown to a desolate "bird island."[59] As Tanaka Hiroyuki points out, Senior Councilor Tanuma Okitsugu, a bold reformist who expanded his powers to the point of essentially dominating shogunal policies during his tenure in 1772–1786, had also attempted to dispatch an expedition to the Bonin Islands, but under his more conservative rival and successor Matsudaira Sadanobu, this and other projects of Tanuma's were halted or reversed.[60] It was not until 1862 that a next expedition would successfully reach the remote archipelago, as Chapter 6 will discuss in more detail.

The idea of colonizing an uninhabited island also elicited the interest of private entrepreneurs. In 1728, a masterless samurai named Ogasawara Sadatō asked for permission to develop the islands, based on a narrative of hereditary rights. Probably motivated by his father Chōkei, who had first raised similar claims unsuccessfully in 1702, Sadatō claimed that no lesser than Toyotomi Hideyoshi had acknowledged his ancestor Sadayori's residence in the islands following his drift there in 1593. Though evidently ahistorical, some form of the myth of Ogasawara's ventures may have circulated previously, as already Suetsugu Heizō referred to the islands under Ogasawara's name in the 1670s.[61] Since no evidence other than Sadatō's application could be found, the shogunate paid it little attention, but Sadatō set out from Osaka regardless in 1733. Since nothing was ever heard of his expedition again, it must be assumed that he drowned.[62] To make things worse, his expedition was deemed an act of subversion and drew after itself an investigation, which ended with a crushing verdict. The Ogasawara family was stripped of their samurai status, accompanied by a declaration that their kinship with Sadayori was fabricated, if he ever existed, nullifying their claims to "No-Man-Land."[63] Ironically, it was this tragical episode that put the name "Ogasawara Islands" in place. There is something deeply

[59] *Nanshinsaku to Ogasawara guntō*, p. 74, in: NDL.
[60] Tanaka, *Bakumastu no Ogasawara*, 1997, 68–69. *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, "Matsudaira Sadanobu." Tanuma was also invested in naval defense and hired Dutch shipwrights and trained Japanese crews on European vessels, much in accordance with Hayashi Shihei's agenda. Shortly before his dismissal, Tanuma even considered relocating 70,000 outcastes to Ezo as a base stock for further colonization projects. Keene, *The Japanese Discovery of Europe*, 1954, 101–02, 119.
[61] *Muninjima*, pp. 4–10, in: NMHC, Acc. No. he-13 334. *Nanshinsaku to Ogasawara guntō*, p. 62, in: NDL.
[62] Yamashita ed., *Ishii Kendō korekushon, Edo hyōryūki sōshū*, 1992, 194; *Nanshinsaku to Ogasawara guntō*, p. 73, in: NDL.
[63] *Nanshinsaku to Ogasawara guntō*, pp. 64–65, in: NDL.

subversive in the popularity of this name and in the way it brought the islands into the virtual geography of the Japanese public – providing the axis of a historical narrative that, embellished over time, came to buttress subsequent territorial claims.

The Pacific in the Japanocentric World Order

The general interest in Japan's maritime environs grew over the eighteenth century, a trend that reoriented the archipelago geographically and historically within maritime East Asia. With the emergence of *kokugaku* nativism around mid-century and its expansion under the impact of Motoori Norinaga's seminal *Kojikiden* in the 1780s, a new linguistic and epistemological toolset was crafted for Japan's intellectual emancipation from the Chinese past. The practice of textual exegesis on ancient Japanese sources inspired *kokugaku* scholars to seek moral and ideological compasses in the native mythology instead. This new school of thought posited the spiritual unity of Japan – not its status categories, regional identities, or feudal retainerships – as the defining factor of an all-encompassing community.[64] This ideological unification of Japan reframed the perception of the archipelago as a national entity beyond its internal political and cultural divisions.

Like Marco Polo, who re-centered the world on China by mapping the Pacific some two centuries earlier, Japanese geographers began in the mid eighteenth century to map Japan's maritime surroundings in an attempt to approximate geospatial realities, but also to reframe Japan in an international context. For geographer Nishikawa Joken, writing in 1720, the insurmountable ocean guaranteed Japan a unique position among the countries of the world, as he put it, "at the eastern top of the world, where the sun shines first."[65] For Joken, "Japan ha[d] the best possible natural barrier against invasion from foreign countries…. Japan [was] surrounded by an impregnable sea."[66] The growing intellectual attention to Japan's unique qualities also changed economic, medical, and spiritual practices: Medical theories were adjusted to better suit the Japanese climate and reduce the use of imported medicine, while religious practices were localized based on geomantic principles.[67] Japan was no longer a cultural extension of the Sinosphere

[64] Burns, *Before the Nation*, 2003, 2–9.
[65] Sakakibara, "Localizing Asia" 2018, 121.
[66] *Nihon suido kō*, pp. 25–26, in: WUL. Translation borrowed from Endō, "The Cultural Geography of the Opening of Japan," 2007, 30.
[67] Trambaiolo, "Native and Foreign in Tokugawa Medicine," 2013, 299; Sawada, "Sexual Relations as Religious Practice," 2006, 362.

or of a continental Buddhist world, but could be envisioned as a world order in its own right.

The creation of this Japanocentric world order is best illustrated by Hayashi Shihei's 1785 map of Japan and its environs (see Figure 3.5). A petty retainer of Sendai domain, Shihei pursued his scholarly inquiry independently and lived the dismal and impoverished life of a misunderstood genius. Against earlier conventions, Shihei positioned Japan not as an insular periphery to the Asian continent, but at the center of an archipelagic zone that extended from the Ryukyus in the southwest over Ezo and the Kuriles to Kamchatka in the north, and from the Amur Delta and Korea in the northwest to the Bonin Islands in the southeast. The provocative effect of Shihei's publication was programmed into the title of the book that enclosed this map: *An Illustrated Glance at Three Countries* was a play on the common association of "the three countries" with India, the origin of Buddhism, China, the home of Confucius, and Japan, the disciple of each's grandiose past, a cartographic principle represented, for example, by the Buddhist map of Jambūdvīpa in Figure 3.2.[68] Instead, Shihei gave an extensive ethnographic introduction to the three countries that constituted Japan's immediate sphere of interest: Ezo, Korea, and Ryukyu. The uninhabited Bonin Islands, about as large as Ryukyu in Shihei's imagination, represented an unclaimed Pacific territory in the southeast that graphically balanced this Japanocentric picture of maritime East Asia.

Shihei's widely circulating treatises on geography and naval strategy are illustrative of the change of paradigms unfolding in the realm of economic and security policies. Unlike Nishikawa Joken half a century earlier, Shihei emphasized that the ocean exposed Japan to all possible security threats. In his *Discourse on the Defense of a Maritime Nation*, written in 1788–1791, Shihei disclosed: "I think to myself that from Nihonbashi in Edo, there is a borderless path to China and Holland."[69] The independent scholar's views were as provocative as his tone was bold. They debunked established conceptions of Japanese geography and by way of it, challenged the ruling principles of international and defense policy.[70] The shogunate had grown aware of Russian presence in the Sea of Okhotsk in 1771, when a Russian mutineer approached Japan with warnings about an imminent invasion. Though the warning had little

[68] Sakakibara, "Localizing Asia," 2018, 109–24. The strategy of contrasting the Buddhist cosmology to a Japanocentric worldview can already be observed in Nishikawa Joken's ideology of Japanese superiority or *shinkoku shisō*.
[69] *Kaikoku heidan*, Hayashi 1786, ed. in Lederer, "Preface," 2003, 122.
[70] Toby, "The World from the Waterline," 2016, 24–27.

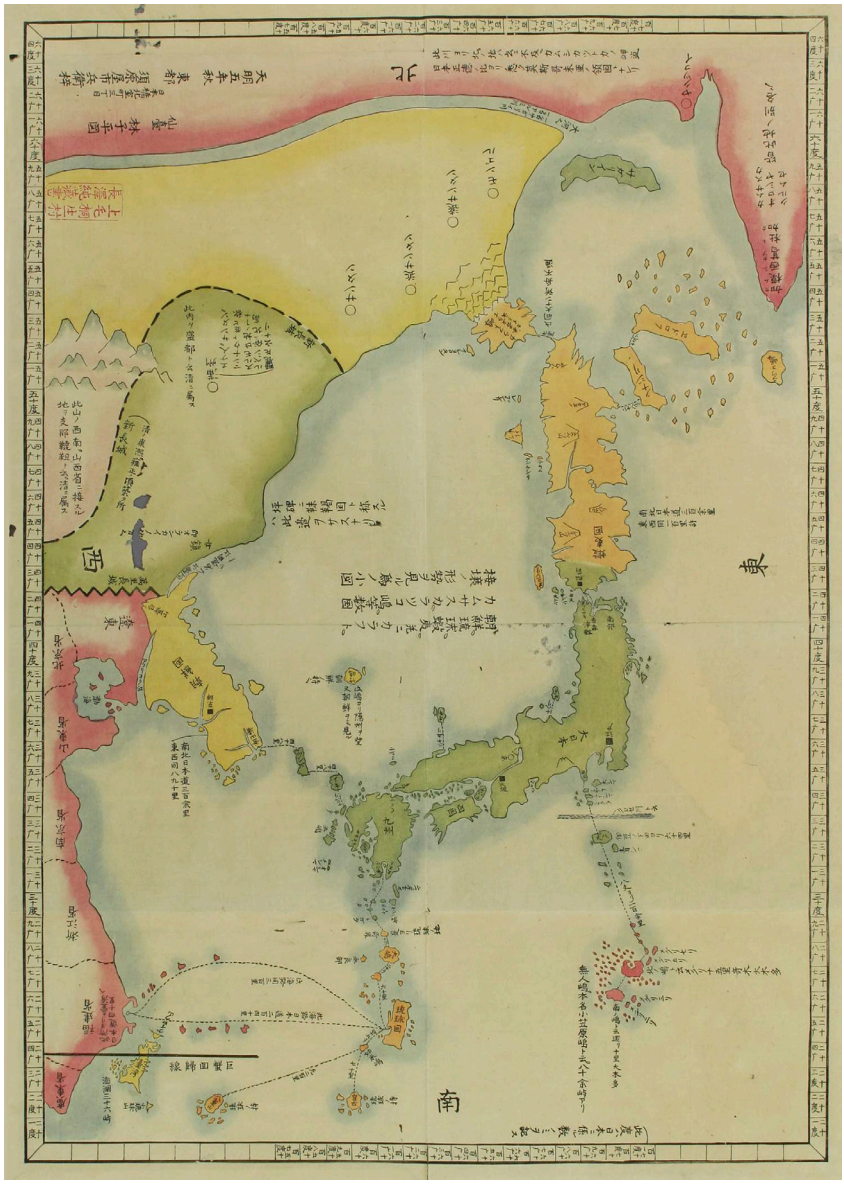

Figure 3.5 Hayashi Shihei's map of Japan and its neighboring countries, with the Bonin Islands in the southeastern corner, 1785. *Sangoku tsūran zusetzu*, vol. 4, in: WUL.

direct impact on policy, the incident raised major interest in maritime Ezo among both shogunal officials and private intellectuals.[71] In this context, his commercially distributed and quite outspoken *Illustrated Glance at Three Countries* gained Shihei an audience with no lesser than Chief Senior Councilor Matsudaira Sadanobu in 1789, with whom he directly discussed his views on naval defense.[72]

These credentials did not, however, spare the obstinate scholar from censorship. In 1792, Shihei was summoned to Edo in reproach for his decision to publish the extensive *Defense of a Maritime Nation*, including technical details and theories of Japan's naval defense. The timing of this publication was uniquely ill-fated as it came just months after the promulgation of Japan's most severe censorship strike to that time, known as the Kansei era bans on heterodoxy. Chastised and prohibited from propagating "strange and unorthodox opinions" and maps "contrary to geography," the print blocks and unsold copies of *A Glance at Three Countries* were seized and destroyed. Shihei succumbed a short time later to a lingering affliction while under house arrest.[73] Yet by the time of the crackdown, Shihei's books had already circulated widely and, despite the destruction of his print blocks, numerous reproductions, printed and in manuscript, continued to circulate – and further than their author may have imagined.[74]

Archipelagic Expansionism

Shihei's book also included a detailed figure of the Bonin Islands, an augmented reproduction of Ichizaemon's map. Different descriptions of the archipelago had circulated in the meantime, for example one dated to 1752 by the geographer Mori Kōan who spoke of seven large and thirteen medium-sized islands, though none of these resembled the outlines drawn by Ichizaemon in any way.[75] Shihei ruled that it must rather be "over eighty islands," and that Ogasawara Sadayori must certainly have built a shrine, which Shihei readily mapped on the island's eastern shore, and he placed two prospective villages, Ōmura and Okumura, around the island's main bay (Figure 3.6).

[71] Godefroy, "Rethinking Ezo-Chi, the Ainu, and Tokugawa Japan," 2021, 387–91.
[72] Lederer, "Preface," 2003, 62.
[73] Ibid., 62–66; Toby, "The World from the Waterline," 2016, 24–27.
[74] Toby, "The World from the Waterline," 2016, 24–27. Toby counts twice as many reproductions than the book's original run, manuscripted after censors destroyed the printing blocks and unsold copies.
[75] *Ogasawara-tō chizu, ichimei Munin Jima*, manuscript map by Mori Kōan, in: NAJ.

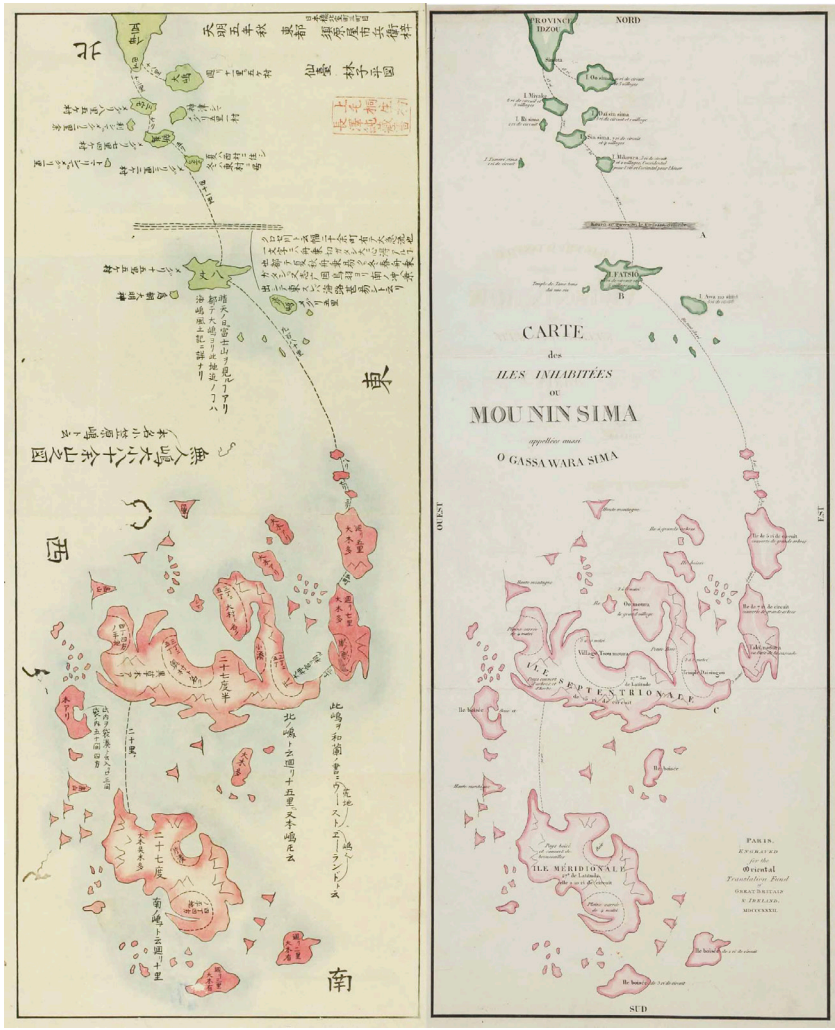

Figure 3.6 Shihei's detail map of 1785 and Julius Klaproth's reproduction of 1838. (OVBE; Klaproth 1832).

As a naval strategist, Shihei was primarily concerned with ensuring that this outpost to the southeast would not fall into foreign hands. But he was also clear about his expectation that incorporating the Bonin Islands would expand the national economy. In this sense, his work also marks a changing attitude toward the idea of growth, beyond the dominant tenets of *kokueki* mercantilism:

All of the ten [major] islands have bays and plains where people can live. They can grow the five grains, and since the climate is warm, exotic things can also be cultivated. Therefore, we should secretly relocate people to this island in order to let them grow trees and build villages and engage in fishery and forestry. Once we will have established a productive new province, we will create a regular sailing connection and sail there three times a year to collect the products. The cost for the construction of ships will be compensated with one voyage![76]

Unlike incremental improvements to agrarian productivity that were being undertaken throughout Japan at the time, the incorporation of the Bonin Islands would have added an overseas province to the realm. Shihei's plans to increase prosperity by adding territory did not come about in isolation, but developed in synch with a shift in paradigms of economic thought and political practice. Accordingly, the impact of Shihei's book and, especially, of his maps rippled across intellectual circles throughout Japan.

The political economist Honda Toshiaki described the country's archipelagic environs at large as a prospective settler frontier. In more or less direct reaction to Shihei, he elaborated in his *Secret Plan for Government* of 1798 that islands close to Japan such as the Kuriles and the Bonins should be incorporated first, and later, the expansion should reach as far as Kamchatka, the Aleutians, and even North America. For Honda, as well, the northern territories, especially the island of Sakhalin, were important bulwarks against Russia's Siberian advance. Once Japan would have established itself as a maritime empire, its capital should be relocated to Kamchatka, given the peninsula's central location among the boreal archipelago.[77]

Control over this northern frontier should be achieved by coopting Native populations: "[B]y helping the Natives and giving them everything they desire, we will inspire a feeling of affection and obedience in them, like the love of children for their parents."[78] Contrary to the ruling policy that commanded a performative ethnic distinction of Japanese and Ainu in speech, dress, and hairstyle, Honda viewed the ethnic separation between Japan and the "Country of Ezo" (*Ezo koku*) in the north an obstacle to colonization, contending that the Ainu were of the same race as the Japanese.[79] This reflected a pragmatic take on a process that

[76] *Sangoku tsūran zusetsu*, vol. 1, pp. 53–54, in: WUL.
[77] Keene, *The Japanese Discovery of Europe*, 1954, 105–06.
[78] *A Secret Plan of Government*, transl. in Keene, *The Japanese Discovery of Europe*, 1954, 180.
[79] Keene, *The Japanese Discovery of Europe*, 1954, 117. The performative aspect of this ethnic distinction is best illustrated by the *umiam* ritual held annually at Matsumae Castle, for which Ainu representatives had to grow beards and dress in "traditional" clothes. The performance of otherness was orchestrated by the Japanese domain to justify its position within the polity as suzerain over the northern barbarians. See: Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, 2005, 119–25.

was already under way: The commercial expansion into Ainu territory was increasingly accompanied by systematic governmental exploration. Since the 1780s, the shogunate had dispatched expeditions as far north as Iturup Island, and Honda himself had traveled to the north several times, perhaps as far as Kamchatka in 1784.[80] Ultimately, the confiscation of Matsumae domain and Edo's assumption of administrative control over northern affairs in 1799 underlined that the northern frontier had become a focal issue for Tokugawa realpolitik.

The theoretical construction of a maritime sphere of influence at the turn of the nineteenth century inspired even bolder expansionist plans. Satō Nobuhiro's *Secret Plan for Unification*, a grand strategy for the political reorganization of Japan written in 1823, responded to Honda's *Secret Plan of Government*, as it pivoted toward the southern islands as Japan's primary frontier. Radical and heavily influenced by his teacher Hirata Atsutane's *kokugaku* thought, Satō's theories of political economy exerted significant influence on the growth-oriented economic policies of Satsuma domain – chiefly in the establishment of cash-crop monocultures in the semi-colonial dominions of Amami and Ryukyu.[81]

In sharp contrast to his pragmatic economic advice, Satō's *Secret Plan for Government* put forward an audacious scenario of expansion via the Bonin and Mariana Islands to the Philippines and eventually onto the Asian continent. Unlike Honda, Satō advocated for settler colonialism on previously uninhabited islands as a way to embolden Japan for an attack on Spanish holdings, followed by a campaign to Manchuria and China. As Satō knew, "the general method of subjecting other countries is to begin with those places that are weak and easy to seize."[82] The "New Philippines," as he called the Bonin Islands, should be gradually populated by "strong soldiers" from Shikoku:

> We shall dispatch some 6–7,000 troops on more than a hundred large and small vessels to colonize the uninhabited islands of the Southern Sea (*Nankai*) and to collect their produce to ship to our country. We shall protect these islands and gradually expand to the south, opening a great number of islands one by one. We will increase the population with people from Japan and promote local development. Once we have made them all prefectures of our Imperial Nation, and strengthened the prosperity of the state, our country will arise in great power. If we succeed in implementing this strategy, … we will have virtually succeeded already in subjugating Manchuria and China![83]

[80] Keene, *The Japanese Discovery of Europe*, 1954, 93.
[81] Marcon, "Satō Nobuhiro and the Political Economy of Natural History in Nineteenth-Century Japan," 2014, 268; *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, keyword "Satō Nobuhiro."
[82] *Kondō Hisaku*, p. 13, in: NDL.
[83] Ibid., pp. 66–67.

Satō's expansionist fantasies seem ominously prescient of Japan's later imperial adventures, but in reality, they were fashioned from a poor understanding of Pacific geography and willfully ignorant of political realities.

Yet his work also illustrates the sorting out of different zones within Japan's Pacific: The uninhabited Bonin Islands, which Satō located straight south from western Japan's Nankai-dō region, were placed in the *Nankai* sea, while more distant and already inhabited islands were subsumed into the "thousands of miles of the South Sea (*Nan'yō*) [that] will enter the map of our Empire!"[84] The malleability of this "South Sea" would prove useful for later expansionists who continually redefined the category according to the Japanese Empire's geopolitical ambitions. By the close of the nineteenth century, *Nan'yō* was expanded to encompass Oceania in its practical entirety, including Hawai'i, Australia, and New Zealand. While Hawai'i became dissociated from the category in the twentieth century, the wartime invasion of Southeast Asia expanded the *Nan'yō* toward Indonesia instead. In other words, Satō's terminology presented the Pacific as a sea of islands set aside for Japan's ambitions.

Japan's Pacific in Global Geography

As a geographical reorientation was unfolding on vernacular and intellectual levels in Japan, new cartographic tools were embedding the archipelago in a new global geography. From the late eighteenth century, maps circulated that featured coordinates, consistent scales, and topographic shapes, rather than traffic routes and political hierarchies, as the chief principles of graphical organization (see Figure 3.7). This let Japan and its environs appear in new, characteristic shapes and it created the uniquely recognizable geo-body of the Japanese islands. Perhaps most importantly, the prominent surveys of the northern frontier by Mamiya Rinzō and Inō Tadataka, both begun about fifteen years after Shihei's map, omitted the ethnographic information that had defined the virtual border between Japan and Ezo, and detached the category of "Japan" from the boundaries of the *ritsuryō* state, defined in the eighth century. As Brett Walker puts it, Mamiya "emptied" Sakhalin of its population, and, by shifting away from an ethnic definition of space, made the islands legible and available for development at the hands of distant rulers in Edo.[85] The cartographic technologies

[84] Ibid., p. 110.
[85] Walker 2007, 311.

Figure 3.7 Inō Tadataka's detail map of Edo Bay with the Izu and Bōsō Peninsulas, triangulated on Mount Fuji, compiled between 1804 and 1821. *Bu sō zu bōsō kaibō no zu*, in: WUL, Acc. No. ru-11 02571.

that facilitated this – triangulation, coordinates, and consistent scales – made geographic information transportable onto different frameworks without alteration and, concomitantly, also facilitated their transfer into foreign geographical discourses.

Like the sea-centric charts of the seventeenth century, the modern methods of surveying and mapmaking evolved in a global scientific context over the late eighteenth century. The emergence of coordinates first on Mori Kōan's *Detail Map of Japan* of 1754, and later, Nagakubo Sekisui's *Revised Road Map of Japan* of 1775, attributed each location to a specific position relative to a global grid, locating the archipelago in a concrete section on earth (see Figure 3.8).[86] Spherical coordinates were known in Japan since Matteo Ricci's iconic world map. Mori's map, however, represents the earliest application of a consistent grid to an isolated map of the Japanese geo-body. In practice, Mori's map rather resembled the Chinese square-grid maps of the Yuan Dynasty

[86] *Nihon bunya zu*, in: NDL; *Nihon yochi rotei zenzu*, in: WUL.

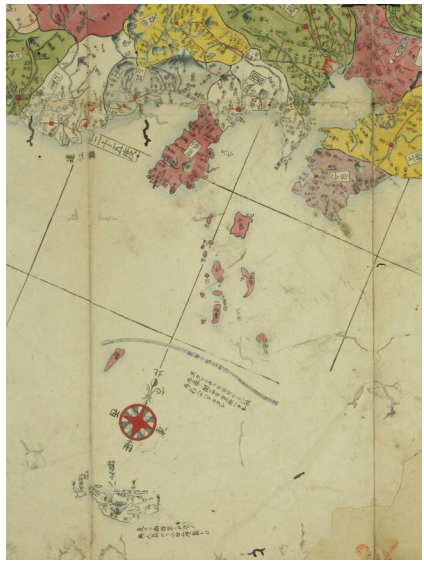

Figure 3.8 Detail of Nagakubo Sekisui's 1775 map with parallel coordinates. Note that the map represents the Kuroshio current as a black ribbon north of Hachijō (bottom left). A decade before Hayashi Shihei, this is the current's first appearance in a graphical map. *Nihon yochi rotei zenzu*, in: Waseda Kotenseki Database, Acc. No. ru-11 00705.

(thirteenth to fourteenth century), as it ignored the globe's curvature. A quarter-century later, a reprint made it clear that Nagakubo's grid lines represented latitudes, at intervals of one degree. Longitudes, on the other side, remained vague, and accordingly, curvature was again ignored. It was not until Inō Tadataka's massive surveys, conducted in 1800–1821, that both longitudes – zeroed on the imperial capital of Kyoto – and latitudes were determined and represented with high accuracy.[87] Though all of these maps maintain a Japanese style in focus and graphical representation, they stand apart from earlier cartographic products in that they are reproduceable, scalable, and combinable without distortion – "immutable mobiles," in Bruno Latour's terms.[88] This made it possible to configure them accurately with the European body of cartographic knowledge.

[87] The Inō map of Japan consists of 214 large-scale (1:36,000) maps that were completed by his team and presented to the shogun in 1821, three years after Inō's death. Suzuki, "Seeking Accuracy," 2016, 130. Frumer, *Making Time: Astronomical Time Measurement in Tokugawa Japan*, 2018, 97.

[88] Latour, "Visualisation and Cognition," 2012, 7.

These maps not only carried extraordinarily accurate information but also represented territories that were charted poorly, if at all, by European cartographers. With Mamiya Rinzō's expeditions to Sakhalin and the Amur Delta in 1808–1809, the shogunate first received confirmation that Sakhalin was an island. This question had been hotly debated among European explorers. Though the French explorer Jean-François de La Pérouse learned from hearsay on his voyage in 1787 that he had landed on an island, the question of whether Sakhalin was not rather a Siberian peninsula remained empirically unresolved into the nineteenth century.[89]

In 1826, Philipp Franz von Siebold, a German physician in the service of the Dutch VOC in Nagasaki, learned from the Japanese explorer Mogami Tokunai, who had been surveying the region since 1785, that Sakhalin was indeed an island. Their conversation prompted Mogami to lend Siebold seven maps of Ezo, Sakhalin, and Kamchatka. When the German met two days later with the shogunal astronomer Takahashi Kageyasu, who had supervised Inō Tadataka's survey projects, Siebold exchanged European books and various maps as well as novel surveying instruments for copies of the Mamiya and Inō Maps.[90] The transfer of these most accurate maps of Japan's northern frontiers into the hands of a foreigner – and Siebold's successful shipment of copies thereof to Europe – became the object of a major scandal in 1829 known as the *Siebold Incident*. Investigated as an act of espionage, the exchange of geographical data led to the imprisonment and removal of several senior geographers and interpreters from shogunal services. Takahashi himself died in prison, but his offense was found so grave that the authorities insisted on executing his body posthumously.[91]

In Europe, Japanese cartographic materials had played a central role in the representation of the northeastern Pacific even before Siebold's fiasco. Hayashi Shihei's book and maps, as well as Nagakubo Sekisui's map described earlier, had reached Europe within a few years of their respective publications. Russian Admiral Adam Johann von Krusenstern, who had surveyed the southern coasts of Japan after his mission to Nagasaki in 1804, took a particular interest in one detail of Nagakubo's map: A black ribbon that ran west to east between Honshu and the Island of Hachijō representing a maritime current labeled *River Kurose* (Figure 3.8).[92] Krusenstern identified Hayashi Shihei as the cardinal source on

[89] Walker, "Mamiya Rinzō and the Japanese Exploration of Sakhalin," 2007, 292–93; Latour, "Visualisation and Cognition," 2012, 5.
[90] Plutschow, *Philipp Franz Von Siebold and the Opening of Japan*, 2007, 12–13; 18.
[91] Keene, *The Japanese Discovery of Europe*, 1954, 152; Plutschow, *Philipp Franz Von Siebold and the Opening of Japan*, 2007, 21. *Kokushi daijiten*, keyword "Takahashi Kageyasu."
[92] Kawai, *Kuroshio sōgū to ninchi no rekishi*, 1997, 150, 204–13.

this phenomenon and reproduced Shihei's erroneous description of seasonal fluctuations in his publications, followed by the remark that "it would be interesting to know what direction the currents [take], because a perfect knowledge of the currents in each season infinitely facilitates the navigation between Kamchatka and Japan."[93] For decades, Sekisui's map remained a cardinal source on Japanese geography, especially after its reproduction in Krusenstern's *Atlas of the South Sea* in 1827. In its Russian translation, the map provided the source data for subsequent publications, including a detailed map published by the British Hydrographic Office in 1855.[94] With these reproductions, the works of Tokugawa era geographers had definitely made their way into modern, "scientific" geography.

After Krusenstern's reference to the piece, Shihei's *Illustrated Glance at Three Countries*, as well, attracted attention from philologists and naval strategists. The herculean task of creating a reliable translation from a language that was accessible only through speculative adaptation of Chinese character lexica and Jesuit grammars from the sixteenth century, intrigued an entire international network of orientalists. Once again, the Bonin Islands became a particular point of interest. Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat, a highly ambitious French sinologist, first translated Shihei's excerpt on the islands in 1817.[95] In 1825, the German orientalist Julius Klaproth, who also translated into French, published his own attempt at Shihei's treatises on the Bonin Islands in the *Journal Asiatique*.[96] Shortly thereafter, Klaproth was offered a grant to translate the book in its entirety, the first full-length translation of a Japanese book in well over two hundred years. It is most telling that it was the *Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland* that funded the book and the facsimiles of Shihei's maps of the "eighty-plus islands of Ogasawara"[97] (Figure 3.6).

At that time, the British Empire cherished an interest in the Bonin Islands as a possible entrepôt for illicit trade into China. Over the decades

[93] Kawai, "A Brief History of Recognition of the Kuroshio," 1998, 548–49; cit. on p. 552; Kawai, *Kuroshio sōgū to ninchi no rekishi*, 1997, 204–13.

[94] Kobayashi and Narumi 2018, 12. *Japan, Nipon, Kiusiu and Sikok and a part of the coast of Korea, according to Krusenstern's chart of 1827*, in: UWML.

[95] Abel-Rémusat "Description d'un groupe d'îles peu connu," 1817, 387–96.

[96] Klaproth, "Description des îles Mou nin sima," 1825, 243–50.

[97] Klaproth, *San kokf tsou ran to sets ou Aperçu général des trois royaumes*., 1832. This was likely the first Japanese text of this length to be translated into a European language since the expulsion of Jesuits in the seventeenth century. Kawai Hideo cites Siebold in stating that Shihei's book was brought to Europe by Isaac Titsingh, an employee of the Dutch factory in Nagasaki, a few years after its publication. Kawai, "A Brief History of Recognition of the Kuroshio," 1998: 549. Titsingh had left Japan the year before Shihei's publication, though he may have picked up the book in either Batavia, or China, where he was stationed in later years. *Kokushi daijiten*.

leading up to the First Opium War of 1839–1842, the British East India Company had been looking for an offshore entrepôt where merchandise could be handed to Chinese intermediaries to smuggle to China and Japan. In 1827, Captain Frederick Beechey of HMS *Blossom* had claimed the Bonins for his crown, guided there by Shihei's text in both Abel-Rémusats and Klaproth's translations.[98] By 1834, however, the British Colonial Office ruled that the islands lay beyond the range of naval protection, and declined to establish an outpost there. For British naval strategists, the Bonin Islands eventually fell out of interest with the opening of treaty ports in China following the First Opium War, but as we shall see in Chapter 6, private settlers flocked to the Bonins over subsequent decades with the encouragement of an insubordinate British consul in Honolulu.

Shihei's map, meanwhile, continued to circulate in translation and attract strategic and scholarly interest to Japanese waters. Like Krusenstern, the American oceanographer Silas Bent had read Shihei to learn about the region's maritime routes, when he traveled across the Kuroshio aboard Commodore M. C. Perry's expedition to Uraga in 1853. Perry himself dedicated two pages of his report to Shihei's account of Ichizaemon's discovery, mainly to rebuke British claims to first discovery.[99] Oceanographer Bent was particularly interested in the dynamics of currents in the Pacific, a research topic that had developed significantly with the publication of Matthew F. Maury's *Wind and Current Chart* series starting in 1847. To chart the open sea, where drift speeds were almost impossible to measure accurately, Bent attempted new methods to construct an integrated hydrography of the region by measuring water temperatures instead.[100] Empirically confirming the existence of the "*Kuro Siwo*, a River in the Ocean" south of Japan, Bent's initial theory picked up Shihei's riverine model of currents which he reconciled later with Maury's more macroscopic picture of ocean dynamics as a carpet of vectors, patched by static "cold strata" rather than countercurrents or eddies.[101]

In the treatises Bent published over subsequent decades, the *Kuro Siwo* remained a compact current he alternatively called the "Pacific Gulf Stream."[102] This gulf stream, Bent speculated, was part of a

[98] Chapman *The Bonin Islanders*, 2016a, 14–15; Beasley, *Great Britain and the Opening of Japan*, 1951, 15–20.

[99] Perry, *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan*, 1856, 198–99.

[100] Bent, *A Paper on the Kuro-Siwo*, 1856b 2.

[101] Bent, *Report made to Commodore M. C. Perry*, 1856a, map pp. 364–65; Bent, *A Paper on the Kuro-Siwo*, 1856b. Maury described the current as a general eastward flow across the entire breadth of over 900 km between Japan and the Bonin Islands, based on tens of thousands of punctual observations at the hand of American whalers that plied the region.

[102] Bent, *Report made to Commodore M. C. Perry*, 1856a, 363.

Figure 3.9 Silas Bent's hypothesis of an open polar sea created by the joint paths of the *Kuro Siwo* and the Gulf Stream. (Bent 1872, 41.)

global system of warm currents that connected the Atlantic and Pacific oceans through the Arctic polar sea. Appealing to the ongoing quest for a northwestern passage into the Pacific, Bent's theory reiterated as late as 1872 the hopes that both currents' warmth would keep a polar passage open to navigation between the two oceans, thus forming a maritime highway between the Atlantic and the Pacific spheres (see Figure 3.9).[103] If confirming the Kuroshio's existence had raised hopes for Krusenstern of swift navigation from Japan to Russian trading stations in Kamchatka, Bent glimpsed in the current a manifest direction for American navigation and expansion.

Despite the influence of Japanese treatises on these Western scientific constructs, it was not until the mid nineteenth century that a geophysical understanding of the Kuroshio as a transregionally connected phenomenon entered the scholarly canon in Japan. In fact, even the acclaimed navigator Ono Tomogorō wondered, when he steered the shogunal steamboat *Kanrin-maru* to San Francisco in 1860, whether his drifting off course "must be due to that current I have heard about before."[104] The conceptualization of the current was indeed the project

[103] Bent, *An Address Delivered before the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association*, 1872, 49.
[104] Cit. in: Kawai, *Kuroshio sōgū to ninchi no rekishi*, 1997, 178.

of a confluence of nationally distinct, yet inherently globalized discourses on Pacific geography.

The Malleable Boundaries of Japan's Pacific

The explorer Shimaya Ichizaemon, who first sailed to the Bonin Islands and mapped the archipelago in response to a castaway report in the late seventeenth century, is all but forgotten today. A celebrated navigator in life who received no lesser than the shogun himself aboard his majestic junk *Fukokuju*, Ichizaemon's career was upended with the political destruction of his sponsor, the magnate Suetsugu Heizō.[105] And although no islands carry his name and no stela memorializes the significance of his voyage, we have seen how Ichizaemon's maps circulated across times and discourses. It is almost ironic that the Bonin or "Ogasawara" Islands were named instead after a masterless samurai who vanished at sea and was convicted posthumously for arrogating a forged hereditary claim to an island on which he never set foot.[106] Ichizaemon never fit in with a historiography that contrasted Japan's sprawling empire of the twentieth century to an insular and introverted past. The Shimaya family's traces all but vanished after Suetsugu Heizō's fall from favor, and it remains a puzzle to this day whether it was Ichizaemon, his son, his grandson, or even an adopted disciple who helmed this remarkable expedition.

Whoever it was, the Pacific this man plied was a patchwork of local seas, beyond which lay a vaguely defined "great ocean." He had no word for "the Pacific," and yet his expedition to the Bonin Islands became part of the same globalizing project that cast a dispassionate imperial gaze upon an ocean of resources and ways of passage. Although Japanese views of the ocean remained distinct from the rim-centric perspective of voyaging empires, the concepts its geographers drew up were by no means less colonial in nature. Japanese explorers and geographers mapped and inventoried their archipelago and its maritime environs with highly sophisticated tools and with clear-cut agendas in mind. Their methods and concepts evolved in response to domestic ideological change, and were part of a global scientific conversation. As an effect, different conceptualizations of oceanic space as *nada*, *umi*, or *yō*; as *tōyō*, *taiyō*, or *Taiheiyō*; *Hokuyō*, *Nan'yō*, or *Nankai* were used in different contexts and constituted an indispensable part of Japan's shifting terr-aqueous self-perception.

[105] On the uncertain lineage of the Shimaya house, see: Akioka, "Ogasawara shotō hakkenshi no kihon shiryō 1," 1963, 10–21.
[106] *Nanshinsaku to Ogasawara guntō*, p. 72, in: NDL.

By the late eighteenth century, cartographic innovations such as global coordinates, consistent scales, and a focus on topographic shapes rather than cultural geographies gave rise to a scalable and combinable type of maps. This enabled foreign geographers to tap into the findings of Japanese explorations not only in the Bonin Islands, but also to the Kuriles, Sakhalin, and up the Amur River. In Europe, Japanese geographical materials influenced the strategic connotations of the North Pacific. With Adam Johann von Krusenstern's adaptation of Nagakubo Sekisui's map of Japan and with the many translations of Hayashi Shihei's *Glance at Three Countries* into French and English, the Bonin Islands and the "River" Kuroshio entered the European geographical vocabulary.

As Europeans added data to their picture of the "terraqueous globe," the medieval *Orbis Terrarum* transformed into an archipelagic and, later, a multi-continental world in which oceans structured the maritime realm. In Asia, the metagographical structure of oceans emerged in its own right. The idea of a "South Sea" or *Nan'yō* gained currency in Japan as a projected Japanese sphere of influence since the 1820s, and constituted an axis for discourses that culminated in the colonial practices of the twentieth century. Shiga Shigetaka's illustrious *Recent Developments in the South Sea* of 1887, cited in this book's introduction, outlined the maximal expanse of an archipelagic zone spanning from Hawai'i to Southeast Asia, encompassing Australia and the islands of Oceania.[107] The rim-centric definition of the "Pacific" *Taiheiyō* by no means supplanted the "South Sea" *Nan'yō*, which remained intimately tied to debates over Japan's position between the continent and the island Pacific. The language this global geographical conversation coined in Japan was an argument in and of itself about the archipelago's relationship with the continent on one side, and its oceanic environs on the other. By the mid nineteenth century, Japan's Pacific had emerged from the depths of the ocean as an archipelagic continent whose malleable boundaries could be stretched according to context, ambition, and political agenda.

[107] *Nan'yō jiji*, p. 11 in: NDL.