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Inventing Subjects and Sovereignty: Early History of the First Settlers of the Bonin (Ogasawara) Islands.

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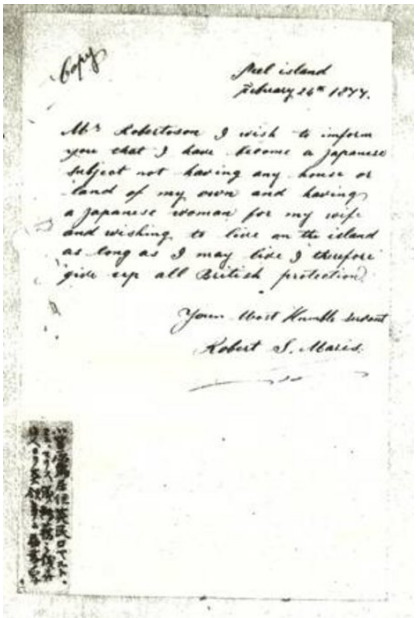
Abstract

In 1877 Robert Myers and four others living on the Bonin/Ogasawara Islands became the first foreigners to be naturalized as Japanese subjects after more than two hundred years of Japan's semi-exclusion from the outside world. In the space of five years, fifty-nine other first settlers became Japanese subjects/'naturalized foreigners' through entry on the Household Family Registry (koseki). At a time when Japan was emerging from a feudal-like system to a modern nation state the Islands were one of Japan's first attempts, in modern times, at overseas expansion. The multinational community on these islands presented the Meiji authorities with unprecedented challenges that could only be overcome through extraordinary measures. In this study I explore the circumstances and context surrounding the unusually placed Bonin Islanders in the late nineteenth century to shed light on the processes of Japanese colonization and social control. I argue that the koseki, as an instrument of 'bio-power' (Foucault, 1998: 140), was indispensible in successfully legitimizing and exercising sovereign power over the Islands.

Early map of the Bonin Islands. Hahajima (Bailey Island) is missing from this map (Cholmondeley, 1915: inside cover)

Prelude



Peel island
February 24th 1877.

Mr Robertson I wish to inform you that I have become a Japanese subject not having any house or land of my own and having a Japanese woman for my wife and wishing to live on the island as long as I may live I therefore give up all British protection

Your Most Humble Servant
Robert S. Myers

An 1877 letter from Robert S. Myers to Russell Robertson, the British Consul in Yokohama (National Archives of Japan 1878)

On the 24 February 1877 (Fig. 2) Robert Myers[1], a British subject living on the Ogasawara (Bonin)[2] Islands submitted a letter to Russell Robertson, the British Consul in Yokohama. In the letter Myers informs Robertson that he had become a Japanese subject

and as such would like to 'give up all British protection'. This extraordinary letter is one of a small number of historical documents that record the first foreigners to be naturalized as Japanese subjects after Japan's more than two hundred years of semi-isolation from the outside world.[3]

Myer's motivations for becoming a Japanese subject are stated in the letter and appear to be straightforward; married to a Japanese woman his intentions were to live on the Bonins for the rest of his life.[4] However, this decision was likely to have been less his own than part of a larger unfolding chain of events driving Japan's engine of modernity inexorably towards the creation of a nation state. Claimed as British territory from 1827, the Bonin Islands were colonized by the Meiji government forty-eight years later in 1875.[5] Myers was one of seventy-one foreign inhabitants living on these islands who presented the Meiji authorities with unprecedented challenges that could only be overcome through extraordinary measures. This paper examines those measures and their effect on the lives of the European and Pacific Islander first settlers in the early history of the Islands.

Introduction

Benedict Anderson describes the combination of the map, the census and the museum used by Dutch colonists throughout South East Asia in the late 1800s as a 'totalizing, classificatory grid, which could be applied with endless flexibility to anything under the state's real or contemplated control' (1991: 184). Although the contexts are different, this is a useful description for Meiji Japan's ventures into colonialism. During the late nineteenth century the Meiji government, facing the threat of territorial claims by other countries and the challenges of modernization, demarcated the nation and mapped the peripheries of the Japanese archipelago. The outlying areas of Hokkaidō, and the Sakhalin, Kuril, Ogasawara and Ryūkyū Islands, home to sundry indigenous and settler populations, were claimed as Japanese territory and the people of these regions were granted conditional Japanese status as subjects of the Empire (teikoku no shinmin) through their entry on the household registration system (koseki).

Although entry on the household registry was only part of numerous complex processes of colonization, the koseki's role was central to its overall success. Through mapping and classifying the polyglot of human geography within, in similar ways to colonial states elsewhere, diverse colonial spaces and identities were efficiently accommodated under the domain of the nation state and under the gradually expanding Empire. Meiji officials were more interested in controlling and claiming the colonized than including them as equally contributing members of the state. The authorities developed a number of registries that succeeded in dividing and separating the colonized from the rest of the population.[6]

Although a number of studies have investigated the processes of Japan's colonization of the indigenous Ainu and Ryūkyū populations (Siddle 1996; Morris-Suzuki 1998a, 1998b; Ōe et al 1992) and the neighbouring nations of Korea and Taiwan (inter alia Ryang 1997; Kashiwazaki 2000; Kang Sang Jung 1998, 2004) it is only recently that comment on the colonization of the first settlers of the Bonin Islands has appeared.[7] This is surprising considering that the Islands were one of Japan's first attempts in modern times at overseas expansion.[8] These significant factors in themselves highlight the importance of closely examining the background of the Bonins to attain a more complete picture of Japan's history of colonization as well as its emergence as a sovereign power.

The official inclusion of the Bonin Islands as part of Japan meant that the Meiji authorities had to deal with the extraordinary situation of ruling a multinational community within its borders. At the same time, in the late 1800s the Meiji government had yet to devise legislation that defined Japanese status along the lines of Western notions of nationality. Comprehensive authority over the islands could only be realized by legislatively including the foreign population. Like other colonized communities in Japan, however, the Bonin Islanders became subjects of the Empire. Forbidden to settle within the interior of Japan proper (naichi) and differentiated from the majority population, the Meiji government's priorities were clearly to control, contain and maintain surveillance over this population.

In this study I explore the circumstances and context surrounding the unusually placed Bonin Islanders in the late nineteenth century to shed more light on the processes of Japanese colonization and population identification. I argue that the koseki, as an instrument of 'bio-power' (Foucault 1998: 140), was indispensible in allowing the Meiji authorities to exercise sovereign power over the Islands and its population.[9] In exploring the nexus between the koseki and control over the Bonin Islands, I borrow from Giorgio Agamben's work on sovereign power and bare life (1998). Agamben argues that the original relation between life and law is not the application of law but its abandonment (1998: 29). This is helpful in explaining how the inhabitants of the Bonin Islands were constituted by the law but at the same time placed outside of it in a tenuous state of exception (Agamben 1998). This state of exception created by the inclusion of 'naturalized foreigners' en masse in the koseki formed the threshold in which the Meiji polity's sovereign power over the Islands was constituted. On the verge of a new era of 'governmentality' (Foucault 1991: 103), the Meiji polity aimed to control the Bonin Islanders through a system of registration that managed this population on numerous levels.

Islands between Nations

In 1827 Captain Fredrick William Beechey landed the warship Blossum at Peel Island[10] and claimed the Island in the name of Britain. Stories of these beautiful islands and their plentiful supply of food and water eventually spread to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaiian Islands) and in 1830, with the assistance and encouragement of British Consul Captain Richard Charlton,[11] Americans Nathaniel Savory and Aldin Chapin, John Millinchamp from Britain, a Dane named Charles Johnson and Matteo Mazarro of Genoa, accompanied by approximately twenty others from Hawaii and surrounding islands, made their way to the Bonins in search of seals and sandalwood.[12] Not finding sufficient quantities of either, the group remained on Peel Island and became its first settlers (Sproston 1854: 26; Robertson 1876: 118).

Over the next few decades the group survived under difficult conditions with strong typhoons and periodic treacherous visits by pirates and unruly seamen (Cholmondeley 1915: 26-27). Despite the increase of whaling in the Pacific as an international venture and numerous visits by friendly ships from various countries, the population of the islands remained more or less constant. Occasionally sailors lingered for short periods to recuperate from illness (Shepardson 1998: 7.4) whilst others, for various reasons, remained and slowly added to the permanent population.[13] Gradually, the prominence of the islands grew and on June 14 1853 the Bonins received perhaps their most famous visitor; Commodore Matthew Galbraith Perry.[14] Perry visited the Bonins before returning to the Lew Chews (Ryūkyū Islands) from where he made his famous voyage to Edo (Tokyo). Perry's visit to the Bonins was part of his overall mission to explore and survey the islands around Japan. Underlying this, however, was a reluctance by him to accept Beechey's claim on the Bonins in the name of Britain. American Captain Reuben Coffin's earlier 1823 arrival on Bailey Island (now called Hahajima) south of Peel Island made this moot for Perry (letter written by Perry 1853 in Pineau 1968: 145). On arriving at the Bonins, Perry had them surveyed and having heard about the American living there he sought out Nathaniel Savory.[15] During his stay, in what would later be a contentious move, Perry purchased a parcel of land from Savory for a government coal depot (letter from Alex Simpson to Lord Claredon 1853 in Pineau 1968: 143; see also Cholmondeley 1915: 102-105).

The purchase underscores Perry's interest in the Bonins as being more than just casual. Indeed, he saw the islands and their location as being of such significant strategic importance that he developed plans for their future colonization (Hawks 1856:

244).[16] He planned to establish the Bonins as a port of refuge and rest and as a transit point for steamers involved in trade between the United States and parts of the Asia-Pacific (Hawks 1856: 242). Perry's plans to annex the Bonins and establish an American colony there (Ibid: 244) were translated into Japanese for a Japanese envoy to the US. Unsurprisingly, these very plans became the catalyst for a sudden interest in the Islands by Japan and the trigger for the Shogunate to take pre-emptive action. The underlying fear of a Western naval base being established so close to Japan led to the eventually colonization of the Bonins in advance of any possible US occupation (Kublin 1953: 36-37).

In fact, the Bonins were claimed twice by Japan in the nineteenth century. The circumstances and execution of the attempts of colonization were quite distinct and disparate.[17] The first attempt was made in 1861 but only lasted fourteen months.[18] The Edo bakufu sent an expedition team on the Kanrin Maru to take thirty emigrants and eight craftsmen from nearby Hachijo Island to settle on the Bonins (Tabohashi 1922: part 2 12).[19] Mizu no Kami Tadonori led the expedition and was accompanied by Nakahama Manjiro as interpreter and chief adviser.[20] Although there is no existing record of the reaction of the islanders to the arrival of this party, Tabohashi speculates that for Nathaniel Savory and the other inhabitants this turn of events may have been even more of a shock than Perry's visit (Tabohashi 1926). In making their claim over the Islands the early settlers were misled by Japanese officials who knowingly used unproven tales of Ogasawara Sadayori's sixteenth century discovery as the basis for declaring the Islands as part of Japan (Obana 1862 and Ishihara 2007: 196).[21] The settlers, not knowing any different, accepted this as truth despite their preference for the status quo and their reluctance to fall under the power of Japan (Tabohashi 1926). Colonization proceeded uneventfully with the original settlers and Japanese emigrants separated as discrete groups. Although the Islands' newly appointed Governor Obana Sakunosuke left the foreigners mostly to themselves and used Savory as an intermediary when necessary (Shepardson 1998: 16.4), some laws were imposed. However, this attempt at sovereign control was incomplete with various avenues of appeal to consuls open to the foreign settlers.[22]

The sudden exodus of Obana and the Japanese settlers after only eighteen months of this first colonization attempt is attributed to political turmoil and financial difficulties on the mainland of Japan at the time of the Namamugi (Kanagawa) Incident. The Japanese officials and settlers were withdrawn from the islands in June 1863 (Obana 1861-1863 and Ishihara 2007: 201). After the withdrawal, life for the first settlers soon returned to its previous state whilst the political landscape on the Japanese mainland was changing dramatically.

The second colonization attempt of the Bonin Islands in 1875 was successful. This time the Meiji Maru was sent with four Japanese commissioners on board to formally claim the Bonins as Japanese territory under the instruction of the Meiji government. It sailed out of Yokohama on 21 November 1875 (Robertson 1876: 126), seven years after the Meiji Restoration had successfully defeated the Tokugawa Shogunate at a time when Japan was moving toward unification, industrialization and a centralized government system. From the perspective of Foucault's governmentality, this was a time when the Meiji officials began constructing nation-conscious subjects from passive peasants that best suited government policies in imagining a cohesive nation. Foucault's governmentality focuses on power and the social control of populations by the state through such authoritarian apparatuses as government departments, hospitals, schools and prisons. With Japan's modernization, the koseki, as an instrument of surveillance and control, became ubiquitous throughout processes of social administration.

Bonin Island post office and main street (photo source Cholmondeley 1915: 41)

The Japanese informed British Consular Sir Henry Parkes of their plans to travel to the Bonin Islands and although a British ship with the Consul Mr. Russell Robertson onboard was hastily despatched from Yokohama, the British accepted Japan's declaration more or less as a fait accompli with little resistance (Cholmondeley 1915: 168). According to Robertson, there were sixty-nine people living on Chichijma at the time of his arrival (1876: 128)[23] and his discussions with Savory's widow, Maria Dilessanto, revealed indifference about national sovereignty. However, she and others asserted their identity first and foremost as Bonin Islanders (Robertson 1876: 138).

The colonization process this time was better organized than the previous attempt and the plans of what to do about the first settlers were laid in advance of leaving Tokyo. The Meiji government had devised a formal procedure of documentation to record and register the inhabitants. This was conducted by the officials aboard the Meiji Maru soon after arrival and involved the Island's heads of households (koshu) signing a declaration stating that they recognised Japan's jurisdiction over the islands and that they would abide by Japanese laws (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1940: 482, 488-489; see also Ishihara 2007: 238-239). On this same voyage, a survey (chōsa) was conducted on both Chichijima and Hahajima in which details of name, sex, age and birthplace of every family member in each household were recorded. In total, seventy-one people had their details entered on these records (Ishihara 2007: 239). The survey essentially mapped and recorded the settlers. In addition, the borders were further secured through the introduction of legislation precluding anyone not born on Japanese territory from settling on the Bonins from that day forward. The foreign population was thus successfully delimited and contained sealing off the islands from any further foreign settlement.

However, the survey alone was not enough to facilitate the exercise of sovereign power or allow the full introduction of government control. The foreigners remained sovereign subjects of other nations and therefore protected under, and subject to, the laws of their respective homelands. Moreover, under extraterritoriality rights of the Ansei Treaties (1858-1894), the Bonin Islanders from the US, the UK and France were exempt from local Japanese law and could only be tried in their consular courts.[24] Short of removing the settlers, the only way to completely secure sovereign territory and control for Japan was to have the Bonin Islanders rescind their ties to their homelands and formally adopt status as Japanese. However, this was a completely unprecedented situation and

extant legislation, without exceptional modification, did not allow foreigners to be naturalized without first marrying a Japanese spouse.

Bare Life and Invented Subjects

Although Meiji officials were certainly cognizant of Western notions of subject-hood and sovereignty at this time, nationality was not legally formalized in Japan and such notions had scarcely been addressed in Japanese legislation. Prior to the introduction of the 1899 Nationality Law (kokusekihō), the only legal provision made for non-Japanese to be considered as Japanese subjects was the Insider/Outsider Marriages proclamation (No. 103) (nai/gaijinmin konʼin jōki) introduced on March 14 1873. This legislation sanctioned marriage between Japanese subjects and foreigners. The Proclamation reflected the patriarchal nature of the kosekihō promulgated two years before in 1871 by attaching a woman's status to that of her husband. Accordingly, although allowed to regain it upon application, a Japanese woman marrying a foreign man would initially lose her status as Japanese. Under Article Six of the proclamation a foreign man marrying a Japanese woman was able to attain 'status' or 'standing' as Japanese (nihonjin taru no bungen) through becoming the adopted son-in-law (mukō yōshi) of his wife's father.[25] The outcome of which was entry into the koseki of the spouse's family. Eventually, the husband could also become the patriarchal head of the family (koshu). A foreign woman married to a Japanese man could also attain Japanese status. However, when a Japanese man married a foreign woman he retained his status as Japanese (Kamoto 2001: 90-94).[26]

Only two of the Bonin Islanders however, were married to Japanese spouses. Therefore, the Meiji officials had to create an exception for the foreign inhabitants of the Bonin Islanders to directly register as commoners (heimin) on the koseki. In 1877 Bill Boats (aka Kopepe), his wife Katie (both Pacific Islanders), Robert Myers, Sino and one other became the first foreigners to naturalize as Japanese. Further highlighting the exceptional circumstances of this situation, Myers and Sino, despite being married to Japanese women, were not required to undergo adoption as mukō yōshi. Neither were their Japanese wives obliged to give up their status as Japanese.[27]

Initially, the Meiji authorities attempted to coax the Islanders to register on the koseki by offering alcohol and confectionary. They also made threats that rights and assurances of property ownership could no longer be guaranteed without registration (Obana 1876-1877; see also Ishihara 2007: 259). Concerned about the time it was taking for the rest of the Islanders to naturalize, the Meiji government eventually delivered an ultimatum. The foreigners were told to naturalize by 1882 or face expulsion from the Islands (taikyo ka kika ka) (Sato 1988: 155).[28] This worked and by 1882 all of the inhabitants, twenty-two families comprising sixty-four individuals, had registered on the koseki (Asakawa 2007: 46). The majority of the Islanders registered in their original name that had to be recorded in katakana.[29] Once koseki registration was complete the Islanders were granted Japanese status, placing them not only under the protection of the Meiji polity but also within its control. In the words of James Scott (1998), this rendered the Bonin Islanders 'legible' to the state, falling neatly under the legislative reach of the government and therefore bounded by its demands. As Deleuze and Guattari remind us, 'sovereignty only reigns over what it is capable of interiorizing, of locally appropriating' (1987: 360). The koseki facilitated this exercise by enabling the Meiji state to reach into the lives of the Islander community and to manage the population in various ways. Family registration enabled the collection of taxes, conscription, the monitoring of births, deaths and marriages and general surveillance.

The naturalization of the Bonin Islanders is not, however, a clear-cut case of either inclusion or exclusion. It is much more complicated than such a dichotomy would suggest. The inclusion of this population was conditional and regulated, becoming more of an 'exclusive inclusion' (Agamben 1998). From 30 June 1878 the Meiji government passed legislation that geographically contained the Islanders by prohibiting them from settlement within the interior of Japan proper (naichi ijū kinshi sochi) (Ministry of Home Affairs 1883). In other words, by banning the new subjects from settling anywhere else in Japan, they were further contained and placed in a state of exception where they existed contemporaneously on the outside as well as on the inside. They were included by the law but also abandoned by it; exposed to the nakedness of what Agamben calls 'bare life' (1998: 21). By including the Bonin Islanders as Japanese subjects the Meiji government was able to demarcate the expanded territorial boundaries of sovereignty and by excluding the Islanders from settlement in Japan proper the boundaries of the interior were protected and reinforced. Furthering the process of governmentalization, the administration of the islands was placed under the jurisdiction of Tokyo Metropolitan Prefecture in 1880 and Obana was restored as Governor. Obana, the conduit of Meiji authority on the Islands, was now able to implement Japanese laws in dealings with the Bonin Islanders without concern for extraterritoriality rights.[30]

Furthering this process of control, in all Meiji government records and documents the first settlers on the Bonin Islands are referred to as 'naturalized foreigners' (kika gaikokujin).[31] This kind of labelling is similar to that used for the indigenous Ainu populations in the nineteenth century, kyūdojin was applied to differentiate between indigenous Ainu and other Japanese subject.[32] The nomenclature of 'naturalized foreigner' reveals much about the nature of control under this classificatory grid through its contradictory and oxymoronic nature. In a contemporary context a naturalized person is by legal definition a national or subject of a particular sovereignty. In the case of Japan in the early Meiji period the process of kika defined the individual as holding Japanese status (nihonjin bungen no taru), a status that could only be obtained by rescinding one's prior legal affiliation with any other nation. The label 'kika gaikokujin' thus becomes incongruous because the term 'gaikokujin' (foreigner) no longer applies in a legal sense, as the individual has become a Japanese subject. The two terms together thus create an ambivalent position describing someone who is simultaneously included and excluded. In the case of the Bonin Islanders this contradiction differentiated them from the majority Japanese reinforcing the legitimacy of Self and enabling the state of exception that allows the exercise of sovereign power.

Year	Population
1878	213
1889	1,629
1894	3,408
1900	5,550
1923	5,926

Adapted from Kurata (1983: 68)

In the space of one year the Ogasawara Islands' population trebled from seventy-one in 1877 to two hundred and thirteen in 1878, with Japanese emigrants from the mainland and surrounding islands making up most of this increase. Over a short period of time the foreign residents became the numerical minority.[33] By 1882, the last year for foreign residents to become naturalized, there were four hundred and twenty four people living on the Ogasawara Islands (Kurata, 1983: 68). The homes and neighbourhoods of

the first settlers became the sovereign territory of Japan and the influence of mainland Japanese emigrants in shaping the future of the Islands grew. As a conduit of colonial sovereign power and a mechanism of statecraft, the koseki was highly successful in legislatively simplifying and homogenizing the complex and diverse first settler community under the common umbrella of Japanese subjects.

Over time various terms have been used to identify the descendants of the first settler community. The term 'naturalized person' (kikajin) derived from 'naturalized foreigner' has remained a differentiating and pejorative term. It has been used, along with various other descriptors such as 'different person' (ijin), to remind the community of their difference and status as insiders on the outside. Highlighting the lasting effects of discursive differentiation, this kind of identification was especially prevalent in the period leading up to the Second World War (Shepardson 1998: 24-10 and Ishihara 2007: 373-375) when tensions between the 'Japanese' inhabitants and the 'naturalized foreigners' were exacerbated by global events. The period during the fortification of the Ogasawara Islands in the 1930s through the immediate pre-war and war periods were particularly difficult times for the original settlers' descendants who had been legally defined as Japanese for more than sixty years. During the Pacific War English was also banned on the Islands (Ishihara 2007: 369); further marginalizing and differentiating the first settler descendants.

A photograph by German-born American geneticist Richard Goldschmidt in 1927. From the left are Horace Savory (second generation), Moses Savory (fourth generation), Aileen Washington (third generation), Benjamin Savory (second generation) and Jane Savory (third generation) (photo source: Kurata, 1983: 141).

The photograph above (Fig. 4.) shows four generations of the Savory family in 1927; fifty years after colonization. All in the photograph are Japanese citizens and descendants of the original settlers. This photograph, whilst providing a glimpse into the lives of some of the inhabitants of the Ogasawara Islands and their European and Pacific Islander heritage, hides as much as it reveals. Opaque is the complexity of feelings around notions of identity and belonging possessed by those in the photograph. Increasing numbers of emigrants from other parts of Japan would have been a constant reminder of their difference and their place at the margins of the imagined community of Japan.

Within eighteen years their island would become a strategic location in a World War and the majority of the Islands' population would be sent to mainland Japan. It was a period when their difference collided with anxiety and suspicion placing them in a precarious position that is vividly remembered even today by those who experienced it. Sebori Mori for example, recalls the time when all but those in the armed forces were evacuated from the mainland during the War. 'I wondered why, despite being Japanese, I was accused of being a spy and why, despite having money, no one would sell me food' (Jōkō 2008: 15-16).

With the subsequent twenty-three year occupation of the Ogasawara Islands by the United States at War's end in 1945, life changed again for the descendants of the original settlers. Upon their return to the islands they fell under the sovereign control of the US. The Japanese population of the islands were prevented from returning until 1968 when the Islands reverted to Japanese control. This aspect of the history of the Ogasawara/Bonin Islands, although beyond the scope of this paper, is important in underscoring the numerous periods of ambivalent existence for all individuals living on the Ogasawara Islands.[34]

Conclusion

In conclusion, I again turn to Benedict Anderson's discussion on the census, the map and the museum. Anderson argues that these three institutions of power together 'profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion – the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry' (Anderson 1991: 163-4). In the case of Japan in the late nineteenth century I have argued that the household registration system, as an institution of power in its own right, greatly facilitated the way in which the nation and Empire of Japan developed and profoundly affected the lives of the colonial subjects of the Ogasawara Islands. The Ainu, Ryūkyū Islanders and Bonin Islanders were each placed in separate files inscribed with their ethnic origins. This approach underscored the ancestral and genealogical distinction between the colonized and the rest of the population. In the same way that categorization constitutes the Other, it galvanizes the Self and as I have argued above, juxtaposes an internal Other with a core Japanese identity stabilizing the Self and making it coherent. The koseki became core in this process of identification and greatly facilitated the exercise of bio-power.

The Bonin Islanders, like the other colonized communities, were constituted inclusively as Japanese subjects through their entry on the koseki registry and exclusively through their discursive construction as 'naturalized foreigners'. This discursive distinction also allowed for differential legislation that banned the 'naturalized foreigners' from residing within Japan proper contributing further to a state of exception. As Agamben argues simultaneous existence both inside and outside the juridical order in a state of exception creates the threshold that is the place of sovereignty (1998: 27). In other words, constituting subjects who were internal outsiders, contained and controlled within but held at arms length produced a threshold that enabled Japanese sovereignty over the Bonin Islands. The difference between the processes of the first and the second colonization underscore the role that the registration and identification of the population had in facilitating control and management. Although the bakufu attempted to introduce laws, the first colonization of the Bonins fell short of sovereign control. The year 1875 was the point at which the first stage of sovereign claim was possible, assisted by the containment and recording of the population through the census survey. However, the changes that occurred in 1877 were the most profound and remarkable because this is the point at which the first foreigners became Japanese subjects through direct entry into the koseki. The moment Myers, Sino and the others submitted their letters, they were constituted as Japanese subjects/'naturalized foreigners' and at this point in time the koseki became a productive agent for defining the sovereign borders surrounding the Bonins and marking the limits and delimits of the Japanese nation, not only in terms of

geography but also of humanity.

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For more on the ecology of the Ogasawara Islands, see Nanyan Guo, Environmental Culture and World Heritage in Pacific Japan: Saving the Ogasawara Islands.

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Notes

1 The original handwritten signature is somewhat unclear and looks like 'Maris' rather than Myers. In a diary, however, Reverend F. B. Plummer explains how in 1877 he helped a British man called Myers who dictated a letter he wanted sent to Russell Robertson in order to become a Japanese subject (Plummer 1877). Robertson (1876: 131) also uses the name 'Robert Myers' in his report.

2 The word Bonin originated from a misreading of the Japanese characters for 'uninhabited' munin. The misreading has been traced back to a self-taught Dutch scholar of Oriental languages, Jean Pierre Abel Rémusat, who translated the Sangoku Tsūran Zusetsu. In 1817 Rémusat wrote a piece on the Bonin Islands in the Journal Des Savans using the Sangoku translation and instead of munin he rendered the characters as bonin (Kublin 1953: 36).

3 The term 'naturalized person' in Japanese (kikajin) has been used by Japanese scholars in describing early migrants from the continent of Asia that settled in the Yamato plain of Japan (around modern day Kansai) in the sixth and seventh century. Many of these people became members of the Yamato court and the terms Kikajin and Toraijin are used to denote those who swore allegiance to the Yamato court during this period (for example see Seki 1996). The term kika therefore can be interpreted as meaning 'to take allegiance with'. In the case of the Bonin Islanders the word means taking on Japanese status and, although nationality was not legally recognized in Japan at this time, they were 'naturalized' as Japanese subjects.

4 Benjamin Pease brought Myers' Japanese wife to the Bonin Islands in 1873 on board the Tory. She was brought to the Bonins from Yokohama with six or seven other Japanese women. Myers' wife was one of only two of these women that chose to stay on the Bonins, the other remaining woman married a Spanish subject from the Philippines called Sino (Robertson 1876: 131-132).

5 In many Japanese references to Japan's claim over the Ogasawara Islands the term 'kaitaku' is used, meaning the reclamation or cultivation of unclaimed land. This is the same term used for the colonization of Hokkaidō and in a similar vein to Siddle's (1996: 51) reasoning, I would argue that the 1875 and the earlier 1861 'reclamation' of the Ogasawara Islands can therefore be accurately considered as colonization. In both instances Japanese colonies were established and, although more pervasive in the second colonization in 1875, both instances involved political and economic control over the Islands and its inhabitants.

6 The registration of all Ainu on the koseki was completed by 1878 and all were registered eventually as kyūdojin (former natives) (Sato 1988: 154 and Siddle 2003: 62 and 451-2). The registration of the inhabitants of the Ryūkyū Islands was completed in 1887, five years after the Bonin Islanders. Later, the external family register (gaichi koseki) was created to record colonial subjects living in the newly acquired colonies of Taiwan and the Korean peninsula.

7 The most comprehensive study in this area thus far is Shun Ishihara's book The Japanese Empire and the Ogasawara/Bonin Islands: Socio-historical Studies on the Naturalized People's Encounters with Sovereign Powers (2007). Ishihara has used a number of primary sources in his analysis that have not been used before, such as Obana's notes located on the Ogasawara

Islands. The work of Daniel Long has been groundbreaking in discovering and collating many facts about the Ogasawara Islands. His effort in documenting the history and the English language spoken by the early settler descendants has preserved knowledge that would have otherwise been lost. McCormack and Guo have also discussed the early settler history and problems of identity (2005).

8 Japan claimed sovereignty over Sakhalin (Karafuto) and the Kuril Islands before the Bonins in the nineteenth century (1845).

9 Foucault defines bio-power as an 'explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations' (1998: 140). Registration on the koseki allowed for control in numerous ways such as tax collection, conscription and population management. The koseki facilitated other forms of control that were useful later, particularly in the years building up to the Pacific War.

10 According to Kublin (1953: 43) there were already two castaways living on Peel Island when the Blossom arrived. The two men, Wittrein and Petersen, were part of the crew of the British whaler William when it ran into trouble in 1826 at the main harbour of Chichijima. They were left behind to complete the salvage of the William and the rest of the crew were taken aboard the British whaler Timor. The captain of the Timor promised the two men that they would return within a year but the Blossom arrived before this happened.

11 Charlton was consul to the Sandwich (Hawaiian), Society and Friendly Islands (now Tonga).

12 Despite their contributions and greater numbers than the white settlers, the first Polynesian settlers have remained virtually nameless and faceless throughout historical records connected with the Bonins. Some names are recorded in Kurata Yoji's book (1985) on the history of the Ogasawara Islands. The names appear in katakana but are incomplete and the nationality (kokuseki) is registered as 'Kanaka' for all the Pacific Islanders. These include; Hawaiian Harry Otaheite (also see Shepardson 1998: 7.2), Spencer, Friday, Jake, Chako, Harlot, Betty and Horan. The Pacific Islanders introduced many of the skills necessary for island settlement such as canoe building.

13 Thomas Webb and William Gilley were two such individuals who permanently settled on the islands, eventually marrying and fathering children. Today many descendants of these two early settlers still use the names Webb and Gilley alongside Savory, Washington and Gonzales.

14 At the time of Perry's visit there were thirty-one inhabitants on the Bonin Islands. According to Robertson (1876: 120), there were four Americans, four English, one Portuguese, some children who were born on the islands and the remaining population, again remaining nameless and faceless, were from various islands in the Pacific.

15 Nathaniel Savory was leader and perhaps the best known of the first settlers to the Bonins. He was from Bradford near Salem in Massachusetts.

16 Alex Simpson, the Acting Consul for the Sandwich Islands, discussed the advantage of colonizing the Bonins earlier than Perry in 1842 (letter from Alex Simpson to Lord Claredon 1853 in Pineau 1968: 144).

17 Ishihara argues that the first colonization laid the foundation for the second and facilitated its process. He refers to the way laws were introduced, the process of colonization and the actions of Nakahama Manjiro as an agent of sovereignty and the return of Obana as governor (Ishihara 2007: 203-204). These points are valid, however there is a stark difference between the two colonization attempts in terms of how control over the population of foreign settlers was achieved.

18 For an extended account of the initial colonization process refer to Tabohashi Kiyoshi (1922).

19 Reflecting deep sentiments of original ownership, this first attempt at claiming the Bonin Islands by Japan was stated as a 're-occupation' (kaishū) in a letter sent on December 17 1861 to Townsend Harris, America's first Consul General to Japan (Harris 1930). This undisputed claim, although untrue, was used as leverage to legitimize Japan's assertion. For an account of the arrival of the Kanrin Maru and the subsequent discussions between Nathaniel Savory and Mizu no Kami refer to Tabohashi (1926).

20 Nakahama Manjirō is well known as one of the first Japanese to visit the United States and playing a central role as interpreter in the opening up of Japan during the nineteenth century. He also passed on his skills and experience in whaling to early Japanese inhabitants of the Bonins.

21 At the time Mizu no kami was aware that claims of the earlier discovery of the Bonin Islands by Ogasawara were dubious and likely untrue (Tabohashi 1926).

22 Appeals to sovereign jurisdiction through various consul officials were made during the first colonization attempt. For example, in 1862 an appeal was made against George Horton, a former English seaman, after a dispute with Nakahama Manjiro over a trunk. Horton wanted to remove the trunk from Manjiro's boat but Manjiro protested and imprisoned Horton on the boat and made his way back to Japan. The American Consul Courts subsequently charged Horton with a 'piratical attempt', of which he was later acquitted. Demands from the American consular were then made to the Meiji government for compensation of Horton's land on the Bonins or a payment of one thousand dollars for the consular authorities to support Horton's living costs in Yokohama (Cholmondeley 1913: 106). Horton was eighty years old at the time and remained in Yokohama until his death two years later. Horton's grave can still be found in Yokohama (Robertson 1876: 142).

23 Frederick Rohlfs, a German, was also living with his wife Kitty on Hahajima at this point in time (Long 2004: 13).

24 From the signing of the Ansei Treaties in 1858 until the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation on July 16 1894 the system of extraterritoriality remained in place. This meant that foreign citizens in Japan were subjugated under the laws of their respective nations not the local Japanese law. The nations involved in these treaties were the US, the UK, the Netherlands, Russia and France. In the case of the Bonin Islanders however, the rule of extraterritoriality was nullified as soon as they were naturalized on the koseki (for more information refer to Ishihara 2007).

25 An understanding of the phrase 'nihonjin taru no bungen' (to attain the status/standing of Japanese) is important here because from 1873 until the introduction of the kokusekihō in 1899 this was the definitive legislation for determining an individual's status as Japanese except in the case of the Bonin Islanders and, using the Bonins case as an example, two Chinese migrants in Hokkaidō that were naturalized on 15 March (Asakawa 2007: 52-58). Kamoto Itsuko refers to this twenty-six year period as the bungen shugi jidai (the era of status-ism) (2001: 77- 108). The term bungen was used in the Edo Period to describe lines of impenetrable demarcation between the different hierarchical levels of social standing into which each individual was born and movement across these divisions was forbidden (Dean 2002: 77). The notion of bungen as it appeared in proclamation 103 was used in a broader context to demarcate between Japanese and outsiders and remained the selected reference by which legislators defined membership of the Japanese polity. It was initially only attainable through marriage with a Japanese spouse. However, here again the 'foreign'

residents of the Bonins were exceptions to this ruling.

26 This was linked to conscription. Losing male subjects to other nations was viewed as weakening of the country's ability to defend itself.

27 The requests to become Japanese subjects that Sino and Myers submitted were written in English with corresponding Japanese translations. Kopepe and Katie however, were classed as so-called 'Kanakas' (now recognized as a derogatory term used to describe Pacific Islanders), hence there were no translations of their documents into English (Ministry of Home Affairs 1883).

28 As mentioned, caution must be exercised in translating 'kika' into its contemporary equivalent of 'naturalized' because at this point in history Japan had no legal definition of nationality.

29 Frederick Rohlfs (1823-1898) mentioned earlier lived on Hahajima and was one of only a very few who changed his name to a Sino-Japanese characters when he naturalized in 1878 (Long 2004: 13).

30 Nathaniel Savory who acted as intermediary between the Japanese and foreign settlers for Obana had died the year before this second colonization on the tenth of April.

31 The Bonin Islanders, however, were not forced to Japanize their names in the way the Ainu were in the late nineteenth century. Long states that only a few of the naturalized foreigners took Japanese names and that most used katakana versions of their Western names for entry on to the koseki (2007: 125-126). This was the case until 1940 when, demonstrating the ambivalence of being insiders on the outside, the naturalized foreigners were forced to change their names (Ishihara, 2007: 369). As part of the assimilation process of Koreans during annexation, Japan introduced the policy of sōshi kaimei forcing millions of Koreans to Japanize their names. Although aimed at colonial Koreans, this policy affected the descendants of the first settlers as well by forcing them to change their names from katakana readings to Sino-Japanese characters. According to Long (2007: 127) some of the islanders chose characters that were phonetically close to their original names, for example Savory became Sebori. At the end of the Second World War and under US occupation the Islanders reverted to their original names in English.

32 The first settlers however, did not suffer the same harsh treatment as the indigenous Ainu and Ryūkyū Islander population. David Odo suggests that status as former nationals of western countries provided the first settlers and their descendants with a layer of protection from the harshness of colonial rule imposed upon other colonized communities such as the Ainu (2003: 288).

33 By 1888 there were 1400 people living on the Islands (Kurata, 1983: 68).

34 This period in the history of the Ogasawara Islands is the theme of my ongoing research. For more information about the Islands during the interwar and post-war periods refer to Ishihara (2007) and Shepardson (1998).

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