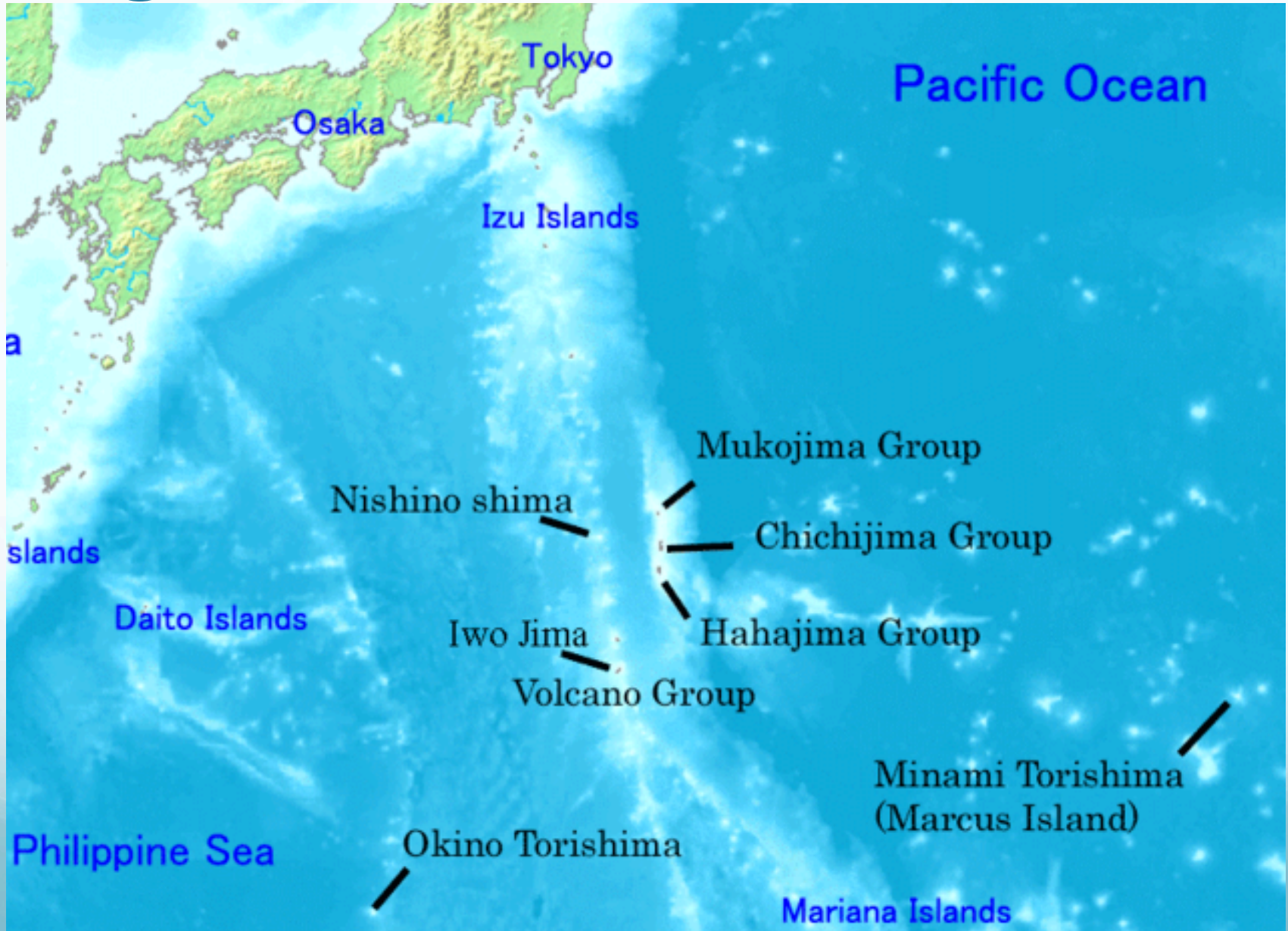


the first language of Ogasawara

English as an indigenous language of Japan

Joseph DeChicchis

Ogasawara-shoto 小笠原諸島



Bonin Islands 小笠原群島

- Mukojima Rettō 聳島列島 (formerly Parry Group)
Mukojima 聳島 “Bridegroom Island”
Yomejima 嫁島 “Bride Island”
Nakōdo-jima or Nakadachijima 媒島 “Go-between Island”
Kitanojima, 北ノ島 or 北島, “Northern Island”
- Chichijima Rettō 父島列島 (formerly Beechey Group)
Chichijima 父島 “Father Island” (Peel Island)
Anijima 兄島 “Elder Brother Island” (Buckland I., Hog Island)
Otōtojima 弟島 “Younger Brother Island” (Stapleton Island)
- Hahajima Rettō 母島列 (formerly Baily Group)
Hahajima 母島 “Mother Island”
Anejima 姉島 “Elder Sister Island”
Imōtojima 妹島 “Younger Sister Island”

early exploration

- 1543: The Spanish explorer Bernardo de la Torre is the first European to discover the islands, which the Spanish call Islas del Arzobispo.
- 1592: Ogasawara Sadayori 小笠原 貞頼 claims falsely to have discovered the Bonin Islands 無人島.
- 1670: The islands are discovered by the Japanese when a ship bound for Edo from Kishu is blown off course by a storm.
- 1675: Captain Shimaya Ichizaemon, with 32 men, explores the islands and claims them as a territory of Japan.

whaling and British navy

- 1825: The English ship Supply visits Chichijima and leaves a wooden plaque, later found by Beechey.
- 1827: Captain Beechey on HMS Blossom visits the islands, which, except for two marooned whalers, are uninhabited. Beechey nails an engraved copper sheet to a tree at Port Lloyd on Chichijima, which he names Peel Island. He claims the islands for Britain as the Archbishop Islands.
- Various people visit and populate the islands: whalers, cast-aways, sick crew members, and curious settlers from a wide variety of ships and countries.

the first true inhabitants

- 1830: Nathaniel Savory, an American who had worked on English ships throughout the Pacific region, leads a small group of settlers from the Sandwich Islands (Hawai‘i) with the intention of starting up a colony. The highly multinational group of colonists includes Hawaiians, a Dane, a Genoan, several Americans, and one or two British subjects.
- 1853: American Commodore Perry and the ships *Susquehanna* and *Saratoga* visit the islands. On Peel Island (Chichijima), Perry finds 311 inhabitants: four Americans, four English, one Portuguese, and the rest from Hawaii and other Pacific islands. Perry recognizes Savory as the head of the island’s government.

excerpt of John's letter to Nathaniel (which was delivered before there was a post office)

- GEORGETOWN,
Sep. 24, 1838.

To NATHANIEL SAVORY.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Your letters by Capt. William North 2nd. were gratefully received the early part of last summer, notwithstanding you have been absent from us now about twenty-four years we have not forgotten you nor are our kind regards for your welfare at all diminished. We presume you are doing well so far as the mere matter 'of money making goes, and have you not made money enough already to enable you to return home to the land of your nativity and visit your father and your friends once more ? Our aged father yet lives and enjoys good health. He married a second wife April 5, 1836 as you will see by the family record which I send enclosed in the box herewith. [...] By the map you can see the number of houses there was (in 1830) then in the town with the names of the owners quite a number have since been erected and the population considerably increased.

The manufacture of shoes is the principal business of the place and that is carried on to a great extent. The shoes are principally sold to southern and western merchants. The western states of this Union are now settling rapidly. [...] The amount of boots and shoes manufactured in this place in 1836 was (by a return then made) about 500,000 dollars worth. Eleazar desires to be remembered to you. He still remains a stiff old bachelor some say he has been courting most ever since you left here how much longer it will take to get a girl well courted I cannot tell. I suppose he wont marry till that is done. We have a Bank in this place with a capital of 100,000\$. Benjamin Little is the President. He desires to be remembered to you. They all call him Uncle Ben yet.

I remain yours with
Sentiment of Respect
JOHN B. SAVORY.

“Hawaiian Village”



HAWAIIAN VILLAGE PORT LLOYD, BONIN ISLANDS, IN 1853
—from Perry's "United States Japan Expedition"

Kanaka village postcard



From sketch by Deane, figures by B. B. B.

A. G. B. 20

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KANAKA VILLAGE BONIN ISLANDS

Japanese colonization

- 1861-1863: The Japanese government tries to establish a colony in the islands.
- 1861 December 20: Mizuno-chikugonokami Tadanori 水野 筑後守忠徳, Hattori Munekazu/Kiichi 服部 帰一, and some travel officers go ashore and ask for the American Nathaniel Savory and the Englishmen Thomas Webb and George Horton. (Webb, living at Susaki Village, declines to meet.)
- Mizuno treats Savory as the head of the island government, and they have a discussion, with Nakahama Manjiro translating.

Mizuno and Savory talk

- Savory: This island belongs to England since the visit by an English ship in 1827. I have papers to prove it. Have you known the above facts?
- Mizuno: Yes, I know the detail. Our people discovered this island 300 years ago and founded a shrine. Do you know about it?
- Savory: We thought this island belonged to England. If what you say is true, I have nothing to say. However, when we came here, there was nobody living here.
- Mizuno: Our people erected buildings 300 years ago and named the island Ogasawara. They lived here for about 200 years, but they discontinued from the year of rooster. That is why no one was living when you came. We plan to let you live here as before, since you lived here many years.
- Savory: We have nothing to say, since we do not know anything. We have seen some record of your country discovering this island.

Savory's statement to Japan

PEEL ISLAND (Bonin),
March 20th, 1862.

This is to certify that I Nathaniel Savory was born 31 of July 1794 in the Town of Bradford County of Essex State of Massachusetts, U.S.A. That in May 1830 at the Island of Oahu I in company with four other white men and a party of natives fitted out and emigrated to this Island arriving here the 26 of June and commenced a settlement and with the exception of a voyage to Manila have been here ever since. I have five children viz. Agnes Burbank born Feb. 14th 1853, Horace Perry born April 3rd 1855, Helen Jane born Feb. 28th 1857, Robert Nathaniel born March 18th, 1860, Esther Thurlow born March 26th ? 1862. My wife is a native of Guam, is 34 years of age. My expectations are to remain here for life. Since the arrival of the Japanese authorities I have been treated with respect and much friendship. To the Chief Commissioner in particular for the very kind manner which he has been pleased to treat me I return him my sincere thanks.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,
N. SAVORY.

In 1854 I was elected Chief Magistrate of this Island for two years which period I served and was re-elected for three years more. I served my term and declined. Since that time we had no form of government until the present regulations published by the Commissioner the Representative of the Japanese Government.

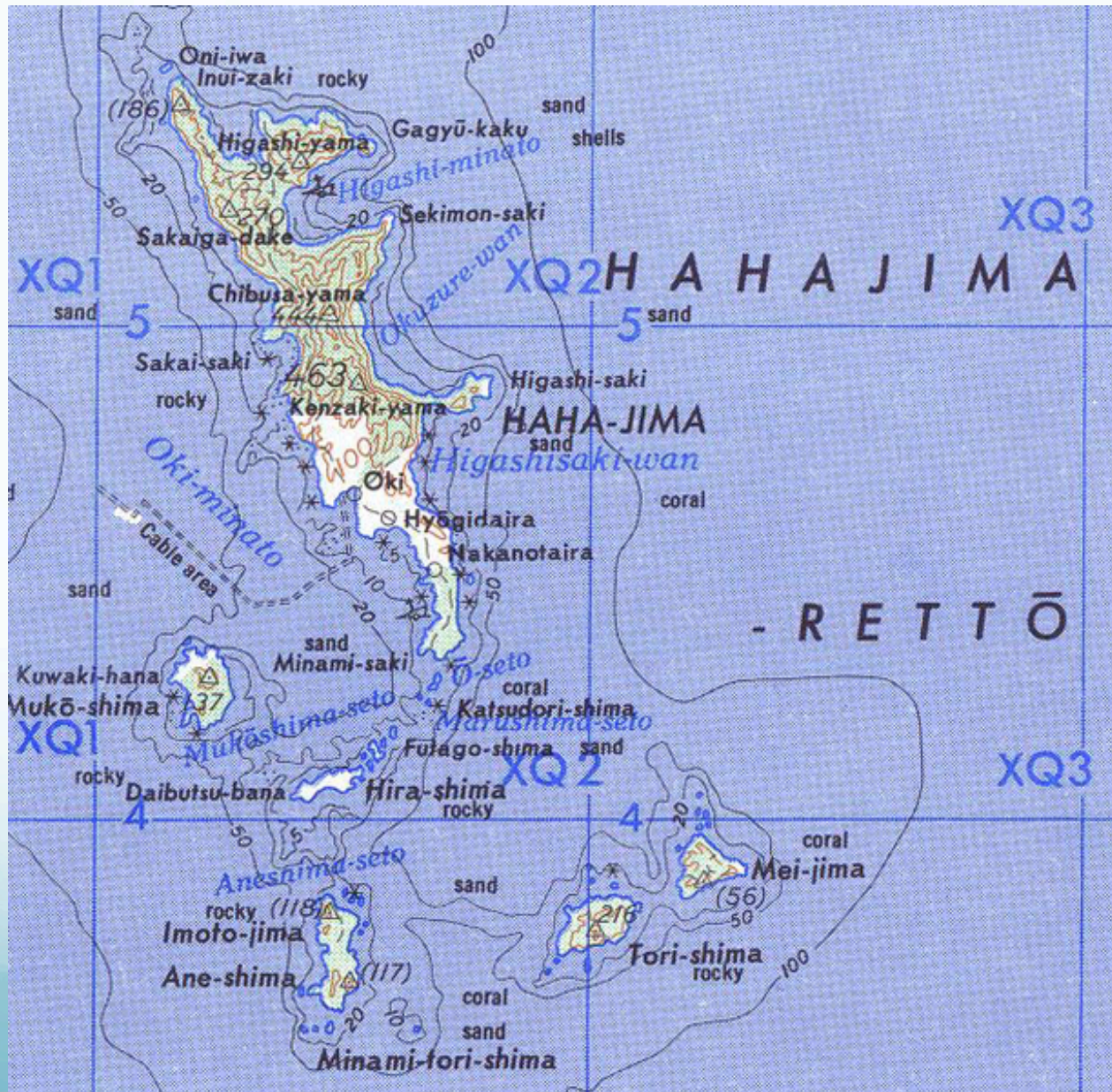
NATHANIEL SAVORY.

HIS EXCELLENCY CHIEF COMMISSIONER.

“nipponification”

- 1875: Japan sends a warship to the islands to reassert its claim. Japan is careful to grant existing rights and protection to the existing settlers. Many gifts are offered to ease the minds of the settlers. A British ship, under direction from the British Consulate in Japan, shadows the Japanese ship.
- 1876: The first actual Japanese colonists come from Hachijojima 八丈島. They meet 66 people who are already living on the islands (nearly all on Chichijima).
- 1878: By year's end, 194 Japanese immigrants are living on the islands.
- 1882: The early settlers all take Japanese citizenship.

Bailey Group (母島列島)

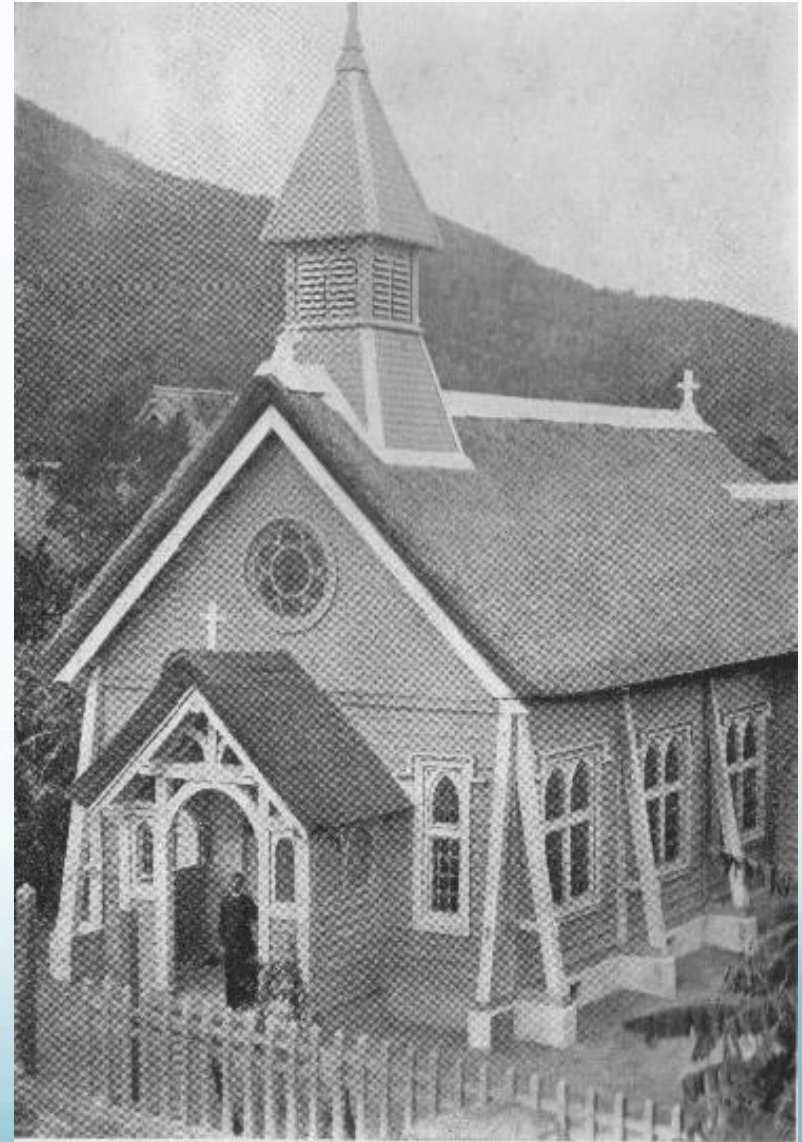
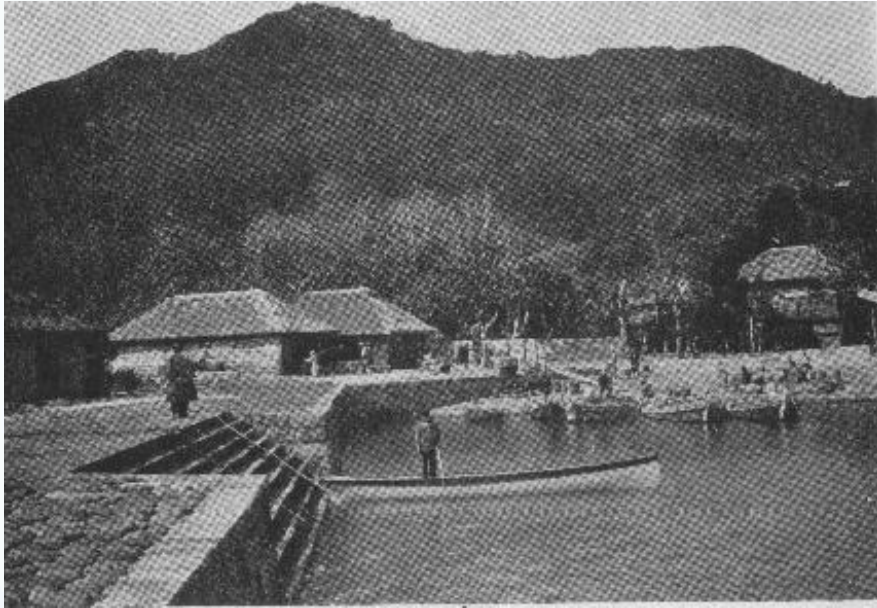


sugar cane workers



SUGAR CANE.

Cholmondeley's photos



modern diglossia

- 1900: The population of Chichijima reaches 2366, reducing the non-Japanese settlers to a minority. The original English-speaking settlers were called kikajin 帰化人 “naturalized people” before WW2, but the general term for them and their descendants later became eikei 英系 or eigokei 英語系 “English type (islanders)”.
- Japanese organize schools.
- Younger kikajin become fluent in Japanese.
- Japanese language is used at school or at work in a Japanese company; and English is used at home and in church.
- Kikajin take katakana names.
- 1917: Approximately 60-70 island people claimed ancestry among the 19th century English-speaking settlers.

anti-English policy

- 1940: Japanese law forces people with non-Japanese surnames to change them (a law also affecting Koreans in the Japanese Empire 大日本帝國).
- Savory becomes セボリ. Webb becomes ウエブ (later 上辺, ウワベ). Other families took arbitrarily chosen Japanese names.
- 1938: The use of English is prohibited. Despite coming under suspicion, the kikajin are conscripted into the Japanese army; many serving as translators.
- 1941: No Bonin people would acknowledge descent from the early English-speaking colonists.
- Before the Pacific War, the given names of children were English; during the war, Japanese; and after the war, English again.

evacuation and return

- 1942: A total of 7711 people live on ten of the islands.
- 1944: Virtually the entire population is evacuated.
- 1945-1968: The U.S. Navy permitted 148 persons with non-Japanese ancestry to return to live in “the Bonin-Volcano Islands”. English-language schooling.
- 1968: Ethnic Japanese islanders begin returning. Japanese-language schooling resumes.
- 2009: Current islanders include some who claim to be related to Nathaniel Savory セボリ. Currently, only Chichijima and Hahajima are inhabited, with a combined population of 2450 as of 1 April, of whom about 1 in 10 are descendent from non-Japanese.

Nat Savory's Teahouse

- 1967: The favorite "tea" served here is Olympia beer.



English-language school

- 1967: U.S. teachers have students in grades 1 to 9. Upon graduation, the children go to Guam for high school.



fisherman and woodcarver

- 1967: Abel Savory shows two sea turtles and one of the many langustas he captured while skin diving.



Replaced long ago by outboard motors, sail and rigging are often carried when traveling to distant islands in case of mechanical problems.

the indigenous languages of Japan

- Ainu has been spoken throughout northern Japan for centuries.
- Japanese has been spoken throughout western and central Japan for centuries.
- Ryukyuan has been spoken from Yaeyama-gunto to Amami Ohshima for centuries.
- English has been spoken in Ogasawara-gunto since its earliest habitation, i.e., since 1830, and no other language is known to have been spoken there earlier.

Japan's dying languages

- Only the standard dialect of Japanese has been consistently supported by the Japanese government.
- Many dialects of Japanese are now extinct or dying.
- Japan's other indigenous languages are also dying.
- Ainu is moribund, critically endangered.
- Ryukyuan (e.g., Uchinaaguchi) is also endangered.
- Ogasawara's English is nearly dead. Nearly all of the current descendants of the original non-Japanese now speak only Japanese on a daily basis.

UNESCO — Languages in Danger



Ainu (Hokkaido)
Amami
Hachijō
Kunigami
Miyako
Okinawan
Yaeyama
Yonaguni

N.B.:
Ogasawara
and its
language
situation is
not shown
on this
UNESCO
map.

Thanks for listening!

English as an indigenous language of Japan

Joseph DeChicchis