

## A Tale of Misadventure in the Western Pacific: Japanese Reach the Bonin Islands and Ponafidin in 1739

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**Abstract:** In 1739, two groups of Japanese sailors met on a remote and inhospitable island due to misfortune. Together they safely returned to Japan, where their story fascinated people from all walks of life. The men's adventures on Ponafidin and the Bonin Islands are largely misunderstood because the official castaway repatriation interviews contain fabricated evidence and deliberate omissions. This article is a reconstruction of events into a castaway narrative, using mostly period sources, that is designed to appeal to scholars of Japanese history, maritime cultures, and communications (particularly those studying the links between culture and perception).

**Keywords:** castaways, Ogasawara Islands, tengu, Torishima

In the summer of 1739, three returning castaways entered Edo bay (present day Tokyo bay) unaware that celebrity awaited them. They had been stranded on an inhospitable rock of an island for nearly two decades before being rescued. Theirs was a tale of countless hardships and survival. Japanese from all walks of life became fascinated with the castaways' story. Shogunal officials, domainal lords, holy men, intellectuals, and commoners alike clamored to get a glimpse of the castaways. Even Yoshimune, the eighth Tokugawa shogun, was not immune from the excitement, summoning the three before him to recount their ordeal. Moved by their tragic account, Yoshimune generously granted the men stipends for life. In time the pains of prolonged solitude gave way to the cruelty of sudden fame. The castaways longed to return home but the authorities were slow to grant permission. When they were finally allowed to leave Edo, the shogunate took the unusual step of notifying road checkpoints beforehand to ensure the celebrities could pass unmolested. The story remained popular for years and a dramatization of the castaways' plight even became a hit play (Kobayashi 2003:

96-104). Well-thumbed manuscripts across Japan bear testament to its onetime popularity. Some retellings kept close to the original accounts while others incorporated fanciful elements or episodes, such as an escape from an island populated by sexually voracious women who forced men to copulate until they died from *jinkyō* (emaciation due to sexual intemperance).

Scholars have long claimed that the three castaways endured life in the Bonin Islands (known in the eighteenth century as Munintō or “Uninhabited Isles”). This assertion had appeared in many Edo-period works, such as the text on Tōjō Kindai’s well-known 1848 *Complete Map of the Seven Islands of Izu*. This misinformation entered Western scholarship in 1953 by way of Hyman Kublin’s article “The Discovery of the Bonin Islands.” A thorough examination of period sources reveals otherwise; the castaways were actually marooned on Ponafidin (Torishima), a small and barren island located in the southern end of the Izu Island Chain. Why have scholars often arrived at the wrong conclusion? It is not due to incompetence. Put simply, the Edo period officials responsible for chronicling the castaways’ account produced documents that contain fabricated evidence and deliberate omissions so as to hide certain information from their superiors.

Absent in the official reports and popular versions of this story are the complete adventures of the heroes, the seventeen sailors who rescued the castaways from their bleak existence by safely returning them to Japan. It is with these seventeen sailors, before their arrival at Ponafidin, that we have a genuine Bonin Island account, the only one during the entire eighteenth century. This article details the sailors’ overseas adventures in the Bonin Islands, their chance meeting with the three castaways on Ponafidin, and the scheme by officials to prevent their fellow Japanese from learning certain facts about the Bonin Islands. Scholars of Japanese history, maritime cultures, and communications (particularly those studying the links between culture and perception) will find this work relevant to their fields of study.

The following narrative is constructed from several period sources: “Munintō hyōchaku monogatari” (Nanbu Sōsho Kankōkai 1971:379-397), “Enshūsen munintō monogatari” and “Edo Horiechō Miyamoto Zenpachisen munintō hyōchaku narabi ni Hachijōjima urategata no oboe” (Yamashita 1992:307-356), and an eighteenth century document housed at the Hachinohe City Library entitled “Minatomura Hachimon monogatari.” These accounts contain significant overlap but also some contradictions due to the aforementioned attempt at

deception, which will be addressed later in the article. Only direct quotes that are particular to a single document will be cited in the text below.

### **Entering the Sea**

In late 1738, sixteen sailors departed Edo for the northern provinces of Japan. Near or in the port town of Hachinohe, the crew loaded buckwheat, soybeans, and barrels of miso onto their ship. Captain Tomizō hired an additional crewman with considerable experience named Hachimon before giving the order to sail back down the Japanese coast for Edo.<sup>1</sup> The men made a few stops and moored at least once to wait out bad weather. Off the coast of the Bōsō peninsula, a storm swept the ship from its course. The elements forced water onto the deck and battered the sailors' confidence. It looked to the crew as though the ship was going to capsize or sink beneath the billows. Cargo was tossed overboard in hopes of stabilizing the vessel by reducing its burden. The storm raged on. Waves, accompanied by howling winds and rain, thudded against the hull. The situation worsened when a thick haze blanketed Japan from view. Swells tossed the vessel to and fro, resulting in overturned water casks. Captain Tomizō eventually lost his bearings. Wedged between insufferable winds and relentless waves the ship buckled under the strain. In a desperate act to keep themselves afloat, the crewmen chopped down the only sail-bearing mast.

Prayers and pledges to various deities, religious icons, and holy places substituted for sailing. Among the beseeched were Hachiman, Kasuga, Buddha, Mt. Fuji, Kumano, Shiokama, Mt. Kinka, Mt. Hayachine and the Grand Shrine at Ise. Believing their demise was near, the sailors cut off their hair and offered it to the heavens, not an uncommon practice for Japanese seamen in jeopardy. Customs and rituals varied greatly from region to region and across time; therefore, it is hardly possible to be certain which gods a particular crew gave primacy and to the form of their rituals. Improvisation at sea further complicates the picture. Offerings were typically made to appease Shinto deities and spirits associated with sailing

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<sup>1</sup> All four accounts agree that seventeen men were aboard the vessel, but disagree over some of the crewmen's names. This may be due to faulty memories or that the sailors went by more than one designation. These able-bodied seamen hailed from all parts of Japan, a manifestation of how extensive internal maritime trade networks had become over the course of the first half of the Edo period. Hachimon exemplified the mobility of the Edo sailor. A Kyushu native, he made Hachinohe his home when he married a local girl. During his life he had lived at opposite ends of Japan and, under several captains, called on many ports in between.

and the seas. For many Buddhist sects a funerary service is a symbolic ordination, a fact that was not lost on some sailors: in essence the dead are turned into monks or nuns. The cutting off of hair or the shaving of the head by distressed sailors, in addition to its Shinto implications, may have served as a type of crude self-ordination (tonsure), a self-performed funerary rite. Understandably, the removal of hair was accompanied by chanting, praying, and a considerable amount of pleading. It may be the case that the men detailed here offered their hair to the gods in an attempt to curry favor with hopes of clinging to this world and if that failed, through the ordination, a smooth entry into the hereafter.

The storm, in the ordinary course of things, subsided but rough seas continued to push the ship south away from Japan. Time was not their ally. As the days passed into weeks their plight grew grimmer. If at any point they allowed the situation's severity to fade from their thoughts, they would be poignantly reminded by the sight of empty water casks. In early February, the crew noticed a change in the weather. The temperature grew hot as if it was summer, a fact interpreted by the castaways as a clear warning they had drifted beyond the limits of Japan and were now outside of her temperate influence. People today would attribute the increasing heat to the sailors' ever-narrowing proximity to the equator.

### **Bonin Islands**

After more than a month of drifting, around the fourth week of February, the men reached a verdant island with steep cliffs (Hahajima). From the ocean the crew could see no signs of civilization. Captain Tomizō declared, "I do not know where we are but I am grateful we can land." He further added, "this [our finding land] is a sign our prayers were not said in vain" (Nanbu Sōsho Kankōkai 1971:384). While searching for suitable anchorage there was some disagreement as to where they might be. A number of the crew assumed what lay before them was one of the Seven Islands of Izu. Others, perhaps feeling they had traveled much further south, surmised they were in the Ryukyus. The rest, demonstrating a profound ignorance of geography, thought they had reached the Korean peninsula. In any case, empty water casks left the sailors with no choice but to go ashore. Shōbei, the second in command, got into a dinghy with a few crewmen to investigate. The small landing party struggled to make it ashore because of the island's steep and rocky coast. Upon their return, Shōbei and the others told their captain that the island was uninhabited and had insufficient water for their needs. Captain Tomizō was unhappy with this report and ordered his entire crew to join the search.

Everyone disembarked. They brought along a few necessities: tools, a pot, a pan, and some rice. Further searching only verified Shōbei's original assessment about the island being uninhabited. Then Tomizō ordered a hut to be built. The ocean began to rise as they worked. Waves started pounding the shoreline. Realizing disaster might befall their vessel at any moment, men ran to the water. In haste, tools, food, and other materials were unloaded—but not nearly enough. The sailors helplessly watched their vessel as it disappeared into a violent sea. All that could be done now was to drag the dinghy onto land and secure it before heading back to the newly constructed hut.

The distressed men searched the island yet again looking for any signs of human activity, all the while hoping for a different outcome. Although unsuccessful at finding people, their efforts were not fruitless as a source of fresh water that “tasted like nectar” was discovered in one of the valleys. Water was their most important find but not the most interesting. The island was densely forested with plants, grasses, and trees unknown to the Japanese: such as a palm with “leaves like umbrellas” and a fragrant, flavorful grass that the men likened to tobacco. This tobacco-esque plant, which was said to resemble the honewort and water dropwort, so impressed the sailors that they dug up its roots with the intent of introducing it to Japan (Nanbu Sōsho Kankōkai 1971:384). Hachiemon later in life referred to the island as Karaashijima (foreign reed grass island). Another peculiar specimen that caught the men's attention was a tall bamboo-like plant that had no leaves on its shoot, except for one at the tip. This tree was said to have seed bunches hanging off of it that resembled ears of millet. Vegetation tickled the eye as well as the nose. An aromatic wood burning in their campfires helped sweetened the air. Not everything was alien, however, as the cawing of an island bird sounded like that of the crow back home. Warblers, a common enough bird in Japan, also inhabited the trees.

Life in this unknown land was difficult for the sailors but it was not without its lighter moments. On an otherwise normal day, while the men started a fire, a brazen bird that looked like a chicken waddled into their hut. The bird exchanged its freedom for its life when it became a pet instead of a meal. Although the island provided shelter, ample food, and a companion animal, the sailors remained steadfast in their determination to return home regardless of the many dangers that stood in their way. The men cut down trees for wood to repair and significantly modify their dinghy into a fair-sized vessel. The mast was made from a sturdy piece of native wood as were the oars. A Shinto charm was tied around the

improvised mast to court providence. Day and night the men directed their prayers at the charm until favorable winds from the south permitted them to reenter the sea. Captain Tomizō patiently waited before giving the order to sail for the northwest, the direction of another lush island (Chichijima) that was visible to the naked eye on a clear day. The divide between these islands (Hahajima and Chichijima) was thought to be about 30 to 40 *ri* (Japanese leagues).

On 4 April, the sailors waded ashore in search of people but again they only found disappointment. Captain Tomizō, as before, had a shelter built and the surroundings explored. Water springing from gaps between some nearby rocks inspired the men to dig a well near their hut. This island was as equally alien as the first. Its rich soil lay smothered in greenery and fish packed the shoaling waters: yellow tail, mackerel, black porgy, sea bream, and others. Most of the sea life here was bigger than normal. Lobsters, for instance, reached lengths of two feet or more. Numerous six-foot-long sharks swam close to the shore. Since fish could be caught in abundance without much effort, the sailors did not bother all that much with the island's fowl that flocked together in great numbers and could be caught with relative ease because of their lack of fear. When the captain decided to ration rice, the men simply ate more fish. Improvised hooks and line allowed for better catches. The former was made from bent nails and the latter from strips of sail. Pike eels—longer than a man is tall—were thought to be the lords of the island according to crewman Hachiemon. The men feared these creatures at first, but when one of them swallowed a fishing hook their divinity fell into question. Fear gave way to bemusement. Bemusement gave way to practicality, meaning the stages of reassessment ended in a meal. The sailors cooked pike eels over a fire and suffered no ill effects, no divine retribution.

The island was devoid of land-based mammals except for the nocturnal bat. Huge turtles carpeted long stretches of beach. It was a sight that did not fail to impress. Shells of deceased turtles lay scattered about, even oddly wedged between rocks. “The shells there are marvelous beyond words,” Hachiemon reported when he was back in Japan (“Minatomura Hachiemon monogatari”). He thought that they would make beautiful combs. Palm fruit growing near the shoreline was picked and stowed aboard the boat along with turtle shells, grasses, and wood. Sacks of rice and water casks occupied most of the storage space. The sailors discovered peculiar trees that they had never seen before. They collected shavings from fallen trees that had wood grains akin to rosewood and ebony. Without the common diversions of everyday life in Japan, the sailors had plenty of time to reflect on their lives and

current predicament. One of the men recalled a story about an island filled with turtles located somewhere southeast of Hachijō called Kame no Shima or Kamejima (island of turtles). The sailors were disposed to believe they had landed in that rumored place. This island was rich in vegetation and the men wonder if mineral wealth was not present as well, namely gold and silver.

Not a single ship was seen during their stay, so the men realized that they had to save themselves. The thought of sailing back to Japan on their modified dinghy was probably not a pleasant one for them. Shortly before departing in the third week of April, lots were drawn from a divination device so the gods could show them the way home. Go to the west-southwest a pulled lot instructed. The castaways obeyed but after half a day on the water without seeing land their faith was washed away by the tides of doubt. In need of a second opinion they drew lots again. Now the deities directed them to the north-northwest, so the ship's course was duly changed. The sailors' faith, the second time around, was soon rewarded as a small uninhabited islet (one of the Parry Group) came into view. There they spent an evening. The following day unfolded almost identically: island discovery, landing, stay, and so on. The sailors reentered the sea and sailed past a handful of rocks and small islets that all appeared to be empty of activity. When these tiny protrusions of land disappeared from view, there was nothing in every direction except for the vast ocean and the equally empty sky.

A storm fell upon the sailors around the end of April. The wind heaved up mighty waves, pushing the vessel eastward away from Japan. Just about everything that was not fixed to the vessel was dumped into the sea—including tools and food—to lighten the ship's burden in hopes of gaining a degree of control. Jettisoning the food was probably unnecessary if not profoundly unwise. The same may be said for the tools. The stresses of the sea have been known to elicit rash behavior, and this case may be one such illustration. Buddha, the Grand Shrine at Ise, and the dragon lord of the sea Ryūjin were asked in prayer to exercise their influence over the elements. Sometime thereafter the seas grew calm. Was there a connection? The sailors certainly saw one. The boat sailed to the northwest until early May, where another small island (Ponafidin) crept into view.

### **Ponafidin**

Perhaps influenced by the island's disagreeable appearance, which was likened to a burnt

mountain, the sailors quickly concluded they had once again landed on the shores of an uninhabited island. The search for people and a watering hole began in earnest even though they strongly doubted a successful outcome. They broke up into groups then scoured the island. Shōbei's group found brushwood tied into bunches, evidence they were not alone. The island was overrun by large fearless birds and home to a number of unnatural stone arrangements. In front of one such arrangement, near an ominous cave, sat two pails full of drinkable water. The situation became unnerving for the sailors. Three brave men entered the dark cave with daggers drawn. What the men found inside made them tremble with fear. Standing in the cave was a wild-haired, black-faced goblin with a feather-covered body.<sup>2</sup> Its glowing eyes pierced the darkness as well as the men's courage. The goblin let out a horrible cry and was then suddenly joined by two more goblins holding large sticks. The other fourteen sailors, probably because they heard the commotion, joined their shipmates inside the cave.

Now the entire crew stood face to face with the goblins. Had they trespassed upon the domain of a long-nosed goblin, a *tengu*? The sailors were beginning to think so, even though they wondered why these three lacked the *tengu*'s signature characteristic of a pronounced nose. Inadvertently or otherwise, as encroachers the seventeen could expect harsh treatment for this supernatural creature was not known for its compassion. Terrified and unable to retreat at this point, one of the sailors nervously uttered something. One of the goblins responded by asking, "who are you people?" in fluent Japanese. Panicked by the thought that more goblins would soon arrive, some of the younger readied themselves to answer his question with violence, looking to capitalize on their numerical superiority while it lasted. Before youth could act, experience stepped in as Captain Tomizō restrained his crew. Tomizō stated his name and the names of his underlings. The head goblin responded with the outrageous claim that he was from Enshū Arai (the town of Arai in Tōtōmi province) and, even more unbelievable to the sailors, that he and his two goblin companions were ordinary Japanese. As mortals are often the victims of supernatural trickery, the suspicious sailors required proof of Japaneseness. The goblins gathered a few of their belongings and presented them to the sailors. Captain Tomizō was shown Japanese money, paperwork from the magistrate's office (*bugyōsho*) in Shimoda, and other items that seemed to validate the claim

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<sup>2</sup> Events surrounding the encounter are somewhat confused. This is due to the discrepancies that exist within period sources. The version of events given here is as plausible as any and more likely than most.



that what stood before him were not goblins. The seventeen sailors began to see human beings under the ruffled appearances, curious mannerisms, and outlandish costumes. They may have even caught a glimpse of their own futures if they remained on the island. The plumose bodies that so scared the sailors turned out to be no more than robes made from albatross feathers and stitched skins. The complex mix of factors that helped the encounter to unfold as bizarrely as it did, it may be said, played only a supporting role to the sailors' collective imagination.

The sailors had no monopoly on misconception. Indeed, the castaways from Arai (formerly considered goblins) felt certain the newcomers were not Japanese despite their claims. Bushy faces and wild hair were telltale signs, the castaways thought, that these sailors came from the island of Ezo. At the time this would not have been a flattering mistake since the Ainu people that inhabit Ezo were not held in high regard as they were seen as primitives. Eventually though, after some discussion, all were recognized as being Japanese.

Except for the albatross, the island was almost entirely barren. The bird's flesh was eaten, its feathers worn, and its oils were extracted for lamplight. The Arai castaways explained to the newcomers that the only source of fresh water on the island, their home for the past twenty or so years, was collected rain—a resource acquired through prayer. The pious castaway regularly made offerings of food to the heavens and prayed before improvised lamps burning fish and bird oils. Buddhist rosaries made from pieces of ship wreckage hung from their necks. What was once the helm was now prayer beads that steered reverent petitions to various deities and the Buddha. During the sailors' month-long stay, they ate seaweed, fish, and a lot of fowl with their new friends. Shared meals allowed the two groups to get to know each other. When conversations turned into stories of hardship, the Arai castaways revealed they had once been twelve strong. One by one they died over the years. Most by accident or illness. A few, however, met their end by their own hands, driven to suicide out of loneliness and despair. One man drowned himself in the ocean; another thrust his head against some rocks, and the third simply waited for death. Claiming the gods had forsaken him, he climbed into a self-dug grave. His companions begged him to reconsider, but tragically he had the misfortune of being both demented and resolute. He asked one last favor of his friends: to bury him alive. They refused so he just lay there until life left his body. Patience may not be a virtue but it could be a lifesaver as three castaways Jinpachi, Nisaburō, and Heisaburō could attest.

Once plans were underway to leave the island, some of the sailors began to doubt if their vessel could support three more men. Shōbei refused to allow his crewmates to flirt with the idea of leaving the Arai castaways behind, especially considering how generous they had been with their limited food and water. Shōbei believed strongly that “the meeting of the two groups was brought about by the will of the gods,” and that all of them were “meant to return to Japan together” (Nanbu Sōsho Kankōkai 1971:390-392). Before departing the men prayed in an attempt to curry favor with the heavens. They purified themselves through ritualistic bathing in the sea. The heavens were also consulted as to which date would be best to depart. With a talisman they stroked reed leaves marked with each day of the lunar month until one floated into the air. Be it by the hand of a god or a seasonal breeze they now had a departure date. However, on a date that differed from the one provided, all twenty men, looking to force the hand of fate or just ignoring the advice of the gods, set sail under with fair weather and good winds. A paper amulet was placed upon the water for the deities to reveal the way home.

### **Hachijō**

Fair conditions allowed for smooth sailing. Even so, by nightfall the men began to worry. The fear they might not see land again grew with each passing hour. A few chanted Buddhist sutras while others prayed to Shinto deities. Dawn revealed a small rocky islet. A quick search confirmed the islet was uninhabited, but it offered a temporary escape from the sea. The men made the most of their situation by gathering edible weeds and kindling needed to cook. “Our deities have been attentive protectors thus far,” they reasoned, therefore the heavens continued to be consulted (Yamashita 1992: 328-329). The aforementioned paper amulet was found stuck to the bow, so it was used again. At midday, the vessel was pushed back into the surf. The moon overtook the sun several times before land was seen again. When they finally reached another island (Hachijō) smoke could be seen rising from it, a sign of civilization. The men worked themselves into an excited frenzy until they scrambled out of the boat for shore, inadvertently trampling their belongings.

Hachijō islanders proved to be hospitable. They supplied the men with food, shelter, and friendship. Local officials too were kind but they wasted little time in starting their interrogation. The sailors and the Arai castaways told a convincing enough story to satisfy the officials who gave the men permission to return home on their improvised craft, which was the last thing any of them wanted to hear. All twenty men pleaded to return to Japan via a

shogunal vessel, claiming their boat was not seaworthy. Hachijō officials went to the waterfront to examine the vessel in question. While investigators inspected the modified dinghy it collapsed into pieces. Officials and commoners alike who witnessed this unusual sight could hardly believe what they had seen. A true appreciation for how close the men had come to a watery demise was revealed. The sailors and their castaway friends return to Honshū as guests aboard a shogunal vessel, as they had requested.

On 22 June 1739, the men boarded a ship bound for Edo filled with exiles who had served out their sentences and were now ordered back to Japan proper. It was said that many Hachijō women were at the port crying as they wished the departing exiles fond farewells (Kobayashi 2003: 94). Some of the men on the ship shed tears as well. The most conspicuous amongst them was an ordained monk, who was caught weeping inconsolably over being separated from his beloved temple and the comfortable existence it offered. This prompted Hachiemon to joke about the Buddhist principle of non-attachment. In Edo the castaways and the sailors (some if not all) were interviewed again. It was not before long that this misadventure jumped from the pages of governmental reports into popular culture. Edo was taken by storm and the Arai castaways became caught up in the winds of celebrity.

### **A Plot to Conceal the Bonin Islands**

Years later when recounting his adventure as an older man, Hachiemon confessed that his repatriation interview was not wholly true. At the request of Hachijō officials, he and his crewmates gave false reports wherein they altered the chronology of events, exaggerated distances, and omitted their Bonin Islands stay entirely. Consequently, in official documents all details concerning the lush Bonins are conspicuously absent and scraggly Ponafidin is reported to lie south of Hachijō at a distance of 700 to 800 *ri*. Hachiemon claimed that, in reality, Karaashijima and Kamejima (Hahajima and Chichijima respectively) were situated about 100 *ri* from Hachijō and that the island where he met the Arai castaways lay even closer (“Minatomura Hachiemon monogatari”). It is for these reasons—in particular the exaggerated distance between Japan and Ponafidin in the official accounts—that Edo-period scholars and modern academics alike have repeatedly reach the erroneous conclusion that the two groups met on the Bonin Islands.

Hachiemon was aware that he may have landed on islands claimed by the Ogasawara family, a possibility brought to his attention in Hachijō. In the repatriation accounts, as well

as the slew of popular tales loosely based upon them, the narrative of the 1739 castaways skips over the Bonin episode to the Ponafidin landing. The leadership of Hachijō probably sought to conceal the fact that the Edo crew had reached the Bonins for worry this revelation might spark interest in the archipelago. It was a very real concern. In the 1720s, the local governor of Sagami and Izu sought to take possession of the Bonin Islands with the assistance of the Hachijō people. Yamada Jiemon's ambitious plan was approved by his superiors, much to the displeasure of the islanders who did not wish to participate in what they saw as a foolhardy adventure. They provided several reasons why it was unwise to launch an expedition: the archipelago is in the middle of nowhere, no one really knows its true location, and the maritime technology needed for deep-water navigation was no longer available in Japan due to long-standing prohibitions on overseas travel (*kaikin*). All castaways who returned home from the Bonins required just as much luck as they did skill, and the Hachijō people seemed acutely aware of this fact. Only the 1675 Shimaya expedition purposefully sailed to the Bonins and safely returned. The islanders did not fail to mention this was done with a "triple-masted ship of foreign design" (Sakata 1874). Yamada's planned seizure of the Bonins never happened, in no small part due to the unaccommodating Hachijō people. A circulating rumor probably fueled the islanders' discomfort. Ogasawara Sadatō, an alleged descendant of Ogasawara Sadayori, sent his nephew Nagaaki to reassert control over the Bonins in 1733. The young man was never heard from again (Sakata 1874). This failed expedition's sole accomplishment was to remind people of the dangers associated with deep-water navigation. Any additional excitement over the islands most assuredly would not have benefited the commoners or the officials of Hachijō because the exploration of the Bonins might have fallen, risk and all, on their shoulders. It is therefore understandable why there would be a desire to conceal facts. Hachijō officials, it may be said, were successful for even today the legacy of their concealment exerts influence over academic opinion.

### **Final Note**

The seventeen sailors blown from their course in 1739 are the only known Japanese to land in the Bonin Islands during the eighteenth century, bridging a 165 year gap between the 1675 expedition under Shimaya Ichizaemon and a party of castaways from Nanbu domain who were pushed there by a storm in 1840 (Tabata 1993:58). These sailors in 1739 were the last Japanese to set foot on the "uninhabited isles" or *munintō*. Later visitors were to discover

an archipelago peopled by non-Japanese, and with this Munintō became an appellation that ceased to be an accurate description.

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## Abstract in Japanese

### 漂着者たち 1739 年の記録：小笠原諸島と鳥島

クラマー羽奈江<sup>1</sup>・クラマー スコット

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太平洋の孤島で 1739 年、二組の漂流民が出会った。彼らは苦勞の末日本へ戻ることができた。その話は本国で人々の関心を集めた。しかし取り調べ書の内容には、意図的に除外されたり、捏造された事柄が含まれていた。その結果、今日でも知られていなかったり、誤解されている点が多い。本稿は、彼らの漂流と遭遇の記録を検討し、再構築することによって小笠原諸島と鳥島での漂着の実態を明らかにしようと試みたものである。

キーワード：漂流記、天狗、無人島

