

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Islands Too Beautiful for their Names: Local Memories and  
Japanese Colonial Rule (1914-1944) in the Northern Mariana Islands

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

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2015

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University of California, San Diego

2015

## DEDICATION

In recognition of the kindness, intellect, and good humor of the *man'amko*, the elders, from the Mariana Islands, and in gratitude for the mentorship they and other local history professionals displayed towards me as I asked questions about intimate memories of the days of Japanese rule and war, this dissertation is dedicated to peoples of the Mariana archipelago irrespective of internal political partitions created by various past and present colonial regimes.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CINCAFPAC	Commander in Chief United States Air Forces Pacific
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief Pacific Command
CINCPACFLT	Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet
CINCPOA	Commander in Chief, Central Pacific Ocean Area
CNMI	Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
DMP	Demobilized Personnel
NBK	Nan'yô Bôeki Kaisha (South Seas Trading Company)
NKK	Nan'yô Kôhatsu Kabushiki-gaisha (South Seas Development Corporation)
NMD	Northern Marianas Descent
NMI	Northern Mariana Islands
NTTU	Naval Technical Training Unit
POW	Prisoner of War
SCAP	Supreme Commander of Allied Powers
SWNCC	State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee
TTPI	(U.S.) Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands



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“Pagan Island in the Distance,” translation of “Harukanaru Pagantôyo,” edited by Okamoto Mariko, Pagan HP Press 2000. [www.paganislandinthedistance.com](http://www.paganislandinthedistance.com). October 15, 2014.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Islands too Beautiful for their Names: Local Memories and Japanese Colonial Rule  
(1914-1944) in the Northern Mariana Islands

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, San Diego 2015

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Although indigenous Northern Mariana Islanders used to be Japanese subjects, these experiences have been marginalized by mainstream postwar histories. This project takes an islander-centered approach by assessing islanders' memories of everyday life during conditions of colonialism and war towards productively challenging dominant nationalized discourses about Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) history. Using interviews with people who grew up during the Japanese era along with textual sources, I assess how colonial institutions managed islanders versus how they have remembered their own lives. Their memories of the Japanese period can be ambivalent and nostalgic, and they

offer comparative and transnational interpretations of multiply colonized NMI history.

Japanese colonialism tends to be interpreted through narratives that describe WWII as an American “liberation” of the islands and islanders from Japanese rule. These narratives conflate Japanese colonialism with war and ignore the historical and ongoing relevance of the interwar thirty years of colonial rule. The dominance of settlers in the NMI at a ratio of ten to one by 1937 was the greatest rate of displacement in the empire. Settlers transformed local economies along with islanders’ daily lives, meanwhile settlers and islanders had opportunities to interact in the colonial towns which led to the emergence of some multiracial families (Chapter 3). Although islanders were informally called “third-class nationals” at the time and had limited opportunities, some people excelled in Japanese schools and got prestigious or high-paying jobs after graduation (Chapter 4).

During the war, a few dozen NMI Chamorro men were sent to Guam with the 1941 invasion and these painful experiences came to dominate public memory, yet the majority of Northern Mariana Islanders experienced this conflict as civilians running from a war not of their own making (Chapter 5). Postwar U.S. repatriation policies removed Japanese and Okinawan residents and separated multiracial families while contributing to a postwar social climate in which it has been difficult or even risky to talk about the Japanese era or family relationships that are its most enduring outcome (Chapter 6). Local NMI communities would benefit from continuing to think beyond nationalized forms of knowledge for history and identity today.



## Chapter 1) Islands Too Beautiful for their Names: Writing Northern Mariana Islands Histories

The phrase, ‘islands too beautiful for their names,’ came from an interview with a woman whose biography illustrates examples of some of this project’s key ideas. Sister Antonieta Ada is today a Catholic nun who was born on Saipan island to the Japanese Nishikawa family on April 24, 1934. She was called Nishikawa Kimiko during the Japanese period, but her parents and almost all of her Japanese family members died in the war. She became Antonieta when she was adopted by the Chamorro Ada family after the war. The Nishikawas had been friends with the Adas in Laolao on the east coast of Saipan where they lived before the war. The Adas had treated little Kimiko as though she was their own child, and she talks about her childhood as a time when she belonged to “two families.” Sister Ada is today a respected member of Saipan’s *man’amko* (elders), and her life story has been published in many places and is locally well known.<sup>1</sup>

One day in 2008 when I was packing up my recording equipment, Sister Ada and I were looking through a publication about the history of the Mariana Islands.<sup>2</sup> She read out loud the old Spanish name for the islands, “*Islas de Ladrones*” (Islands of Thieves). I asked her what she thought about that name. Sister Ada responded by saying: “*Islas de la, Ladrones. Ladrones very bad [laughs]. Isn’t it? It’s too, too...the island is too beautiful for that name [laughs]. What do you think?*”<sup>3</sup>

I have chosen this quote to encapsulate this project because it suggests an idea that has emerged as one of the most important concepts in my search for meaning in NMI

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<sup>1</sup> See Alexie Zotomayor, “Sister Antonieta Ada MMB: Finding Peace,” in the *Island Locator* (May-June 2008), 9-14; see also Bruce Petty, “My Two Families—Sister Antonieta Ada” in *Saipan: Oral Histories of the Pacific War* (McFarland, 2002), 21-24.

<sup>2</sup> Don Farrell, *Saipan* [bilingual Eng-Japanese]. (CNMI: Micronesia Productions, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Antonieta Ada, interview with the author July 15, 2008, House of Maturana, Navy Hill, Saipan.

history, one that seemed to have been an unremarkable observation for Sister Ada at the time. The islands are too beautiful for (and they represent more than) the names multiple colonizing regimes have given to the people and places in NMI history. In retrospect, it almost seems as though Sister Ada was obliquely referring to her own life when she made this observation. Like other islanders who had lived in multiracial households and went by Japanese names as children, her own name changed during the transition from the Japanese to American control. Had she decided not to share her story with others, there would have been no way to know that she was Kimiko before the war.

Another woman whom I got to know very well and interviewed extensively for this project is Escolastica Tudela Cabrera (1930–2013). She was an important entrepreneur who opened a string of successful businesses on the island of Saipan, most recently the local Chamorro bakery and grocery called Esco’s Bakehouse now Tun Goro’s SnackBar (in honor of her late husband Gregorio Cabrera, d. 2005) located on Capitol Hill, Saipan. In addition to being a business leader and mother of thirteen children, she was the first female to be elected to the Municipal Legislature of Saipan in 1963. She always seemed to enjoy talking about her life story, and has been interviewed many times. As with Sister Ada, stories about Escolastica (and her husband Gregorio) have been published in several places.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> An abridged list of articles about the life stories of Escolastica includes the following: “Escolastica and Her Starch,” *Micronesian Reporter* X:2 (Agana, Guam: Headquarters, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, March-April 1962): 2-5; Johannes Ngiraibuuch, “Profile of a businesswoman: Escolastica T. Cabrera,” *Commonwealth Focus* (Friday, August 26, 1983); “Up Close and Personal: Businessperson of the Quarter,” “Mariana Islands Visitors Guide,” Vol. 2 No. 2 (Saipan: Marianas Business Advertisement and Sales Services, April-June 1991): 31, 43, & 70; Bruce Petty, “Escolastica: Escolastica Tudela Cabrera,” in *Saipan: Oral Histories*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2002): 27; “Escolastica Tudela Cabrera: As told to Henritz Joy Palijo,” in Katharyn Tuten-Puckett, project director, “*We Drank Our Tears:*” *Memories of the Battles for Saipan and Tinian as Told by Our Elders* (Saipan: Pacific STAR Center for Young Writers, 2004): 39-40; “Hito ni rekishi ari, Esukosu ni rekishi ari: Kimottama hah-san ga kazoku

I came to understand more about how inheritances from multiple colonial influences manifest in Chamorro culture during my conversations with Esco. She told me proudly that her family has a documented genealogy going back to a Spaniard who moved to Guam during the days of Spanish rule. A self-published genealogy of the Tudela family states that a man named Francisco Tudela moved to Guam and there married a woman named Josefa D. Anderson.<sup>5</sup> Francisco was Escolastica's great grandfather, and her father's name was Vincente Ramirez Tudela. Vincente was the eighth of eleven children born to Francisca D. Ramirez and Jose A. Tudela, who was the son of Francisco and Josefa. Vincente was born in 1881 in Guam and then lived in the Northern Mariana Islands during the German times (1899-1914) when Escolastica remembers hearing that he had trained as a soldier under German command. Vincente was different from his parents in that he could speak German, and Esco recalls that he had a tattoo of the German imperial flag on his arm. When I asked her about how her dad's generation was different from his parents', she replied by saying that she remembered when her grandparents wanted to keep something secret from their children

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totomoni tsukuriageeta Saipan no aji" [History of a person, History of Esco's: The Taste of Saipan Built Up by a Courageous Mother and her Family] *Loco Saipan*, 17:10 (Oct 2007): 14; Alexie Villegas Zotomayor, "Escolastica Tudela Cabrera: Recollections," *Marianas Variety* (Monday, July 21, 2011), last accessed July 21, 2011, <http://www.mvariety.com/spice/escolastica-tudela-cabrera-recollections.php>; Alexie Villegas Zotomayor, "Escolastica Tudela Cabrera: Recollections II," *Marianas Variety* (Friday, July 22, 2011), last accessed July 22, 2011, <http://www.mvariety.com/spice/escolastica-tudela-cabrera-recollections-ii.php>; Gemma Q. Casas, "Tan Esco's 13 Blessings," in *Beach Road Magazine* (Saipan: Glimpses Publications, November 2011): 4-7; Nakayama Kyôko, ed., "Shikataganai, ne: Esuko-san no kataru Saipan no senka" [We had no choice: Esco-san talks about the ravages of war on Saipan] in *Guamu/Saipan/Marianashotô wo shiru tame no gojûshô* [54 Chapters about Guam/Saipan/ Mariana Islands (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2012): 146-150. The life story of Esco's husband, Gregorio C. Cabrera, was also published: Kamisawa Yoshiaki, "Japanese and Saipanese Lived as Friends Before War," *Marianas Oral History Series* (English Translation-5) Interview with Gregorio (Goro) C. Cabrera, Trans. Norman Havens, Adapted by Hiroshi Nakajima, *Journal of the Pacific Society* No. 58, 16:1 (June 1993): 112-122. This list does not include video interview appearances.

<sup>5</sup> Geraldine Tudela Asuncion Reyes and Michael Dewey Rogers, Jr., "A Book of the Tudela Family: Genealogy of the Marianas" (Saipan, MP: R&M Printers, 2000).

and grandchildren they would speak *Espanol linguahi*. Otherwise the family would speak Chamorro at home. Escolastica was the eleventh of fourteen children born in the nineteen-teens, twenties, and thirties who grew up during period of control by the Japanese government (1914-1944) that took over after the Germans.

While her grandparents and parents could speak Spanish and German, respectively, her generation learned the Japanese language and other subjects in the Japanese public schools. So while her elders did speak some Japanese because they had picked it up on the street, or perhaps in social education classes, it was Escolastica who biked to Garapan city in the 1930s and sold her father Vincente's cobbler wares to Japanese stores because she could speak Japanese better than him and could bargain for a good price. Her early involvement in the family business was thus both important to its success at the time, and it allowed her to develop her own business skills at a very young age. She remembered that the war came and cut short her childhood and education experiences: she made it to the third grade, but she was a hard worker and had it not been for the fighting, she might have continued for two more years (the maximum possible for most indigenous children).



**Figure 1.1: Sister Antonieta Ada (Left) and Escolastica Tudela Cabrera (Right)<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>6</sup> Left: (January 17, 2007) Antonieta Ada is pictured here standing in front of a panel where her adoptive father Juan Ada is pictured in the American Memorial Park Visitor Center, Saipan. Juan Ada was the first

From 2007 to 2011, conversations with these two women allowed me to narrow my focus on several important ideas around which I designed subsequent interviews with other people. First, when talking about the past they (naturally) privileged their own lives as frameworks from which to interpret history. Just by talking within straightforward biographic frameworks, they often told stories that compared one colonial period to another, or blurred the boundaries between what was “Japanese,” “Chamorro,” or “American” (among other signifiers). Second, memories about lives that cut across colonial regimes seemed to be inherited, especially in the case of the Chamorro elder Escolastica. Her stories spoke of how earlier indigenous generations from the first half of the twentieth century had known even more rapid colonial changes than her generation who lived during the century’s second half, and these family stories and legacies continue to contribute to cosmopolitan indigenous cultures.

Within these conversations, nostalgic memories of the 1930s also emerged which ran counter to the overwhelmingly negative portrayals of Japanese imperialism in most history texts and in local English language narratives. Today, the dominant narrative about NMI history assumes that the U.S. liberated islanders from Japanese rule, which by contrast is portrayed as a negative, oppressive, or harmful period. Islanders’ memories suggest that colonial periods have been similar or even indistinguishable at times, and do not conform to the dominant narrative. They have revealed insights about the nature of the nation-building processes associated with colonialism, as well as differences between various past and present colonial regimes.

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mayor of the island after WWII. Right: (September 22, 2011) Escolastica Cabrera at her home in Capitol Hill, Saipan with her 1996-1997 “Citizen of the Year” award from the Saipan Rotary Club recognizing her business acumen and leadership in the local community.

Based primarily on my own interviews as well as oral histories by other researchers, the main argument I advance in this dissertation is that local memories, especially those about the Japanese colonial period, have been ignored by the dominant U.S. liberation narrative paradigm that portrays current resident populations as members of the ideological U.S. nation-state and justifies U.S. territorial status in the present day. These memories suggest that life during the Japanese colonial period was often pleasant, that many islanders made great achievements in Japanese colonial schools and society, and that this period was in some ways better than the postwar U.S. militarized forms of rule. These memories also suggest that colonial regimes have been comparable and complicit, and that relationships between islanders and former settlers from East Asia were irreparably damaged by racialized postwar American policies.

### **1.1 Background**

The Northern Mariana Islands have been colonized by many powers within early modern and modern histories of empire. The sequence of colonial regimes have created conditions that give rise to persistent intra-archipelagic tensions as well as cosmopolitan indigenous islander cultures. Yet most histories about these regimes have not considered them in comparative or transnational terms. Historiographies of this region in the languages of the most recent two empires—Japan and the U.S.—tend to be organized around nationalized frameworks which do not situate the archipelago within an Asia-Pacific regional or local context. Instead, most Japanese and English language histories of

the Northern Mariana Islands present national political bodies in charge of administering island affairs as the center of knowledge production in history.<sup>7</sup>

From the perspective of indigenous populations, the names given to the time periods associated with the mainstream understandings of NMI history have been more reflective of the worldviews of foreign powers than island residents. This statement is a basic postcolonial argument that remains under theorized in the NMI where colonial processes remain unfinished.

This project actively questions nationalized forms of knowledge production about history and is situated at the intersection of Japanese history, Pacific Island studies of imperialism and colonialism, and U.S. territory histories. Although I am writing this dissertation from within a modern Japanese history program, this is not a straightforward “Japanese” history. I am establishing my own field by using ethnographic and oral history methods to push conversations about history out of the dominant paradigm of knowledge production. This is important because local voices interpret the past in ways that exceed the confines of American, Japanese, and other histories that have tended to present islanders as colonized bystanders to historical change instead of agents of change. Assessing local interpretations of the ongoing relevance of various historical colonial regimes opens up a space for contemplating larger questions about the nature of colonial power relations and everyday life.

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<sup>7</sup> National histories outline categories of inclusion and exclusion around both territories and imagined citizens or national subjects. National histories portray national subjects in racialized terms. David Goldberg argues convincingly that the concept of race has been central to the emergence of the modern nation state, and that national subjects are always racialized subjects. David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial State* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002).

Most NMI histories do not interpret the ways in which hundreds of years of multiple colonial regimes have created conditions for extra-national, transnational, and comparative forms of consciousness about history and belonging to emerge in local communities. Most histories present colonial eras as mutually distinct periods that do not overlap with one another.<sup>8</sup> This is in spite of the fact that both national (Japan, U.S.) and international world bodies (League of Nations, United Nations) have held administrative and/or sovereign power over this region as shown in Figure 1.2. This means that the boundaries of colonial authority and the nature of power have been complex and subject to interpretation in the past and through the present day. Exactly how to define the nature of the relationships between world powers represented in Figure 1.2 is debatable.

A) Nations	
Spain	1521-1899
Germany	1899-1914
Japan	1914-1944
U.S.	1944-1990
B) World Bodies of Nations	
League of Nations (Japan's Mandate)	1919-1933
United Nations (U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Isl.)	1947-1990

**Figure 1.2: Colonial Powers in the Northern Mariana Islands, Micronesia**

As the figure above illustrates, for most of the twentieth century, or for a total of fifty-seven years, the NMI (and Micronesia) were colonies of the world body of nations

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<sup>8</sup> Don Farrell has taken on the entirety of Northern Mariana Islands histories in his CNMI Public School System textbook. This textbook has been essential to public education and has since 1990 provided CNMI high school students with a foundation in local history, and its scope excludes questioning nation-state frameworks for writing history. Don A Farrell, *History of the Northern Mariana Islands* (Saipan, CNMI: Public School System, 1991).



as it was defined at the time.<sup>9</sup> This makes it difficult to define precisely what colonialism means in local history. Therefore in the NMI, historical research has the potential to productively question the meaning of this term. Conversations with indigenous senior citizens undertaken for this dissertation implicitly called into question the meaning of colonialism, especially when people compared one period to another. Their comparisons have allowed them to make sense of the nature of life in the past versus the present day, at the same time as they also demonstrate that the Japanese and the U.S. periods are comparable and that they share certain traits in common.

Inspired by my informants, I think of colonialism as primarily a composite set of lived experiences emerging from ongoing processes of negotiating imposed structures. I agree with Robert Young who defined the term in contrast to imperialism: “While imperialism is susceptible to analysis as a concept... colonialism needs to be analyzed primarily as a practice.”<sup>10</sup> If imperialism can be defined largely as a set of ideas and policies tied to an original location of knowledge production, colonialism is the work of localizing imperial knowledge and thereby changing these ideas and policies to serve local needs. Thus in this project, the term colonialism primarily refers to human actions that enable people to survive and thrive as they adapt introduced systems of power to local contexts.

In the NMI where three imperial powers have come and gone in the past century alone, libraries and archives in various countries hold records dating to these different time periods. Because indigenous Northern Mariana Islanders did not produce their own

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<sup>9</sup> In the case of the NM islands north of Rota where the U.S. Navy Technical Training Unit took over for ten years, the islands were under U.S. administration subject to UN oversight for forty-seven years.

<sup>10</sup> Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001): 16-17.

text-based records during most of history, authors writing the archipelago's history have largely been outsiders citing a preponderance of fragmentary and foreign evidence. It is more appropriate to say that according to archived historical accounts, there are multiple pasts on record rather than one History of the NMI in existence. Because of this circumstance, oral testimonies from people who lived through the rapid regime changes are particularly important as one way to provide glimpses between and around gaps in the sequence of colonizing regimes.

A few researchers have explicitly questioned the lasting consequences for local populations of multiple colonial regimes in the NMI.<sup>11</sup> Overall, however, the frequency of regime changes in NMI history has had a negative affect on scholarly interest in indigenous islanders' culture and traditions. Indigenous islanders living in these neocolonial islands have been seen as hyper-politicized in popular and academic discourse alike. This is to say that compared to other indigenous Micronesians, anthropologists and ethnologists have tended to see the Mariana Islands' indigenous Chamorro people as less attractive objects of study among the various potential Micronesian sites for research. Chamorro people and culture have historically been considered mixed, hybrid, derivative, or creole and apparently therefore relatively lacking in authentic indigenous traditions due mainly to centuries of Spanish colonization,

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<sup>11</sup> For research that assesses the consequences for Northern Mariana Islanders of multiple periods of colonial rule, see Neil Bowers, *Problems of Resettlement on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, Mariana Islands* (Saipan: Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Division of Historic Preservation, 2001); see also Keith Camacho, *Cultures of Commemoration: The Politics of War, Memory, and History in the Mariana Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011); see also Jose S. Dela Cruz, *From Colonialism to Self Government: The Northern Mariana Islands Experience* (Potomac, MD: Scripta, 2010); see also Laurel Heath, "Education for Confusion: A Study of Education in the Mariana Islands 1688-1941," *The Journal of Pacific History* 10:1 (1975): 20-37; see also Dirk A. Ballendorf, et.al., "An Oral History of the Japanese Schooling Experience of Chamorros at Saipan and Rota in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands," Unpublished manuscript, November 1986 (University of Guam: Micronesian Area Research Center).

religious and social assimilation, and intermarriage.<sup>12</sup>

When compared to other Pacific Islanders, then, Northern Mariana Islanders have tended to be seen less as anthropological objects and more as political subjects of colonial regimes requiring re-education away from their lingering attachment to the last hegemon. Chamorros and Carolinian Refaluwasch islanders are today considered indigenous to the Northern Mariana Islands in popular culture and by academics, but the definition of a person of Northern Mariana Descent is a legal, political concept that remains contentious.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, overlapping colonial imprints continue to create conditions from which indigenous NMI cultures emerge that are at once indebted to various historical colonialisms while also, importantly, not being reducible to a sum of their parts.

One cannot reduce the story of the Japanese or the U.S. territorial eras in the NMI to a sum total of the colonial laws established to govern or educate people. As indigenous islanders' stories suggest, government laws and economic livelihoods that provide structure to day-to-day life do not represent the entirety of human experience: indeed,

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<sup>12</sup> In the case of Japanese colonial anthropologists researching the peoples inhabiting their new Nan'yô Guntô (South Sea Islands) territory, the definition of Chamorro as an islander with Spanish and Filipino bloodlines from the Mariana Islands. In Japanese colonial era popular culture, the term Chamorro could be understood to signify not just indigenous Mariana Islanders but a mixed-race Micronesian islander. During this time when so-called racial purity was thought of as a marker of authentic identity, people who were thought to be racially pure were seen as more identifiable with an original homeland. In this way of thinking, Chamorros may have been seen as inauthentic, mixed-race islanders who did not live by age-old traditions but by semi-Europeanized life systems and were therefore imagined to be only partially originally from the Northern Mariana Islands.

<sup>13</sup> The definition of a person indigenous to the Northern Mariana Islands according to the Commonwealth Constitution, Article XII, Section 4 is as follows: "A person of Northern Marianas descent is a person who is a citizen or national of the United States and who is of at least one-quarter Northern Marianas Chamorro or Northern Marianas Carolinian blood or a combination thereof or an adopted child of a person of Northern Marianas descent if adopted while under the age of eighteen years. For purposes of determining Northern Marianas descent, a person shall be considered to be a full-blooded Northern Marianas Chamorro or Northern Marianas Carolinian if that person was born or domiciled in the Northern Mariana Islands by 1950 and was a citizen of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands before the termination of the Trusteeship with respect to the Commonwealth." Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Law Revision Commission, "The Commonwealth Constitution, Article XII: Restrictions on Alienation of Land, Section 4: Person of Northern Marianas Descent," last accessed August 4, 2015, <http://www.cnmilaw.org/articlexii.html>.

islanders were not fully interpolated in Japanese colonial structures nor have they been completely incorporated in contemporary American structures of governance. In this project, I use the term everyday life<sup>14</sup> to mean aspects of life that emerge from but also exceed the workings of capitalist modernity. I reconstruct history from the perspective of everyday life as a space at once emerging from, but also outside of, colonial governing systems and capitalist modernity.

## 1.2 Research Questions

Instead of thinking primarily of Mariana Islanders as political subjects who currently struggle on the edge of the U.S. political map, I have been interested in taking a closer look at individual NMI senior citizens' explanations of their own identities and histories as a means of rethinking local subjectivity in the past and present. I have been interested in reconsidering what it means to be 'from' the NMI by talking with people who have lived there the longest. My central inquiry in this project has been: how does the oldest generation of senior citizens in the NMI talk about their childhoods during the Japanese colonial era, as they are people alive today whose own lifetimes have persisted

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<sup>14</sup> Henri Lefebvre writes that 'everyday' leisure activities are a consequence of modernity and capitalist modernization: capitalism demands the reproduction of its relationships of production-consumption at the same time as these alienating relationships give rise to the emergence of spaces of leisure and self-creation. He argues that leisure activities are important because, "they lead us back towards the feeling of presence, towards nature and the life of the senses..." Capitalist modernity is the site of most human activity in Lefebvre's reading, and his understanding of everyday life envisions the production of a self-made moments of escape at once borne from, and moving away from, relationships guiding capitalist economies. Thus everyday life within modernity can be thought of as entailing the necessary seeking of a "feeling of presence" in nature and sensory experiences that are not prioritized in the workings of capitalism, which in Lefebvre's rendering, appears qualitatively modern, rational, and progress-driven. Lefebvre's definition of everyday life does not perfectly fit the case of the NMI under Japanese and American colonialism, because not all islanders have been immersed and active in colonial political economies. Nevertheless, I use this term because capitalism in the NMI has incorporated islanders as producers and consumers to a significant degree during the Japanese period, and this remains true through the present day. Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life, Volume 1* (New York: Verso, 1991) 40-41.

through the last few regime changes? Considering that American liberation narratives about history are dominant in the NMI today, my broader question has been, how do some stories about the Japanese colonial period in the NMI become well known, while others remain obscure? In order to provide context for assessing the memories of senior citizens, the second question was necessary as a means of considering how a dominant narrative emerged to either incorporate or marginalize their perspectives.

This project reframes the concepts ‘history’ and ‘colonialism’ through local interpretations, and exposes how imperial definitions of people had deleterious outcomes for residents whose intimate bonds existed outside of imperial categories. As suggested earlier, archival evidence about these islands and islanders that has been produced by the empires, nations, and world bodies of nations associated with NMI colonialisms appears fragmented from perspectives based in everyday life. In contrast, human lifespans that have extended beyond or between these regimes occupy vantage points that connect one regime to another and are productive of comparative and transnational knowledge. Stepping to the side of the American liberation narrative paradigm enlivens NMI history by acknowledging that Japanese colonialism has also significantly impacted local populations who interpret the relevance of this and other past eras using transnational and comparative frameworks. Local perspectives on history and colonialism show that Japan and the U.S. as the two most recent historical colonial powers are not only comparable, at times they can appear indistinguishable.

To date there has been little published research about indigenous islanders’ memories of the Japanese NMI towns, meanwhile published accounts in Japanese of

Japanese settlers' memories are much more common.<sup>15</sup> Beginning especially in the 1990s, researchers began to focus on recording and analyzing these memories before this generation is no longer around to share them.<sup>16</sup> In this dissertation I draw from research by other scholars who interviewed Northern Mariana Islanders about their memories of the Japanese era. The most important among these is a 1986 paper co-authored by Dirk A. Ballendorf, former director of the Micronesian Area Research Center of the University of Guam. Dr. Ballendorf managed a team of researchers as they interviewed thirty-two people in Saipan and Rota about their memories of the Japanese schools. Their project was funded by the American Association for State and Local History, and was called, "An Oral History of the Japanese Schooling Experience of Chamorros at Saipan and Rota in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands."<sup>17</sup> Their work was part of a larger group of oral history projects undertaken around this same period.<sup>18</sup> Far more

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<sup>15</sup> Japanese settler memories of living in Saipan provided source material for Susumu Nomura's account of daily life in Saipan under Japanese colonial rule, *Nihon-ryō Saipantō no ichimannichi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006).

<sup>16</sup> For oral history collections of NM islanders' memories, see Bruce Petty, *Saipan: Oral Histories of the Pacific War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002); See also Pacific Star Center for Young Writers, *"We Drank Our Tears:" Memories of the Battles of Saipan and Tinian as Told by Our Elders* (Saipan, CNMI: Pacific Star Young Writer's Foundation, 2004). Unpublished oral history interviews conducted in the Chamorro language by Herbert Del Rosario with over seventy indigenous NM islanders in the 1990s and early 2000s are held at the CNMI Archives at the Northern Marianas College. From among the seventy VHS tapes, eighteen have been transcribed and translated from the Chamorro language to date. Herbert Del Rosario, "Oral History Project in the Northern Mariana Islands," 70 VHS tapes and 18 corresponding transcripts, NMC Archives, Saipan CNMI: 1994-2000.

<sup>17</sup> Dirk A. Ballendorf, et.al., "Oral History."

<sup>18</sup> Other oral historiography projects undertaken by the University of Guam Micronesian Area Research Center (MARC) started in 1980 with a project called "World War Two Experiences of Chamorros at Guam and Saipan" funded by the National Park Service, which produced four volumes that are available at MARC. In 1983, the Atkins Kroll Company of Guam on the occasion of their 70th anniversary funded another oral history project, and the resulting report entitled, "Seventy Years of Atkins Kroll on Guam," is also at MARC. Also, MARC proposed and received funding from the Japan Foundation for a project called, "An Oral Historiography of the Japanese Administration in Palau" that was completed in Dec 1985 (Ballendorf, "Oral History," 1-2). In 1982, the Historic Preservation Office of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands at Saipan funded a project called, "History of the Japanese Administration in Micronesia," undertaken by Mark R. Peattie. The final report of this project is available at MARC, and Peattie later

people with memories of the Japanese colonial era were still alive and in good physical and mental health in the early 1980s, which makes their unpublished seventy six-page paper a valuable summary of islanders' recollections of Japanese education programs and society in general. Ballendorf and his team were able to record the memories of several Chamorros who spoke excellent Japanese and had reputations for having enjoyed telling stories about the Japanese period. Some of these individuals' personal stories were also recorded in Japanese colonial publications and reports. Thus although these highly educated Chamorro senior citizens had already passed away years before I started my own research, the Ballendorf manuscript contains stories that had not been recorded elsewhere told by some very important islanders who lived during the Japanese era.

Unfortunately this team of researchers did not use tape recorders, and instead relied on handwritten notes. Because of this, at times they admit that individual islanders' first-person accounts have been reconstructed using words that "might appear to have come from people with more than a third grade education. In no case, however, was any of the substantive detail changed or misrepresented," they write.<sup>19</sup> The voracity and rigor with which Ballendorf perused research lends a great deal of credibility to the content of this report, although it remains an unpublished paper held in the Micronesian Area Research Center collection at the University of Guam. I have excerpted and reassembled some of this report's most revealing and riveting individual examples in support of my arguments. Although I disagree with some of their conclusions, in making use herein of this study's content I wish to recognize this important yet unpublished research.

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published what is still the most important survey history of this period, called *Nan'yô: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1885-1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988).

<sup>19</sup> Ballendorf, "Oral History," 6.

I have also drawn from a half dozen interviews conducted in Japanese by Yoshiaki Kamisawa, a Japanese man who had been living in Rota for several years in the late 1980s when he began recording conversations and working with Hiroshi Nakajima to transcribe and edit these conversations for publication. Because Kamisawa spoke with the Chamorro elders in Japanese, he captured variety of specific vocabulary words and details about the Japanese period that would not have surfaced as readily in an English language interview. Kamisawa's reports were published between 1992 and 1993 in both Japanese and English as part of the *Journal of the Pacific Society's* Marianas Oral History Series.

In addition to the materials in this dissertation, I am producing a collection of interview recordings and transcripts to donate to archives in the NMI for posterity. In this way, I aspire to give back to local communities that participated in this project. In the following section, I summarize the methods I used to gather these interviews that are the primary sources for this dissertation.

### **1.3 Interviews in the Mariana Islands**

The collection of recorded interviews interpreted in this project represents stories solicited by someone inhabiting a local outsider position who openly expressed interest in Japanese perspectives as a tactic to draw out memories of this era. By local outsider, I am referring to the fact that I was born in Yap and have lived most of my life in Saipan (twenty-two years). Prior to graduate school, I got to know some *man'amko* (elders) and hear their stories while I was working at the American Memorial Park in Saipan (2003-2007). Many people I interviewed for this project know me from my years growing up in



Saipan, from my time working at the park, or through other family members who still live there.

I conducted field research on Guam, Saipan, and Tinian mainly from 2012-2013 in the form of interviews with twenty-three senior indigenous citizens who remember the Japanese colonial era from 1914-1944. The preliminary interviews I conducted were with Sister Antonieta Ada and Escolastica Cabrera in 2007 and 2008, and with those pilot recordings I began conducting interviews with University of California Institutional Review Board approval in the summer of 2011 (project no. 111076).

Because of the many intersecting historical factors that shape how the eldest generation of indigenous NM islanders talk about their childhoods in the Japanese days, I spent a great deal of time in the early stages of my research refining the ideas that were important for investigating contemporary memories of the Japanese era in the NMI. Traveling between San Diego and Saipan in order to cross-reference university library sources with my primary informants' stories was essential to this process. During this phase I decided my framework would be a working concept called 'living colonialism' that involved self-critical awareness of the limitations and possibilities departing from my own and my family's intimate familiarity with, and active role in, recent CNMI history and present day life on Saipan. Throughout this manuscript, when I have considered my background relevant to research results or a sequence of events, I have disclosed these details.

In October 2012 I announced my project in local newspapers in a press statement that drew significant responses. The statement read:

People who remember living during the Japanese colonial period (1914-1944) are invited to be part of an ongoing research project conducted by Saipan resident Jessica Jordan. Research questions focus on understanding memories of the Japanese period in terms of how they are relevant for life nowadays. Stories about Japanese colonial influences in the Northern Marianas that may appear less often in mainstream sources are of special concern. Jessica Jordan, a PhD candidate in history at the University of California, San Diego, is in the Northern Marianas conducting research until early 2013.

This notice was published once in both the Saipan-based Marianas Variety and Saipan Tribune newspapers, and was published intermittently in the community pages of the Guam-based Pacific Daily News from late October 2012 through early January 2013.

After publicizing this call for participation, I was able to pursue interviews with around twenty new participants who contacted me by email and by phone. Some people reached out to me who had never before spoken on record about their memories. In addition, as a result of my press release I was invited to participate in radio interviews on a local station and one interview on Australian National Radio. I wanted to explain my project to the widest possible audience in order to reach as many people as I could who were still alive and who remembered the Japanese days in these islands. Other than through snowball sampling, there were no methods outside of a public press release to search for people among the current resident population who were alive during the old days of Japanese rule. To my knowledge, there have never been any clubs of indigenous Northern Mariana Islanders whose goal or mission statement pertains to sharing or documenting memories of life under Japanese rule.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Since 2007 there has existed a Japanese Chamorro club in Guam called the Guam Nikkei Association, and since 2012 members can include, “anyone over the age of eighteen, residents of Guam and whose Japanese ancestry may have come not just from Japan and its prefectures including Okinawa, but Hawaii, the mainland United States, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshalls, the Federated States of

It was essential for me to remain on the island of Saipan for many months to both research and write while I pursued meetings with people now in their 80s and 90s. Even after I had done the preliminary work of convincing people to talk with me about their sometimes painful memories of the Japanese era and the war, and agreement to get together was still no guarantee that a meeting would indeed take place. Because of the precarious health conditions of many of these senior citizens, meetings were often postponed many times. I had to be patient and wait for a day and time when people would feel well enough to talk with me.

In some cases, I waited several months to meet with people, and in other cases I never had the chance because the individuals never recovered before passing away or a family member intervened and cancelled the interview citing health concerns (sometimes mental health). One such case was especially painful since family members knew of the stories they had heard their father talk about for years, and upon hearing of my project had contacted me in the hope that I might record his memories in Japanese before it was too late. To see their beloved patriarch unable to remember his childhood or talk like he used to seemed to have been very difficult for younger family members to witness. In that case I sat with the family and informally talked with them about what they remembered their father used to talk about, and although I did not audio record the conversation I took notes and followed up with a thank-you note and copies of photographs I had taken just as I had with all of my interviews.

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Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, and elsewhere in the global arena.” Peter R. Onedera, “Guam Nikkei Association History,” last modified February 1, 2013, assessed April 29, 2015, <http://guamnikkeihistory.blogspot.com>. There is no similar association for Japanese Chamorros in the NMI.

Before conducting interviews during my 2012-13 research year, I met with local people engaged in public historical interpretation to explain and gain support for my research. These local historians and educators helped by recommending people with whom to meet, and they helped me understand relationships between individual participants whom they often knew personally in ways that I did not.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to talking with people in the Marianas, I was able to get to know a handful of indigenous islanders from other parts of Japan's former empire in Micronesia during August 2011 when I travelled to the Marshall Islands, Chuuk, and Pohnpei with the Project 35 team organized by Greg Dvorak. Funded by the Toyota Foundation, this project sought to both explore and foster historical and contemporary connections between Japan and Micronesia. That summer, together we visited institutions and met with senior citizens across Micronesia, and it was during this trip when I first began to consider differences between NMI indigenous experiences and those of people from other islands in the old Nan'yô Guntô. Some comparative examples used in this project are the result of the way that my views on Micronesia changed during this trip. With the team, I helped to conduct Japanese and English-language interviews with a handful of indigenous Micronesian people, and these recordings remain in Dvorak's Project 35 archive.

The research participants whose stories I recorded in the NMI beginning the following year in 2012-13 were the primary sources I used to organize this dissertation. Interviewees had the option of allowing me to record the interview, but it was not

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<sup>21</sup> These local historians and educators include Herbert Del Rosario, Don Farrell, Herman Guerrero, Gordon Marciano, Sam McPhetres, and Scott Russell.

required for participation. In total I recorded twenty-seven interviews and transcribed handwritten notes during one interview. I always acquired written consent prior to an interview, whether or not it was audio recorded. If participants allowed audio recording, they had the option of agreeing to donate the resulting transcripts to NMI-based public archives upon completion of the dissertation project.<sup>22</sup> For historical reasons I believe it is necessary to allow participants the option of granting public access to memories shared with me during those meetings. These transcripts that will be donated to public archives total twenty-four in number. I continue to send copies of the Mp3 audio files and transcripts to each participant and to incorporate their edits whenever they are provided to me. Participants have the option of deleting part or all of the recorded interviews and the corresponding interview transcripts at any time prior to donation. I am around halfway through this process and look forward to being able to donate the Mp3 recordings and transcripts to public archives for posterity.

Before starting an interview, the basic message I gave to people about this project included the following:

I am interested in memories and histories about the Japanese colonial period in the NMI. While there are many books and films that deal with life during this time, these sources do not represent all of the different ways that people still talk about this period. I want to know how people still live with memories of this time period. This project considers both the content and form of different memories and histories of the Japanese era that are circulated or spoken about in the NMI today.

The purpose of this interview research has been to discern what NMI history means from perspectives of everyday life for the island's longest-term residents—

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<sup>22</sup> My archiving permission forms allow me to donate transcripts and Mp3 files to archives in the Northern Mariana Islands, which include the Northern Mariana Islands Humanities Council and the CNMI Public Archives at the Northern Marianas College.

specifically how people make the Japanese colonial past knowable toward living with its consequences in the U.S. territorial present. I tried to make especially this point clear during my introduction.

Qualified informants with memories of the period included people who remembered living in the Japanese colonial towns in the NMI. Qualified industry informants included people who work in fields such as government agencies (which administer museums, schools, and civic events), non-profits (which collaborate with government and industry to organize events and projects, fund publications, and sponsor research), and tourism industries (the NMI local government bureau of tourism affairs and private tour companies). All of these groups locally produce histories about the Japanese period. I assessed an overall picture of interpretive mandates established by these groups as they manifested in Saipan, the CNMI capital island, and tried to understand the role each plays in establishing various public imagined communities. When read together, this data comprises the evidence for my claim that echoes previous studies that show that a dominant U.S. liberation narrative pervades English-language histories of the modern Mariana Islands.

I have signed-up twenty-eight study participants in total, with twenty-three of them representing individuals who are the main target of my study: people with experience living during the Japanese era. The remaining five have been historians who have helped me to understand the target participants' memories within the dominant paradigm. For both groups—those with industry expertise and those who experienced the Japanese era—I opened interviews by acquiring basic biographic data. This data included

the participant's full name, date of birth, place of birth, both parents' full names, immediate family member's names, current residence, and profession.

Among the informants with experience living during the Japanese days, I tended to begin by asking a series of questions about what they remembered from childhood. I did not insist on directing an interview by asking questions unless the participant seemed reticent to speak freely, or unless stories strayed into exceedingly personal areas such as family medical histories or family scandals. In order to avoid replicating national frameworks, as I got better at conducting interviews I learned to phrase questions not by asking about "the Japanese era" but by using biographic frames of reference—I would ask about childhood, school days, first jobs, and etcetera. I would ask questions in Japanese if the participant expressed an ability to communicate in the language, which most people with experience growing up during the Japanese era did, at least part of the time. Most participants did not require much encouragement before talking freely, as many had told their stories before and had figured out ways of talking about even painful memories of war deaths. However I was not always granted my requests for interviews, and it is likely that painful memories still prevent many people from talking about this past at all. Wariness about white, academic researchers likely also factored into some of the polite rejections I received.

Over time I became more familiar with the common threads running throughout stories. During an interview, once I had an impression about a person's basic biography I would proceed to ask them specifically about these threads. It is standard professional practice to ask open-ended questions that do not lead a person to provide certain types of responses, lest these responses reflect more upon the framing of questions than the

qualities of the memories themselves. After all, I wanted people to be comfortable telling me whatever details they felt were important, rather than starting out by narrowing my focus on a set of criteria in order to guide the extraction of content.

While heeding warnings against asking leading questions, when there were lulls in the conversation I would ask about specific Japanese-language keywords. These keywords included: *santô kokumin* (third-class national), *tômin* (islander) or Kanaka (term for Carolinian islanders), *shôgakkô* vs. *kôgakkô* (elementary vs. public school), prominent place names such as Garapan or Charanka village, *satôkibi* (sugar cane), Nan'yô Bôeki Kaisha or Nan'yô Kôhatsu Kabushiki-gaisha (dominant companies operating on the islands at the time). I would ask about these keywords in the following way, “did you ever hear about/ do you remember anything about (fill in the term).” These keywords tended to bring back a flood of memories that would kick-start conversations that had momentarily slowed. When appropriate, I would ask what people were doing during the war, how they survived, and if they lost any relatives.

Prior to the interview I tried but did not always have the opportunity to explain my own family's background on the island and my approaches to history. I did not want people to feel as though I was not willing to share information about myself, since I was asking about intimate details of their lives. Instances when I failed included those meetings when a person took off on a monologue and I was not expected to lead the conversation. These particular individuals are or were skilled storytellers and their stories have been published many times elsewhere.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> People whose stories had been previously published include Antonieta Ada, Escolastica Cabrera, Lino Olopai, and David Sablan.



Whenever possible I would explicitly explain to people that I grew up on Saipan and that this experience made me skeptical of both U.S. and Japanese books and films about history. I tried to make people aware that the U.S., Japan, and other nations would be available for criticism and that there were no topics that were off-limits as far as I was concerned. I likewise made it clear that I was not interested in asking them about the “facts” of history through the interview—awareness of the names, dates, and events noted in history books was something my training in history had given me, I explained. In contrast, I wanted to know what the people thought about history and about their own lives within it. I wanted to know how they saw themselves as a different generation from today’s youth. In general, my goal was to walk away with a sense of how and why they had formed opinions about their own memories and about history.

To this end, creating a basic biographic sketch of each participant was central to creating a full picture of the person’s lifetime as the filter through which his or her memories took shape. Although many people would start by warning me that they did not know anything about the past and they only knew about their own lives, I assured them that this was what I wanted to know and they should not feel like they had to stretch the truth or tell me something because they thought I wanted to hear it. I told them that whatever they felt like telling me or not was okay. Likewise, when explaining myself to interviewees’ family members who had offered to put me in touch with their elder relatives, I would provide the above explanation of my intent.

Telling people these things in a forthright manner usually fostered a relaxed atmosphere for the interview. Although again, with some people I did not find an opportunity to fully explain myself because some people were content to direct the

meeting. Often at the end of the conversations averaging two to three hours, participants would thank me for allowing them the opportunity to remember their youthful past in great detail. I began to see that people were feeling happy about my interest and attention to the minutiae of their childhoods. Eventually I came to understand that some of what was happening during our meetings was the telling of stories in order to remember and perform a certain identity that had been dormant. Their beliefs about themselves, once I could roughly outline them as such, in general informed my own beliefs about them. In the process of writing, I have also tried myself to embody some of the lessons their stories teach. This dissertation has presented the outcome of these conversations supplemented by archival research in Japanese and English language sources.

#### **1.4 Interpreting Memories**

This dissertation does not represent all indigenous islanders' memories of the Japanese period through the present day, and instead reassembles and explains what I propose are among the most important common threads marginalized by the American liberation paradigm. In order to manage the process of interpreting and organizing the results of my own and other interview-based research, I have drawn from an example set by Gail Herschatter. Her description of a "good enough story" helps me to think about the potential of memory as a source of insight into history:

By [good enough story] I mean a story that does not provide a complete understanding of the past, but instead surprises and engenders thought, unspooling in different directions depending on which thread the listener picks up. A good-enough story is available to reinterpretation; it can be woven into many larger

narratives.<sup>24</sup>

Like Herschatter suggests, memories are not usually voiced in an organized way that lends to a “complete understanding of the past.” The memories I collected and assessed for this project have most often been fragments that became the catalysts for further research by inspiring me to ask follow-up questions. I investigated Japanese and English-language sources to connect memory fragments with policies and social systems that heavily structured life in the islands throughout different periods.

I recorded and reassembled individual memories towards demonstrating how local senior citizens have come to express recollections about the Japanese days in ways that may overlap with one another and sometimes (but not always) with dominant versions of history. I have drawn upon archival sources to situate memory fragments within historical time periods, and to help clarify common threads that surfaced in more than one interviewee’s recollections. In this way, this project assesses the most important “good enough” stories told by indigenous Northern Mariana Islanders about their lives during the Japanese period and beyond.

Overall, two threads in particular stand out. These include the presence of feelings of both ambivalence and nostalgia<sup>25</sup> for this era, as well as the presence of multiracial

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<sup>24</sup> Gail Herschatter, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China’s Collective Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> Nostalgia in Micronesia for the days before WWII has been reported by other sources. See Lin Poyer, Suzanne Falgout and Laurence Marshall Carucci, *The Typhoon of War: Micronesian Experiences of the Pacific War* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001); Grant K. Goodman and Felix Moos, editors, *The United States and Japan in the Western Pacific: Micronesia and Papua New Guinea* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981): 43; Ballendorf, “Oral History, 71 & 76; Alan J. Greenberger, “Japan as a Colonial Power: The Micronesian Example, *Asian Profile* 2:2 (April 1974): 155; Willard Price, *America’s Paradise Lost* (New York: The John Day Company, 1966): 23, 95-110, & 197-218; Robert Trumbull, *Paradise in Trust: A Report on Americans in Micronesia, 1946-1958* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1959): 23, 87, 97, & 136.

Japanese-Chamorro and Japanese-Carolinian islander families. These two threads point to the ways in which the dominant liberation paradigm has not been “good enough” to account for indigenous people’s perspectives. With a focus on valorizing the U.S. role in WWII at the expense of a more nuanced understanding of the legacies of intense Japanese settler colonial (not just wartime) activities, this paradigm has ignored the long-term consequences of local intimacies that first emerged when these islands and islanders were part of the Japanese empire.

#### 1.4.1 Ambivalence and Nostalgia

In Guam at the southernmost end of the Mariana archipelago, memories of Japanese colonialism focus on Japan’s wartime occupation (1941-1944). In contrast, many people not just in the Northern Mariana Islands but also in different parts of Micronesia have nostalgic memories of the Japanese era. This was a period during which the local population witnessed widespread agricultural and industrial development of the islands alongside the integration of its territories and peoples into capitalist and colonial modernity on a previously unknown scale. Rather than think of nostalgia as a sentiment that is willingly or unwillingly ignorant of colonial violence, I understand this nostalgia as primarily a longing for lives and livelihoods lost to the war.

Portraying colonialism and war as separate enables a certain kind of nostalgia for the Japanese era as distinct from the chaos and suffering of war. Interviewees told me that the colonial period ended when the Japanese military arrived, turned school buildings into barracks, and eventually sent islanders out of the towns and villages to live on their farms while the military took all other resources for their own use. Their everyday lives

changed appreciably as the battle lines approached and Japanese military rule came to dominate. The Japanese colonial days were perhaps, arguably, peaceful and happy times especially when compared to war.

Many people have referred to the thriving economy of those days as having been good for islanders. The bustling Japanese economy centered on sugar cane agriculture was one among many elements of Japan's deeply transformative settler colonial project in the NMI. Islanders occupied many kinds of jobs in this economy, and they were almost always paid less than settlers. The Japanese colony in Micronesia that had been economically profitable by the late 1920s also contrasted sharply with the near total cessation of economic activity throughout the immediate postwar period of U.S. Navy control. For about fifteen years after the end of the war, U.S. CIA training in several NM islands prohibited commercial activity in these islands until 1962. It is understandable that people might point out these differences when recollecting changes they experienced during the 1920s-1950s time period. Because most islanders had active roles in the Japanese settler towns and then suddenly found their lives restricted to roles that supported the U.S. Navy, it is no wonder that many people who experienced both Japanese and U.S. colonialisms have said that during the Japanese days, the economy was good.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that nostalgia should not be subject to critique. In the words of Keith Camacho, "prewar memories of peace actually work to conceal what was, in reality, a violent era of American and Japanese colonialisms in the Mariana

Islands.”<sup>26</sup> Repeated and ongoing colonial violence is a defining feature of Mariana Islands history, and by pointing out the existence of nostalgia I do not mean to suggest otherwise. Isolating the war, or thinking of it as the primary or exclusive domain of violence, could also make it seem as though such violence is historical or does not persist through the present day.

Nostalgia is not the only sentiment that characterizes memories. Ambivalent stories from the Japanese colonial period include memories of islanders being seen as lower class in Japanese colonial cultures. Many people recall that the pejorative slur *santô kokumin* (third-class national) referred to islanders in local settler-dominated society. If Japanese from the mainland were viewed as *ittô* (first-class), and Okinawans were *nitô* (second-class), Chamorros and Carolinians were known as *santô kokumin*. Memories of being called these pejorative names and others are as common as nostalgic recollections. Many people also understandably have terrible memories of WWII, which in their descriptions, was a conflict between Japan and the U.S. that wounded the islands and islanders but was not fundamentally about islanders.

Ambivalence is not antithetical to nostalgia. When telling stories, interviewees demonstrated that they could hold both negative and positive feelings about a memory at the same time. Commonly, I heard people say that they liked having jobs to perform and opportunities for personal advancement in the Japanese days. At the same time, they disliked being the targets of racist slurs and policies, and especially resented the events of the war. Yet people had many good experiences and formed bonds in the Japanese colonial towns for which they have felt nostalgia ever since.

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<sup>26</sup> Camacho, *Cultures*, 16.

Ultimately, nostalgia remains a perilous topic because, as Camacho has warned, it risks downplaying the violence of multiple colonial regimes in history. Memories have also been described as perilous because they present content that is risky from the perspectives of narratives about American liberation and commemoration: likewise, they are perilous because they are also at risk of disappearing with the passing of this generation.<sup>27</sup> There is some risk in asking people about their nostalgic memories, while not asking is also risky. There is much to be gained by thinking about the ambivalence and nostalgia of these elders in terms of everyday life perspectives that represent a space of experience that is distinct from nationalized historical accounts.

Today, there is widespread anticipation and fear of the impending emplacement of new military bases and training facilities on the islands of Pagan, Saipan, Sarigan, and Tinian. Within this tense atmosphere, opinions of island elders who traditionally garner respect (*respectu*) in local cultures seem to have become more sought after by younger generations seeking direction in the struggle to deal with the military buildup. The potentially counter-hegemonic stories of economic prosperity and nostalgia for the days of Japanese rule remain relatively marginalized accounts that people might bring to bear on interpreting and responding to the challenges of neocolonial daily life.

#### 1.4.2 Indigenous Families with Japanese Ancestry

Japanese and U.S. colonial administrative categories for recording data on Northern Mariana Islander populations separated people in to clear racial/ethnic

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<sup>27</sup> Takashi Fujitani, et.al. eds., *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

categories that did not allow for the possibility that a person might belong to more than one group. Chapter 3 provides more details about Japanese period race/tribe categories for tracking statistics and establishing colonial policies, and Chapter 6 explains how the U.S. categorized people into different racial groups that were the basis of other policies and management decisions. The racialized and politicized definitions used by both powers have caused harm to islander individuals and families.

As rigid as colonial definitions of people have been, as noted earlier, the definition of a person of Northern Marianas Descent (NMD) allows for the inclusion of individuals from many different racial or ethnic backgrounds. While the term NMD specifically identifies NMI Chamorros and Carolinians as peoples from these islands, the category also states that an NMD must have held domicile status by 1950 as well as Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) citizenship. This leaves room for the potential inclusion of a broad range individuals who were not of Chamorro or Carolinian descent but who fulfilled other criteria.

Certain American postwar policies and decisions have demonstrated reluctance to include people with Japanese names within the category of indigenous islanders, and have made it difficult for islanders to publically celebrate their partial Japanese heritage. Two examples illustrate this claim. First, U.S. postwar repatriation policies in the NMI removed the tens of thousands of settlers from East Asia. This mass removal caused suffering for families that included settlers and indigenous islanders, and eventually broke many of them apart permanently. In the postwar period of control by the U.S. Navy, having a Japanese-sounding name might have caused American military personnel to doubt one's indigenous status: one Chamorro man remembers changing his Korean-



Japanese name in the 1950s to his birth father's Chamorro name so that the U.S. Navy would not deny his family ID cards.<sup>28</sup> Some islanders have maintained contact with their former family members and friends who were moved to Japan and elsewhere after the WWII, but many lost touch as a result of the efforts of the U.S. military to sever ties between people in Japan and the NMI during the height of the Cold War. Some islanders who had married Japanese settlers or military personnel reestablished contact during the Japanese tourism boom in the 1980s, a few years after the U.S. military had reopened the islands to commercial travel.<sup>29</sup> Some islanders and former settlers, usually called repatriates (*kikansha*), have maintained relationships that began during the Japanese colonial period despite the presence of postwar American military cultures in the Pacific islands that have been suspicious and even antagonistic towards people thought to be Japanese.

Second, a more recent example reveals the pervasiveness of anti-Japanese sentiment in the U.S. government through the 1980s. During the period of transition from the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) political unit, in 1986 President Ronald Reagan granted U.S. citizenship to residents of the CNMI who held TTPI passports, and to anyone born there starting November 1<sup>st</sup> of that year. Northern Mariana Island TTPI passport holders were to receive U.S. passports as the old TTPI passports were phased out. However the U.S.

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<sup>28</sup> Elias Borja, whose story is presented in Chapter 6, was known as "Shing Eikai" before the war. Elias Manibusan Borja, interview with the author, Fleming Restaurant, San Jose, Tinian, November 28, 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Gordon Ichihara Marciano recalls that his grandmother Tereko Ichihara married a Japanese navy officer and they each thought the other had died in the war. They met again in the 1980s in Saipan after both had remarried, and Gordon says they were both surprised to see one another after the passage of four decades. Gordon Ichihara Marciano, interview with author in the Hafa Adai Beach Hotel lobby, Garapan, Saipan, September 6, 2013.

Passport Office rejected the applications of many TTPI passport holders from the CNMI. Many islanders had Japanese names and/or were married to Japanese people. The presence of these names caused U.S. Passport Office employees to call into question these applicants' status as islanders of Northern Marianas Descent.<sup>30</sup>

A Japanese Chamorro woman with the last name Takai,<sup>31</sup> with the help of her attorney Larry Hillblom, brought a class-action lawsuit against the U.S. government to demand the issuance of U.S. Passports for the Japanese Chamorros (and others) to whom they had been denied. They won their case, and it seems that the U.S. Passport Officers' original rejections had been the outcome of various individual decisions rather than a coordinated and categorical rejection of them as a group. This class-action lawsuit is evidence of the fact that American bureaucrats as recently as the mid-1980s interpreted Japanese-sounding names and indigenous islander identities as antithetical.

Despite American postwar reluctance to accept that some islanders are part Japanese, a large and significant number of Micronesians claim partial Japanese ancestry. Presently there are no undisputed statistics about how many indigenous Micronesians may claim partial Japanese, Korean, Okinawan, or Taiwanese descent—these groups settled Micronesia under the category “*hōjin*” (lit. “countrymen,” or “Japanese”) during the period of empire. However, the Japanese government sponsored a study of Micronesian people of Japanese descent in 2010.<sup>32</sup> For this study, researchers started by looking in local island government phone books and other listings for names that

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<sup>30</sup> Herbert Del Rosario, interview with author, Northern Marianas College Archives, Northern Marianas College campus, As Terlaje, Saipan, July 2, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Class-action plaintiff Takai was the wife of Joseph Tenorio, the founder of Joeten department stores.

<sup>32</sup> Izumi Kobayashi, *Minami no Shima no Nihonjin: mō hitotsu no sengoshi* [Japanese of the Southern Islands: Another Postwar History] (Tokyo: Sankeishinbunshuppan, 2010).

appeared to be Japanese. Based on interviews and archival research, this study estimated that about one in five Micronesians are today of Japanese descent.<sup>33</sup>

The aforementioned study suggests that a significant number of islanders claim partial “Japanese” ancestry in the case of islands in Micronesia excluding the NMI, but it contains no information about the NMI. Moreover names represent only one form of evidence of these family ties: this study did not question people whose surnames did not appear to be Japanese. Nevertheless, some people in the NMI with names that sound Chamorro or Carolinian actually self-identify as being of Japanese, Korean, or Okinawan descent and remember that their family history is connected to settlers who arrived on the islands under the protection of the Japanese flag, or even earlier.<sup>34</sup> As mentioned previously, after the war some people changed their childhood Japanese names to sound more indigenous because American militarized cultures were suspicious of Japanese people. Today some Northern Mariana Islanders claim Korean descent and have Japanese-sounding names: these may have been Japanese names taken up by Koreans following Japan’s imperial period name-changing campaign in Korea.<sup>35</sup> An indigenous Northern Mariana Islander’s surname (or former surname), in other words, can provide

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>34</sup> There are several local Carolinian and/or Chamorro families living on Saipan and Tinian with Japanese last names passed down within the family (used either as a surname or a middle name), including for example: Ichihara, Matsumoto, Sasamoto, Sonoda, Takai, and Togawa. But names can be deceptive. Some Chamorro families are known for having connections to Japan, or are perhaps of partial Japanese descent, although they do not use any Japanese names, such as certain branches of the NMI Pangelinan family.

<sup>35</sup> Descendants of the NMI Matsumoto and Togawa families say they are of Korean descent. In February 1940 the Japanese government instituted a mandatory name-changing program in Korea called *sōshi kaimei*, where Koreans were required to change both their surnames and given names to Japanese names. A similar program called *kaiseimei* was launched in Taiwan, which was not mandatory. Koreans and Taiwanese who settled in other parts of the empire especially after February 1940 may have been known by their Japanese names. This potentially makes it more difficult to identify people from Korea or Taiwan who settled in the Japanese empire. For the name-changing campaign, see Richard E. Kim, *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); see also Wan-yao Chou, “The Kōminka Movement in Taiwan and Korea: Comparisons and Interpretations,” in Peter Duus, et.al., eds., *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996): 55-61.

only limited information about where the family's ancestors may have originated, or the politics influencing their decision to use the name. They may be descendants of Koreans forced to take on Japanese names in the imperial period who changed their names again after the war when the U.S. anti-Japanese sentiment in the Northern Mariana Islands posed a threat. Like the islands themselves, Northern Mariana Islanders are also “too beautiful,” or too complex, for their names. The layers of colonial and neocolonial influences on islanders' lives complicate attempts to render their stories completely visible, and require an understanding of sequence and multiple levels of power that have impacted their lives and those of their elders.

Due to decades of rapid colonial shifts that changed definitions of the groups into which people have had to make themselves fit, in the Northern Mariana Islands, “people” have not been easily identifiable under one racial, ethnic, or national category. In the historically multiply colonized Northern Mariana Islands where today definitions of Northern Marianas Descent continue to be debated, the names used for people throughout different colonial moments have similarly been unstable signifiers. Thus one of the central goals of this project has been to reconstruct shifting definitions of island residents by asking them to explain who they have been and who they are now. In this project, it has been challenging to identify exactly how island residents were managed according to different systems that were structured around shifting race classifications, while also assessing the real-world effects of these systems for local communities whose everyday lives were made up of relationships and experiences that exceeded what was possible to represent within these systems.

More so than most other factors, the settler colonial nature of Japan's imperial activities in the NMI significantly and permanently altered life for islanders, especially on the most heavily settled and urbanized island of Saipan. In the Northern Mariana Islands during the Japanese era, there were disproportionate numbers of settlers to indigenous islanders. This lopsided ratio meant that these modern, urban towns had been places with opportunities for the communities to mingle, cultivate friendships and romantic relationships, intermarry, and bear children together. There were some marriages between settlers and islanders that, if relatively small in number, were common enough to cause people to remember that they had been viewed negatively but had been accepted once they had taken place.

I estimate that there may have been no more than a few hundred mixed-race settler-indigenous families living in the NMI in the late 1930s within the total population of about forty thousand people. Indigenous families with Japanese members dating to the colonial period or earlier have been understudied and even unjustly made the target of racial discrimination in the years after the war. This project investigates a few examples of Japanese Chamorro and Japanese Carolinian families towards validating their experiences and complicating the idea of what it means to have once been a "Japanese" subject in the colonial empire.

## **1.5 Chapter Summaries**

Chapter 2, "Rethinking Dominant Paradigms of Histories about Japan in the Pacific" considers how various contemporary multinational, neocolonial relationships constrain what can be said about Japanese colonialism in the Northern Mariana Islands

within Micronesia. Mainstream understandings of “Japan in the Pacific” call to mind suicide bombers and fight-to-the-death military conflicts between the Imperial Japanese armed forces and the Allied forces. But perspectives based in everyday life on the islands suggest that Japanese colonialism (1914-1944) was different from the wartime period, and that transformations associated with colonial rule continue to affect life in the islands today. This chapter is divided into four topics that contribute to understanding why indigenous islanders’ knowledge of Japanese colonialism remains marginalized.

Chapter 3 provides an introduction to the various communities that lived in the Northern Mariana Islands during the Japanese colonial period, and is called “Dominated by Settlers: Populations in the Northern Mariana Islands during the Japanese Colonial Period.” It opens with an overview of the sugar infrastructure that transformed island landscapes, drew tens of thousands of settlers mostly from Okinawa prefecture, and fostered the growth of other trades and enterprises on the islands. Next, this chapter provides a quantitative and qualitative overview of the populations of different race and “tribe” categories used by the colonial government, including especially an explanation of period understandings of Chamorro and “Kanaka” (Carolinian) people. Among islander populations, some Chamorro landowners became a wealthy elite from renting and selling land to the growing number of settlers while others obtained prestigious jobs in the colonial government. This chapter concludes by sharing individual examples of multiracial romances and families that formed between settlers and indigenous islanders during this era characterized by both institutional and informal racism and imperial assimilation policies.

Most people who lived through the Japanese colonial period remember that islanders were known as “*santô kokumin*” (third-class nationals) at the time. Japanese colonial schools and society were sites where islanders learned about the prevailing cultures of empire in which they remember being known as “third-class.” Chapter 4 explores colonial education for islanders and is called, “*Santô kokumin to iwareta kedo...* [We were called third-class nationals but...]: Northern Mariana Islanders in Japanese Colonial Education Programs.” Members of this generation were children during this period, and memories of school experiences figure prominently in their stories. Colonial education programs taught islanders to strive to be “Japanese,” which for islanders meant mainly learning the national language and agricultural skills. These skills would enable them to become productive laborers and law-abiding subjects, or to become “Japanese” in the sense that they were learning to live in the modern towns built by the colonial government and private companies. Although they were the targets of racist beliefs, many Chamorros in particular were able to advance through the education systems to become model examples of islanders who had almost become “Japanese,” some even attending schools intended for Japanese children. Many senior citizens expressed nostalgia for the Japanese education system within which some pupils accomplished impressive feats. The colonial schools likewise taught islanders certain skills and daily rituals that they recalled into old age. The knowledge and memories islanders took away from the *kôgakkô* or Japanese colonial schools for islanders bonded them as a distinct generation.

Chapter 5 called, “Colonial Civilians and Military Men: Common and Elite Indigenous Northern Mariana Islander Experiences of Japan’s Total War (1937-1945)” summarizes and challenges the assumptions undergirding polarized war memory in the

islands today. Ambivalent memories of indigenous Northern Mariana Island Chamorro participation in the invasion and occupation of Guam have predisposed many people to hold negative opinions about the character of these Chamorros, their families, and by association the Northern Mariana Islands under Japanese rule. About four thousand indigenous islanders were alive in the Japanese colonial Saipan-shichô (Saipan District) during the war, but only around fifty-five Chamorro men went with the Japanese military to Guam. In the NMI, starting around 1939 when the Japanese Navy 4th Fleet was stationed on the island of Saipan, people remember that stricter social policies accompanied the rise of military control over daily life. Most Chamorro and Carolinian Northern Mariana Islander men, women and children experienced the 1944 battles in the Northern Mariana Islands as non-combatants running from both the Japanese and U.S. forces. Most islanders suffered through devastating battle conditions on Saipan where about one-fifth to one-quarter of the indigenous population died. Others struggled to stay alive on islands like Pagan and Rota that were cut off from support and strafed until the conclusion of hostilities. The average indigenous person's experiences of war across the Mariana archipelago were more similar than different as trapped island residents fled a war not of their own making, but memories of a few elite NMI Chamorro military men's actions have been dominant and divisive. If more people thought about war memory in the NMI in terms of common people's experiences, this might serve to foster connections between people in the NMI with people in Guam and other regions toward healing.

Chapter 6, "Broken Homes, Torn Families: U.S. National Security and Postwar Repatriation Campaigns in the Northern Mariana Islands," reconstructs the history of U.S. postwar repatriations that sent most immigrant Japanese, Koreans, and Okinawan



settlers back to their point of original embarkation. The U.S. military viewed Japanese residents and eventually also Okinawan settlers, but not Koreans, as a unilateral threat to stability and security in the islands. Although Korean settlers were treated as newly liberated peoples, Japanese and Okinawan settlers were treated as enemy civilians. The mass removal of settler Japanese and Okinawan populations out of the islands resulted in the dismantling of multiracial settler/indigenous families. Stories told by one man who was once a member of a multiracial Korean-Chamorro family suggest tactics by which island residents negotiated the repatriation policies. The damages sustained by descendants of these people who were caught between competing empires remains unacknowledged in historical accounts of this time period.

In conclusion, I summarize the ways in which the liberation narrative paradigm constrains and ignores various features of NMI history that are relevant for local life, as well as the insights possible when interpreting NMI history through comparative and transnational frames of reference. Features of NMI history that have been ignored by the dominant liberation paradigm include an array of ongoing consequences of living on these former battlefields. This paradigm also marginalizes multiracial family bonds and active postwar memory networks connecting contemporary Japan, Okinawa, and Korea to the NMI. What's more, the dominant paradigm ignores comparative and transnational interpretations of NMI history revealed in this dissertation. Japanese systems drew upon records left by earlier colonizing regimes, a fact that complicates the idea that the Japanese period was a distinct regime from which the U.S. liberated the islands and islanders. Islanders have also tended to say that the Japanese period was economically better than the militarizing U.S. regime. I interpret this to mean that they preferred being

economic subjects with active roles in the Japanese socioeconomy over being political subjects whose daily lives next to the postwar U.S. military bases were comparatively more restricted.

Moving past the dominant paradigm enables historians to conceptualize recent NMI history within regional and local contexts. Thinking about NMI history within the regional contexts of the Mariana archipelago, Micronesia, and East Asia makes possible insights about experiences shared by various former and current subjects of multiple colonial powers. Thinking of NMI history within these regional contexts also exposes several unresolved questions about how colonized populations were left out of reparations and treaty processes that concluded the war. Finally, my interviews with people from the eldest generation of indigenous islanders in the NMI reveal a range of experiences they share in common. Their shared experiences point to certain ways in which this generation have been agents of continuity and change in history.

Janus-faced economic/ military hegemony has characterized colonial modernity in this area, and the fate of islanders caught in the middle continue to be a tertiary concern. Thinking of histories in transnational ways is important if future generations are to address questions that arise from indigenous and long-term experiences of living in the NMI. Researchers should remain in conversation with local interpretive voices, recognize the constraints placed upon knowledge formation by neocolonial politics including ongoing U.S. military buildup of the Mariana Islands, and consider addressing the needs of today's multiracial and transnational resident communities. Authors and storytellers would be well served to think about local history within global and transnational historiographies of imperialism that conceptualize world empires as comparable,

competing, and complicit, such as for example Japan and the U.S. in this study.

Diversifying the range of topics associated with history might more directly engage with (and validate perspectives based in) local island life. Local residents in the Marianas ought to take advantage of the opportunities they have to reconnect with stories about the past told by their elders and ponder their “lessons” or guidelines for action that are implicit or explicit in their stories. These elders know what it was like to live in the foreign country that is local history, and they can offer alternative perspectives on contemporary problems.

## **Chapter 2) Rethinking Dominant Paradigms of Histories about Japan in the Pacific**

Japan's historical presence in the Western Pacific islands includes colonial not just wartime activities and legacies. Today, mainstream understandings of histories about "Japan in the Pacific" almost exclusively call to mind a wartime regime. But indigenous islanders' comparative and transnational interpretations of the shift from Japanese (1914-1944) to U.S. (1945-present) control challenge the perception that Japan was primarily a militarized, oppressive force. Nevertheless, islanders' perceptions continue to be subsumed by various power relationships and discourses about the Western Pacific islands of Micronesia, and about the Northern Mariana Islands within the Mariana archipelago.

This chapter is divided into four sections that each deal with reasons why indigenous islanders' knowledge of Japanese colonialism remains relatively obscure. Today "Pacific Rim" discourse tends to obfuscate the ongoing consequences of Japanese historical colonialism by portraying multinational capitalism as the catalyst of historical change, and by focusing on the relationships between "Rim" countries at the expense of the Pacific Ocean and Islands area in the middle. Meanwhile neocolonial relationships maintained by the U.S. with various Micronesian island territories significantly impact discourses about the islands and islanders' histories and identities. Very few Japanese histories investigate topics related to Micronesia, and those that do tend to focus on the actions and policies of the colonial government as opposed to perspectives voiced by subjugated peoples. Finally, the dominance of the U.S. liberation narrative paradigm profoundly constrains and politicizes what can be said about the Japanese colonial period and its ongoing relevance for islanders in the present day.

## 2.1 The Pacific Area and History

European knowledge of the Pacific Ocean began with the 1513 discovery the sea off the west coast of what is today Panama by Vasco Núñez de Balboa. He named the ocean *el Mar del Sur* (the South Sea). In 1520 Ferdinand Magellan is credited with having renamed the sea the *Oceano Pacifico* (Pacific Ocean) perhaps due to its calm appearance. Yet the name “South Seas” continued to appear on European maps and in common use for centuries.<sup>36</sup> From the 1520s through the 1850s, many seafarers especially from England, France, Portugal, and Spain mapped the Pacific Ocean and island areas.

Globally circulating knowledge of the Pacific Ocean and islands became the domain of these European empires through their explorations and mapping projects. The meanings of words like “South Seas,” “Pacific,” and “Pacific Islands” have been defined by European powers, although the islanders and the islands themselves have not been mere bystanders in this process and they have played a role in the formation of colonial power. Before the 1970s, prevailing views on the globe’s largest ocean territory were beholden to the overwhelmingly Orientalist genealogies of knowledge associated with viewpoints held by these explorers.

But more recent “Pacific Rim” discourse has been described as post-Orientalist partially because of its concern with the forces of multinational capital flowing through and within the Pacific area, although multinational capital is still based on western epistemologies. Pacific Rim discourse has tended to focus on the ring of countries that encircle the Pacific Ocean, as this term is geologic and partly refers to volcanoes

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<sup>36</sup> O.H.K Spate, “‘South Sea’ to ‘Pacific Ocean,’” *The Journal of Pacific History* 12 (1977): 206.

encircling this basin. Pacific Rim discourse thus calls to mind the countries around the perimeter, where the 'donut hole' space in the middle, or the islands and vast ocean, receive less attention. These Rim countries include especially Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan, countries in Southeast Asia, countries along the west coasts of North and South America, and Australia and New Zealand. However the "psychic center" of the Pacific Rim has been identified as the Japan- U.S. relationship.<sup>37</sup>

This is because Pacific Rim discourse emerged during the late Cold War period when several changes took place. The term arose in the 1970s just after China-U.S. rapprochement, the end of the Vietnam War, an increase in Japan's economic strength, a worldwide economic downturn, and widespread questioning of U.S. hegemony as had never happened before. The discursive space associated with the Pacific Rim took shape around late Cold War American cultures that were still concerned with socialist bloc powers in the world. Although perceived Soviet threats were in the background, Chris Connery argues that Pacific Rim discourse arose as "a non-othering discourse:" unlike Said's Orientalism that "delineates genealogically as a discursive formation centered on a fundamental othering...Pacific Rim Discourse presumes a kind of menonymic equivalence." This discourse, Connery argues, broke away from older Orientalizing genealogies of knowledge and instead proposed viewing the world as "an interpenetrating complex of interrelationships with no center." However, this discourse still has an Orientalist orientation because Japan is not completely equivalent to the "West." This transformation happened in part, Connery argues, because the rise of Japan as a global

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<sup>37</sup> Chris L. Connery, "Pacific Rim Discourse: The U.S. Global Imaginary in the Late Cold War Years," *boundary* 21:1 (Spring 1994): 32.

power required a rethinking of categories of knowledge: “when Japan is number one the only way not to be number two is to transcend the nation.”<sup>38</sup> In other words, among other overlapping factors, it was largely Japan’s new position of economic strength in the world that forced a move toward transcending old categories of knowledge by which countries had been measured against one another. In a world where the Japanese nation was suddenly (again) challenging the economic dominance of the U.S.—this time as a liberal democratic power—explanations originating somewhere other than nation-state frameworks had to be used to make sense of changing global relationships.

Thus Pacific Rim discourse emerged as an “economically determined discourse that functions as the mythology of multinational capitalism within a national sphere.” The discourse allowed the workings of multinational capitalism to now be acknowledged as the force behind Japan’s rise to prominence, because capital had transcended the boundaries of nation-states even as the latter remains a pillar of global relations. Pacific Rim discourse today focuses on multinational capital flowing between “Rim” countries while ignoring the area in the middle, meanwhile the fluid ocean space in the middle is an apt metaphor for the centrality of capital in these discourses. That the world’s largest ocean makes up the bulk of this territory is ironically fitting since “movable capital is liquid capital.”<sup>39</sup>

This Pacific Rim vision continues to permeate American strategic military/economic goals in the present day. On January 5, 2012, President Obama announced the Asia-Pacific Pivot defense strategy that would see a “heavy focus on Asia

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 31-36.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 36-40.

and the Pacific” through 2020: this strategy envisions the Pacific ocean area as the connector between the U.S. and India and China as “two Asian giants driving economic developments in the region,” rather than seeing the Pacific Ocean or the Pacific Islands as having a substantive or meaningful role to play in this strategy.<sup>40</sup> The Pacific in this “Asia-Pacific” is the middle section that connects Asia to the U.S., and perhaps ought to instead be written, “Asia-Pacific-U.S.” In the configuration, China is the center of “Asia” and Japan is absent.

If all of the nations signified by Pacific Rim discourse were included in the scope of “Pacific” studies, this would include a geographic area covering far more than half of the earth’s surface. Events that have transpired in the countries that surround, and lie within, the Pacific Ocean involve themes that potentially intersect at just about every global and local register. But in order to critically focus on the Pacific island area inside the Rim, multinational or transnational approaches alone are not sufficient. One must slow down and linger a while in the actual, physical places that make up this vast territory: this sea of islands are home to perspectives steeped in transnational historical influences which researchers have unfortunately tended to pass over en route to somewhere else.

The Pacific is largely ocean territory, and studies of the Pacific Ocean region inside can take the form of maritime, seafaring, and routed histories. The University of Hawaii theorizes views from the inside of this vast area via their Pacific Islands Studies mandate which promotes scholarship by and about Pacific islanders and the sea of

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<sup>40</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, “Strategy Guidance Underscores Asia-Pacific Region,” DoD News, last updated January 6, 2012, <http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=66706>.



islands. Many scholars adopt the view that is by now widely accepted among Pacific Islands-centered approaches: the islands are not small specks of land “in the sea,” but the sea historically connects peoples across what is more aptly called a “sea of islands.”<sup>41</sup>

As noted above, knowledge of the Pacific islands has historically been subjected to European genealogies of knowledge. These came to include American representations of colonies they acquired towards the end of the nineteenth century. Euro-American dominance has marginalized late nineteenth and twentieth century Japanese imperialist knowledge that has impacted especially the Micronesian region of the Pacific.

Several scholars have pointed out the postwar lacuna of knowledge about Japan’s Asia-Pacific empire.<sup>42</sup> A dearth of popular critiques of colonialism and war throughout Japan’s former empire actually helps to buffer contemporary Japan- U.S. treaty-based relationships.<sup>43</sup> It is in the interest of the U.S. to mitigate discourses that acknowledge the

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<sup>41</sup> In his seminal essay, “Our Sea of Islands,” Tongan scholar Epeli Hao’ufa argued that the dominant reading of the Pacific Islands as small, resource poor, economically backward and therefore necessarily dependent on foreign nations is a perspective which willfully ignores the expanse of oceans that have for millennia been traditional indigenous spaces of travel, commerce, resource extraction, warfare, and spiritual inhabitation. He argues that rather than thinking of the islands as small land specks in a vast expanse of ocean (a continental, land-locked perspective), it is more accurate to see this territory as an inter-connected “sea of islands.” He puts out a call to remember that attempts to disavow the centrality of the sea as territory can be identified as the workings of neocolonialism which aspire “to make people believe that they have no choice but to depend.” Epeli Hao’ufa, “Our Sea of Islands,” *The Contemporary Pacific* 6 (1994): 151.

<sup>42</sup> See Sebastian Conrad, “The Dialectics of Remembrance: Memories of Empire in Cold War Japan,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56:1 (2014): 4-33; see also Leo Ching, “Give me Japan and Nothing Else! Postcoloniality, Identity, and the Traces of Colonialism,” in Tomiko Yoda and Harry D. Harootunian, eds., *Japan After Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006): 142-166; see also Igarashi Yoshikuni, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>43</sup> As a formal conclusion to WWII, Japan signed two treaties in San Francisco on September 8, 1951, under which the terms for restoring independence to Japan were established. One was the multinational Treaty of Peace with Japan signed by forty-eight nations. The other was the bilateral U.S.-Japan Security Treaty signed by the U.S. and Japan which gave the United States the right to maintain armed forces bases in Japan. Meanwhile the United States supported and encouraged Japanese rearmament in the form of police forces and a military that would become known as the Self-Defense Forces. In the months that followed, Japanese leaders were told that the U.S. would not ratify the treaty unless they also signed a

former strength and ongoing relevance of histories of imperial Japanese rule that came before (and might pose challenges to) contemporary neocolonial American military dominance in the tropical northwest Pacific region. Perhaps nowhere is this dearth of acknowledgement and reconciliation more pronounced than the regions where the U.S. currently maintains military bases.<sup>44</sup> One such region is Micronesia.

## 2.2 Neocolonial Micronesia

The Pacific Islands have historically been divided into Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. The name “Micronesia” means “tiny islands” in Greek, and it refers to the region in the Western Pacific Ocean north of Melanesia and west of Polynesia, including the Caroline, Mariana, and Marshall Island groups as well as Kiribati. Micronesia was the name for which the geographer Gregorie Louis Domeny de Reinzi in 1831 had received official approval from La Societe de Geographie in Paris to use to refer to these islands.<sup>45</sup>

Micronesia encompasses thousands of islands in the tropical Western Pacific Ocean almost entirely north of the equator with a total land area of about 1,700 square miles in a total ocean area of 4 million square miles. In other words, Micronesia’s land area makes

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different treaty recognizing the Nationalist government in Taiwan as the legitimate government of China. This treaty was signed on the same day that the latter two were effectuated, on April 28, 1952. The Security Treaty was revised and signed on Jan. 19, 1960, which sparked widespread protests in Japan. The U.S. retained sovereignty of Okinawa until 1972, when it was returned to the Japanese government on the condition that the U.S. is permitted to continue to maintain military bases there. John Dower writes of what he calls the San Francisco Treaty System that it “made Japan another divided country by detaching of Okinawa Prefecture, the southern part of the Ryukyu Islands chain, from the rest of the nation and turning it into a U.S. military bastion.” John Dower, “The San Francisco System: Past, Present, Future in U.S.-Japan-China Relations,” *The Asia Pacific Journal* 12, no. 8 (February 24, 2014), assessed April 29, 2015, [http://www.japanfocus.org/-John\\_W\\_-Dower/4079/article.html](http://www.japanfocus.org/-John_W_-Dower/4079/article.html). This treaty remains in effect today and U.S. military bases in Okinawa are still the targets of protest.

<sup>44</sup> For a critique of discourses related to U.S. military base-adjacent areas in the Asia and the Pacific, see Setsu Shigematsu and Keith L. Camacho, *Militarized Currents: Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

<sup>45</sup> David Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia: Discourses over Development in a Pacific Territory, 1944-1982* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1998): 1.

up just 0.0425% of the region. It home to three sovereign countries and two U.S. territories. The countries include the Federated States of Micronesia or the “FSM” (made up of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap island states), the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. The U.S. territories include Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. The Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau, and the Northern Mariana Islands used to belong to the same political grouping established by the Germans during the 1899 treaty with Spain, and they came under Japanese control as the “South Sea Islands” (Nan’yô Guntô) in 1914. The Northern Mariana Islands that are the focus of this study lie at the northernmost end of Micronesia.

Within thriving Pacific islander-focused research and cultural productions by scholars focusing on Melanesia and Polynesia areas, Micronesia remains under-represented.<sup>46</sup> This is because for much of the twentieth century, Micronesia was beholden to American prerogatives for knowledge production. The region contains several archipelagos where residents in the 1960s and 70s negotiated agreements to become various kinds of U.S. territories or states: the independent countries listed above were granted sovereignty in “free association” with the U.S.<sup>47</sup> As a result, until recently in many of the islands in Micronesia, postwar funding for education and public historical interpretation has come largely from the U.S. federal government. This characterization is especially true in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands that are now U.S. territories,

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<sup>46</sup> At the 2012 Pacific History Association Conference’s closing presentation in Wellington, New Zealand, Damon Salesa quoted Vince Diaz as having joked that the Pacific actually has three culture areas: Melanesia, Polynesia, and “Amnesia.”

<sup>47</sup> The sovereign countries in Micronesia that signed a “Compact of Free Association” agreement with the United States are the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

and not freely associated sovereign states. However, even these sovereign states allow the U.S. military access to their lands and seas, and are beholden to these military prerogatives in a way similar to what has been called Japan's "client state" relationship with the U.S.<sup>48</sup> In this region, and especially in the U.S. territories in the Mariana Islands, it has been understandably difficult to think outside of prevailing structures of knowledge production that rely upon the American nation-state as a lens through which to frame questions about history and identity. Particularly in the Mariana archipelago, United States national history has been formatively important in the construction of contemporary indigenous islander consciousness about their relationship to the past by presenting it in the form of nationalized narratives, especially during public war commemorations.<sup>49</sup>

Recently, David Hanlon alluded to U.S. dominance in the region when he argued that in contrast to cultural nationalisms emerging from post-1960s decolonizing Polynesia and Melanesia, he anticipates that Micronesia will be the last third of the Pacific Islands' culture areas where islanders will raise their collective voices toward creating local narratives to stake their own claims to history. Hanlon wrote about the relative dearth of Micronesian literary representations in an American-dominated field of Oceanic or Pacific-focused literature in the Spring 2009 edition of the *Contemporary Pacific*. In his article, Hanlon says that when compared to Melanesia and Polynesia,

Micronesia remains largely quiet and unacknowledged in American literary imaginings of the Pacific. More importantly, there exist precious few writings by the peoples called Micronesians. The reasons for the lack of a local literature are many, and include variation in the educational

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<sup>48</sup> Gavin McCormack, *Client State: Japan in the American Embrace* (London, New York: Verso, 2007).

<sup>49</sup> Camacho, *Cultures*, 2011.

policies of the region's different colonizing groups. Of particular importance are the debates among U.S. colonial officials in the 1950s and 1960s over the role of culture and vernacular languages in the Islands' elementary and secondary schools (Peacock 1990). These debates were resolved in favor of a flawed, predominantly English language-based curriculum that encouraged not creative expression but a basic, utilitarian competency. What remained paramount and consistent throughout were the strategic interests of the United States. The educational systems that have developed in the different political entities that now make up the region struggle with this colonial legacy. As Emelighter Kihleng of Pohnpei has noted in her recently published book of poetry (2008), *postcolonial* is not an adjective that can be used to characterize postsecondary education in the islands.<sup>50</sup>

These Pacific islands that have been among the most heavily affected by histories of repeated colonialisms have understandably been the slowest to explicitly acknowledge and cultivate critical distance from these political and social forces. In the meantime, there remain understudied local perceptions of colonialism and history based in life in the region that might help scholars to answer Hanlon's call for the increased production of local scholarship by and about Micronesians.

### **2.3 Micronesia in Japanese History**

In recent decades, transnational and comparative studies of the Japanese empire have become more common,<sup>51</sup> and most of these studies have focused on the oldest territories of Taiwan and Korea.<sup>52</sup> These histories rarely deal with Japan's late nineteenth

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<sup>50</sup> David Hanlon, "The "Sea of Little Lands": Examining Micronesia's Place in "Our Sea of Islands", *The Contemporary Pacific* 21:1 (Spring 2009): 99.

<sup>51</sup> See Jong Bong Choi, "Mapping Japanese Imperialism onto Postcolonial Criticism," *Social Identities* 9:3 (2003): 325-339; see also Sandra Wilson, "Bridging the Gaps: New Views of Japanese Colonialism, 1931-1945," *Japanese Studies* 25:3 (2005): 287-299.

<sup>52</sup> See Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, et.al., *The Japanese informal empire in China, 1895-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); see also Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, et.al., *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); see also Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, eds., *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

to mid-twentieth century imperial presence in Micronesia.<sup>53</sup> Those that do assess Japan's colony in this area most often describe it as an outlying or exceptional example in the context of the empire. A foundational study summarized the Japanese empire as generally having been a series of strategic flag-planting maneuvers after which economic ties followed.<sup>54</sup> The primacy of economic ties and a pan-island ideology that accompanied Japan's acquisition of this territory do not appear in most histories of the empire. Most Japan scholars are not familiar with the history of Micronesia and instead have characterized the origins of Japanese imperialism in terms of strategic motivations to conquer Asian neighbors.

But Japan's colonies in Micronesia differed from Japan's other colonies in some important ways. As early as the 1880s, Japanese seagoing traders visited the area and set up commercial ventures across various islands: some of these adventurous traders settled in the islands and established families who trace their identities back to these early settlers.<sup>55</sup> Japan's economic impetus for colonizing Micronesia and the importance of their economic dominance (which buffered military fortifications) has tended to be overlooked in comparative analyses of the Japanese empire. In the pan-Asian empire, Micronesia did not share an Asian heritage with Japan although some scholars were theorizing historical connections between these islands at the time. When he was serving

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<sup>53</sup> Chapter 3 of this dissertation is a historical survey of Japanese activities in the region and reviews sources on this topic.

<sup>54</sup> Mark R. Peattie, "Introduction," in *The Japanese Colonial Empire*, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Mori Koben was perhaps the most famous settler to the islands at this time. He was the son of a Tosa samurai who in 1891 took a job a trading company and travelled to an island in Chuuk in 1892. At the time Chuukese islanders were embroiled in tribal warfare. Mori offered his military services to Chief Manuppis and helped lead them to victory. He won the hand of the chief's daughter in marriage for his services. Mori's descendants in Chuuk number in the hundreds if not thousands today. See Mark R. Peattie, *Nan'yô: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia 1885-1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988): 26-33.

as statesman during League of Nations meetings, Japanese folk studies founder Yanagita Kunio theorized that Micronesia and Japan were both island nations vulnerable to foreign intrusion.<sup>56</sup> As island nations (*shima guni*), the idea was that Japan and Micronesia were both challenged by the same Western forces with which Japan was familiar and had even surmounted, and could therefore mitigate in Micronesia. Therein lay the patriarchal justification for bringing Japan's youngest non-Asian territory into the imperial grasp and away from Western powers.

Although Micronesia has been marginal in comparative studies of the Japanese empire, it played an important role. This area was the site of seminal Pacific War battles and the island bases from which Americans sent fire and atomic bombs to Japan in 1945. Before that, it was the site of heavy settlement by mostly Okinawan migrants, which is a history that indelibly connects this region to contemporary Okinawan identities based on experiences of global diaspora. What's more, the consequences of the Pacific War battles and subsequent U.S. dominance over Micronesia buffer ongoing relationships enabled by Japan-U.S. postwar treaties. The fight over dominance of the Pacific continues through the present day in the form of Mariana Islander (like nearby Okinawan) protests against United States military buildup. Additionally, China, Japan and the U.S. still struggle over control of the Diaoyu or Senkaku islands north of Taiwan and adjacent to Micronesia where last year President Obama stood alongside Japanese Prime Minister Shinzô Abe and announced that these islands (which he called by their Japanese name "Senkaku") are

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<sup>56</sup> During Yanagita Kunio's (1865-1972) involvement in post-World War I League of Nations negotiations that included deliberating Japan's acquisition of German Micronesia, Yanagita became keenly aware of other League members' disparaging views of Japan. Ôguma argues that because Yanagita experienced mockery at League meetings, he increasingly favored thinking of Japan as an, 'island nation' which, like Okinawa and Micronesia, had been victimized by discrimination from Western imperial powers. Eiji Ôguma, *A Genealogy of 'Japanese' Self-images* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 1992): 186-7.

administered by Japan according to the Japan- U.S. security treaty.<sup>57</sup> These islands are still the objects of debatable territorial and military claims.

Oral history and interview-based research that focuses on Micronesian islanders' perspectives have tended to ignore the Northern Mariana Islands.<sup>58</sup> This is presumably because the NMI is no longer a part of the region of Micronesia that became the Federated States of Micronesia. But from the time of the advent of the name "Micronesia" through the German, Japanese, and U.S. colonial periods (1899-1978), the Northern Mariana Islands had been a part of this ambiguous culture area.

Many interview-based research collections involving indigenous Mariana Islanders' memories of the Japanese empire and war do not explicitly deal with indigenous metacognitive expressivity available to researchers using such methods.<sup>59</sup> However some researchers have done oral history or interview-based research in the Mariana Islands that has assessed indigenous islanders' critical insights about discourses on history and identity.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> The White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Joint Press Conference with President Obama and Prime Minister Abe of Japan," last updated April 24, 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/24/joint-press-conference-president-obama-and-prime-minister-abe-japan>.

<sup>58</sup> See Lin Poyer, Suzanne Falgout, Laurence Marshall Carucci, eds., *The Typhoon of War: Micronesian Experiences of the Pacific War* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001); see also James West Turner and Suzanne Falgout, "Time Traces: Cultural Memory and World War II in Pohnpei," *The Contemporary Pacific* 14:1 (Spring 2002) 101-131; see also Geoffrey M. White, ed., *Remembering the Pacific War*, CPIS Occasional Paper 36 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1991).

<sup>59</sup> Metacognitive in this study means moments when people demonstrate awareness of, and make comments about, their own thought processes. The term refers herein to moments during interviews for example when participants remarked on their own word choices, storytelling style, or reasons for deciding to share certain memories. These metacognitive moments are important because they point to the frameworks people use to interpret their own knowledge. For examples of helpful oral histories about the Mariana Islands which do not explicitly address the metacognitive features of interviews, see Bruce Petty, ed., *Saipan: Oral Histories of the Pacific War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001); see also Wakako Higuchi, *The Japanese Administration of Guam, 1941-1944: A Study of Occupation and Integration Policies, with Japanese Oral Histories* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013).

<sup>60</sup> Regarding memory of WWII in the Marianas, Keith Camacho used interviews to assess assumptions shaping memory content. See Camacho, *Cultures*, 2011. Herbert del Rosario conducted dozens of



Among Japanese-speaking researchers, to date many of the most theoretically rigorous projects that explicitly assess Micronesian perspectives on their own memories of Japanese colonialism in the area focus on the Marshall Islands and Palau.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, critical and comparative literary scholarship has examined the entire region rather than researching local differences between or within island groups.<sup>62</sup> There have so far been no studies that have assessed Northern Mariana Islanders' critiques on history and identity related especially to the period of Japanese rule.

This project addresses a lacuna of existing knowledge about indigenous Northern Mariana Islanders' experiences and perceptions of history by looking closely at memories of *tiempon Japones* (Chamorro language for "the Japanese time") in NMI history. While this research is not clearly situated within the field of Japanese history, I make use of Japanese colonial era sources to situate islanders' memories into the historical contexts from which they emerged.

## 2.4 Mariana Islands Liberation Narrative Paradigm

In the Mariana Islands, U.S. national frameworks for understanding history are dominant. Because the U.S. retains sovereignty over the NMI, most histories of these

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interviews in Chamorro with NMI senior citizens about their memories of the Japanese days and WWII, in which he reached a level of intimacy and familiarity with his interview participants that allowed for candid exchanges. Herbert Del Rosario, "Oral History Project in the Northern Mariana Islands," 70 VHS tapes and 18 corresponding transcripts, NMC Archives, Saipan CNMI: 1994-2000.

<sup>61</sup> See Stephen C. Murray, "War and Remembrance on Peleliu: Islander, Japanese, and American Memories of a Battle in the Pacific War," (PhD diss, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2006); see also Gregory Eric Dvorak, "Seeds from Afar, Flowers from the Reef: Re-Membering the Coral and Concrete of Kwajalein Atoll," (PhD diss, Australian National University, 2007); see also Shingo Iitaka, "Palauans' Colonial Experiences under the Japanese Administration: An Approach by Historical Anthropology," (PhD diss, Tokyo Metropolitan University, 2009).

<sup>62</sup> See Naoto Sudo, *Nanyo-orientalism: Japanese representations of the Pacific* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2010); see also Robert Thomas Tierney, *Tropics of Savagery: The Culture of Japanese Empire in Comparative Frame* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

islands in English describe these islands as part of the American nation. Because American actions in the NMI began in earnest in WWII, tales from this war function as origin stories that rhetorically bind the Northern Mariana Islands to the United States.

Studs Terkel summarized American popular memory of WWII when he wrote that it has come to be viewed as “*The Good War*,”<sup>63</sup> or the nation’s last great war. Stories Terkel presents in his bestselling oral history suggest that this war is remembered to have been fought at the right time, for the right reasons, against a clearly defined enemy, and with positive social outcomes including the eventual racial desegregation of the U.S. armed forces. WWII is remembered as distinct from the Vietnam War which received less public American support and which the United States did not win. As the generation of WWII veterans has begun to pass away, especially since the 1980s there has been a surge of interest in memories, novels, and films about this “good war.”

Within the vast cannon of American WWII literature, the Pacific Theater has historically received less attention than the European Theater. But in more recent years, stories of American heroism in the Pacific region have ranked among the bestsellers among writing about this era.<sup>64</sup> These bestselling versions of English-language Pacific history include American Pacific War narratives that are replete with examples of individual heroism leading to the ‘liberation’ of the islands by American forces.<sup>65</sup> These

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<sup>63</sup> Studs Terkel, “*The Good War*”: *An Oral History of World War Two* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

<sup>64</sup> For examples of bestselling American Pacific War literature, see E.B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1981); see also Laura Hillenbrand, *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* (New York: Random House, 2010).

<sup>65</sup> For popular histories of WWII in the Northern Mariana Islands, see Harold J. Goldberg, *D-Day in the Pacific: The Battle of Saipan* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007); see also Francis A. O’Brien, *Battling for Saipan* (New York: Presidio Press, 2003); see also Nathan Prefer, *The Battle For Tinian: Vital Stepping Stone in America’s War Against Japan* (Havertown: Casemate Publishers, 2012); see also Gordon Rottman, *Saipan & Tinian 1944: Piercing the Japanese Empire* (Oxford: Osprey, 2004).

histories support an implicit claim that the U.S. has a mandate to direct activities in this area which originate in the high cost of American lives in the Pacific War battles. Actual American military dominance over much of Japan's former empire contributes to the popularity of this literature.

Locally in the Northern Mariana Islands, stories of American triumphs that rhetorically justify contemporary territorial relationships are inscribed on memorial stones. The American Memorial Park of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior was established on Saipan by an act of Congress in 1978. This park and about a half-dozen Park Service wayside signs at various locations in Saipan represent the U.S. federal government's interpretive interventions into local history. Centrally located in the town of Garapan, the American Memorial Park is today a tourist attraction with beaches, a boat marina, lawns, war memorials and a free Visitor Center and WWII Exhibit hall. The park has two major stone memorials dedicated to war dead. The Flag Circle/Court of Honor memorial bears the inscribed names of the nearly five thousand American servicemen, and the Marianas Memorial holds the inscribed names of almost one thousand indigenous islanders who died during this war.

Deriving legitimacy from a mission to "honor the American people and Mariana Islanders who died in the Marianas Campaign in World War II," Japanese war dead are not mentioned in this mission statement. In this rendering, Mariana Islanders are implicitly commemorated as American people in this park named after the nation that captured the islands. In contrast, the Cornerstone of Peace memorial in Okinawa bears the inscribed names of all of the 140,000 people who died in the WWII battles on the island regardless of nationality or ethnicity. One important consequence of the American

Memorial Park's mandate is that it gives the impression that the historical Japanese presence on the islands was a militarized one associated with WWII. However, during the interwar period a civilian Japanese bureaucracy administered the area and produced lasting effects that far exceed those attributable to militarism and war.

The park's Visitor Center exhibits do acknowledge this earlier period of colonial rule that brought many immigrant civilians to the islands, and they identify different groups using names that these groups use to describe themselves today. The exhibits explain that by the 1940s the NMI was populated by Japanese, Korean, and Okinawan immigrants. They do not present these groups as uniformly "Japanese," which tends to be how mainstream U.S. histories represent immigrant Asian civilian settlers who were on the island during the war.<sup>66</sup> A Park Service wayside interpretive sign erected at Saipan's Banzai Cliff says that indigenous Chamorros were among Japanese civilians who were taking their own lives near the end of the battle, signifying recognition of the problems often involved in separating indigenous islanders from "Japanese" civilians at the time.

These National Park Service interpretations thereby exclude perspectives critical of U.S. hegemony even while complicating ideas about who was "Japanese" during the war, and drawing attention to important but marginalized indigenous and civilian settler suffering and survival stories. Meanwhile, English language interpretations of Pacific War history and memories that are dominant outside of the islands have tended to work against serious consideration of diverse and ongoing personal experiences of indigenous

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<sup>66</sup> This is also the way that neo-nationalistic Japanese historians would prefer that these people be identified, because this adheres to Japanese colonial records that did not separate Okinawans and Koreans but grouped them together with Japanese as *hōjin*, or "countrymen." For example, see Nakajima Hiroshi's detailed critique of the American Memorial Park Visitor Center exhibit panel text, "Me ni amaru goji / goyaku: bijita senta no tenji" [Excessive Misnomers, Mistranslations: Visitor Center Exhibits], *Hafa Adai Magazine* 16:10 (October 2006): 14-16.

islanders as agents of historical change or as sources of knowledge about local history, except when they are presented as collaborating with the “liberating” U.S. combatants.

The American Memorial Park has been a major site of public commemorations of WWII that promote knowledge of the Japanese era, the Pacific War, and local indigenous identities through liberation narrative frameworks. These have included the 1994 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration of WWII in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan and Tinian. The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary saw the construction of major infrastructure in the American Memorial Park in Saipan and the return of U.S. war veterans for ceremonies, parades, public talks and other events on the islands. More recently, local committees collaborated to organize a 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event in 2004 that was even broader in scope than the 50<sup>th</sup>. A 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemoration in June 2014 was smaller in scale than the earlier commemorations owing to the decreased number of still-living U.S. war veterans who were able to return to the islands.

Liberation narratives positioning Japan as a wartime power defeated by the U.S. thus dominate histories of the NMI. Keith Camacho identified this framework for knowledge production about WWII and Japan as one that constructs Chamorros as productive, patriotic Americans who understand Mariana Islands history in commemorative terms while expressing gratitude toward American actions during WWII.<sup>67</sup> Camacho demonstrated that Mariana Islands war commemorations can best be understood as techniques for constructing a nationalistic consciousness in local island societies. This has not been a neutral or objective process, but has created the conditions for specific features of dominant war memory to emerge.

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<sup>67</sup> Camacho, *Cultures*, 2011.

By examining the gendered and racialized postwar public commemorative activities that created spaces where people could imagine themselves as productive subjects of the United States government, Camacho argues that the “loyal Chamorro subject” has been constructed as, “one who is simultaneously embraced and renounced as a member of the American and Japanese nation-states.”<sup>68</sup> Camacho argues that war commemorations construct indigenous Chamorro islanders as loyal Americans if they had rejected Japan during or after WWII and thereby proved their enduring loyalty to the U.S. Yet in this construct, especially for Chamorros from the NMI, historical Japanese influences are also thought to have tainted indigenous Chamorro identity and culture and therefore also constrict these Chamorros to the perpetual embodiment the subjectivity of lesser Americans who must always compensate for history by repeatedly performing their loyalty to the United States.

In the contemporary liberation narrative paradigm, people may either exemplify, or act as the counter-example of someone who has been liberated (an American). But, what do indigenous islanders have to say about this? To answer this question, one cannot simply talk to people about their memories of the Second World War and the days of Japanese rule by thinking within the framework employed by liberation narratives, which would mean asking: do you feel you were liberated? This question traps people into a yes or no answer—either you are on the American side or you are anti-American—it seems to suggest. Other questions asked by researchers in years past have been beholden to this framework. For example, it has been common to hear the leading question, *what bad*

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 16.

*things did the Japanese do to you?* asked by American journalists and researchers conducting interviews with indigenous senior citizens.

Local constructions of self-knowledge are significantly influenced by American commemorations, and the liberation framework has been an important part of both popular and academic representations of Japanese history in the Northern Mariana Islands. But the NMI was once part of Japan's colonial apparatus and experienced a range of social transformations during the interwar period. Although local consciousness about history has been heavily impacted by the liberation narrative paradigm, ambivalent and nostalgic stories about the old days of Japanese rule have been shared in spaces that are comparatively less influenced by war commemorative modes of thinking about this past. A broader picture of comparative colonial experience as a basis for local knowledge has so far been insufficiently identified as a lesson emerging from NMI history, perhaps because voicing and assessing these perspectives necessarily involves challenging the dominant paradigm that is linked to the overwhelmingly powerful and intimidating American military industrial complex in the Western Pacific.

### **Chapter 3) Dominated by Settlers: Populations in the Northern Mariana Islands During the Japanese Colonial Period**

Japanese colonialism in the NMI had precedents dating to commercial relationships established by Japanese traders in the 1880s. By 1914 when the Japanese Navy occupied German Micronesia, Japanese merchants already dominated trade in these islands. At the end of WWI, the League of Nations recognized Japan's familiarity with Micronesia when they granted Japan a Class C Mandate to administer the territory as an integral part of the empire. Under new colonial structures, the Japanese government transformed especially the Northern Mariana Islands within Micronesia into a sugar-producing territory that hosted large communities of settlers. These settlers dominated life on the islands at the time, and they permanently changed indigenous Northern Mariana Islander communities.

Starting in the mid-1920s, the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota began receiving growing numbers of settlers from various parts of the Japanese empire who moved to the islands to work in the sugar industry. These settler residents' everyday lives, habits, preferences and attitudes shaped the dominant cultures of the Northern Mariana Islands. Indigenous residents living in these communities learned trades and worked in a colonial economy that was thriving by the mid 1930s, and which allowed for the growth of a fairly wealthy elite class of Chamorro islanders. Islanders had various opportunities to interact with settler residents, and these interactions also gave rise to the formation of multiracial families.

This chapter opens by providing background about the economic and political circumstances leading to Japan's acquisition of Micronesia before explaining how tens of



thousands of settlers came to populate especially the Northern Mariana Islands within Micronesia. Next, I describe the quantities and qualities of various populations residing in the NMI at this time, the ways in which the colonial government managed local society using racialized systems, and how islanders fit into these systems. Finally, I assess indigenous islanders' memories of living in towns dominated by settlers and introduced cultures in order to show that these populations interacted and sometimes blurred the boundaries between them.

### **3.1 Background: Japanese Commerce and Colonial Rule**

Japanese first contacts with Micronesia began in the 1880s. During these years literature and stories about the South Seas became popular, as did the doctrine advocating expansion to the south (*Nanshin-ron*).<sup>69</sup> The late 1800s through early 1900s was a time when Japanese explorers travelled to Micronesia and wrote stories about their journeys, while others forged businesses as traders, and still others settled and produced generations of descendants who today trace their lineages back to Japan.<sup>70</sup> While several small businesses established a presence in Micronesia during the mid-Meiji era, the most important one to emerge from this time period was the Nan'yô Bôeki Kaisha (NBK). The

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<sup>69</sup> As opposed to *Hokushin-ron* (Northern Expansion Doctrine), which advocated Japanese expansion into Korea and Manchuria, *Nanshin-ron* (Southern Expansion Doctrine) advocated Japanese expansion into Southeast Asia and Micronesia as the area of greatest potential value. It originated possibly in the Edo period but was important in foreign affairs in the Meiji through the Shôwa eras through the end of the Second World War. *Nanshin-ron* advocated strengthening the navy, expanding shipbuilding capability, extending sea routes, and promoting trade and immigration primarily in Japan's Nan'yôchô n Micronesia.

<sup>70</sup> The most well known Japanese pioneer settler to the area was Mori Koben (1869-1945). Son of a Tôsa samurai, Mori travelled to Micronesia in late 1892 and settled in Weno Island, Chuuk. He was given chiefly status after he helped one chief defeat a rival tribe, and this position allowed him to marry the chief's daughter. Mori lived out the duration of his life on the island and acted as a liaison between Japan and Chuukese islanders, in addition to fathering generations of descendants who nowadays retain the name Mori and are an important family in Chuuk.

company built several stores that sold “articles of everyday living to Japanese and natives throughout the islands, carrying mail and passengers, and producing copra.”<sup>71</sup> They traded things like cloth, axes, cooking utensils, lamp oil, and sometimes weapons and liquor for natural products like copra, turtle shell, mother of pearl, and *beche de mer* (sea cucumbers).<sup>72</sup>

These traders established a business presence that soon dominated trade in the area: by 1906 more than 80% of trade was conducted with Japan.<sup>73</sup> By 1909, Japan accounted for 68% of imports to Guam, a U.S. Navy base. In July 1913, fifty-six Japanese were living in the Palau islands and fifty-one were living in the Marianas: although this number seems small, because of their domination of trade, their influence was greater than the population figures suggest.<sup>74</sup> Japan’s late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial dominance helped to justify their claim to the islands during post-WWI negotiations over the former German territory. More so than in most of Japan’s other formal colonies, in Micronesia trade had clearly preceded the flag.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Purcell, David C. “Japanese Entrepreneurs in the Mariana, Marshall, and Caroline Islands,” in Hilary Conroy and T. Scott Miyakawa, editors. *East Across the Pacific: Historical and Sociological Studies of Japanese Immigration & Assimilation*. Santa Barbara, CA: American Bibliographical Center Clio Press, 1972: 60.

<sup>72</sup> Peattie, Mark R. *Nan’yō: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1885-1945*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988: 21.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>74</sup> Purcell, “Japanese Entrepreneurs,” 61.

<sup>75</sup> Jun Uchida shows that ordinary, non-government representatives settled in Korea long before Japanese annexation. “... Whether “pushed” by the revolutionary changes at home or “pulled” by the allure of opportunities abroad, overseas settlers had one thing in common: more often leading than following the flag, they laid the basis of Japan’s East Asian empire.” Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011): 35.

### 3.1.1 Navy Rule of the Nan'yô Guntô [South Sea Islands] 1914-1918

Japan formally took over control of the islands when in 1914 Germany entered the First World War and retreated from their Western Pacific territories north of the Equator. In October of that year, a Japanese expeditionary force seized the German possessions including the Caroline, Mariana, and Marshall Islands. The 2<sup>nd</sup> South Seas Squadron sailed into Jaluit in the Marshall Islands and there established a South Seas Defense Force presence.

During this period of naval control, teams of scientists including many medical doctors and some anthropologists researched medical and cultural conditions in the islands. One well-known 1918 ethnographic study of Micronesian cultures conducted on this trip was published in both Japanese and English by Matsumura Akira, and was called *Contributions to the Ethnography of Micronesia*.<sup>76</sup> Various researchers from the Imperial University of Tokyo visited Micronesia on these navy ships in 1914-15. Based on assessment of these studies, Tôru Sakano argues that the islanders came to be labeled as “idle” (*taida*).<sup>77</sup> The navy also did surveys in preparation for creating an education system for islanders. These described the islanders as generally having “feeble” (*mukiryoku*) attitudes, and being “feeble by nature” (*sententeki ni mukiryoku*).<sup>78</sup>

Perceptions about islanders and island cultures that emerged from this early research surely influenced Japanese national leaders' beliefs about the potential of

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<sup>76</sup> Matsumura Akira, “Contributions to the Ethnography of Micronesia,” *Journal of the College of Science, Imperial University of Tokyo*, XL:7 (1918).

<sup>77</sup> Sakano Tôru. “Dairokushô: ‘Taida’ naru tasha—shokuminchi ryôchika Mikuroneshia ni okeru jinruigaku kenkyû,” (Chapter 6: ‘Idle Others:’ Anthropological research in Micronesia under Japanese colonial rule) in *Teikoku Nippon to Jinruigakusha—senhappyaku hachijyûyon nen—senkyuhyakugojyûni nen* (Imperial Japan and Anthropologists: 1884-1952) (Tokyo: Keisô Shobô, 2005): 369-402.

<sup>78</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, 136.

Micronesians to work as laborers in a modern economy. It was not just the notion that Micronesian populations were small, but also that they were “idle” or “feeble” that led Japanese colonial planners to seek alternative solutions to a perceived shortage of potential labor. Over the next twenty years, in cooperation with certain businessmen they would recruit tens of thousands of East Asian migrants mainly from Okinawa to work largely in sugar and fishing industries in the area.

### 3.1.2 Civil Administration (1918-1922), the League Mandate (1920), and Nan'yôcho Government (1922-1942)

An imperial ordinance in June 1918 revised regulations for the Navy's South Seas Defense Force and dictated that on July 1<sup>st</sup>, the Civil Administration was to take over from the Navy's Defense Force.<sup>79</sup> Thus, Japan's Minseibu or Civil Administration controlled the Nan'yô Guntô for a brief period from July 1, 1918 to April 1, 1922.

At the conclusion of the First World War, Article 22 of the Treaty of Versailles established a Mandate system. In this system, signatory members were to govern territories, which, as a consequence of the First World War, were no longer under the authority of Germany and were thought to be unable to govern themselves. Certain “South Pacific Islands” as well as South West Africa,

...owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the territory of the Mandatory, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as integral portions of its territory, subject to the safeguards above mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, 169-196.

<sup>80</sup> Brigham Young University Library, “Peace Treaty of Versailles: Articles 1-30 and Annex, The Covenant of the League of Nations,” The World War I Document Archive, last updated November 11, 1998, assessed April 29, 2015, <http://net.lib.byu.edu/%7Erdh7/wwi/versa/versa1.html>.

The interests of the indigenous population referenced in the excerpt above had earlier been defined in terms of what League members were expected to do for them: “the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility...”<sup>81</sup>

Formerly German Micronesia, or the certain “South Pacific Islands” cited above, were taken over by the Japanese Navy in 1914 which meant that Japanese researchers had already sought and compiled knowledge of the area and the people. In addition, Japan was geographically contiguous with Micronesia, which according to Article 22 would have been a factor supporting the decision to assign the islands to Japan. In December 1920, the League granted a Class C mandate to Japan for the nearly thousands Micronesian islands scattered north of the Equator.

The Class C Mandate specified that Japan was to take administrative control of “all of the former German islands situated in the Pacific Ocean and lying north of the Equator” on behalf of the League, which retained sovereignty in this arrangement (Article 1).<sup>82</sup> Specifically, Japan was to accomplish the following per the mandate: to promote the material and moral wellbeing of the indigenous population (Article 2); to prohibit slavery, the slave trade and prevent forced labor “except for essential public works and services,” to prohibit arms traffic and prevent the supply of intoxicating spirits to the “natives” (Article 3); to only militarily train “natives” for internal police and local

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Kokusai Renmei Kyôkai, “Documents Relating to the Japanese Mandate for the German Possessions in the Pacific Ocean Lying North of the Equator,” Dai 122 shû, vol. 122 (Tokyo: Kokusai Renmei kyôkai sôsho, 1933): 8.

defense purposes and to abstain from fortifying the islands as bases (Article 4)<sup>83</sup>; to guarantee the free exercise of religion and allow missionaries to teach, travel and live in the islands and to keep the borders open to all nationals of League member states (Article 5); to submit an annual report to the League Security Council (Article 6); and to agree to appear in the Permanent Court of International Justice established by Covenant Article 14 to resolve disputes with any other member nations regarding the provisions of the mandate (Article 7).<sup>84</sup>

The Japanese government had organized the Nan'yôchô or the South Seas Bureau administrative unit while the League of Nations was still adopting the Mandate. On January 28, 1920 when the peace treaty signed with Germany became official, the imperial government considered basic reforms of the Civil Administration system to prepare for setting up an administrative government.<sup>85</sup> Organic Regulations of the Government of the South Sea Islands proclaimed Nan'yôchô as a district of the empire. Under article 10 of the Meiji constitution, the Nan'yôchô Kansei (South Seas Bureau Ordinance) created a government structure for managing the South Sea Islands. On March 31, 1922, the Nan'yô Guntô Defense Force regulation was temporarily suspended, and on April 1<sup>st</sup> the Nan'yôchô was created and at the same time the Minseibu system

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<sup>83</sup> Japan did not follow the provision pertaining to fortification, and during the Fifteen-Year War (1931-45) recruited islander patrolmen and other men to serve in the military. The mandate terms stipulated that Japan was charged with governing the area as an integral portion of the empire. This came to mean adhering to a 1918 bill that paved the way for the military to directly control all industries necessary for producing military-use items.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 8-10.

<sup>85</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, 197.

was abolished.<sup>86</sup> Effective April 1, 1922, the islands became known as the Inintôchi (Mandate) and were governed under the terms of the Class C Mandate as the Nan'yôchô.

The Ministry of Overseas Affairs oversaw the South Seas Bureau, which was divided into six districts named after the capital islands: Truk (Chuuk), Yarûto (Jaluit, Marshall Islands), Parao (Palau), Ponape (Pohnpei), Saipan (Northern Marianas), and Yappu (Yap). Whereas the navy had been headquartered in Chuuk, the civilian government established its capital in Koror, Palau. In July 1921, the Minseibu was separated from the military headquarters in Chuuk and was moved to Palau.<sup>87</sup>

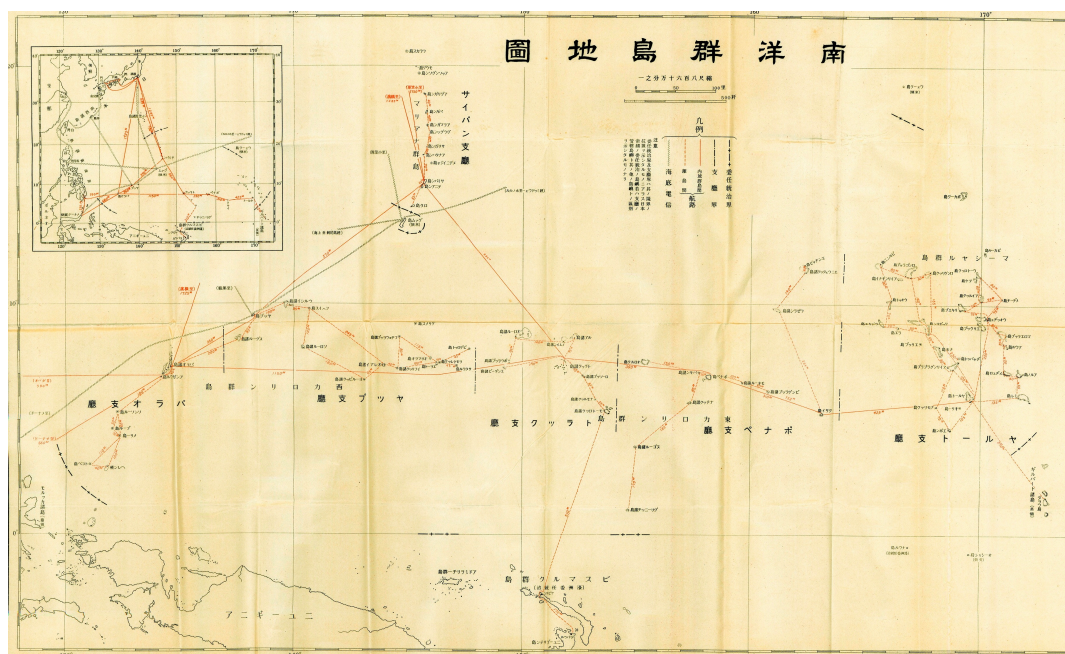


Figure 3.1: Map of the Six Districts of Nan'yôchô Showing Shipping Lanes and Distances<sup>88</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Under Imperial Ordinance number 107, 1922, "Organic Regulations of the Government of the South Sea Islands." Edward I-te Chen, "Chapter 6: The Attempt to Integrate the Empire: Legal Perspectives" in *The Japanese Colonial Empire 1895-1945*. Edited by Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984: 170, 258.

<sup>87</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, 169-170.

<sup>88</sup> Nan'yôchô, *Nan'yôchô shisei jûnenshi* (Ten-year history of the Administration of the South Sea Islands Bureau), (Nan'yôchô Chôkan Kanbô, 1932): np.

With the acquisition of former German Micronesia, Japan had gained the last of what have been identified as its five formal colonies, or colonies that were widely recognized by other nations and empires at the time to be legal territories of the Empire of Japan.<sup>89</sup> These included Taiwan (1895), the Kwantung Leased Territory made up of a leased area on the Kwantung peninsula and the South Manchuria Railway along with its right of way (1905), Karafutô at the southern half of Sakhalin Island (1905), Korea (1910), and Micronesia or the Nan'yô Guntô (1914).

Unlike Karafutô, Korea, and Taiwan, Micronesia was similar to the Kwantung Leased Territory in that Japan held limited sovereignty over these areas and exercised authority according to international agreements established to govern Japan's Mandate. The Meiji Constitution did not apply in the latter two territories, which is to say that government officials did not need to consult the Imperial Diet to authorize legislation.<sup>90</sup> In Nan'yôchô, the government ruled by Imperial Ordinances and gave colonial governors a great deal of authority in administering local affairs.

Unlike Korea, Taiwan and Kantôshû where governors held the highest rank in the colonial bureaucracy called *shin'nin*, in Karafutô and Nan'yôchô the governors held the second highest rank called *chokunin* and they were supervised by the Prime Minister while also being required to take orders from other cabinet ministers. *Chokunin* managed the judiciary as an executive function and they could appoint and dismiss judges at will. At the local level, the Japanese governor in Palau had executive power and issued ordinances called *chorei*.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Myers and Peattie., *The Japanese Colonial Empire*.

<sup>90</sup> Chen, "Attempt to Integrate," 242-43.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 263-64, 266, 259.



Trade increased dramatically during the Nan'yôchô period. There was a twelve-fold increase between 1922-35, from ¥3,602,000 to ¥41,595,000. By comparison, trade in Formosa increased only 2.2 times during these same years.<sup>92</sup> While imports had exceeded exports during the years of naval administration, during the Nan'yôchô colonial period, exported commodities exceed imports. Moreover by 1932 the colony no longer needed to receive any subsidies from the government in Tokyo and was fiscally self-sufficient.

The colonial government had been heavily involved in establishing and supporting key industries in these islands. As a compliment to trade, at this time government subsidies enabled the Nippon Yûsen Kaisha (Japan Mail Steamship Company) or NYK to offer affordable shipping services of goods and people in the territory. The NYK shipped between Japan and Micronesia and constructed the Palau-maru and Saipan-maru ships exclusively for these routes. In 1920 vessels owned by NYK made journeys into the South Seas every six weeks, but by 1925 with the increase of immigration they made the trip every three weeks.<sup>93</sup> In 1930, colonial records show that the port at Saipan island averaged one incoming ship every eight days, whereas Tinian island received an average of one ship every seventeen days.<sup>94</sup> Various companies including the NYK owned these ships. Increased ship traffic and migration coincided

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<sup>92</sup> Yanaihara Tadao, *Pacific Islands Under Japanese Mandate* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976; first published 1940): 50.

<sup>93</sup> Peattie, *Nan'yô*, 147.

<sup>94</sup> Jan.-Nov. 1930 statistics: *Nan'yôchô Kôhô* (South Seas Bureau Bulletin) Parao Shotô Korôrutô: Nan'yôchô, Shôwa 5-nen (Palau Archipelago Koror Island: South Seas Bureau, 1930), Reprint Tôkyô: Yumani Shobô, 2012: 109, 122, 204, 222, 255, 292, 319, 355, 361. Dec. 1930 statistics: *Nan'yôchô Kôhô* 1931, 36.

with the gradual rise of a small tourism industry in the islands, as well as the production of guidebooks and travel logs intended for settlers and sightseers in the territory.<sup>95</sup>

While the NYK ran shipping between the territory and Japan, the Nan'yô Bôeki Kaisha (NBK) introduced earlier ran lines within the territory to more distant outposts. By the late 1930s, NBK activities included commerce, trade, marine transportation, forwarding, contract work, coconut cultivation, and fishing. In addition to the Mandated area, NBK operated in the Dutch Celebes, Gilbert Islands, Guam, and Rabaul in the Bismark Archipelago under Australian mandate. NBK dominated commerce in the territory and it had “all the characteristics typical of monopolistic capitalism.”<sup>96</sup> By the 1930s, the NBK Mariana Islands route went seventeen times a year from Saipan to Guam by way of Rota, and five times a year to the northernmost Northern Mariana Islands of Agrihan, Alamagan, Anatahan, Pagan, and Sarigan.<sup>97</sup> Figure 3.1 shows the shipping routes between and within archipelagos, as well as distances between islands.

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<sup>95</sup> Most of the works available in major Japanese libraries searchable under keywords Nan'yô Guntô or Nan'yôcho include titles dating to the 1930s. For colonial books that introduce Micronesia to Japanese migrants and travelers, see Ôgimi Tomonori, *Waga tôchi Nan'yô Guntô annai* (Tokyo: Nantôsha, 1930); Ito Tomojiro, *Nan'yô ryokô annai* (Kobe-shi: Umi bunsho-ten, 1933); Yokota Takeshi, *Waga Nan'yô no shôtai* (Tokyo: Nan'yôsha, 1933); Ômi Ichirô, *Kobune wo sumika ni Nan'yô e* (Tokyo: Hirano shobô, 1934); Akimori Tsunetarô, *Nan'yô ryokô* (Osaka: Shimoichikei bundô, 1938); Kubo Takashi, *Nan'yô ryokô* (Tokyo: Kinnohoshi-sha, 1939); Ôgimi Tomonori, *Nan'yô Guntô annai* (Tokyo-shi: Kaigai kenkyûjo, 1939. Reprint, Tokyo: Ozorasha, 2004); and Nan'yô Kyôkai, *Nan'yô annai* (Tokyo: Nan'yô Kyôkai, 1942). During the 1930s, publication industries experienced a boom at the same time as they were increasingly required to comply with military government goals for printing presses and their networks of distribution. The production of materials about the South Seas grew at the same time as interest in travel or emigration the new state of Manchuria in what Young has called a moment of “total empire.” Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>96</sup> Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 57.

<sup>97</sup> Peattie, *Nan'yô*, 148.

### 3.2 Sugar and Settlement in the NMI

Trade was significant, but the single most important industry to develop in this territory was sugar farming that became extremely successful in the Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan and Tinian. Of the six island districts, the Saipan-shichô was comprised of high islands as opposed to sandy, low-elevation atolls in places like the Marshall Islands. This meant that the Saipan-shichô possessed a relatively sizable land area where agriculture was possible. Moreover the Mariana Islands' position in the most northerly part of Micronesia (situated between 13 to 20 degrees north latitude) meant that they had less annual rainfall and more sunshine than other islands. These weather conditions were favorable for sugar farming. With South Seas Bureau support and assistance, by the mid-1920s the Nan'yô Kôhatsu Kabushiki Gaisha (South Seas Development Corporation) or NKK under the management of Matsue Haruji had found solutions to several challenges that had befuddled earlier attempts to grow sugar cane on Saipan.<sup>98</sup>

The Mandate's overall population increased from 52,222 in 1920 to 102,537 in 1935, which was an increase of 50,315 or 96.3% over fifteen years. The average density of the population across all districts of the Mandate per square mile in 1920 was 62.9, and in 1935 it rose to 123.6, showing an increase of 60.7 people per square mile in a span of 15 years.<sup>99</sup> By 1942, the last year for which data is available, the territory's population had grown to 145,272.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 123-132.

<sup>99</sup> Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 29.

<sup>100</sup> *Nan'yôchô Kôhô* (South Seas Bureau Bulletin). Parao Shotô Korôrutô: Nan'yôchô, Shôwa 17-nen (Palau Archipelago Koror Island: South Seas Bureau, 1942). Reprint Tôkyô: Yumani Shobô, 2012. Volume 25 (June 30, 1942): 36-37.

Settlers congregated in the greatest numbers in the Mariana's three southernmost islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Saipan district residents constituted 16% of the total Mandate population in 1925, 28% percent in 1930, and 43% in 1935.<sup>101</sup> Because the Chuuk islands were the capital of the navy administration, that archipelago had the largest population until 1930 when settlers to the Saipan district began to dominate.<sup>102</sup> By 1942, 37% of the Mandate's residents lived in the Saipan district, and the next largest population cluster was 23% in the Palau islands.<sup>103</sup>

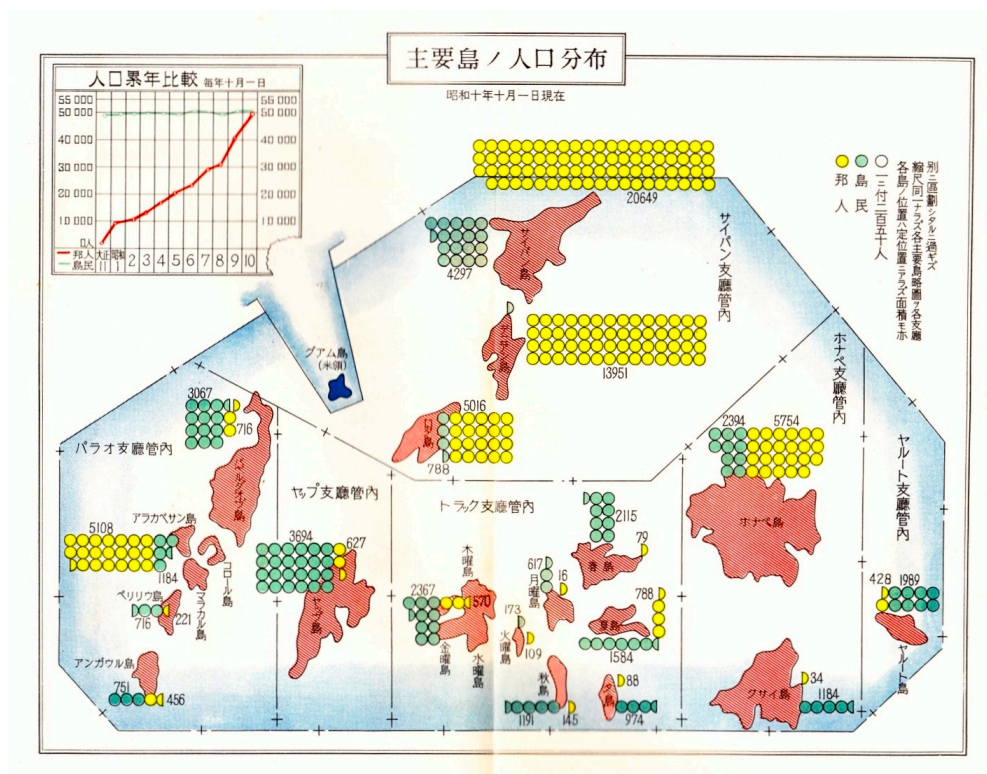


Figure 3.2: Population Map of Japan's Six Administrative Districts in Micronesia<sup>104</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>102</sup> The Chuuk district had over 15,000 residents during the 1920s decade and grew by 2,000 in the 1930s. Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 30.

<sup>103</sup> The figures cited here reflect data published on June 30, 1942. *Nan'yôchô Kôhô* Volume 25, pages 36-37. At this time, the overall population in the territory was 145,272, with at least 53,516 people in the Saipan district (31,630 people in Saipan, 16,365 in Tinian, and 5,521 in Rota), and 33,370 in the Palau district.

<sup>104</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, np.

The yellow dots in the 1935 map shown in Figure 3.2 represent *hōjin* or “countrymen” (Japanese settlers including mainland Japanese, Okinawans, and Koreans). The green dots represent *tōmin* or “islanders,” who in the Saipan district included Carolinian and Chamorro people. This map clearly shows that among all of the six districts in the Mandate, not only was the population in the Saipan district the largest, but settlers outnumbered islanders by the greatest ratio.

The overwhelming presence of settlers in the Saipan district signified a form of domination in and of itself. The huge community of settlers brought habits and lifestyle preferences to the islands that defined the contours of local socioeconomies. Settler populations became what Jun Uchida has identified in the case of colonial Korea as “mundane conduits for Japanese culture and modernity:” settler culture affected many aspects of the average indigenous person’s life “where official policies could only go so far.”<sup>105</sup> The settlers’ dominating physical presence in Korea as theorized by Uchida was even more pronounced in the Northern Mariana Islands where the ratio of ten settlers to one indigenous islander by 1937 was the largest rate of displacement in the empire.<sup>106</sup>

The NKK, which recruited these settlers, was capitalized by the Tōyō Takushoku Company, and was protected by the colonial government. The company was given subsidies as well as rent-free use of government land in Saipan. In these ways, it held a

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<sup>105</sup> Uchida, *Brokers*, 13.

<sup>106</sup> While settlers in Japan’s much larger colony in Korea comprised an overall number that was far greater than settlers to the Nan’yōchō, the ratio of settlers to indigenous residents in Korea was much lower. Uchida writes that there were 583,428 Japanese settlers in Korea by 1935, which represented the largest overseas settlement of Japanese at the time. The ratio of settlers to Koreans was about 30% in Seoul and Pusan, and about 25% in satellite cities like Taegu and Kunsan. Uchida, *Brokers*, 11. Japanese settlers vastly outnumbered indigenous Ainu in Karafutō by about seven to one by 1906 with 10,800 Japanese settlers to 1,561 Ainu. Chen, “Attempt to Integrate,” 246. Palau, the Nan’yōcho capital, had a ratio of five settlers to one islander, which was the second highest in the territory but was still only half the density of settler populations in the Northern Marianas.

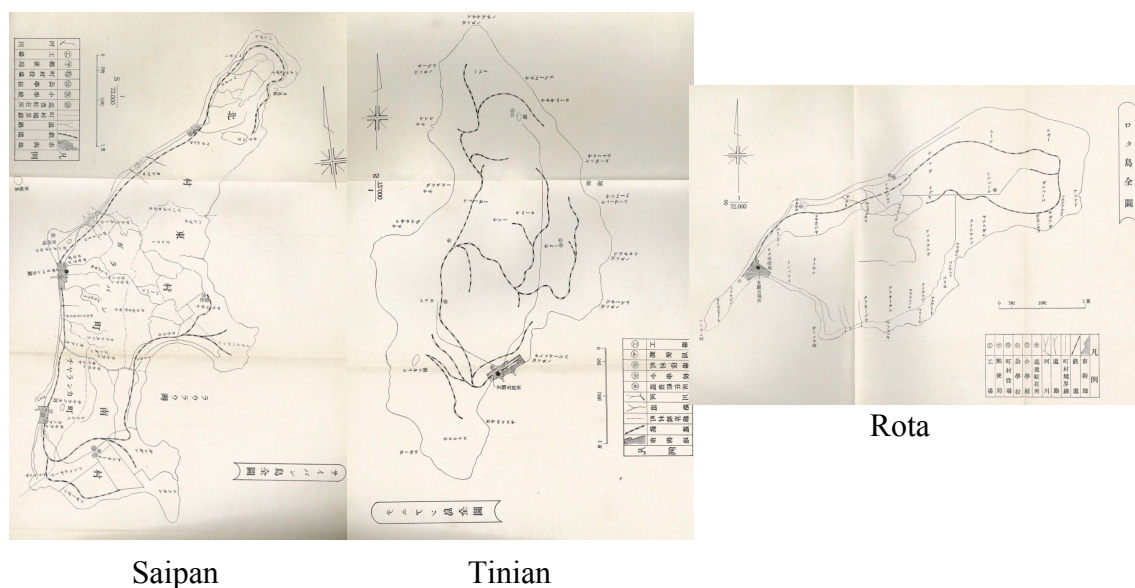
more significant monopoly than NBK. NKK engaged in fishing as well as the production of sugar, alcohol, starch, phosphate, damar, and ice while extending their activities throughout the islands of Saipan, Tinian, Rota, Palau, Peleliu (in Palau), Ponape, and Dutch New Guinea by 1937.<sup>107</sup> In 1933, half of the Japanese population on the islands worked for NKK (15,000 people) and the company took in 55% of the total revenue of the entire colony.<sup>108</sup> The monopolistic nature of this business' role in the islands contributed significantly to the territory's productivity, at the same time as its activities defined the nature and pace of everyday life on the most heavily settled and cultivated islands of Saipan and Tinian.

When the Japanese Navy arrived in 1914, German officials had overseen the creation of phosphate mines as well as the planting of extensive coconut trees for the production of copra along with other small-scale agriculture projects. But much of the islands remained covered in jungle when the Germans left. With government support, NKK transformed the terrains of especially the islands of Saipan and Tinian into urbanizing agricultural towns with public infrastructure and private developments that had never before existed on the islands. Although the German colonial government started phosphate mining and engaged (as did the Spanish) in copra farming, it was Japanese developers who first established sugar agriculture in these islands.

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<sup>107</sup> Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 56, 119-127.

<sup>108</sup> In 1933, NKK had a revenue of ¥3,090,000 of the Nan'yôchô total of ¥5,628,918. Ibid.



**Figure 3.3: Maps of Saipan, Tinian and Rota Islands Showing Railroads and Villages as of 1938<sup>109</sup>**

The NKK built a narrow gauge railroad system on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota; a processing mill in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan; a rum processing plant in Chalan Kanoa that made use of the sugar refinery's waste products; and expanded the islands' docks and jetties.<sup>110</sup> The district's capital island of Saipan was the first to be cultivated for sugar agriculture, and it was the location of the sugar refinery constructed in the early 1920s and alcohol plant in 1926.<sup>111</sup>

The nearby island of Tinian became the target of more development that same year. Tinian was ideal because the island was flat compared to Saipan, there was better

<sup>109</sup> Nan'yôchô Saipan-shichô, *Saipan-shichô kannai gaiyô* (Saipan: Nan'yôchô, 1938): n.p.

<sup>110</sup> In order for NKK to transport goods to and from the islands, a major overhaul of the docks was required. NKK set out to secure harbors by dredging channels and constructing docks to handle commercial and military vessels alike. In 1926, the Tanapag harbor in Saipan that had been used for small boats was dredged to allow for a deep-water channel that would become the main shipping thoroughfare. In the 1930s, several jetties south of Garapan town were constructed for fishing and for pleasure vessels. At the south end of Garapan today still stands an old crumbling Japanese jetty overgrown with ironwood trees. The Saipan dock known nowadays as "Sugar Dock" that was adjacent to the old NKK sugar factory in Chalan Kanoa was used for smaller shipments and transporting people.

<sup>111</sup> Peattie, *Nan'yô*, 123-32.

soil, and there were few indigenous residents which meant that land could be more easily taken to make way for agricultural plots.<sup>112</sup> By 1937, 57% of the settler population living on Tinian was from Okinawa and even more than on other islands, Tinian communities were strongly influenced by Okinawan culture.<sup>113</sup>

The island of Rota was the last to be developed by NKK, which turned their attention to the island in 1930.<sup>114</sup> Output of sugar from Rota never approached the levels achieved in Saipan or Tinian, as the rugged terrain was not as suited to cane agriculture. Rota sustained phosphate mining since the mineral had been discovered on the Sabana plateau. By 1942, the ratio of settlers to islanders on Rota was about five to one, whereas on Saipan the ratio was about eight to one and on Tinian there were only settlers and no indigenous islander residents.<sup>115</sup>

NKK's developments in these three southernmost Northern Mariana Islands quickly fostered the growth of settler towns, where migrants transformed island economies and societies into veritable Japanese domains. There were two kinds of immigrant farmers who migrated to the Northern Mariana Islands: *dekasegi* (single men), and families. More and more women were included in the overall number of people who immigrated to the NMI as time passed. In the Saipan district in 1920, 24% of the 1,758 *hōjin* (mainland Japanese, Okinawan, Korean) settler residents were women, while they represented 32% of the settler population in 1925, 39% in 1930, 41% in 1935, and 45%

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<sup>112</sup> On October 1, 1934, only 28 of Tinian island's 10,919 residents were reported as *tōmin* (islanders), and by June 30, 1942 none of the 15,921 residents were classified as *tōmin*. For 1934 statistics, see Nan'yōchō, *Nan'yōchō Kōhō* Vol. 14, 60-61; for 1942 statistics, see Nan'yōchō, *Nan'yōchō Kōhō*, Vol. 25: 36-37.

<sup>113</sup> Okinawa-ken Bunka Shinkōkai, *Kyū Nan'yō Guntō to Okinawa kenjin: Tenian=Okinawans and the Nan'yō Guntō: Tinian* (Naha-shi: Okinawa-ken Kyōiku Iinkai, 2002): 5.

<sup>114</sup> Peattie, *Nan'yō*, 164-67.

<sup>115</sup> 1942 populations included the following: Rota 4669 *hōjin* to 859 *tōmin*; Saipan 27,161 *hōjin* to 3,365 *tōmin*, and Tinian housed 15,915 *hōjin*. Nan'yōchō, *Nan'yōchō Kōhō* Vol. 25: 36-37.



in 1942.<sup>116</sup> The rise in the number of women reflects the transition away from the *dekasegi* migrants and towards an increasing number of family migrants. As more families moved to the islands, the birth rates for *hōjin* increased to enlarge this population even further. Having babies in the islands probably represented, among other things, the desire to put down roots and settle permanently. These families were willing to remain in the islands for longer periods of time than the single men.<sup>117</sup>

The islands' natural environs came to resemble Japan and Okinawa in the eyes of settlers. The Flame tree (*Delonix regia*), or the *deigo* in the Ryūkyūan (Okinawan) language, has an orange flower that was known as the Nan'yō-zakura or South Seas cherry blossom during the Japanese period. Among the many perennial shrubs and trees in the Northern Mariana Islands, the bright orange flame trees bloom once a year. Because they bloom annually they are said to have reminded settlers of the springtime cherry blossom cycle back home, and were a rare reminder in the tropics of the changing of the seasons. Many shrines were also built on the islands, the most central of which on Saipan was a shrine in Garapan. What's more, in the foothills of Gualo Rai, Saipan just to the east of the main town of Garapan, a circular pathway of eighty-eight Buddhist statues was constructed in the image of the "Hachijūhakkajō" pilgrimage site in Shikoku, Japan. There people would walk through the eighty-eight posts of the Buddha beneath coffee trees growing on the hillside.<sup>118</sup> In these ways, settlers constructed in the tropical island landscapes certain cultural markers that made them qualitatively more "Japanese."

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<sup>116</sup> Statistics from 1920-1935 years cited in Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 30. 1942 statistics reflect data published on June 30, 1942 in Nan'yōchō, *Nan'yōchō Kōhō* Vol. 25: 36-37.

<sup>117</sup> Peattie, *Nan'yō*, 160.

<sup>118</sup> A few of the eighty-eight stone statues bearing inscribed individual numbers still survive in memorial sites and personal gardens on Saipan.

The Northern Mariana Islands were settled mainly by migrants from Okinawa Prefecture, where by 1938 they made up 60.6% of the *hōjin* population. By comparison, that same year the second most represented place of origin for settlers was Fukushima Prefecture at 7.8 percent, followed by Tokyo at 7.7 percent.<sup>119</sup> It is no understatement to say that Okinawan habits and norms shaped settler society. Tomiyama Ichirō writes that Asato Noboru's *History of the Development of Japan's South* published in 1941, "presented Okinawan tradition...as the tradition of Japan's southern development."<sup>120</sup> Okinawan migrants to Tinian had opened extensive Okinawan-style businesses there by 1942, including restaurants, noodle shops, taverns, and even *awamori* distilleries.<sup>121</sup> For entertainment, it was common to hear the Okinawan *shamisen* being played and there were theaters on both Saipan and Tinian dedicated to Okinawan dance and drama.<sup>122</sup> During this period, groups called the Okinawa Saipan Association and the Okinawa Tinian Association formed to further support connections between these islands.<sup>123</sup>

Japanese mainstream culture and writers of the colonial period ascribed negative qualities to Okinawan culture and Okinawans. Tomiyama examined scientific research from the period that portrayed the "Japanese" in the South Sea Islands as of "low quality." He writes that a doctor and anthropologist named Kiyono Kenji, who had been commissioned by the Pacific Association to conduct research in the islands, had observed that the Japanese in the South Seas had poor character in terms of "bodily strength,"

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<sup>119</sup> Data as of October 1, 1937. Nan'yōchō, *Nan'yōchō Kōhō* Vol. 14: 140-41.

<sup>120</sup> Tomiyama Ichirō, "Colonialism and the Sciences of the Tropical Zone: The Academic Analysis of Difference in 'the Island Peoples,'" in *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, edited by Tani Barlow (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997): 215.

<sup>121</sup> Okinawa-ken Bunka Shinkōkai, *Kyū Nan'yō Guntō to Okinawa kenjin*, 16-17.

<sup>122</sup> One such theater on Saipan was called Minami-za, and the theater on Tinian was called Kyūyō-za. Ibid, 18-19.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 20.

“birth rate,” “work efficiency,” “brain power,” and “spirit of leadership.” Kiyono speculated that these Japanese had the same problems as islanders, adding that they were “becoming the same in the tropical environment.”<sup>124</sup> Kiyono was conflating Okinawan culture and lifestyles with those of the South Sea islanders, and even attributing similarities between these cultures to causes apparently rooted in the tropical environment itself.

Okinawan settlers came to be thought of as culturally and ethnically existing somewhere between Japanese people and islanders. Tomiyama assessed period publications that portray these Okinawan settlers as “Japan Kanaka,”<sup>125</sup> while noting that negative stereotypes toward Okinawans pervaded perceptions of Japanese settler societies in the region.<sup>126</sup> Among other things, these discourses are expressions of concern about the large number of Okinawan settlers who were acculturating islanders into societies that were heavily influenced by Okinawan lifestyles rather than those of mainland Japan.

Although the cultural traits of Okinawans may have been troubling to some people in mainland Japan at the time, it is also clear that bureaucrats and business leaders thought that Okinawans were the people to fit into the Micronesian environment to make it both agriculturally productive and Japanese.<sup>127</sup> As noted earlier in this chapter, during the first years of Japanese rule, navy planners and studies supported by the navy viewed the Nan’yôchô indigenous population as low in number and potentially unreliable as

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<sup>124</sup> Tomiyama, “Colonialism and the Sciences,” 213-214.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Tomiyama quotes Yanaihara as saying, “Okinawans do not win the respect of the islanders because their life style is so shabby. Consequently, the reform of Okinawan education and life styles is an urgent matter for the reform of Japanese colonial society in the south.” Ibid., 215-16.

<sup>127</sup> Tomiyama Ichirô, “The ‘Japanese’ of Micronesia: Okinawans in the Nan’yô Islands,” in *Okinawan Diaspora*, edited by Ronald Y. Nakasone (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002): 59.

industry labor. Okinawan migrants answered the colonial planners' labor needs in the Northern Marianas as they had years of experience in sugar agriculture to bring to bear on the fledgling enterprises. At the same time, their departure from Okinawa solved what was at the time described as the population problem there, which more or less referred to poverty, unemployment, and other economic malaise.<sup>128</sup>

Okinawan knowledge of fishing practices has been identified as central factors in the viability of the Japanese Bonito fishery industry in the Northern Marianas.<sup>129</sup> Agrarian laborers from Okinawa almost exclusively worked in the sugar industry that dominated the territory's economy, and their knowledge of sugar agriculture enabled the successes of this form of agriculture in the Northern Mariana Islands. Thus despite anxieties about their cultural impact on so-called *tômin* populations in the territory, skilled Okinawan laborers were indispensable to the success of the territory's dominant industries.

While the NKK was the major employer in the Northern Mariana Islands under Japanese rule, people also found employment offering a range of goods and services that increasingly came to be sought after by the growing settler communities. The influx of settlers gave rise to wholesale and retail shops, general stores, specialty stores like cobblers and shoe repairmen, restaurants, movie theaters, confectionaries, and brothels. What's more, urbanization accompanied the growth of industry. In Saipan, a telephone system was constructed: government offices and some businesses and personal residences used three-digit phone numbers. By the end of the period, wireless radios were being

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<sup>128</sup> Wendy Matsumura, *The Limits of Okinawa: Japanese Capitalism, Living Labor, and Theorizations of Community* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

<sup>129</sup> Wakako Higuchi, "Pre-war Japanese Fisheries in Micronesia—Focusing on Bonito and Tuna Fishing in the Northern Mariana Islands," *Immigration Studies* 3:51 (2007): 49-68.

used to communicate across the territory, and airplanes were traveling frequently between the islands. Amidst the rapid urbanization and economic diversification in the NMI, sugar agriculture was always dominant and all other economic activities either directly or indirectly depended upon this industry.

The number of resident Japanese government officials remained small. Among the 51,000 settlers engaged in various occupations by 1935, 43.9% were farmers, 14.1% were industrial workers, 7.9% were merchants, 8% were fishermen, and 3.9% were officials and members of free professions.<sup>130</sup> *Hôjin* laborers from Asia comprised 80% of the people employed in sugar, alcohol, and dried bonito businesses.<sup>131</sup>

By August 1931, the islands had become so densely populated with settlers that the Nan'yôchô government had to come up with subsidiary structures to manage them. By an executive order, Nan'yôchô applied the same town-village system (*buraku*) that was used in rural Japan.<sup>132</sup> Town councils were created for each large Japanese community on the islands and functioned as elective bodies. These councils determined the village budget and financial obligations, as well as publicizing directives given by the district administrator.<sup>133</sup> Villages had representatives and vice representative clerks who, as public servants, contributed to managing the hygiene office and who served on these councils. They also held conferences in the villages to give people an opportunity to consult with them.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>131</sup> Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 52.

<sup>132</sup> Nan'yôchô Saipan-shichô, *Saipan-shichô kannai gaiyô*, 12.

<sup>133</sup> Peattie, *Nan'yô*, 335n.17.

<sup>134</sup> Nan'yôchô Saipan-shichô, *Saipan-shichô kannai gaiyô*, 12-13.

In the Saipan-shichô (Saipan district), in September 1932 five villages were designated by order of the Nan'yôchô. These included Garapan-chô (the capital of the district), Minami-mura (south village), Higashi-mura (east village), and Kita-mura (north village). In Tinian, Songsong village was made into Tinian-chô. Then in October 1934, Charanka-mura (today Chalan Kanoa) on Saipan was detached from Minami-mura. These villages represented half of the total number in the entire territory, with the other three each located in separate island districts. In other words, other island groups only had one elected municipal body per district, whereas by 1934 the Saipan-shichô had five elected bodies governing the dense population of settlers.

### **3.3 Populations Living in the NMI During the Japanese Colonial Era**

There were two major groups of residents tracked by the Japanese colonial administrators, which were further broken down into sub-groups. There were *hōjin* (countrymen) who included *naichijin* (mainland Japanese), Chōsenjin (People of “Chōsen” or the peninsula of Korea pre-partition), and Taiwanjin or Taiwanese. Okinawans or people from Okinawa prefecture were included among the *hōjin* population, although culturally and historically they have been thought of as a distinct group of people. There were also *tōmin* (islanders), while *gaikokujin* (foreigners) represented everybody else and were a very small group.

*Tōmin* (islander) was a term used both formally and informally by various groups during the days of Japan’s empire in Micronesia to refer to indigenous or “native” peoples of Micronesia. The South Sea islands government recognized that among *tōmin*, there were two kinds of *zoku* (tribes) called Chamorro and Kanaka. At the time,

Chamorro primarily meant peoples indigenous to the Mariana Islands (Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands). The term Kanaka has a more complicated history and possible range of meanings.

		1922	1927	1932	1934	1936	1938	1940	1942	1942 Entire Territory
Hôjin	Naichijin	n/a	n/a	n/a	30,054	40,457	44,459	25,372	26,294	86,810
	Chôsenjin	n/a	n/a	n/a	231	377	409	698	1,354	6,407
	Taiwanjin	n/a	n/a	n/a	11	2	1	1	0	3
	Subtotal	2,019	7,095	21,787	30,296	40,836	44,869	26,071	27,648	93,220
Tômin	Chamorro zoku	2,416	2,700	2,133	3,455	3,086	3,215	2,701	2,896	4,394
	Kanaka zoku	788	946	1,006	990	1,067	1,000	1,079	1,067	47,557
	Subtotal	3,204	3,646	3,139	4,445	4,373	4,215	3,780	3,963	51,951
Gaikokujin		6	6	15	14	18	21	17	19	101
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5,223</b>	<b>10,741</b>	<b>24,926</b>	<b>34,755</b>	<b>45,227</b>	<b>49,105</b>	<b>29,868</b>	<b>31,630</b>	<b>145,272</b>

**Figure 3.4: “Saipan-shichô” (Saipan District)/Northern Mariana Island Populations 1922-42, with 1942 Entire Territory Population<sup>135</sup>**

### 3.3.1 “Kanaka” and Chamorro

“Kanaka” is a loanword in Japanese from the English “Kanaka,” which referred to a Hawaiian of Polynesian decent. In Australia and New Zealand, the term referred to South Sea Islanders particularly those who were brought to Australia as laborers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The *Japan Knowledge* encyclopedia defines the term Kanaka in Japanese as having first referred to people of Polynesian descent living in Hawaii, and later by the 1920s it comes to refer to people from Micronesia. The term Kanaka was thought to refer to people of Micronesia hailing from islands south of the Marianas, but populations referred to as Kanaka people had been living in the Northern Mariana Islands at least beginning during the centuries of Spanish control of the

<sup>135</sup> 1922, 1927, and 1932 data as of October 1 of these years. Nan’yôchô Saipan-shichô, *Saipan-shichô Kannai Gaiyô*, 10. Statistics from 1934 as of Oct. 1, 1934; from 1936 as of Dec. 31, 1938; and from 1940 as of Jun. 30, 1942. The *Nan’yôchô kôhô* volumes and page numbers cited to produce these 1934-1942 data are as follows: for 1934 data, see Vol. 14: 60-61; for 1936 data, see Vol. 16: 44-45; for 1938 data, see Vol. 18: 534-535; for 1940 data, see Vol. 22: 452-453; for 1942 data, see Vol. 25: 36-37. *Nan’yôchô Kôhô* 1934-42 (Reprint Tokyo: Yumani Shobô, 2012).

Marianas, if not earlier.

Physical Anthropologist Hasebe Kotondo (1882-1969) extensively researched the physical constitution of islanders in Micronesia during Japanese rule, as well as their histories of migration and settlement. He wrote about them in his government-sponsored *Kako no Waga Nan'yô* [The Past of Our South Seas] (1932).<sup>136</sup> The book opens by providing an outline of each of the island groups in Japan's Micronesian territory, and then focuses on histories of different groups' settlements in various islands. In his "Chapter 2: Kanaka and Chamorro," Hasebe explains that the *tômin* of the Nan'yôchô had been defined by the administration as divided into Kanaka and Chamorro while noting that the term Kanaka was derogatory.<sup>137</sup> He wrote that Kanaka people represented everybody outside of the Mariana Island group in the mandate, and the largest populations of Kanaka were in Chuuk.

Hasebe specified that Chamorro is another name for people of the Marianas, and pointed out that the Chamorro people in Yap and Palau were immigrant residents. According to the government's 1925 survey, he writes, the greatest number of Chamorro people were living in the Mariana Islands, while significant numbers of Chamorros had migrated for work in Yap and Palau. He indicated that these Chamorro people lived around Colonia in Yap and in Palau's *hokutan-bu* [northernmost section].

Greg Dvorak wrote about Japanese imperial understandings of islanders in an era film that was called, "Waga Nan'yô" [Our South Seas] which depicted differences between Kanaka and Chamorro peoples:

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<sup>136</sup> Hasebe Kotondo, *Kako no Waga Nan'yô* (The Past of Our South Seas). Oka Shigeo, 1932.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.



According to “*Waga Nan ’yô*,” a silent educational film produced mainly by the Japanese Navy in 1936, Kanakas were described as “being playfully carefree but of lower cultural level than Chamorros,” while Chamorros were “advanced and of a docile nature with an industrious manner, possessing even pianos and other instruments in some of their wealthier homes” (“*Waga Nan ’yô*” 1936). Chamorro, a term taken completely out of context from the Mariana Islands, where it refers to the indigenous population there, was taken by Japanese to mean “of mixed race” or “of lighter skin.” Chamorros were thought to be more intelligent, sophisticated, and advanced, and they were often admired for their beauty.<sup>138</sup>

My research concurs with Dvorak’s assessment that while the term Chamorros could mean people of the Mariana islands, in period publications it also seemed to have been used to identify multiracial people throughout Micronesia, although perhaps especially Pohnpeians. Chamorros were defined as mixed-race because of the centuries of Spanish colonialism in the area. The term “Chamorro” therefore could mean a South Sea islander of mixed racial heritage, which included but was not always limited to indigenous populations in the Marianas. In addition, as Dvorak points out, Chamorros are often described as owning pianos and other Western accouterments.<sup>139</sup> They lived in houses that were made of wood or plaster in a Spanish style, as opposed to the raised structures with coconut frond thatch roofs and woven wicker walls like many other Micronesians.

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<sup>138</sup> Dvorak, “Seeds from Afar, 120.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.



Carolinian Family and Home



Chamorro Family and Home

**Figure 3.5: Saipan Carolinian and Chamorro Families Standing Before their Homes**<sup>140</sup>

Nowadays in the Northern Mariana Islands the term “Carolinian” in English approximates the older term Kanaka. Although both words have many possible meanings, Kanaka and the contemporary term Carolinian both also refer to people from locations in the Caroline Islands south of Mariana Islands who settled the NMI during the Spanish period and who, along with Chamorros, are today legally and commonly considered to be indigenous to the Northern Mariana Islands. In the NMI, the word Carolinian people use to refer to themselves is Refaluwasch. Today, a word similar to Kanaka remains in use nearby in New Caledonia where indigenous islanders call themselves “Kanaks.” Both the term *tômin* and Kanaka can be offensive in the Northern Mariana Islands and these words carried negative connotations during the Japanese era.

In Nan'yôchô (like the Japanese colony in Kantôshû) the Meiji Constitution did not apply. Moreover, the islands of Micronesia were not annexed by Japan, and Japan had only limited sovereignty over these islands that they exercised according to the laws governing their Class C Mandate. Accordingly, the legal status of so-called *tômin* islanders indigenous to this territory remained that of aliens for the duration of the

<sup>140</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*.

Japanese period. The only way that an islander from Micronesia could become a Japanese national was if they fulfilled the requirements for naturalization.<sup>141</sup>

As alien peoples, islanders were therefore completely at the mercy of Japanese colonial policies and possessed no actual legal rights with which they might potentially question these policies. Not surprisingly, Japanese laws restricted the lives of islanders more severely than those of settler populations. It was illegal for islanders to drink alcohol despite the fact that alcohol was manufactured in and exported from the Northern Mariana Islands, and in spite of the ubiquity of *tuba* (coconut toddy).<sup>142</sup> The main way in which islanders across the territory got into trouble with the law in those days was for violating this regulation.<sup>143</sup>

In other islands, different restrictions were enacted that targeted various local practices. In Palau for example, the German government had earlier banned *kaldebekel* or clubs run by women that conducted local trade. These clubs persisted despite the ban, which was renewed by the Japanese government. The Japanese goal for this ban was to allow Japanese peddlers and hawkers to distribute commodities into Palauan villages.<sup>144</sup> The Japanese government also maintained the German government's decision to outlaw *kalid*, or indigenous Palauan spiritual healers.<sup>145</sup> In Yap in 1928, the branch office

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<sup>141</sup> Chen, "Attempt to Integrate," 242-43.

<sup>142</sup> Islanders throughout Micronesia have used the same method used to create *tuba* to draw non-alcoholic liquid from the apical meristem of coconut trees, including a liquid given to infants. Because of this and in order to mitigate the declining population in Yap, an exception against the prohibition of tapping coconut trees by this method was made in Yap. An exception of one tree per infant was made in the 1930s, and certificates were issued by the Yap Government Hospital for this purpose. Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 289.

<sup>143</sup> In 1936, islanders were responsible for 438 incidents of violating liquor control law whereas Japanese committed 150 such offenses. The total numbers of all types of offenses by islanders that year (which in addition to violating the liquor ordinance included gambling, assaults, theft and burglary, fraud and blackmail, usurpation of property, and illegal fishing) were 619 of the total 1,170 in the territory. *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 222-223.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

prohibited islanders from traveling in canoes between islands. The intention of this prohibition was “to prevent accidents at sea,” but importantly it also brought business to the NBK shipping enterprise that transported goods and people between islands in the territory.<sup>146</sup> These prohibitions were attempts to change traditional practices that furthered the Japanese government’s economic and social goals for the islands and islanders.

### 3.3.2 Settler Colonialism as a Form of Domination

Jun Uchida’s study of settler colonialism in Korea called *Brokers of Empire* offers an instructive example of how to conceptualize the role of settlers in the making of Japan’s colonial empire. Uchida explains how diverse populations who settled in Korea contributed to the territory’s colonization because they “not only oversaw their communities but actively mediated the colonial management of Korea as its grassroots movers and shakers.”<sup>147</sup> Her choice of the term “brokers” alludes to settlers’ profit-oriented goals for relocating to Korea. In Micronesia, imperial policies established conditions that relegated islanders to marginal roles in the labor force, and settlers’ lifestyles embodied dominant cultural norms on the islands that furthered the marginalization of islanders. In the case of colonial Korea, Uchida writes: “settlers spread inequalities and fueled social discontent by dominating opportunities in enterprise, education, and bureaucratic employment.”<sup>148</sup> Similarly, in Micronesia they occupied most

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 150, 224.

<sup>147</sup> Jun Uchida, *Brokers*, 5.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

of the jobs in the territory and devalued the labor of working class islanders even while land values increased.

The influx of settlers reduced the bargaining power of the indigenous population for their services as laborers. During the time before the sugar industry developed, or between about 1915 and 1922, islanders had been able to demand that they be paid double wages to work in the phosphate mines on Sundays. However, owing to the sudden competition for jobs in the emerging sugar industry, especially in Saipan, “a rapid increase of Japanese laborers has reduced the importance of native labor, and consequently the native demand for a double wage on Sunday has altogether disappeared.”<sup>149</sup> Thus through competition with immigrant laborers, the value of indigenous laborer precipitously declined. The average islander therefore suffered economic hardships in this way as a result of the sudden surge of settlers.

The government’s top jobs were reserved for Japanese people from the main islands of Japan, and locally the highest socioeconomic classes included mainly settlers. Most of the laborers in the largest industries of sugar, alcohol, and dried bonito were Japanese laborers. In his foundational study of the Japanese colonial administration of Micronesia first published in 1940, Yanaihara Tadao writes that “the economic development of the islands has come to be almost entirely dependent upon the Japanese population.”<sup>150</sup> Thus the same kind of settler dominance described by Uchida as having taken place in colonial Korea was occurring in Micronesia.

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<sup>149</sup> Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 62.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

However many islanders worked in jobs that emerged in the towns that formed around the settler communities. While the *hōjin* settlers often worked in major agricultural industries, in government, and owned and ran small businesses, in the NMI the “*tōmin*” did not usually work as sugar cane farmers but worked in small-scale commercial businesses, as assistants to teachers at public schools, in phosphate mines, as laborers on coconut plantations, as stevedores at the docks, as domestic servants to Japanese residents, or even as police officers or chiefs. Across the mandate, the most common jobs held by islanders were in phosphate mining and copra production.<sup>151</sup> But if they had been given the choice, many islanders especially in places like Palau and Yap with well-developed indigenous forms of money and trade relationships would probably have preferred to have maintained their older socioeconomies. However, in the NMI some Chamorro landowners comprised an elite, wealthy class that engaged in various enterprises as business owners. Some elite Chamorros came to be employed in jobs normally reserved for *hōjin*.

### 3.4 A Landed Elite

As the next chapter explains, in the NMI under Japanese rule, boys from Chamorro families in particular had more educational opportunities. They were sometimes given the chance to attend advanced educational programs beyond the maximum of five years afforded to most islanders, and some were able to find work afterwards in high-paying jobs or were selected to serve in bureaucratic positions of

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<sup>151</sup> Copra laborers were hired by the NBK, whereas the phosphate mines were government-run enterprises. Ibid., 52, 61.

authority. Some of these boys had the means to attend more expensive schools because their families gained wealth by leasing or selling their land to the sugar company, NKK, or to settlers from elsewhere in the empire. The historical circumstances surrounding land ownership in the Northern Mariana Islands established conditions wherein some Chamorro landowners became a wealthy elite in the settler towns. Their elite status was not the result of Japanese policies or programs, but had begun to emerge years earlier during the Spanish administration.

Several hundred years prior to Japan's arrival in the NMI, the Spanish administration had changed traditional Chamorro society's relationship to land. As opposed to other Micronesian islands where indigenous systems of social organization remained in force at the start of the German administration in 1899, in the Mariana Islands Spanish authorities had instantiated the private ownership of land and had issued title deeds. By the end of the period, several wealthy land-owning families possessed title deeds issued by Spain. This meant that by the time German colonizers arrived, they did not have to create systems of private land ownership in the Northern Mariana Islands the way they did with other islands under their charge.<sup>152</sup>

The German administration recognized the Spanish title deeds, researched and corrected some unclear contracts and decisions made in the last few decades of Spanish control, and made some changes in land allotments.<sup>153</sup> When the Japanese Navy took over, they seized all of the German land titles.<sup>154</sup> Because many of the German

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>153</sup> Farrell, *History*, 260-61 & 273-74.

<sup>154</sup> On Saipan, the total land area controlled by title deeds by the end of the German era (1914) was 2965 acres on the west coast, with 741 additional acres being prepared for acquisition. Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 121-22.

documents and survey maps were apparently “lost in the confusion of the transfer of the islands to Japan,”<sup>155</sup> in many areas there were unclear boundaries between government-owned and private lands.

In 1923, the Japanese government carried out an extensive survey on the main islands of the six districts to clarify the boundaries of government land, and in 1933 a more detailed survey was undertaken in order to discern boundaries between government and private lands. The results of the 1933 survey showed that in Saipan, the colonial government owned 78% of land, and 22% was private.<sup>156</sup> The fact that the Japanese authorities prioritized the government survey in 1923 probably resulted in a larger overall land area claimed by the government than if the private lands survey had been conducted at the same time. Yanaihara writes that the government had prioritized this survey, “perhaps to avoid difficulties and delays since it was anxious to ascertain the extent of land available for immediate economic exploitation and settlement of Japanese immigrants.”<sup>157</sup>

Following the German policy, the Japanese colonial government initially forbade islanders from selling or mortgaging their land, and leases were only approved when reviewed and registered by the government for a maximum of ten years. But in 1931, the law was changed making the sale or mortgage of land allowable with government approval. Yanaihara writes that this was a necessary modification especially in Saipan and Palau where aliens were arriving in great numbers.<sup>158</sup> In other words, by 1931 many

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>156</sup> 111,156 square yards were government owned, 30,060 square yards were owned by islanders, and 684 square yards were owned by Japanese. Ibid., 156.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 153.



more settlers wanted to lease and buy land from islanders, and the government decided it was in their best interest overall to remove restrictions on these transactions.

After this policy shift, the demand for land increased as more people sought to take advantage of the lifted restrictions. Both leases and sales were popular.<sup>159</sup> Islanders leased 1200 acres to the NKK in 1932, and that same year about 200 settler families leased smaller plots for sugar cane cultivation while many also leased land in the towns. Over the period of Japanese colonial rule, the value of land also increased which increased the profits made by landlords. By the printing of Yanaihara's study in the mid 1930s, a 2.5 acre piece of land in Saipan had increased its lease value three times since the start of the colonial period.<sup>160</sup> Landowners also facilitated Japanese industrial and commercial productivity on the lands that they owned. On Saipan, about ten percent of NKK land or 1230 acres was leased from Chamorro landowners, and the government owned the remainder.<sup>161</sup>

Chamorro landowners grew wealthier because of land transactions and had money to spend. With capital at their disposal, Chamorros sometimes became business owners. One coconut factory owned by Chamorros in Saipan was opened in 1932 and employed five workers.<sup>162</sup> This business produced copra using an old machine that had been purchased from the Ada Soap factory, and had been capitalized at ¥1500 per person among four investors. What's more, a group called the "Chamorro Association"

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<sup>159</sup> Between January 1931 and July 1933, 450 leases were signed for 187 for building sites, 157 for farmland, and 166 for forestland. During this same time, there were 39 sales of land including 13 for building sites, 13 for farmland, and 3 for forestland. *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>160</sup> As for sale prices, by the mid-1930s, 2.5 acres of farmland would sell for ¥200, and a 3.9 square yard plot in Garapan cost ¥35. *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

established in 1929 by the Chamorro community in Saipan worked as a mutual financing association. The group gathered money from members and in return provided services to them, although exactly what kind of services is unclear. In 1933, the Association had ¥16,000 in credit and seventy-five members. Yanaihara writes that “this may be regarded as outstanding evidence of the progress of the Chamorro community in monetary economy.”<sup>163</sup>

Residents and business owners stored their capital in the only bank in the territory, called the Post Office Savings Bank. By 1935-36, the total number of islanders across the territory who deposited money into Post Office Savings accounts was 6,069, which was about 12% of the territory’s overall islander population by 1936.<sup>164</sup> This represented an 8% increase over the number of depositors in 1931-32. In 1936, the total amount deposited by islanders was ¥94,103 which was an 84% increase in the overall amounts deposited in 1931-32. This means that although the total number of depositors grew very slowly, the overall yen amounts deposited increased dramatically. In other words, it was not that many more people set up accounts and were accumulating wealth, but that the people who already had bank accounts had grown much wealthier in the first five years after restrictions on land transactions had been lifted.

Islanders who were earning lots of yen did more than put it in the bank—they also spent it on large luxury items. For example, Francisco Sablan Pangelinan (b. 1903) remembers traveling to Japan several times as a young man to shop for automobiles. His father paid for his trip to Japan and lent him money for his first car, although the family

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 159.

<sup>164</sup> The population of islanders was 50,524 as of October 1, 1936. Nan’yôchô, *Nan’yôchô Kôhô*, Vol. 16: 44-45.

had not always been so wealthy. Francisco says his father had been a whaler as a young man and “had seen the world, a matter of life-long importance to him.” Then when Francisco was young, his father had worked for a Spanish family as a foreman in an agricultural project. But after the economic boom of the 1920s and mass settlement of Saipan, his father was “earning a comfortable living from house/land rentals, and also from farming.”<sup>165</sup>

Francisco had been working for the Post Office for three years when his father and the Post Office split the cost of a trip to Japan for training for Francisco. When he returned, he began to take lessons in mechanics and driving. After working for the Post Office for three more years, during which time he drove a motorcycle for the job, his father bought him passage to Japan to buy his own car. Francisco remembered traveling with Herman Guerrero and Antonio Diaz to Tokyo, where they rented an apartment for twenty days while they went shopping.<sup>166</sup> The first car he bought in Tokyo for ¥1300 and brought back to Saipan was a second-hand, reconditioned Chrysler. After he returned to Saipan he got his certification in driving and auto mechanics, quit his job at the Post Office, and became a taxi driver to earn more money than he ever had before. He eventually sold the Chrysler, returned to Tokyo and bought a Chevrolet, which he later sold to Antonio Diaz who sold it to Juan B. Barcinas on Rota, thus making it the very first car owned by a Chamorro on Rota. Altogether, he made five trips to Tokyo.<sup>167</sup> Not only was Francisco making history by bringing Chamorro-owned American cars to more rural parts of the NMI, he was able to impress his longtime Japanese sweetheart with his

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<sup>165</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 60, 63.

<sup>166</sup> Herman Guerrero now owns Herman’s Bakery on Saipan, and Antonio Diaz became Commissioner of San Antonio village, Saipan in the early days of the American administration. Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 62-63.

cars and he later married her. He was quite wealthy in those days, because his father had both given and loaned him money to travel to Japan, buy cars, and bring them back to the islands where he then used them to make his own money. The fact that his family's land had increased in value overnight opened up many doors for people like young Francisco.

### 3.4.1 Islander Civil Servants

The Japanese colonial government modeled its structures for managing islander societies after those used by the Germans, thereby potentially causing the least amount of turmoil in the prevailing social bureaucratic systems while simultaneously subjecting island communities to Japanese governance. In these systems, islanders held government positions of supervisory authority over communities of islanders. Throughout most of Micronesia, various chiefs had prevailed over indigenous systems of maintaining social order. The German administration had instituted a policy of governance whereby traditional chieftains were kept in positions of power while the Germans attempted to govern through them. The Japanese administration kept this German model in place until 1922 when new rules were laid down regarding “native” officials of the Japanese government: these rules made the government officials known as village chief and village headman equal in power to the old chieftains, thereby weakening the power of traditional social systems.<sup>168</sup> These changes were most significant on Micronesian islands other than the Northern Marianas, where Chamorro society was not organized around chiefly structures although this was true of Northern Mariana Island Carolinian society.

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<sup>168</sup> Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 223.

The Japanese system created village chiefs (*sonsonchô*) and village headman, (*sonchô*): however in the Northern Mariana Island Chamorro communities, the system of islander administration comprised of a district head (*kuchô*), and an assistant official (*jôyaku*). The two rankings of leaders were supposed to be hierarchical, such that the assistant official reported to the district head and the village headman reported to the village chief, but in reality they all served about the same purpose and all reported to the nearest Japanese authority.<sup>169</sup>

In addition to officials in the government, islanders served in the police forces. Mark Peattie describes the islanders who served as patrolmen as the “backbone” of the local administration because they were often the only point of contact between Japanese settlers and islanders.<sup>170</sup> Nevertheless, they occupied the lowest position in the colonial bureaucracy. At the pinnacle of the colonial law enforcement structure were the employees of the police section of the South Sea Government in Koror (*keimuka*). This office was managed by a superintendent (*keishi*), and under him were police inspectors (*keibu*), then assistant inspectors (*keibujo*), then head policemen (*junsa buchô*), and finally policemen (*junsa*). At the level of individual island districts, at the top of the hierarchy was the district governor to whom the police inspectors (*keibu*) reported. The chain of command beneath the police inspectors mirrored that of the central office. At the very bottom of the district level there were also (*junkei*) or patrolmen who reported to the policemen (*junsa*).<sup>171</sup> Indigenous islanders often worked as patrolmen.

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<sup>169</sup> Peattie, *Nan'yô*, 75-76.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-74.

<sup>171</sup> Nan'yôchô, *Nan'yô Guntô Keisatsu Gaiyô* (Tokyo: Kôgyôkan, 1937): 5.

A police station was located in the capital of each island district. These stations were managed by a supervisor who oversaw the work of substations in the key villages and islands, each of which were manned by two or three officers.<sup>172</sup> In the Saipan district in 1937, the police box (*junsa hashutsujo*) was in north Garapan and there were police substations located in the following villages on Saipan island: Chacha, As Lito, Matansha, and Chalan Kanoa. On Tinian island there were substations (*junsa chûzaisho*) in the following villages: Marpo, Kahi, Chûro, and Hagoi. Rota island was designated a police officer reporting box (*keisatsukan hashutsujo*), probably with slightly more autonomy than the Tinian island substations because it was so far away from the district capital in north Garapan, Saipan. On Rota, substations were in Sinapalo and Taruga villages.<sup>173</sup>

To be eligible to work as a patrolman, Peattie writes that one had to have been under forty years of age, completed five years of public school, and been in good health. At the start of their employment, patrolmen were trained for three months in Japanese language and methods of law enforcement. Islander patrolmen were supposed to assist Japanese policemen, and had a wide range of responsibilities. Their duties exceeded those that would normally be expected of a policeman in Japan. They collected taxes, enforced sanitary regulations, disseminated public information, supervised road building,<sup>174</sup> selected the islander students who would be given the limited number of slots in public schools,<sup>175</sup> and generally served as intermediaries between the colonial government and local communities. In 1929, the colonial authorities decided to allow patrolmen to handle

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<sup>172</sup> Peattie, *Nan'yô*, 74.

<sup>173</sup> Nan'yôchô, *Nan'yô Guntô Keisatsu Gaiyô*, 7.

<sup>174</sup> Peattie, *Nan'yô*, 74.

<sup>175</sup> Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 242.

cases involving Japanese residents and not just those involving islanders, which had been the old policy.<sup>176</sup>

Policemen and patrolmen could be harsh and, in the style of authorities in Japanese schools, used corporal punishment on suspects and offenders. Manual Aldan (b. 1912) recalls that there were very few crimes committed during the Japanese era, and that “the police were extremely strict and would often beat up a suspect, though we believed they were honest.”<sup>177</sup> Urusula Atalig (b. 1909) referred to these law enforcement officers and the government administrators as one example to prove her assertion that Chamorros were not third class, but second-class subjects in Japanese colonial society. “I know we were No. 2 because the mayor of Rota was a Chamorro...and the policemen were Chamorro.”<sup>178</sup> These patrolmen maintained a trustworthy reputation overall, and were seen as an elite group among islander communities.

### **3.5 Social Interactions Between Groups**

Japanese society in the NMI was affected by colonial bureaucratic race and tribe categories for managing populations, period ideas about racial and cultural difference, and settler domination of local socioeconomic life. These factors might suggest that it was unlikely that Japanese settlers and islanders got to know one another very well. But probably more so than in other island districts, in the Northern Mariana Islands during this period business relationships, friendships and marriages did form between the settler and indigenous islander groups.

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<sup>176</sup> Peattie, *Nan 'yô*, 74.

<sup>177</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 16.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

The primary places where these groups would have come into contact with one another were in the towns when people were engaged in business or work. Yanaihara Tadao describes the various relationships that businesses sustained with islanders as including the following three types: 1) those that have little direct economic relations with islanders, 2) those that employ islanders as laborers, and 3) those that have commercial relations with islanders.<sup>179</sup> Among the first group of enterprises that did not employ islanders, he lists the sugar company NKK while noting that some exceptions existed in Saipan. Among 2) industries that employed islanders, he notes that especially the Nan'yô Bôeki Kaisha (NBK) employed islanders through contracts to cultivate coconut, and the government employed laborers in the phosphate mines. Especially Japanese, Chinese, Chamorros and Angaur islanders (Palauans) were employed on a permanent basis at the phosphate mine in Angaur.<sup>180</sup> The final group of businesses were 3) those that engage in trade with islanders or otherwise provide services to them. For example, he writes that the NBK steamship service between the islands was well traveled by islanders, who could buy tickets to travel on deck at one-third to one-half of a full ticket price.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 61-63.

<sup>180</sup> As time passed, more and more islanders applied for work in this phosphate mine in Angaur. But in the first few years of military rule, just like in the German era, the Japanese government had to compel islanders to work. They did this through the village council or by assigning islander chiefs and mayors the task of finding laborers to work on a volunteer basis. Yanaihara describes this as a system of "indirect rule" which lent credibility to his claim that these conditions "did not constitute slavery" (62). Yet he uses the word *corvée* to describe this arrangement later in his report (278). It is not clear that conditions for laborers at the mine in Angaur did not border on slavery in some cases some of the time. But as time passed and settlers dominated other jobs while islanders went to Japanese schools and began to look for work, more islanders signed up to work there voluntarily. Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 62, 278.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 63.



Islanders took advantage of reduced rates given to them by the NBK, which was the steamship service that ran between the Micronesian islands.<sup>182</sup> On board they would have come into contact with travelers from around the mandate and the Japanese empire. Inter-island travel by ship was common in those days, and laborers' wages were enough to allow islanders to travel perhaps more often between the highly integrated and commercially interdependent Micronesian region than at any time before or since.<sup>183</sup>

Chamorro laborers from the NMI traveled especially to Angaur, Palau to work in the phosphate mine and to Yap where communities of Chamorros had been living since the German period. Yanaihara wrote of the Chamorro laborers at the time as exemplary:

This comparative economic prosperity of the Chamorros is not confined to their native lands of Saipan. Even in the islands to which they have migrated, such as Yap, Angaur and others, they are successfully selling agricultural products, fish, etc. working as copra brokers or skilled laborers.<sup>184</sup>

In Yap, Chamorros settled in an area that is still known as Chamorro Bay. On Angaur island in Palau where they had moved to work in phosphate mines, a settlement next to the mine area was known as Saipan Village. Chamorros were willing to work for wages even if other islanders were less enticed by the idea, and their readiness to do so is exemplified in the history of their settlements in other island groups in Micronesia.

Yanaihara notes that other businesses that traded with islanders included 776 shops as of October 1932 that had opened to cater to settlers but that also served

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<sup>182</sup> In 1932, there were 6,691 islander passengers of NBK (the liner traveling between islands) and 14,028 Japanese passengers. *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> Although the Germans had ruled Micronesia as one political unit, there were far fewer vessels traveling between islands and commercial links were not as extensively developed at that time. Then after the Japanese period, the U.S. took control and completely stopped commercial travel between many islands (especially in the Marianas and the Marshalls) in especially the first decade after WWII and turned them into tightly guarded military bases.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

islanders. In the more remote atolls, coconut brokers would make special contracts with merchants to sell goods of use to islanders in exchange for shredded, dried coconut. The items islanders often bought at these barter-based shops included mostly food, matches, tobacco, knives, clothes, and other kinds of daily necessities. These brokers were also moneylenders and even sometimes bootleggers, representing “a dark side of the trader’s role in the primitive stage of commerce,” according to Yanaihara.<sup>185</sup> Because they were the front line of trade in many rural islands, they directly influenced the economic life of various indigenous communities. However, the Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota were heavily populated and urbanized. The coconut brokers described by Yanaihara were more important in rural areas of places like the Marshall Islands and Chuuk. In the NMI, contacts between islanders and settlers were far more frequent and regular than suggested by Yanaihara in his summaries of businesses that employed or were patronized by islanders.

Most Northern Mariana islanders were employed in enterprises that served the large settler populations on Saipan and Rota. Many were fishermen or farmers and sold their fish, crops or livestock for money. Some learned business skills from Japanese employers who trained them, came to trust them, and promoted them to managerial positions, and others were employed in skilled trades that paid them more money than Okinawan sugar farmers. For example, after graduating from fifth grade Antonio R. Deleon Guerrero (b. 1919) started out working at Marushin Shoten (owned by Shin Nakamura from Chiba Prefecture) that assembled and sold wholesale things like leather-covered slippers and wooden *geta* from Japan as well as *miso* paste. After learning about

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 63.

product display, measuring and weighing commodities, managing the books, collecting payments and taking orders, and making deliveries, Antonio was promoted to manager of a new branch that opened on Garapan's fourth street.<sup>186</sup> Another Chamorro man who learned a trade was Jose B. Tudela (b. circa 1927) who attended the carpentry school in Palau. After he returned to Saipan in 1941 he worked as a carpenter earning five times the wages of an Okinawan sugar cane worker.<sup>187</sup>

By the early 1930s many people fondly remember a range of diverse commercial enterprises and entertainment-oriented businesses in town with which they maintained relationships both as employees and customers. For example, the bonito (tuna) processing plant in Saipan had an ice-making machine that was used to preserve the fish. Various vendors must have purchased ice from the plant, because people recall that delicious snow cones (*kakigori*) were available for sale at shops in the district capital of Garapan. There were various kinds, including syrups of strawberry, melon, orange or lemon (five *sen*), *adzuki* sweet red beans (fifteen *sen*), and *mitsumame* or a combination of red beans, cherries, and syrup (twenty *sen*).<sup>188</sup> These snow cones would have been most islanders' very first contact with ice.

Many people also nostalgically recall the *katsudô shashin* or the two "moving picture" theaters on Saipan: these included the Cinema Theater and the Saipan Theater.

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<sup>186</sup> Antonio R. Deleon Guerrero, "Served 23 Years as Saipan's Vice-Mayor," interview by Yoshiaki Kamisawa, "Marianas Oral History Series (English Translation-4), *Journal of the Pacific Society* 57 Vol. 15 No.4 (Jan 1993): 96.

<sup>187</sup> Jose B. Tudela, "I Owe My Carpentry Skills to Japanese Technology," interview by Yoshiaki Kamisawa, "Marianas Oral History Series (English Translation-3), *Journal of the Pacific Society* 55-56 Vol. 15 No.2-3 (Sept. 1992): 92.

<sup>188</sup> Vicente T. Camacho, "The Japanese Blood Shed in Saipan Is Still With Us," interview by Yoshiaki Kamisawa, "Marianas Oral History Series (English Translation-1), *Journal of the Pacific Society* 53 Vol. 14 No.4 (Jan. 1992): 131.

This was the era of talkies, so the theaters employed a narrator (*benshi*). Vincente T.

Camacho (b. 1929) described the experience of watching a movie at the theater this way:

When you'd listen to the narrator, it sounded as though the pictures themselves were talking. The narrator was really good at it. And then there was music to it, too. The band could make sounds like a cannon, rifle bullets, horses' hooves, and the rumble of a car, and it was just like real.<sup>189</sup>

The theaters played many Samurai movies. Max Reyes (b. 1932) says he loved the Samurai movies so much he had dreams about them at night that caused his parents to wake him up and ask him if everything was okay.<sup>190</sup> Ticket prices were between fifteen and twenty-five *sen*,<sup>191</sup> and some people remember earning their own money as children so that they could go to the theater. Jose B. Tudela recalled that he worked for Mr. Matsumoto, the proprietor of one of the theaters, carrying advertising banners for the movies around town. In exchange, he got free tickets.<sup>192</sup>

To earn extra money for treats like snow cones and movie tickets, people also remembered performing other odd jobs. For example, Jose and Vincente both remembered that one quick way to make money was to chop and sell firewood.<sup>193</sup> Jose says he could sell five pieces for fifteen or twenty *sen*.<sup>194</sup> Also, because he was a good student and his teacher vouched for his trustworthiness, he would clean houses and draw the bath daily for Japanese residents for thirty yen per month. He also recalled that he and his sister used to peddle tortillas and fried bananas in town.<sup>195</sup> Vincente said he would

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>190</sup> Marcelino "Max" Charfauros Reyes, interview with the author at Max's home in Chalan Laulau, Saipan, March 20, 2013.

<sup>191</sup> Camacho, "Japanese Blood," 133; Tudela, "Carpentry Skills," 92.

<sup>192</sup> Jose B. Tudela, "Carpentry Skills," 92.

<sup>193</sup> Camacho, "Japanese Blood," 132; Tudela, "Carpentry Skills," 92.

<sup>194</sup> Tudela, "Carpentry Skills," 92.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 92-93.

also collect empty bottles and cans and sell them to some people who were willing to pay for them.<sup>196</sup> In these ways, these Chamorro children remembered earning extra money to spend on leisure pursuits. Children also helped out in earning money for their families. Escoclastica Tudela Cabrera (1930-2013) remembered that she used to ride her bike into Garapan to sell the leather shoes her father would make as a cobbler.<sup>197</sup> She could speak Japanese better than him and could bargain for a good price.

Many others went to work as apprentices at local retail stores. After graduating from the five years of primary schooling available to most islanders, Jose remembered that these kinds of students, “worked pulling two-wheeled carts for trading companies, or doing other manual labor.”<sup>198</sup> Others worked for Japanese government agencies on the islands. Jose’s older brother worked for the post office delivering telegrams, a job that required that he ride his bicycle all over the hilly island of Saipan for sixty yen a month. Jose, on the other hand, had acquired carpentry skills by attending the prestigious woodworking school in Palau from 1940 to 1941 right after he completed five years of public school. The carpentry skills he gained made him very employable when he returned to Saipan in 1941, when he said he could earn seven yen and fifty *sen* in one day, whereas Okinawan workers employed at NKK and others working at NBK made only about one yen fifty *sen* per day.<sup>199</sup>

Chamorro children also remembered playing with Japanese children. Vincente said that his family lived in the business district of Garapan, and that there were five or

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<sup>196</sup> Camacho, “Japanese Blood,” 132.

<sup>197</sup> Escoclastica Tudela Cabrera, interview with the author at Esco’s home in Capitol Hill, Saipan, July 8, 2008.

<sup>198</sup> Tudela, “Carpentry Skills,” 91.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-92.

six children living nearby. He says that sometimes on Sundays, he would invite the neighborhood children to come with him to play on his family's farmland north of Garapan, in San Roque village (then Matansha). He remembered that to travel the few miles to get there, they would ride on the small-gauge steam engine train used for hauling sugar. While the train was mostly comprised of cars for holding sugar cane, there was one car, without a roof, that was equipped with seats and hand rails for passengers to whom no fee was charged. The train went north in the morning and south in the evening. The children would ride on the train up and back for free, and play all day on the farm which provided some respite from their busy lives in Garapan.<sup>200</sup>

Another place where islanders came into regular contact with Japanese authority figures and other children were in the schools. Although the Japanese education system for children on the islands was divided into two tracks, one for people who spoke the Japanese language regularly (intended for settler children) and one for people who did not speak the language regularly (intended for islanders), it was not uncommon for islanders in the Northern Mariana Islands to attend schools intended for Japanese pupils. The next chapter provides a history of the education programs in this territory, as well as islanders' memories of school attendance and the nature of Japanese education. Outside of regular coursework, the schools as well as the sugar corporation organized athletic meets called *undokai*. There teams from different schools played against one another in sports including especially baseball and sumo, but also in track and swimming races. A yearly *undokai* was held to celebrate emperor Showa's birthday in late April.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Camacho, "Japanese Blood," 131.

<sup>201</sup> Tudela, "Carpentry Skills," 93.

Relationships between islanders and settlers in the towns are remembered to have been both tense and pleasant. Although a regular occurrence, many islanders have recalled that mingling between the different races was generally frowned upon. A group interview conducted by the Ballendorf team at the Saipan Center for Aging in Garapan reported that about twenty senior citizens agreed that islanders generally could not associate with Japanese people in those days. “Many times we wanted to mix with the Japanese on a closer social basis, but we were not allowed to, and there wasn’t much opportunity,” the group is quoted as saying.<sup>202</sup> However, Maria Sablan Reyes (b. 1922) said that interactions between Japanese business people and islanders were common in the villages, even if the highest class of Japanese bureaucrats remained aloof: “Japanese officials lived on high ground by themselves, but Japanese business people lived in the villages with us, so most of us could speak a smattering of Japanese before we started school.”<sup>203</sup> It seems most likely that both mingling between groups and tension about differences between them persisted at the same time in these villages.

### 3.5.1 Multiracial Families<sup>204</sup>

In addition to fostering business and friendly relationships, the modern, urban towns had been places where communities could mingle, cultivate friendships and romantic relationships, intermarry, and bear children together. Of these settlers, many

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<sup>202</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 50.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>204</sup> The term ‘multiracial’ herein refers to families that included people of Japanese, Koreans, and Okinawan descent and indigenous islanders of Chamorro and Carolinian descent. I use this term to point to instances when people have belonged to more than one racial category by which populations have been tracked by government records (and subsequently managed via U.S. repatriation policies). When talking about meaningful differences that exist between groups of people, I use the nouns “population,” “community,” or “ethnicity” rather than “race.”

Okinawan families travelled to the region and made the area their home. Japanese settlers were less likely to have brought their families from the mainland, and Korean settlers were largely single men. This means that Korean men were probably more likely to have had reasons to seek out lovers among the local population, and Okinawans who migrated to the area as family units had potentially fewer incentives to find a mate among local residents. However, unions of all types took place.

Some data about multiracial Japanese-Micronesian families does exist, but it excludes the Northern Mariana Islands. As noted in the introduction to this dissertation, a study of Micronesian people of Japanese descent sponsored by the Japanese government in the early 2000s did not extend its investigation into the NMI.<sup>205</sup> This 2010 study estimated that about one in five Micronesians at the time were of Japanese descent. This suggests that perhaps one-fifth of indigenous Micronesian islanders come from families who may have had children with settlers during the Japanese colonial period or earlier.<sup>206</sup> If this is accurate, this number represents a significant minority group. Among the among the total population of about forty thousand people who were living in the NMI by end of the Japanese colonial period, I estimate that there were probably no more than a few hundred multiracial families that included settlers and indigenous islanders. The Ballendorf study and my own research involved several people who recalled, or themselves were from, multiracial settler-indigenous families.

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<sup>205</sup> Izumi Kobayashi, *Minami no Shima no Nihonjin: mō hitotsu no sengoshi* (Japanese of the Southern Islands: Another Postwar History) (Tokyo: Sankeishinbunshuppan, 2010).

<sup>206</sup> Using public records to locate Japanese-sounding names as a starting point for research on Micronesians of Japanese descent on mainly the islands of Chuuk and Pohnpei, Kobayashi estimated that one in five people or about twenty percent of Micronesians are of Japanese descent (Kobayashi, *Minami*, 188).



For example, many people recalled that romances blossomed between Chamorro men and Japanese women. Manual Aldan (b. 1912) remembered courting a woman whose father was Japanese and mother was Chamorro. They married in 1946. He remarked that he is not sure whether or not he could have married her during the Japanese times.<sup>207</sup> On the other hand, Juan B. Blanco (1923-2014) remembered things differently. He spoke Japanese fluently and held a high paying job at the NKK that would normally have been reserved for a Japanese employee. He said that he had been courting a Japanese girl while he was working for NKK, and he did not doubt that “the marriage would have been possible if I had proposed it.”<sup>208</sup>

Another Chamorro man of relatively high socioeconomic standing ended up marrying his Japanese sweetheart. Francisco Sablan Pangelinan who owned his own car in the 1930s on Saipan said of his life in those days:

To be a possessor of a car at that time and to drive it as a taxi, especially for a person like me who liked to have fun (I was a playboy then) gave me a bold reputation, and I risked doing things that were not always acceptable to the Japanese. For instance, I courted a beautiful Japanese girl.<sup>209</sup>

Francisco had known this girl since they were children, as they had lived close to one another and had grown up together. Her parents had emigrated from the Ogasawara Islands to Saipan, and her father had done contract work for Francisco’s father making boxes to store *zori*. When the Japanese girl was about nineteen years old, Francisco recounts that lots of Japanese men were interested in her but she told her father that she wanted to marry her true love although “he was not a Japanese yet.” Francisco’s father

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<sup>207</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 16.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 41-42.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 63.

was afraid of the “Japanese prohibition of such marriages,” but the girl’s father rejected this, saying, “there can be no law that interferes with true love.” With that their parents consented to the union. She became a Catholic in order to marry Francisco, his father built a separate house for them, and they married shortly thereafter. Francisco said:

At the time I was unaware of any other marriages between a Chamorro man and a Japanese lady, but it took place and it caused no trouble. I suppose this was due to our parents’ attitude. My father was a person of expansive ideas and so was I. Maybe we were both rebels in the way we thought and acted.<sup>210</sup>

Francisco described himself and his family as being rebellious because he did not know of other cases like his. Although he references his father’s fear of breaking the law, I could find no Japanese law intended to prevent the marriage of a Chamorro man and a Japanese woman. The fact that he remembers his father’s reluctance to break the law, even though this was not actually illegal, suggests that there were strong taboos surrounding the marriage of Chamorro men to Japanese women.<sup>211</sup>

Children were born of these kinds of multiracial marriages. Edward T. Dela Cruz (b. 1935), whose Japanese name was Toshiwo Tamaoki, said that his father was Chamorro and his mother was Japanese. He remembered that their marriage was not accepted at first and that they had to go to Pohnpei until his elder sister was born, which was an event that he recalled had seemed to justify the marriage. Afterward they returned to Saipan and he remembers that they were able to live without harassment.<sup>212</sup>

Other children recall being adopted into families of different racial backgrounds. Nicholas M. Leon Guerrero’s (b. 1928) biological father died when he was only about

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>211</sup> Other such marriages are remembered to have occurred. For example, Pedro Martinez Ada said that his nephew Francisco married a Japanese woman. Ibid., 27.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 55.

one year old, and his mother favored his adoption into the Japanese Tomomitsu family. In those days, he says, he was known as Tomomitsu Hiroshi and he remembers that his Japanese family was very kind to him. He would visit his Chamorro mother at least once a week.<sup>213</sup> In a similar situation, Elias Borja (b. 1936) was a member of a Korean-Chamorro family during the Japanese period. His biological father had died when he was very young and his mother had married a Korean man by the last name of Shing. When he was a child, Elias was known as Shing Eikai. He spoke Japanese at home with his Korean stepfather and he attended *Shôgakkô* (elementary schools) intended for Japanese pupils.<sup>214</sup>

A slightly different case was the daughter of immigrants to Saipan from the Ogasawara islands, who was introduced in Chapter 1 as Sister Antonieta Ada (b. 1934). Antonieta was born as Nishikawa Kimiko. At an early age, the Chamorro Ada family who lived next to the Nishikawas the east coast village of Laolao, Saipan, befriended little Kimiko. She remembers that the Adas who had few of their own young children had asked the Nishikawas if they could have Kimiko. Afterward, both the Nishikawa and the Ada families shared the responsibilities of raising her. Like the other children of mixed-race households, she also attended *shôgakkô* for regular speakers of the Japanese language. After all of her Nishikawa family members except for a younger brother were killed in the war, the family of Juan Ada adopted her and her name became Antonieta.

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 28-9.

<sup>214</sup> Elias Manibusan Borja, interview with the author, Fleming Restaurant, San Jose, Tinian, November 28, 2012.

When she talks about her life, she explains that she was raised by “two families.” Today she identifies herself as Chamorro.<sup>215</sup>

### 3.6 Conclusion

Although histories to date have made note of the large numbers of settlers to these islands, they have insufficiently considered the ways in which settler colonialism exerted lasting effects on indigenous communities.<sup>216</sup> In these communities, islanders were subjected to a range of colonial policies and restrictive laws that did not apply to settlers. Official government policies and popular culture viewed settlers and islanders as fundamentally different groups of people, but at the same time Japanese settler colonialism fostered opportunities for these groups to interact as work colleagues, to be friendly, intermarry, and sometimes have children together. Despite the exploitative nature of the social systems, many islanders have happy memories from this period during which time they remember the joys of life in the economically thriving towns where they formed lifelong bonds with settler residents.

Indigenous populations in the Northern Mariana Islands filled various positions in Japanese settler colonial society by the late 1930s. These positions most often included working as farmers, traders, carpenters, service industry workers, and miners, but also sometimes as skilled tradesmen, business owners, patrolmen or government

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<sup>215</sup> Antonieta Ada, interview by author, House of Maturana, Navy Hill, Saipan, July 7, 2008. A biographic article on Antonieta bears the title “two families.” See Bruce Petty, “My Two Families—Sister Antonieta Ada.” In *Saipan: Oral Histories of the Pacific War*, 21-24. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002.

<sup>216</sup> Mark Peattie’s foundational study, *Nan’yô: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia 1885-1945*, explains colonial transformations in terms of the economic and social exploitation facilitated by laborers who migrated to the area. The work does not extensively theorize consequences of this mass migration for islanders’ lives.

administrators. Some Chamorro males in particular advanced to high earning or high prestige jobs in these communities. Their successes were partly as a result of inherited class status that predated the Japanese period and could be traced back to earlier colonial regimes. These successes were also, importantly, a result of their own hard work.

During the Japanese colonial period (1914-1944), people in the NMI had the most contact of any Micronesian islanders with East Asian settlers. More people from East Asia immigrated to the NMI than to any other part of Japan's Micronesian Mandate, and the consequences of this settlement for indigenous residents are numerous. However this area remains understudied as a location that was once part of the formal colonial Japanese empire that still bears traces of this past, some of the most important of which are the living indigenous Northern Mariana Islander descendants of multiracial families.

Acknowledging lingering family connections between settler and indigenous peoples in Japan's former Pacific Island colonies might at first call to mind the racist pan-Asian ideology and the exploitative dogmas that helped to justify Japanese colonialism and war. But the intimate bonds of human families that emerged during the period of Japan's colonial rule in the Pacific are not principally phenomena that can be understood through the imperial ideologies that justified expansion. In the NMI like in many other cultures in the world, families can be broadly defined.<sup>217</sup> Legally and culturally, Northern Marianas Descent *familia* can incorporate people of various racial and national origins. This includes people who first migrated to the islands during the Japanese period, including Ogasawara islanders, Japanese mainlanders, Okinawans, and Koreans.

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<sup>217</sup> As with other indigenous Micronesian cultures, NMI traditions of adoption are well known. In addition, the contemporary legal definition of an indigenous person of Northern Marianas Descent (NMD) says that non-Chamorro and non-Carolinian children can be adopted as members of indigenous families and granted all of the special legal rights afforded to NMDs.

The potential of intimate relationships to reframe colonial discourse was theorized by Ann Stoler in reference to North American and European colonial history: “when the intimacies of empire are at center stage... the incommensurabilities between... empire...and colonial history diminish.”<sup>218</sup> Personal stories connect the dots between imperial histories and colonial everyday life. Rather than using histories of imperial policy to think through stories about settlement and repatriation, drawing from memories to create an interpretive framework allows new knowledge to emerge.

A scholarship looking to the tense and tender ties of empire and sex—who with whom, where, and when—opens in two related directions: to rethink what political narratives inform our comparisons and to reassess what questions about the management of the intimate will allow for more effective histories of empire’s racial politics.<sup>219</sup>

Multiracial settler-indigenous families may partially be a consequence of Japan’s imperial conquest of Micronesia, but they cannot be understood by the same methods that would be used to analyze the historical structures that propelled the Japanese empire. These colonial relationships were far more complex and messy than the imperial ideologies that led to their establishment. Multiracial families did not belong to either the “Japanese” or the “Chamorro” population, for example, but to both at the same time.

Yet colonial record keeping had no way of tracking these families. As a result, they have lived on the margins of Japanese and U.S. colonial societies in that they have remained unaccounted for in most official census data because individuals and households have usually been recorded within only one racial or ethnic category.<sup>220</sup> For

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<sup>218</sup> Anne Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies,” *The Journal of American History* 88:3 (Dec 2001): 865.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Systems in Japan and the U.S. for recording census data separated people into distinct race categories without any category for multiracial people (until the year 2000 in the U.S.).

this reason, colonial archives are not very useful for researching multiracial families, whereas memories offer important insights. Memories acknowledge the “tender ties” that formed in the Japanese-held NMI and allow for a more effective consideration of the questions we ought to be asking about the actual lasting outcomes of this period of domination by settler colonialism.

Unfortunately, far too often in colonial histories of the NMI, islanders have been portrayed as political actors—as “Japanese” or “Americans”—as though their primary identities are national and their primary allegiances are oriented towards distant countries. Actually, like people everywhere, islanders have much more localized identities and priorities guiding their actions. Perhaps the most important of these priorities have been family members.

The human costs of, and lingering, lived consequences of, histories of “Japan in the Pacific” are much more than histories of imperial conquest or ideological indoctrination. It is best to approach these histories of intertwined settler and indigenous lives by considering how people negotiated imposed policies toward living life on the ground at this colonial site, rather than studying the policies separately from their lasting outcomes.

#### **Chapter 4) *Santô kokumin to iwareta kedo...* [We were called third-class nationals, but...]: Northern Mariana Islanders in Japanese Colonial Education Programs**

In the Japanese period, the colonial education system was the most important institution where islanders learned skills that would help them to get along in Japanese colonial society. Many people remembered that Japanese primary school education was supposed to be mandatory, and it was an experience shared by almost everyone who lived through this period. Schools designed for islanders taught mostly the Japanese language, math, and agriculture, but also morals. The specific work ethics taught in these schools socialized children for specific roles in society. They were places where students learned about the criteria by which people could be ranked in the prevailing racist-classist colonial hierarchy. In this informal hierarchy, many people have remembered that *tômin* (islanders) were thought to be “*santô*” or “third-class.” These schools were also places where children learned skills that allowed them some ability to outperform the low status ascribed to them by settler society.

In this chapter, I draw heavily from the oral history project conducted between 1984-85 by a team led by Dirk Ballendorf from the University of Guam. These researchers started out wanting to understand islanders’ schooling experiences under Japanese rule, and by the end of their study they had concluded that islanders’ educational experiences under Japanese rule are better understood in broader terms as socialization both by the schools and by other institutions.<sup>221</sup> I agree with their conclusion that, “the effects of the Japanese period on surviving individuals in the Marianas today had more to do with the wider social situation than merely with schooling and formal

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<sup>221</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 66.



educational programs.”<sup>222</sup> Nevertheless, as an experience shared by most Northern Mariana Islanders who lived during this period, and which gave them certain skills that allowed them to function and even thrive in Japanese settler society, formal schooling was a key component of their socialization as Japanese colonial subjects.

Colonial education for indigenous populations included 1) primary schools and 2) social education programs that trained them to strive to become “Japanese.” Becoming “Japanese” had specific meanings related to where the islanders were envisioned to fit within the Japanese empire at the time. Public elementary schools on the whole trained islanders to become wage laborers especially in agriculture but also in certain trades. Social education programs allowed for additional educational opportunities including study abroad programs and group tours of the Japanese mainland. The latter were intended to instill the drive to earn money and live like mainlanders.

Islanders in Japan’s South Seas territory remember that as so-called *tômin* (islanders) they were seen as “*santô kokumin*” who were thought of as racially or economically lower than Japanese and Okinawans, if not also Koreans. Individuals who discussed this term during interviews seemed to suggest that it had as much to do with economic class as with apparent race, which points to the fact that class and race were closely intertwined concepts in popular imperial cultures. A more detailed explanation of the unofficial race-class hierarchy that islanders associate with Japanese colonial society comes at the end of this chapter in the section that reconstructs common themes in islanders’ memories of their school days.

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 68-69.

Especially Chamorro islanders in the Northern Mariana Islands were able to pay for (or earn the patronage of a Japanese sponsor who would pay for them to attend) advanced schooling opportunities normally dominated by regular speakers of the Japanese language (settler children). These Chamorros graduated and obtained jobs in the Japanese colonial bureaucracy or in industries. This gave them socioeconomic standing that rivaled or surpassed many settlers from East Asia, and may have called into question racist-classist beliefs about them. People have overwhelmingly talked about their Japanese colonial school experiences, especially the rigorous and strict discipline of their teachers, in positive ways and lament that such discipline is absent in today's American schools. The individual scholastic and professional accomplishments achieved by many hardworking islanders in this highly racist and classist colonial society give rise to widespread expressions of nostalgia for this period.

This chapter thus both reconstructs basic features of Japanese education programs created for islanders and assesses how islanders remember them. The Ballendorf oral history manuscript contributes significantly to the second half of this chapter. To reconstruct a history of changing Japanese education programs, a Japanese history of the colonial education system published in 1938<sup>223</sup> provides details about various programs directed towards islanders. These included a primary school system that changed along with shifts in the colonial administrative structure, a special Japanese language reader created for islanders, and social education programs. The ways that islanders have recalled their experiences of participating in various social education programs, including study-abroad opportunities and tours of the mainland, are noted throughout this section.

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<sup>223</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*.

Islander's recollections about the workings of the Japanese public schools (*kôgakkô*) for students who did not speak Japanese regularly constitute the final section of this chapter. Individual memories convey details about islanders' everyday experiences within all of these education programs and provide a sense of how they actually worked on the ground, sometimes in ways that are unacknowledged by mainstream histories.

#### **4.1 Primary School Education for Islanders**

While colonial laws restricted the rights of islanders who were legally aliens in the Japanese empire, educational systems offered some opportunities for advancement within Japanese society. Several participants in this study as well as Chamorros who have spoken on record elsewhere about their school experiences under Japanese colonial rule in the NMI have generally recalled the schools favorably as places of strict discipline and pragmatic learning. However, some have negative memories of corporal punishment, but many others have spoken in favor of this form of discipline. Some also recall the schools as places where prevailing racial tensions of the period were learned, which are memories that provide insights into the unofficial discourses about ethnicity, nationality and identity circulating in this colonial society.

In general, Japanese classroom education gave many indigenous Northern Mariana Islanders a lifelong ability to speak Japanese and to read and write katakana, hiragana, and some kanji, as well as to do arithmetic in their heads or by using the *soroban* (abacus), among other practical skills like agriculture and carpentry. Thus while the schools were places of harsh discipline and racial tension, they also gave islanders certain tools they would use for the rest of their lives. Particularly in the Northern

Mariana Islands and Palau where the highest school enrollment rates were seen in the territory, Japanese education experiences remain a significant feature of memory of this period for the generations who were children at this time.<sup>224</sup>

The *Nan'yô Guntô kyôikushi* (Nan'yô Guntô education history) published in 1938 by an academic group called the Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai (South Sea Islands Education Committee) provides details about educational policies presented in the first part of this chapter.<sup>225</sup> During the colonial period, this committee was responsible for working with the colonial governor to establish and revise educational policies, and to maintain education-focused working groups in each of the six island districts.<sup>226</sup>

Starting with the advent of the Nan'yôchô, Japanese language skills were the primary factor used to separate pupils into the two different schools. This meant that the two-tiered colonial school system left open the possibility that students who excelled in their Japanese language classes, or who otherwise learned to speak Japanese at an early age, could enroll in the schools modeled after mainland Japanese schools and intended for *hōjin* or settler children. Some children had the opportunity to study in the Japanese mainland. Many Chamorros attended the more advanced schools for native Japanese language speakers both in Saipan and in Japan.

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<sup>224</sup> School enrollments were highest in the Saipan and Palau districts. In Saipan, 64% of school age children were attending schools in 1927, and 88% were attending by 1935. In Palau, 87% were attending in 1927, and this number grew to 99% by 1935. Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 243.

<sup>225</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*.

<sup>226</sup> The Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai missions included the following: 1) publish opinions on education, 2) publish research on the condition of education and schools, 3) organize lectures on education, set up training sessions, and provide leadership for *seinendan* (youth associations) 4) organize social education and conduct research to improve the lives of islanders, and 5) manage educators in the region. Nan'yôchô, *Nan'yô Guntô yôran* (Nan'yôchô, 1939): 149.

#### 4.1.1 Naval Period (1914-1918) *shôgakkô* (elementary schools) for Islanders

Throughout the Japanese colonial period, all public schools for islanders were free and textbooks and other materials were provided to students. Education programs in the Nan'yô Guntô began during the period of Japanese Naval rule (1914-1918). On December 27, 1915, the Saipan *shôgakkô* (elementary school) was established in Garapan and one school was also established in each of the islands of Yap, Palau, Ponape, and Jaluit. These schools taught four years of courses to islanders and mirrored the school system in Japan. Courses included moral training (*shûshin*), Japanese language, Japanese history, geography, arithmetic, science, manual arts (*shukô*), drawing, singing, calisthenics (*taisô*), agriculture, and sewing or homemaking. Japanese language overwhelmingly took the most time, consuming fourteen of twenty-four coursework hours per week for first and second year students.<sup>227</sup> During this period, there was also a small temple school on Rota island.

At the Saipan school, there were two Japanese as well as two Chamorro employees: Jose Sablan and Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan. Both men were employed as full-time teachers, and both had attended German schools. Both had graduated from the German government's elementary school in Saipan, while Gregorio had also completed the first year of middle school at the German governmental school in Qingdao, China.<sup>228</sup> By employing these Chamorro men, the Japanese government was making use of the fruits of German educational efforts. These men were able to use the vernacular to assist

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<sup>227</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*: 138-49.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

children in their lessons. These lessons were largely in the Japanese language, which was something that Jose and Gregorio also had to learn.

The Japanese Navy did surveys of the islands in preparation for creating a permanent education system. These described the islanders as generally having “feeble” (*mukiryoku*) attitudes, and being “feeble by nature” (*sententeki ni mukiryoku*).<sup>229</sup> The 1930 education history states that the purpose of education was to “assimilate islanders and to make them Japanese” (*tômin o dôka shi, Nipponjin ka suru*).<sup>230</sup> This source claims that based on the navy surveys, the people of the Mariana, Marshall, and Ponape islands had undergone the negative effects of Western civilization so their education should be difficult. Meanwhile the people of Yap, Palau, and Truk had little contact with “bad” cultures, so their instruction should be comparatively easy.<sup>231</sup>

Despite ambivalence about islanders’ Western influences, these influences were also sometimes seen in a positive light. The same source elsewhere wrote that Chamorros are a “halfway enlightened people” (*hankaimeijin*) and are a mix of Spanish and Chinese blood: moreover because they have the desire for money, Chamorros were described as the *Shinajin* (Chinamen) of the South Seas.<sup>232</sup> The desire for money was important because it signaled to colonial administrators and business owners that an islander might be willing to work in Japanese industries. Chamorros, unlike other Micronesians, had been forced to adapt to a monetary economy during the Spanish period and needed no introduction to its fundamental principles. Mark Peattie writes of the Japanese colonial view of Chamorros, “the Japanese always tended to favor the Chamorros of the Marianas

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<sup>229</sup> Nan’yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, 136.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

as the most advanced and adaptable of the Micronesian peoples.”<sup>233</sup> According to the 1938 education history, below the Chamorros were Kanaka, which included all other islanders in the mandate. Within this group, the Carolinians of Yap were regarded as the lowest because they most persistently resisted Japanese attempts to assimilate them and change their ways of living.<sup>234</sup>

During the navy period, a debate ensued over challenges arising from the difficulty of teaching Japanese language to Chamorro and Carolinian islanders as speakers of different languages. This was especially a problem on Saipan where the overall numbers of pupils from these two groups were about equal. Because Chamorro culture was thought of as higher than the Carolinian culture, the Chamorro language was considered briefly as a language that might unify the island tongues. The Japanese military governor on Saipan ordered the establishment of a Chamorro language class on June 28, 1917. In response, the educational adviser named Sugita issued a strongly worded counter opinion saying that the navy governor’s opinion was unusual, and that unity would instead be gained through the Japanese national language. However, in the context of NMI history the Japanese Navy governor’s opinion was actually not unusual—Spennemann writes German governor Georg Fritz had required the use of Chamorro as the language of instruction in the school he created in Saipan.<sup>235</sup> Nevertheless, on September 5, 1917, the Japanese Navy governor’s order to create a Chamorro language class was terminated.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Peattie, *Nan’yô*, 112.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.; see also Nan’yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, 139.

<sup>235</sup> Dirk R. Spennemann, *Edge of Empire: The German Colonial Period in the Mariana Islands 1899-1914* (Albury, NSW Australia: Heritage Futures, 2007): 217.

<sup>236</sup> Nan’yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, 162-163.

The navy schools were based on the Japanese school system and were called *shôgakkô* (elementary schools). The education history text claims that these schools performed adequately, but there were many things that could not be enforced because of what it claims was the islander children's cultural level, race, manners and customs. Japanese educators and administrators responded to these imagined issues by promulgating the “Nan'yô Guntô *tômin gakkô kisoku*” (South Sea Islander School Rule) on June 25, 1918 that was effectuated on September 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>237</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Civil Administration Period (1918-1922) *tômin gakkô* (islander schools)

As a result of this order, the education system changed during the Civil Administration Era. During this period, the system for the most part tried to follow the elementary schools in the mainland, but the navy administration's four years of courses were shortened to three years. The name of the schools changed from *shôgakkô* (elementary schools) to *tômin gakkô* (islander schools).<sup>238</sup>

Along with this change, the subjects of Japanese history, geography, and science that had been a part of the Navy era curriculum were removed. The Japanese language remained the most important subject, with ten of twenty total first-grade course hours per week spent on the language. In addition to the Japanese language, courses included moral training (*shûshin*), arithmetic, calisthenics (*taisô*), singing, drawing, agriculture, manual arts (*shukô*), sewing or homemaking.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 170, 173.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 179-80.



*Tômin gakkô* were opened in seven locations: Roeppu in the Marshall Islands, Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands, Babeldap island's Gararudo village, Peleliu, and Angaur in Palau, Wednesday Island (Suiyôtô) in Chuuk, Rukunoru island in the Mortlocks (Chuuk), and Mataranimu in Pohnpei. There were a total of five different classes of islander pupils who attended the school on Saipan during this period, rivaled only by the five classes in the school on Natsushima, Chuuk. All the other islands' schools had only three classes. There were two classes in the branch school on Rota at the time. Some of the Japanese policemen and miners living in these islands served in these schools as instructors of basic education in Japanese and math.<sup>240</sup>

At Civil Administration locations (*minseichôjo*), there were supplementary courses, *hoshû-ka*, were offered that required two years to complete.<sup>241</sup> *Hoshû-ka* were first established at Islander Schools on Chuuk and Yap, and then one dedicated *hoshû-ka* school was opened in Chuuk and one in Saipan. In 1920, these higher courses were offered in Palau and Pohnpei.<sup>242</sup>

Schooling was reported to have helped islanders to find employment and as having a noticeable affect on subsequent instruction as children grew accustomed to obeying Japanese authorities. Graduates were able to understand Japanese well and gain employment in government agencies, companies, and shops. The education history text states that this was not just convenient for these businesses, asserting that: "through these islanders, the island's common people also improved in many ways."<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 181-82, 192-93.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 193-94.

<sup>243</sup> ...*kore nado no tômin wo kaishite ippan minshû no kaizensareru ten mo sukunakunai.* Ibid.

#### 4.1.3 Nan'yôchô period (1922-1942) *kôgakkô* (public schools) and *shôgakkô* (elementary schools)

At the start of the Nan'yôchô period (1922-1942), the school system changed again. At the same time as the Nan'yôchô was being created, by Imperial Ordinance number 114 the Nan'yôchô Kôgakkô Kisei (South Seas Bureau Public School Regulation) was created which clarified school organization and authority. Nan'yôchô order number 32 proclaimed that the schools previously administered as the Nan'yô Guntô *tômin gakkô* would become the Nan'yôchô *kôgakkô*.<sup>244</sup> This ordinance made it clear that the *kôgakkô* were “places that grant general education to children who do not use the national language regularly.”<sup>245</sup> The *shôgakkô* (elementary schools) were “places that grant general education to children who use the national language regularly.”<sup>246</sup> Students had to be at least eight years of age and no older than fourteen or fifteen to be eligible for enrollment.<sup>247</sup>

The *kôgakkô* curriculum included three years of required courses in the following subjects: moral training (*shûshin*), Japanese language, arithmetic, drawing, singing / calisthenics (*taisô*), manual arts (*shukô*), agriculture, and homemaking. For first, second, and third year students alike, twelve of the twenty-four hours of coursework per week were devoted to learning the Japanese language. The next most emphasized subject was math at four hours, and then singing/calisthenics at three hours, while all other subjects were one hour each per week.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>245</sup> *Kokugo wo jôyô sezarû jidô ni futsû kyôiku wo sadzukurû tokoro*. Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> *Kokugo wo jôyô suru jidô ni futsû kyôiku wo sadzukurû tokoro*. Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 242.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 204-05.

*Hoshû-ka* (supplementary courses) lasted for two years and were not required, and enrollment was based upon a student's ability to pass the entrance exam. In this course, the only difference from the *hon-ka* curriculum was that singing and calisthenics were separate classes. For both first and second year students, of the twenty-six hours per week of course time, Japanese language was ten hours, while math, manual arts, agriculture, and homemaking were 4 hours each, and the rest were one hour each.<sup>249</sup>

On April 1, 1922, there were two *kôgakkô* in the Marianas: one on Saipan and one on Rota while there were a total of seventeen in the territory. Some *kôgakkô* had dormitories that housed students who traveled from other islands. These included the schools in Palau, Yap, Natsushima in Chuuk, Koroni in Pohnpei, and Jabor and Maroerappu in the Marshall Islands.<sup>250</sup> Throughout most of Micronesia, students had to travel to the main islands of an archipelago because schools were not constructed on every island or even in every atoll. The aforementioned list of schools that took on boarders represents all of the schools in the territory except the ones in the Saipan district where dormitories were unnecessary. This is because the Marianas is made up of high islands whereas the rest of Micronesia consists of numerous, small, low-elevation atolls and few high-elevation islands that tend to be larger in size. Populations are concentrated in the large, high Mariana Islands do not live on scattered islands located a long distance away from one another.

Once this school system had been created, a specialty school was planned in the territory's capital of Palau. It was called the Carpentry School (*mokkô totei yôsei-jo*) and

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 209-10, 214-15.

was established on May 26, 1926 by Nan'yôchô Order Number 1. Government planners believed that islanders' lives would improve if their health improved as the result of living in better houses, and this carpentry school was established with this idea in mind. The school offered a two-year course. The best students from around the mandate travelled to Koror, Palau to attend this school that offered mostly practice-oriented building and carpentry classes, although other classes were also taught.<sup>251</sup> By March 1932, fifty-nine students had graduated and forty-one were employed: of this number, thirty-two were carpenters in government offices, mines, or carpentry shops, five were assistant teachers in *kôgakkô*, three worked in the hospital or post office, and one was continuing his studies at the school. A total of thirty students were enrolled in 1935.<sup>252</sup>

In 1928, the curriculum for *kôgakkô* changed. That year, the three-year primary course was changed by the addition of science, while singing and calisthenics for second and third year students were separated into two classes. In addition, a *kaji* (housework) course was added for girls. After this year, only girls worked on housework for an additional hour per week in the second year and an additional two hours per week in the third year.<sup>253</sup> The supplementary courses were also changed to add geography and science for all students and a housework class for the girls.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 232-36.

<sup>252</sup> Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 245.

<sup>253</sup> This is what the new curriculum looked like: First years: 12 hours of Japanese of a total of 23 hours, 5 hours arithmetic, 3 hours singing/*taisô* and one hour each for moral training, manual arts, and drawing. Second years: 12 hours Japanese language of 25 hours for boys and 26 hours for girls, 2 hours of *taisô*, and one hour each for other subjects except boys did not do *kaji* (housework). Third years: 12 hours of Japanese language of 27 hours total for boys and 29 hours total for girls, where girls did homemaking; 5 hours on arithmetic, 2 hours each for geography, *taisô* and agriculture, and one hour each for all other subjects. Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, 222-23.

<sup>254</sup> For first and second year students, of the 28 hours per week for boys and 30 hours per week for girls of course time, Japanese language was 10 hours, math was 4 hours, agriculture was 4 hours, manual arts, *taisô*,

#### 4.1.4 The South Sea Islands *Kokugo tokuhon* (*National Language Reader*)

The Japanese Navy began designing a special Japanese language textbook for Micronesian islanders during the period of naval control. This reader was initially published in four volumes that were used to teach islanders both the basic three years and the supplementary two-year courses on the Japanese language.

The idea for the books originated from dissatisfaction with the national language reader used in the navy schools. Referring to opinions based on experiments done by education employees working at the various island locations, the headquarters' education chief (Chuuk *shôgakkô* principal Sugita) gave an order to start editing the national language textbook. In the temporary period after the military occupation ended, it was noted that there were “few books or documents that referred to things existing between official and private matters”<sup>255</sup> He was suggesting that few sources dealt with the everyday realities of life on the islands under Japanese rule, yet Japanese officials needed to develop methods of teaching islanders about how to live as Japanese subjects in their local communities.

After months of effort and deliberation by a council that was in charge of the colonial command (Shireikan), the first edition was finally completed in March 1917.<sup>256</sup> The content was planned around what was perceived to be the cultural level of the people in the islands, and selected vocabulary words referenced local things. Vocabulary words

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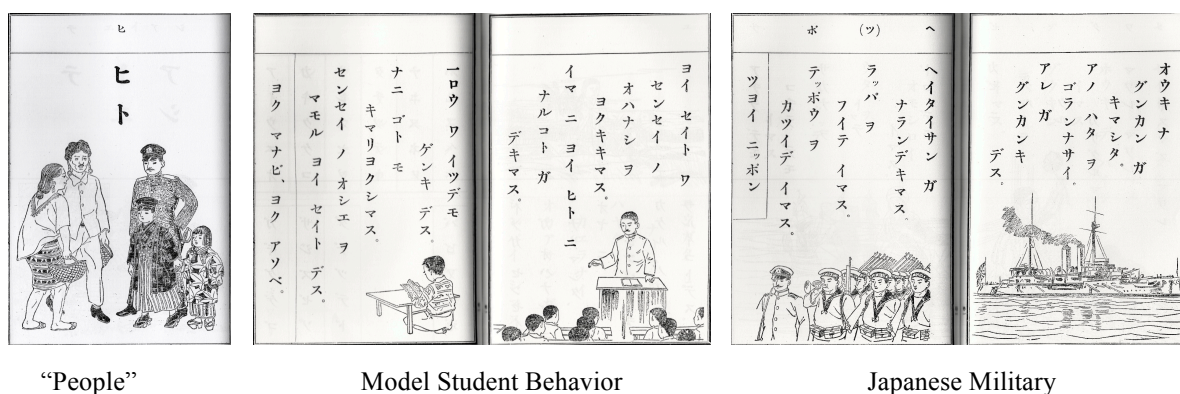
and science were 2 hours, and all the rest were one hour except for girls who did an additional 2 hours of homemaking. Ibid., 223-24.

<sup>255</sup> *Kôshi no aida ni sankô ni shisuru tosho bunken o yûsuru mono mo sukunai.* Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> That month the Nan'yô Guntô Kokugo tokuhon volumes one and two were edited and published. In February 1919 volume three was published, and then in March 1919 volume four was published. Ibid.

were drawn from Tokyo middle-class language, and brevity and clarity were emphasized.<sup>257</sup>

The Monbusho (Ministry of Education) in Tokyo reprinted the books in 1924. Starting in March 1926, the readers were thereafter reprinted in Palau where a new edition appeared in 1927, and again in 1933. Over time, the readers kept getting longer and more complicated, content was enhanced, the burden of kanji was lessened, and class exercises were described as having been more thorough.<sup>258</sup>



**Figure 4.1: Excerpts from the *Kokugo tokuhon* (National Language Reader) Volume 1 (1917)**<sup>259</sup>

Figure 4.1 shows five pages from the very first volume of the *Kokugo tokuhon* published in 1917. In the excerpts above, the page on the far left includes just the word “people” (*hito*) above an illustration of what appears to be Japanese adults and children on the right, and an islander man and woman on the left who look like they are from the Chuuk islands, which was the administrative capital at the time. This illustrates images of

<sup>257</sup> Volume 1 was 55 pages and mainly gives examples of vocabulary words, volume 2 was 59 pages with 20 chapters, volume three was 33 chapters and 130 pages, and volume four was 40 chapters and 180 pages. Ibid., 251.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 281-82.

<sup>259</sup> Miyawaki Hiroyuki kanshû, *Nan'yô Guntô kokugo tokuhon* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Ôzorasha, 2006).

people that the children might have encountered in daily life, and it appears early in the series on the third page of the first volume of the first edition.

The excerpt in the middle comes later in this same text for first graders, and it describes model behavior for students in Japanese schools with illustrations of this behavior that reinforce its messages. The text on the page says: “Good students listen carefully to the teacher’s words. Now you can become a good person. Ichirô is always alert and always follows the rules. He is a student who abides by *sensei*’s teachings.”<sup>260</sup> The text in the box on the left margin of the left page reads, “study hard, play hard.” This reading exercise illustrates how these language textbooks featured images that were intended to give visual guidance to compliment narrative instruction to students as to how to behave in Japanese schools.

The subsequent volume for second year students contained a slightly more complicated message about ideal behavior, for which I have not provided an excerpted image here. This message appears in a reading lesson entitled *gakkô* (school), which featured an illustration of a child walking towards a school building.

I like school the best. Everyday I am taught many interesting things. I learn the national language, arithmetic, interesting songs and games, and good manners. If I try my hardest in my studies and keep with *sensei*’s teachings, I will be able to quickly become a good Japanese. This is thanks to His Majesty the Emperor. For this I must be eternally grateful.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> *Yoi seito ha sensei no ohanashi wo yoku kikimasu. Ima ni yoi hito ni naru koto ga dekimasu. Ichirô ha itsudemo genki desu. Nani goto mo kimariyoku shimasu. Sensei no oshie wo mamoru yoi seito desu.* Side bar: *yoku manabi, yoku asobe.* Miyawaki Hiroyuki kanshû, *Nan’yô Guntô kokugo tokuhon* vol. 1, 52-3.

<sup>261</sup> *Watakushi ha gakkô ga ichiban sukidesu. Mainichi iroiro yoi koto wo oshiete itadakimasu. Kokugo wo narattari, sanjutsu wo narattari, omoshiroi shôka ya yûgi wo oboetari, tameni naru ogyôgi wo oboetari shimasu. Sensei no oshie wo mamotte, isshôkenmei ni benkyôsuresuba, hayaku yoi nihonjin ni narukoto ga dekimasu. Kore mo minna, aregatai tennôheika no okage de gozaimasu. Kono arigatai goon wo wasurete ha narimasen.* Miyawaki Hiroyuki kanshû, *Nan’yô Guntô kokugo tokuhon* vol. 2 (Tokyo: Ôzorasha, 2006): 9-12.

In clear evidence here are fundamental principles exhibited in the Imperial Rescript on Education that had first established the Japanese education system during the Meiji period.<sup>262</sup> The Imperial Rescript informed curricula at schools in all colonial locations, even though in the case of the South Seas colony, islander pupils were aliens in the Japanese empire. These principles included especially the idea that the emperor is at the pinnacle of the *kokutai* (national body), and that students must demonstrate filial piety to parents, schoolteachers, and other authority figures all the way up to the emperor. The education system's emphasis on the emperor and rule-adherence are obvious in the excerpt above, while it also references the large proportion of class time spent on the Japanese language and math in these schools. The education system taught islander students that they could become "good Japanese" if they behaved in the ways described here.

Finally, the excerpt on the right is from the first volume and introduces first grade students to the Japanese military. The sketch illustrates a navy ship that would have been a familiar sight, which is adorned with the navy sunburst flag at the ships' aft section. The text here reads: "A big warship came. Look at that flag. It is the Navy flag. The soldiers line up. They play trumpets. They carry guns on their shoulders." The text in the box on the left margin of the left page reads, "strong Japan."<sup>263</sup> This lesson was unambiguously aimed at familiarizing islander pupils with the insignia and visual

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<sup>262</sup> The Imperial Rescript on Education was the Meiji era reform promulgated by the Emperor in 1890. It outlined principles for Japanese primary school education. The basic messages of this document were that the imperial institution made Japan unique in the world, and that imperial subjects should obey authorities. It was based in Confucian ideas of patriarchal order, but the emperor was the center of the system. After it was written, the rescript was distributed to all schools in the country along with a portrait of the Emperor Meiji. All students were required to read and memorize the rescript.

<sup>263</sup> *Ôki na gunkan ga kimashita. Ano hata wo goran nasai. Are ga kunkanki desu. Heitaisan ga narande kimasu. Rappa wo fuite imasu. Teppô wo katsuide imasu.* Miyawaki Hiroyuki kanshû, *Nan'yô Guntô kokugo tokuhon* vol. 1, 32-3.



presence of the Japanese Navy, and to have the children associate these symbols with strength. Islander pupils spent the vast majority of their coursework time in Japanese colonial schools learning the Japanese language through these readers. Their content clearly relays Japanese colonial messages of assimilation, while underscoring the idea that islanders were to respect authorities including their teachers, the mighty Japanese Navy, and the emperor.

## 4.2 Other Education Programs for Islanders

Education programs included not only primary schools, but also various programs intended to provide training and education for islanders outside of the school system.

### 4.2.1 Social Education

Like the primary schools, social education programs for islanders began at the start of the naval occupation. The navy administration set up several courses for the general population as they were creating schools for children. The Defense Forces Commander sent out an order to start temporary Japanese language classes which stipulated the suitable times for Japanese language training for *tômin junkei* (islander patrolmen), employees, and other applicants.<sup>264</sup> Three days after the establishment of social education courses, on October 23, 1916 the Saipan military government head issued a report that two *junkei* (patrolmen), six employees, and fifty-one *tômin* applicants were to be taught the Japanese language at the elementary school by the school principal. Classes lasted for two hours every Monday, one hour on Thursdays, and two hours on

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<sup>264</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi.*, 337.

Saturdays. From August 1, 1922 at the Rota campus, every Sunday from 9am to 11am the Kokugo Kenkyukai (National Language Research Association) would host Japanese language classes.<sup>265</sup>

As background to this efforts, the education history text states that, “originally, islanders had been using the gifts of heaven as clothing, food, and shelter: while they had progressed to cultivation they did not make many efforts to get materials for food and clothing.”<sup>266</sup> This claim is overly simplistic as islanders had for centuries lived in homes and wore clothes that were the products of skilled craftsmanship that were far more than “gifts of heaven.” What’s more, by the time Japan took the islands from Germany, many Northern Mariana Islanders and other Micronesians had assimilated Western building methods, clothing and cooking styles, and religious practices among other cultural practices. The Japanese navy started courses in each archipelago that lectured about what they deemed to be appropriate clothes, food, and shelter in addition to lecturing about work. Other courses taught included manual arts, agriculture and cultivation, blacksmithing, woodworking, and home improvement.<sup>267</sup>

These courses were thought to have provided roads to vocational aid. In addition, the educational history text states that the social education programs were instructive for self-aware young men in that they succeeded in establishing Youth Associations (Seinendan), while also educating for self-government, humanitarian cultivation, and rational methods of physical education.<sup>268</sup> Also every year starting at the beginning of the

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 337-338.

<sup>266</sup> *Genrai tōmin ha, tenkyō no shibutsu wo motte koromo/shoku/jū no yō ni kyōshi, susunde kōsakushi, kufūshite ishoku no shiryō wo eru koto ni tsutomeru koto ga sukunakatta.* Ibid., 328.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 329.

military occupation, tour groups of the *naichi* (mainland Japan) took place. During these programs, “intellectual islanders were dispatched to the mainland where they were allowed to intuit mainland culture and to strive to deepen their awareness of cultural improvement.”<sup>269</sup> The Youth Associations and mainland tour programs will be explored in more detail in a subsequent section.

Saipan agriculture courses were started by a October 20, 1916 regulation of the military government. That day, a *nôji kôshû-kai* or Saipan farming class was established by the navy governor to teach farming and construction practices to ten Chamorro and ten Kanaka students.<sup>270</sup> These agricultural courses dealt with ordinary crops, specialized crop cultivation, and forestry and were held at government offices.<sup>271</sup> They were scheduled once per year, but were originally supposed to have been every six months. Under Nan'yôchô governance, classes were expanded across the mandate to include manual arts and lectures about policies of providing work to islanders. The manual arts classes taught people how to create things like chairs. Just as with the agriculture classes, these were also held at the various government branch offices, and some classes were taught every six months while others were taught every year.<sup>272</sup> These classes were available to students who had graduated from the public schools.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> *Tômin yûshikisha wo naichi ni haken shite, naichi no bunka wo chokkan seshime, sono bunka kôjô to, naichi ni taisuru ishiki wo fukaku seshimuru koto ni rikimete iru.* Ibid., 329.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 330-32.

<sup>271</sup> Either the district office, the branch office, or the industry experimental station, which was the earlier iteration of the tropical plant research site (*nettai shokubutsu kenkyôjô*). Ibid., 336.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 335-36.

<sup>273</sup> Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 245.

Fewer people from the Saipan district participated in these classes than people from other island districts.<sup>274</sup> This may be partially explained by the fact that the overall population of islanders in the Saipan district was smaller than in other districts. But their lower participation rates probably also had to do with the fact that islanders in Saipan had access to a broader range of private educational and professional growth opportunities created by the sugar industry and dense communities of settlers.

Still other kinds of social education classes were held across the mandate. Blacksmithing classes were held in the Yap from 1922-24 that taught simple methods of producing things from metal and other materials. There were also woodworking and logging classes that taught basic skills related to these trades in order to improve the sanitation of *tômin* houses. Woodworking and logging courses were established in the Yap, Palau, and Chuuk districts. But then the Carpentry School in Palau was opened in 1926, and these community courses stopped. Training continued at the carpentry school.<sup>275</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Seinendan (Youth Associations)

The Seinendan were established in every village in the islands, and were “designed to awaken the islanders to their civic and social responsibilities.”<sup>276</sup>

Elementary school staff or *hōjin* volunteers would serve as instructors. These groups

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<sup>274</sup> Agricultural class participants per year between 1917-1921 in Saipan ranged from between 7 and 17 people. Between 1922-24 there were between 17 and 20 participants annually, and then participation dropped to between 7 and 10 per year from 1925-1935. Across the districts, 1686 islander pupils enrolled in all of these social education classes between 1922 and 1935. By far, the highest enrollments overall were seen in the Jaluit district (Marshall Islands). Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi.*, 336-37.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 335.

<sup>276</sup> Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 246.

were supposed to improve islanders' knowledge and virtue, physically exercise their bodies, and perform public service. Their main activities were *kôwakai* (lecture meetings), *undokai* (athletic meets), and public service projects. But participants reportedly put the most effort towards village public service projects, and the education history text describes the results of these public service projects as having been remarkable.<sup>277</sup>

In the Saipan district, On October 6, 1929 the Saipan Tômin Seinendan (Saipan Islander Youth Association) was formed. Members included school graduates under 25 years old. This group focused on improving public morals, public projects, and the management of joint farming. Seinendan formed at the headquarters of each island district, which in the Northern Mariana Islands was called the Saipan Nankô Shônendan (Saipan Southern Light Boy Scouts) established on August 9, 1930. This group was for younger boys to receive training before entering the Seinendan so as to facilitate harmony between the organizations.<sup>278</sup>

The total number of people in the Saipan district who participated in the Seinendan averaged 171 between 1931-1935. Many women participated in Yap and Palau, but no women participated in Saipan, nor did any women participate in Chuuk or Pohnpei. While no women participated in Chuuk, this island district had the greatest overall participation by far, averaging 1,558 participants per year from 1928-35 and this district also had the largest overall population of islanders. There was no participation at all in the Marshall Islands, and in 1936 it is reported that the Japanese government was

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<sup>277</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, 335.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

trying to create a youth association there. Total figures during the most participated year in 1931 showed an enrollment of 4,495 people across the territory.<sup>279</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Naichi Kankôdan (Group Tours of the Mainland)

Starting with the first year after the occupation, every year influential Japanese residents and village officials organized islander tours of the Japanese mainland. They organized these tours because they thought that observing the *naichi* would help lead *tômin* toward improving their lives. These trips were supposed to develop the minds of individual islanders as well as the general population, and to thereby result in social education. From the first year after the start of the occupation, on May 2, 1915, the Nan'yô Guntô Self-Defense forces instituted a policy for tours of the mainland in each of the defense units. Every summer, these groups would stay in the mainland for more or less twenty days and would sightsee at what were deemed the most important cities. Islanders would visit cities like Tokyo and Osaka, and would make field trips to industry, transportation, and educational and cultural facilities.<sup>280</sup> Upon returning to the islands, *tômin* participants were expected to talk with other islanders about what they had experienced.

Islanders selected to participate were of high birth and held jobs. Islanders from Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, the Marshalls, Saipan, Palau, Angaur, and Yap all participated in the first tour group in 1915. From Saipan, the four participants in this first group

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid., 346.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 346-47.

included one Carolinian and two Chamorro men.<sup>281</sup> The Japanese education history reports that because it was Palauan and Yapese custom to be naked and barefoot in this period, Western-style clothes and shoes were something for which these islanders initially had to be totally dependent upon the government. By the mid-1930s when this book was written, all islanders were preparing Western-style clothes for these tours at their own expense. Gradually, the education history reports, the people they call *tômin* have become sharp dressers to the extent that, by comparison, they would make more than a few mainlanders look bad.<sup>282</sup>



1921 *Kankôdan*



1935 *Kankôdan*

**Figure 4.2: Photographs of the 1921 and the 1935 *Kankôdan* (Group Tours)**<sup>283</sup>

At first the government sponsored the costs of the tour groups from 1915-21 for the majority of the participants, although some islanders contributed their own funds.

From 1922 onward, all participants paid for their own way. During the first six years

<sup>281</sup> The following four people from Saipan participated in the first *Kankôdan*: 1) An interpreter was assigned to most of the island groups. For the Saipan group, the Japanese Chief of Saipan Office of Nan'yô Bôeki Kaisha, NBK was assigned this task (Tanabe Kintarô); 2) Juan Delos Reyes, age 41, village chief, a person of great renown (*meibôka*); 3) Juan De'aku (probably Diaz), age 45, deputy mayor (*joyaku*), he had Japanese patronage; and 4) Antonio Agairen, age 22, Kanaka-tribe deputy mayor, person representing the Kanaka-tribe. Ibid, 349.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 351.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 352.

when trips were sponsored for the majority of participants, there were anywhere between twenty-two to eighty-eight participants per year with an average of forty-eight people per year.<sup>284</sup> From 1922 to 1935 when the government did not sponsor anyone, participants ranged from thirteen to twenty-three people per year with an average of 20 participants per year. Starting in 1938 and continuing thereafter, graduates from the *shôgakkô* or the woodworking school in Palau paid for all of the travel expenses for participants from all of the districts.<sup>285</sup>

In terms of the island districts from which participants came, between 1922 and 1935 the largest number came from Palau (126 people), and the smallest group came from Saipan (thirteen people).<sup>286</sup> After 1922, the composition of the participants seemed to alternate years such that one year they were made up of people from Palau, and the next year they included people from Chuuk, Pohnpei, and the Marshalls. Nobody from Saipan district participated between 1922-27, and people from the Saipan district are reported as having participated in the 1928, 1930, and 1934 trips only.<sup>287</sup> However one Chamorro man from Saipan remembered attending the 1916 *kankôdan*.

Pedro Martinez Ada (1903-1995) was born on Saipan and went to German elementary school until the third grade when the Japanese arrived (1914). Afterward he attended Japanese school where he excelled in his studies, and where he remembers that Gregorio “Kilili” Sablan was his assistant teacher. Pedro mastered the Japanese language quickly and was soon considered to be one of the best Japanese speakers on the island. Because of his skills, he was taken to Japan in 1916 on the Naichi Kankôdan and served

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<sup>284</sup> No records were reported for 1920.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 352-54.

<sup>286</sup> Yap had 20, Chuuk had 31, Pohnpei had 57, and the Marshalls had 27 people.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 354-55.



as an interpreter and assistant for the older Micronesians in attendance. He recalled that the trip lasted a month and that they traveled by train to visit shrines and historical sites in Yokohama, Tokyo, Osaka, and Nikko. They and also went to the theater, saw dances, went to parties, and were entertained in people's homes. Pedro said he enjoyed eating the Japanese food, and being amused by the other Micronesians who preferred to walk around without shoes. "They were not used to wearing shoes, so they took them off," he said. After returning to Saipan, he resumed schooling and soon began to work as an assistant teacher himself because of his mastery of the Japanese language.<sup>288</sup>

Another account about an islander's experience traveling to the mainland was published in the Koror, Palau-based magazine *Nan'yô Guntô* in 1935 and was apparently written by a person called Rasuda from Kaisharu Village in Palau. The article is entitled, "Naichi to watakushi" (the mainland and me) and recounts the experiences of traveling through Japan from what is supposed to be the perspective of a Palauan islander. However the clear message of the piece is that the experience of being around wealthy and hardworking mainlanders, seeing the modern buildings and other features of Tokyo and Okayama, and visiting a Tenri Shinto site of worship in Nara inspired Rasuda to proclaim at the end of the piece: "I am returning to Nan'yô, and I will talk to everyone about the mainlanders, and tell them about how hard the mainlanders are working. I intend to make them abandon the thoughts of laziness that they have had until now."<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Ballendorf, "Oral History," 25-26.

<sup>289</sup> *Nan'yô e kaettara minna no mono ni naichi no sama o hatashimasho sochite naichi no hitotachi ga donna ni isshôkenmei ni hataraiteiru ka o shrase ima made no yô na namaketa kangae o suteru yô ni saseru tsumori de arimasu. Nan'yô Guntô 1 (1): 57.*

This composition focuses on how Rasuda came to want to earn money through hard work, and how he decided to convince his peers to do the same. This would have been the ideal outcome of Kankôdan from the perspective of colonial educators and administrators. The argument presented in this piece speaks so directly to the stated goals of the program that it inevitably calls its true authorship into question.

Palauans were the majority participants in these programs perhaps because they lived in the colony's capital where the most wealthy and influential Japanese were living. The highest-ranking Japanese bureaucrats, publishers, and intellectuals lived in Palau and likely formed bonds with Palauans whom they would choose to sponsor for these Kankôdan. Another possible explanation for Palauans' high participation rate is that Palauan traditional culture posed challenges to Japanese assimilation attempts: these islanders had indigenous cultures of exchange that used coral beads as money, which, while they were still practiced, repelled Japanese attempts to incorporate islanders into modern socioeconomies of yen-based exchange.<sup>290</sup> Tour organizers may have wanted to hasten the adaption of Japanese lifestyles and values by Palauans. These tours were designed to cultivate in these islanders a desire for modern material and cultural life, and to abandon older non-yen-based socioeconomies. The Japanese colonial concern with bringing islanders to the Japanese mainland was connected to the desire to teach them to want money and reject their traditional ways of living, which would in turn benefit the Japanese economy. Both the records attesting to Palauans' high participation rates, and the other Japanese colonial efforts to eradicate Palauan traditions suggest that the

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<sup>290</sup> Traditional Palauan economies were not unlike Yapese traditional economies that used enormous limestone discs. In Yap, the stone money was used as non-circulating currency which changed hands (but not physical location) on the occasion of large purchases of things like land.

Kankôdan especially targeted these islanders. Meanwhile, islanders in the Saipan district who were accustomed to monetary economies had very low rates of participation in these programs. Pedro's memory of his own participation reveals that he was there more as an assistant to the other Micronesians, rather than as a regular participant.

#### 4.2.4 Ryûgakusei (Students Studying Abroad)

Starting in the first few years of Japanese rule, some islanders sought out their own opportunities to study abroad in the mainland or in foreign countries, and for these students the Nan'yôchô office served as a protective mediator. For graduates and students of *tômin gakkô* who wanted to study in the *naichi* or in another foreign country, colonial policy stated that students needed to have the assistance of a patron who would serve as a guardian (*hogôsha*). This person would survey the islander family's circumstances, investigate the boarding place abroad, and measure the convenience of the student's attending school there.<sup>291</sup>

Pedro Martinez Ada, the Chamorro boy who had gone with the 1916 Kankôdan and then became an assistant teacher on Saipan, said that after these experiences he decided to resume his studies at the urging of others. "The Japanese saw how good I was and suggested that I return to Japan for further schooling." He returned to Japan to study at the *Aoyama shihan gakkô*, which he described as a "normal school for training teachers." He studied there for four years while living with a Japanese family, whose household head was employed as a judge. After he completed this course, he enrolled at Sophia University and lived in a dormitory there for a year and a half. During that time,

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<sup>291</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, 355.

he recalled studying German and English. After the devastating 1923 earthquake he chose to return to Guam in 1924 because his sister was married there, and part of his family had been living there, although this decision did not please his Japanese benefactors.<sup>292</sup>

Pedro's story is also featured in the Japanese education history text because he was the first student from the Nan'yô Guntô to be sent to Japan to study. His case instigated the creation of policies to manage such arrangements for islanders. Described as a pioneering example in the education history, "Young Pe" is reported therein to have had a desire to study abroad in the *naichi*. The Saipan Civil Administration entrusted all mediation regarding this matter to Tokyo Prefecture. The following year, in around May 1920, the text reports that Pedro traveled to the mainland. In July he passed the third year entrance examination for the elementary school normal course attached to the Aoyama Normal School in Tokyo Prefecture.<sup>293</sup> After graduating, he entered first year studies in a preparatory course (elective course) at Sophia University in Tokyo. In September of the next year he quit school and returned to the islands. At the time of the writing of the education history, Pedro was reported to have been involved in trade in Guam.<sup>294</sup>

Following Pedro's example, the Japanese government worked to allow students from Micronesia to study abroad at mainland elementary, middle and religious schools, as well as in other countries. On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1922, the Interior Ministry Director issued a notice about how to handle students who wished to study abroad.<sup>295</sup> Although a slightly

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<sup>292</sup> Ballendorf, "Oral History," 26.

<sup>293</sup> This school and course name in Japanese is *Aoyama Shihan Gakkô Fuzoku shôgakkô Jinjô-ka*. Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, 355.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

different case, Juan B. Blanco (1923-2014) remembered that he was selected to move to Japan in 1934 when he was in second grade and ten years old. A memorial tribute to Mr. Blanco written by a friend shortly after his death shared some details of the circumstances leading to his move to Japan.<sup>296</sup> This article states that in 1934, a group of Japanese academics from four different universities visited Saipan to investigate *kôgakkô*. They were reportedly concerned with segregation in the schools, and decided to take one academically strong islander pupil back to Japan with them to enroll in Japanese elementary school. Juan remembered that he was selected because he was class president at the time. His father agreed with the move and paid for the trip. In Japan he was sponsored by one of the university students, and said he was not required to change his name to enroll. He completed the third grade in Tokyo, but because his sponsor had finished his university training and had been offered a job in Palau, Juan wrote to his father and together they made arrangements to move to Shimizu city in Shizuoka Prefecture. There his sister and two other women from Saipan were studying to be midwives under the sponsorship of a Japanese physician. Juan's father traveled to Japan to assist with the enrollment in Shimizu, where Juan completed the fourth and fifth grades. He returned to Saipan in 1939 and continued his education there. Juan was humble about the circumstances enabling his study abroad experience. "I believe that I was allowed to attend these Japanese schools because my father was personally friendly with the Japanese."<sup>297</sup> Juan's own talents along with his father's support and the support

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<sup>296</sup> Noriyasu Horiguchi, "A Tribute to the late Juan B. Blanco," *Saipan Tribune*, Last updated Nov. 4, 2014, <http://www.saipantribune.com/index.php/tribute-late-juan-b-blanco/>

<sup>297</sup> Ballendorf, "Oral History," 41.

of other Japanese people were all factors that allowed him to attend regular Japanese primary school in Japan.

A group interview conducted in the mid-1980s by the Ballendorf research team in Saipan reported that three women had been selected to go to Japan to attend nursing school. These three could have been the same women that Juan remembered, which included his sister. The group remembered that only one of these women, Maria Santos, returned to the island with her diploma.<sup>298</sup> Sister Remedios P. Castro (1915-2007) had once been given the chance to attend nursing school in Japan, but her mother opposed the idea.<sup>299</sup> Instead, she joined the order of the Mercedarian Sisters of Berritz in Saipan and became a nun. Another Chamorro who studied in Japan was identified in an announcement published in the Palau-based magazine *Nan'yô Guntô*: in 1936, Antonio Camacho of Saipan had been able to enroll at Nippon University Technical College Engineering School to study *denki* (electricity) towards becoming an electrical engineer.<sup>300</sup>

Between 1920 and 1935, the education history text reports that a total of 139 islanders studied abroad with numbers growing as the years passed starting with one person per year in 1920 to eighteen per year by 1935.<sup>301</sup> Study abroad opportunities most often drew participants from Saipan and Palau, followed by Pohnpei and the Marshalls. Chuuk and Yap had the fewest participants.

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<sup>298</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>300</sup> “Nan'yô Shônenshû Nichidai e,” [South Seas Youth to Nippon University], *Nan'yô Guntô* 2 no. 6: 74.

<sup>301</sup> Of these, 115 boys and 26 girls are reported to have studied abroad. The numbers in the original chart are reported at 139, but the sum of the boys and girls is 141. *Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, kyôikushi*, 358.

The education history draws conclusions about the cultures of different island groups based on their relative participation or lack of participation in study abroad programs as experiences that necessarily assimilated islanders into foreign schools. The authors' perception of islanders in the Northern Marianas is that they could more easily assimilate into Japanese culture than other islanders. They surmise that "Saipan makes up the door to the South Sea Islands, and in addition to being a convenient place from which to commute to the mainland, it has been conjectured that the Chamorro tribe is generally of a high culture..."<sup>302</sup> Meanwhile Palau was the colonial capital, and "their cultural level seemed to have remarkably improved,"<sup>303</sup> they write. Pohnpei was in the middle, while the Marshalls is described as being left behind because of transportation inconveniences related to the fact that the Marshall Islands consists of many small atolls separated by vast ocean territory. They report that the closure of the navy capital in Chuuk lessened those islanders' participation in studying abroad, and Yap's low participation was explained by saying their "cultural level is relatively low."<sup>304</sup>

For the most part, study abroad participants graduated from elementary schools and religious schools abroad, but there are almost no participants who had graduated from middle schools. There were many students who left their schools abroad after one or two years—and the main reason, the education history text states, is that these students lack willpower.<sup>305</sup> The education history further report, "it is very common that once a person starts to become idle, it is not possible to eliminate this [attitude] and revive

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<sup>302</sup> *Saipan wa Nan'yô no monko wo nashi, naichi to no kôtsû shiben de aru ue, Chamoro-zoku ga ippan teki ni bunka-teido ga yaya takai to iu koto mo suiryô sa re...* Ibid., 359.

<sup>303</sup> ...sono tômin mo bunka no teido ga ichijirushiku kôjshita kan ga ari... Ibid.

<sup>304</sup> ...Yappu tômin ha wariiai ni bunka no teido ga hikui toiu koto ga dekiru. Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> *Jiseiryoku ni toboshiku.* Ibid.

them.”<sup>306</sup> Among people who studied abroad and returned to the islands, many subsequently occupied high positions on the islands. For this reason, such participation was labeled by the education history as a rank of intelligence for islanders.

### 4.3 Remembering the *kôgakkô* (Public Schools)

These public schools were orderly, clean, and highly disciplined, and people who attended these schools remembered that the school’s strict rules shaped the attitudes of children who attended them. Islanders have described Japanese public schools as having strict codes of order that were carefully maintained in the classroom, and which were intended to teach habits that students were supposed to maintain both in and outside of school. The overwhelming majority of people who have shared memories of their school experiences also recall that corporal punishment and other methods of discipline were severe and effective.

Although the educational history text does not discuss strategies of classroom management and the day-to-day scheduling of activities, these are what people most remember about their time in these schools. One such strategy was to involve islanders in the education of other islanders. Japanese teachers relied on islanders to help them to teach especially first grade, as first graders did not yet speak Japanese. Islanders would work as teacher’s assistants (*jokyôin*) and would help primarily by translating the teacher’s instructions for new pupils. However, after the first year, only Japanese could be spoken in the classroom so the work of assistants shifted to other duties, which

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<sup>306</sup> *Ichido yûda no chimata ni haire ba , kore o haijo shi te fukkatsu suru koto ga deki nai koto ni yoru koto ga hijô ni ôi.* Ibid.



generally included keeping the class orderly. These teacher's assistants were generally graduates of the Japanese school system who were appointed to serve in these jobs, while the very first assistants had graduated from German schools. Colonial government reports show that these assistants were usually paid wages that were comparable to islanders employed as patrolmen or *junkei*, who made anywhere between about eighteen yen and forty yen per month.<sup>307</sup> As for the relative value of these wages at the time, for example, by about the late 1930s one bundle of five pieces of one-foot long firewood sold for fifteen *sen* (where 100 *sen* equaled one yen), and snow cones were between five and twenty *sen* each.<sup>308</sup>

In addition, among the enrolled student body some people remember being entrusted to watch over the class when the teacher had to step out of the room. Two people who remember being appointed as class monitors to serve in this way were Sister Remedios and Escolastica. Both of these women recalled being very good students, and the teacher would entrust them to report offenses (like speaking Chamorro in class) to the teacher.

Escolastica remembers that she was a good student who would probably have been able to pass the exams at the end of the third year of *hon-ka* to qualify to enter the two-year *hoshû-ka* course. But the war started and interrupted her education. She said of the generation of children who started in the Japanese schools just before the war, that

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<sup>307</sup> For example, Tomas Mendiola was working as a Chamorro assistant teacher in the Saipan district in March 1934, when he made thirty-five per month; that same month Garo (Carlo?) Delos Reyes earned twenty-eight yen as an assistant teacher. *Nan'yôchô kôhō*, Vol. 13: 136.

<sup>308</sup> Tudela, "Carpentry Skills," 92.

“our time was not good, we don’t have enough study.”<sup>309</sup> The photo below is from her first grade class at the Saipan *kôgakkô* circa 1939. Escolastica is pictured standing in the back row, third from right.



**Figure 4.3: Escolastica Tudela Cabrera’s First Grade Class Photo, Garapan *kôgakkô* circa 1939**

As this class photo illustrates, these students did not have to wear uniforms like the *shôgakkô* students. However they had to dress in clean clothes, and most girls had their hair cut in a bob while some wore it pulled back. Augusto Atalig (b. 1931) remembered that boys also had to wear their hair in the same style.<sup>310</sup> The schools required that students cultivate a uniform silhouette, while also teaching them how to compete with one another and to strive to do better than their peers.

<sup>309</sup> Escolastica Tudela Cabrera, interview with the author at Esco’s home in Capitol Hill, Saipan, July 8, 2008.

<sup>310</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 20.

The formal start to the day's activities started at around 7:30am. Maria Sablan Reyes (b. 1922) also recalled that children gathered in front of the school every morning to sing, do calisthenics, march, and listen to the teacher's inspirational lectures on morals and good manners. She remembered that this was called *chōkai* (morning gathering), adding that this morning ritual:

...included saluting the emperor and reciting commandments of proper behavior which we were required to memorize during the first year. One of the commandments was to strive constantly for perfection and to do each job perfectly—this included saluting the teachers in a stiff, prescribed manner. We were trained to act at all times as if we were soldiers on a parade ground.<sup>311</sup>

Sister Remedios added that the morning routine included singing the imperial anthem called *Kimigayo*, and that they had to memorize the twenty minute calisthenics routine so that they would know the motions that corresponded with each part of the music.<sup>312</sup> This morning routine reinforced physical stamina as well as moral lessons that situated the Japanese emperor at the pinnacle of pupils' allegiance to the empire.

Like the morning routine that set the tone for the day by orienting the entire student body and school staff members towards the emperor, all other routines were highly ordered and hierarchical. After the morning routine in the schoolyard, students filed into the classroom in an orderly and quiet way under the direct supervision of the teacher. They would stand by their benches, boys on one side of the classroom and girls on the other. Frank Tudela (b. 1921) added that students were to “wait for the teacher to order us into the classroom and to sit down, all done with precision. We sat straight up on

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 57.

the benches and did not fidget.”<sup>313</sup> Sister Remedios said that after sitting down, “then we would lower our heads for a moment of silent contemplation.”<sup>314</sup> When all of this was done, Nicholas M. Leon Guerrero (b. 1928) remembered that the teacher would announce the day’s schedule and instruct the students to open their books.<sup>315</sup>

Students were expected to strictly obey the teacher’s commands, and to not disrupt the flow of classroom activities. Francisco Sablan Pangelinan (1927-2014) reflected upon the expectations for islander pupils’ behavior:

I became aware during school, and even more so when I started working, that demonstration of too much initiative was considered to show an undesirable trait. To question an authority on his accuracy gave one a black mark. To inquire beyond the subject in hand was to give one a reputation for giddiness and undependability.<sup>316</sup>

In general, as the excerpted lessons illustrated in the Japanese Language Reader (Figure 4.1) suggest, islander pupils were expected to obey their superiors above all else. As Francisco says, islanders were not expected to challenge the status quo or to try to improve upon existing systems, but instead to work hard within roles created for them by Japanese colonial authorities. Sister Remedios similarly said that hierarchical authority was fundamental in these schools, adding that students were sometimes assessed on their comprehension of behavioral expectations.

Each step in learning was taken together under the direct command of the teacher. Memorization was the basis for most learning. Sometimes, though, we were told to compose short poems that had to do with behavior.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid., 38 & 58.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid., 58.

Generally, former students remember that morning classes were didactic and included academic subjects like the Japanese language, history, geography, and arithmetic.<sup>318</sup> Francisco remembers that class work was structured so that there was one half hour of class, after which students were released into the schoolyard where they engaged in unstructured play for a half hour.<sup>319</sup> People generally recalled that classes were dismissed for lunch around 11:30, when students went home to eat with their families. In addition to athletics, afternoon classes are recalled to have included gardening especially learning to grow vegetables. The school day ended at around 3:30pm.<sup>320</sup>

In order to enforce school rules, people recall that the Japanese school system placed a great emphasis on discipline, which was strict and which people also widely remembered to have been good for their development.<sup>321</sup> Augusto remembered that this discipline was not meted out in schools arbitrarily, but that teachers “always explained why a student needed to be punished.”<sup>322</sup> As rote memorization was emphasized in these schools, a punishable offense could include “being unable to repeat word for word and from memory everything we had learned.”<sup>323</sup> But more commonly, people recalled that especially certain behaviors were forbidden at school. These included speaking Chamorro in the classroom (after the first grade), disrupting class, fighting, smoking, stealing, arriving late, and displaying bad manners.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 38, 39 & 45.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid., 28, 38, 39, 45, 59 & 60.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid., 17 & 52.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 28, 38, 44-46, 58.

Punishments are remembered as having included standing with one's arms outstretched for a couple of hours, or standing in this way in the sun for an hour and having one's parent's contacted (if caught smoking), or just standing in the sun.<sup>325</sup> Other punishments included spanking or slapping. Maria remarked that sometimes the way her teacher slapped students seemed as if he were "practicing judo on us. This made us scream in terror."<sup>326</sup> A group interview conducted in Rota by the Ballendorf research team said that people agreed that punishments sometimes included collecting grasshoppers for the teacher's chickens.<sup>327</sup> Another punishment might include doing extra work in the garden or cleaning up the schoolyard.<sup>328</sup>

Sometimes the entire class would be punished for the actions of one student. Maria remembered that when the class was noisy or there had been a theft and the offender was at large, the teacher would shout that they were *yabanjin* (wild people) and would make them feel ashamed.<sup>329</sup> Luis Limes (b. 1934) who did not attend school himself said that his elder siblings told him about one time when a coin had been stolen and the teacher wanted to find the culprit. The teacher held what she said was a human bone in front of the class, and told them that she was going to pass the bone around the class and make everyone bite it, adding that the ghost of the person living inside it would haunt the one who had committed the offense. At this point, he said the guilty student "broke into tears and confessed."<sup>330</sup> This story is so idiosyncratic it seems unlikely to have been fabricated, and although it represents an outlying example of a particularly

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<sup>325</sup> Ibid., 28, 38, 55, 60, 52.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 33-34.

creative form of punishment it nonetheless speaks to the level of disciplinary freedom and psychological control Japanese teachers had over their classrooms.

People said that these school punishments influenced students' thoughts and behavior. Nicholas commented somewhat resignedly, "I always went along with what the Japanese said. It is not that deep in my heart, I believed everything they said, but why go against their wishes? We would be punished if we did that."<sup>331</sup> Juan Blanco stated that in his case, corporal punishment had a positive outcome. "I was slapped only once. That was when I was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. It was good for me and I never needed to be slapped again."<sup>332</sup> Similarly, Maria said that she was also slapped once for coming late, and that she was so heartbroken and humiliated by the experience that she was never late again. She added that this kind of severe discipline was acceptable to parents because it was also practiced at home, and proceeded to give an example.

For instance, a mother, in ordering her daughter to fetch betel nut for her, might spit on the floor, and if the daughter had not returned before the saliva dried, she would be spanked.<sup>333</sup>

Many others agreed that the Japanese methods aligned with those used by their parents, saying, "discipline was strict and was good for character development."<sup>334</sup>

Sister Remedios became an educator on Saipan after the war, where she opened a preschool now called Sister Remedios Early Childhood Development Center that is still operating today. She taught many of the leaders of the Northern Mariana Islands, and is remembered fondly as a mentor and educator of the postwar community. She held the

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 52.

Japanese educational system in high regard, and summarized her thoughts about it in this way.

Punishment was precise and swift and well understood by all of us. My belief is that punishment should be for correction and should be given for love of the child; for instance, when my mother punished me in my home, I felt love for her and would embrace her. This was the basis for most punishment in the Japanese school. I was well behaved in school and was never punished. In fact, I was always one of the appointed student monitors who reported misbehavior to the teacher, such as fighting or speaking Chamorro. And I did this in the spirit that I have just described and my fellow students never held it against me. Did the parents resent the teachers disciplining and sometimes punishing their children [?] No, for punishment was a part of child raising in the Chamorro family.<sup>335</sup>

Like Sister Remedios and Maria, Escolastica also remembered that Japanese corporal punishments were closer to the Chamorro traditions of disciplining children. Both Escolastica and Sister Remedios remarked that while spanking used to be an effective Chamorro means of disciplining children at home, nowadays American laws define this as child abuse and have curtailed Chamorro families' abilities to rear their children. As an early childhood educator talking with researchers at her preschool, Sister Remedios summarized her thoughts about differences between the Japanese and American school systems in the following way.

As you can see the children are noisy and rambunctious and difficult to keep in order. But if I tried to impose Japanese system of discipline, I would be taken to court and charged with child abuse. Yes, there is more, much more freedom in the schools today, which, in itself, is good. But it is misused, dreadfully misused. We had freedom in the Japanese school system, but this was freedom to do the right things as the teachers defined them.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.



In Sister Remedios' account, the presence of strict discipline in Japanese schools did not imply that freedom was lacking. Freedom is a keyword that has often been used to contrast the Japanese colonial period with postwar American liberal democratic systems, and it is likely she was speaking to the expectations set by dominant discourse when she made this observation. For Sister Remedios, islanders' freedom in the Japanese schools was present in a form that was clearly defined by Japanese authority figures. This definition of freedom implies the ability to choose whether or how to obey one's superiors: it was the relative freedom to decide if one wanted to strive to become a good Japanese pupil.

#### 4.3.1 "Santô Kokumin" (Third-Class Nationals)

It has been common to hear that at the time, islanders were informally ranked as *santô kokumin* (third-class nationals) in colonial society.<sup>337</sup> This is a term that people likely learned both in school and in colonial society. Although memories of this "third-class" ranking are not limited to the schools, nevertheless the schools taught islanders to adopt certain values that were built into teachers' criteria for assessing students. As the following example will show, islander children were socialized to adopt especially the desire to be farmers, to wake up early to work, and that the harder one worked the higher class ranking one might achieve.

Maria recalled that the merit system at the Saipan *kôgakkô* when she attended (circa 1931-34) always placed her at the bottom. This system focused on early morning activities that began well before the formal start of school. She remembered that the

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<sup>337</sup> Peattie, *Nan'yô*, 111-12.

pupils who arose the earliest in the morning and worked in the school garden between 5-6am “were of the highest order (*ittô*),” those who worked from 6-6:30am were second (*nitô*), and those who worked between 6:30-7:30 am were third (*santô*). Maria’s grandfather did not agree with this system and he did not allow her to arrive earlier than 7am, which was before she recalled that regular activities began at 7:30am. She remembered that:

The teacher’s argument for encouraging early morning work was that Saipan was a farming community and we must learn how to get up early and get to work on our ranches; and besides, he said, we would feel better and more alert when we got up early.<sup>338</sup>

This teacher’s ranking system was based on the time of day at which a student began their daily labor and suggests that the hour one awoke and started working reflected an individual’s dedication to labor. This system moreover recognized individual efforts and placed islanders into competition with one another. These students were taught that individual work ethics and dedication to crops could be used to meaningfully distinguish them from one another. Moreover, the fact that the teacher used the words *ittô*, *nitô*, and *santô* to designate rankings might suggest a broader tendency toward hierarchical thinking among Japanese authorities at the time although the teaching profession always requires the evaluation of students.

Using this same ranking nomenclature, it has long been common to hear senior Northern Mariana Islanders say that indigenous people were known as *santô kokumin*. So common was this term that the Ballendorf research team explicitly asked their interviewees about it. They arrived at the following conclusions about where Chamorros

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<sup>338</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

and Carolinians remember the various groups were ranked in the Japanese colonial societies: *ittô kokumin* (first-class nationals) were Japanese (from the mainland), *nitô kokumin* (second-class nationals) were Okinawans, *santô kokumin* (third-class nationals) were Chamorros, and *yontô kokumin* (fourth-class nationals) were Koreans. The Ballendorf study showed that thirteen Chamorro informants said they were known as “third-class”, whereas twelve said they were known as “fourth-class.” A group interview conducted in Saipan at the Aging Center with ten people who lived during this period showed that they were all in agreement that Chamorros were fourth class.<sup>339</sup> However, a group interview conducted in Rota at the Aging Center there said that Chamorros were third class.<sup>340</sup>

In my interviews, people who recalled this ranking system said that they were third class, and some did not even remember anyone being ranked fourth. What’s more, Mark Peattie writes that islanders had been known as “third class” at the time, although he suggests that Koreans were viewed along with Okinawans as second-class.<sup>341</sup> The above list represents a general understanding with which many who were alive at that time agreed, however, some had other opinions. There was never a formal

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<sup>339</sup> The ten interview participants in Saipan were: Joachin Diaz Quitigua, b. April 6, 1906, male; Vincente Ilano Cepeda, b. July 29, 1915, male; Ester Fermin Mailo, b. Sept. 14, 1922, (Trukese) female; Nerim Riack, b. Feb. 15, 1923, (Trukese) female; Maria C. Demipan, b. March 11, 1908, male; Roberta Kesewaol Tudela, b. Aug. 24, 1916, (Palauan) female; Huberto Atalig Taisacan, b. Oct 11, 1914 (Rota) male; Cecelia Sablan Tudela, b. Sept. 19, 1912, female; Clothide Aldan Chin, b. June 24, 1914 (female); Francisco Palacios Sablan, b. June 16, 1903, male. After reporting this finding, Ballendorf, et.al., remark that despite this group agreement, “we knew from previous experience that some members of the “Chamorro elite” believed that Chamorros has been No. 3 (santo-kokuming).” Ibid., 49.

<sup>340</sup> At the Aging Center in Rota, the following people participated: Rudolpho Mundo, Maria Ch. Barcinas, Jose C. Ayuyu, Rosa A. Taitano, Hilda O. Ayuyu, Brihida C. Maritita, Ana T. Castro. The Ballendorf team reported that “All agreed that Chamorros were rated as No. 3 in the social hierarchy, and said that they had been content with this arrangement since “it seemed to be the way things were supposed to be (destiny).” Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> Peattie, *Nan ’yô*, 111.

pronouncement by the Japanese government of a cultural ranking system even though they did set certain precedents for these rankings to emerge in popular culture. The list above is an approximation of collective memory of colonial racism/ classism and variations in this hierarchy are not uncommon.

Notably, the Japanese government created conditions from which racist/classist hierarchical ideas about culture could emerge by 1) tracking people according to race and tribe groups, 2) instituting a two-tiered school system segregated by Japanese-speaking ability, and 3) paying different wages, and charging different rates, to *tômin* vs. *hōjin*. Moreover, cultural ideas about race hierarchy prevalent throughout the empire at the time also pervaded local cultures, as the last chapter suggested. Moreover, although Japanese, Okinawans, and Koreans were tracked together as *hōjin* in population records, these groups in fact possessed different rights under the Japanese government policies pertaining to them, and they were seen as unequal in popular imperial culture. All of these circumstances created the predecessor conditions from which this local iteration of Japanese colonial “classes” could emerge.

Maria’s memory of her teacher’s use of a similar ranking system to differentiate between islanders in the classroom is highly suggestive of the prevalence of work ethic at the basis of hierarchical thinking. When islanders talked about why Koreans were ranked as number four in their memories of Japanese colonial culture, people pointed to their work ethic. Sister Remedios recalled that people at the time had the impression that, “We

Chamorros were No. 3 and the Koreans were below us. They were lazy and not respected,” she said.<sup>342</sup>

Another example of a different memory of Chamorros’ class rank reiterates this point. Ursula Atalig (b. 1909) of Rota believed that Chamorros were actually second in this hierarchy, and she gave examples to prove it. “I know we were No. 2 because the mayor of Rota was a Chamorro... and the policemen were Chamorro.”<sup>343</sup> Ursula’s use of examples of Chamorros who had risen to positions of power in local society underscores the idea that this ranking system was subject to interpretation, and that individual work ethic as evidenced here by individual accomplishments was important. She saw people holding positions of governmental authority as being high class—after all, Chamorro police and mayors worked in the same Japanese around which the ranking system had emerged. These memories suggest that one’s ability to earn money or achieve status through effort undergirded the rankings, rather than a fixed idea about race or tribe. Thus while ideas about racial difference were important, so too were one’s job and record of achievements when it came to evaluating one’s “class” in Japanese colonial society.

Interestingly, a Chamorro who achieved a high socioeconomic class did not at first remember the *santô kokumin* term. Juan Blanco who went to school in Japan and held an NKK job that was normally reserved for Japanese people was reportedly at first perplexed with the Ballendorf team asked him about these rankings. His high status in Japanese colonial society probably, understandably, precluded his being made the target of name-calling. After thinking for a while, he summarized the ranking system in the way

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<sup>342</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 59.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

reported above. Although it is impossible to generalize based on just one example, it is fair to suggest that it is highly likely that Chamorros like him who had achieved a high status in society were probably not made the target of racial slurs and consequently would not have easily remembered them. The people who had the most power and privilege in Japanese colonial society would probably not have been as readily aware of the class and race struggles taking place among people with less power and privilege, were more likely to have remained aware of the many barriers to entry into “*ittô*” society.

One Chamorro man remembered slightly unusual circumstances surrounding his visit to Japan that reveals a sense of how aware islanders were of the ways that Japanese people viewed them. Ignacio Sablan (b. 1926) remembered that he was taken to Japan in the fifth grade after an author who had angered islanders with his portrayal of them had occasioned the colonial administration to send a different writer to the island to give apologies. Ignacio’s memory of this incident demonstrates not only his own skill with the Japanese language, but the extent to which Japanese publishing about islanders had progressed by about 1940, the approximate year of his memory.

While I was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade I was sent, for quite unusual reasons, to Japan for 2 months. It happened in this way: A Japanese writer had come to Saipan to write and publish an account of the island’s progress under the Japanese mandate, and in this published account, which somehow found its way back to Saipan, there was a picture of a Saipan family labeled Tomin, which was an accurate enough designation since this, in Japanese, simply meant “islander,” but in common local usage it has come to mean “savage.” There were indignant outbursts from the local people, and the Japanese Administration, in an effort to correct the faux pas sent another writer to write another article and to apologize for the discourtesy. “If our system of education has not been able to remove all trace of ‘savagery’ in 20 years, then we are the ones who are to blame, and this is an insult to the emperor,” he said and probably wrote. He spoke to many school children. When he spoke to me, he was amazed that I spoke Japanese without accent and he thought that, except for my deeper coloring, I must be

Japanese. When he found that I was Chamorro, he urged that I be sent to Japan to be shown off publicly as proof of the excellence of the local educational system. My parents paid my way but the author arranged for my touring about Japan and my speaking to many groups. Then, after two months I returned to Saipan and completed my 5<sup>th</sup> year studies...<sup>344</sup>

The large number of authors of academic studies, introductions to Micronesia, travel narratives, novels, and other Japanese publications by people who had traveled through this region by 1940 makes Ignacio's story entirely plausible.

Among many observations that could be made about Ignacio's memory, it shows that islanders who were literate and actively participating in Japanese colonial socioeconomies were aware of the demeaning ways in which they were represented in mainstream Japanese culture. His story reveals that sometimes islanders voiced oppositions to these representations, and that sometimes, Japanese authors and the Japanese government listened to and heeded their objections. The author in this story took Ignacio with him as a kind of model example of how these minority people could indeed learn to speak Japanese fluently, and suggest that language fluency was perhaps the most significant barrier facing colonial subjects who wanted to enter Japanese society. Although the mainland speaking tour served the author's purposes, surely this would have been a formative experience for Ignacio that may have been beneficial to him as well.

#### 4.3.2 Islanders in Schools for *hōjin*

Japanese colonial authorities created different education programs in this territory for *hōjin* and *tōmin* children, although *tōmin* children who learned Japanese well enough

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

were able to attend schools intended for *hōjin*. A brief explanation of the schools for regular speakers of Japanese will help to establish the advantages certain Chamorros gained in attending them.

For *hōjin* children, or children of “Japanese” residents, education systems were designed like schools in the mainland. Under the navy administration, from December 1915 to April 1922, *hōjin* children attended *Jinjō shōgakkō* that were available in Saipan, Palau, and Chuuk. These schools taught four years of courses and mirrored the curricula taught in the Japanese mainland. The schools changed in the Nan’yōchō period, when the segregation between schools intended for *hōjin* and *tōmin* came to be based on language ability: at the time, the *Jinjō Shōgakkō* for regular Japanese language speakers were extended to six years, and a two-year course called *Kōtō shōgakkō* was added. In 1933, *Jitsugyō gakkō* or a School for Manual Arts was established in Saipan for graduates of the *Kōtō shōgakkō* that offered an additional two years of courses, which in 1937 were extended to three years. In 1939, a *Kōtō jogakkō* for female graduates of the *Jitsugyō gakkō* was constructed in Garapan, Saipan, and offered girls four years of additional courses. It was the only advanced school for girls in the territory. As of 1939, there were twelve *Jinjō shōgakkō* and thirteen *Kōtō shōgakkō* in the territory, meanwhile there were 26 primary schools for non-regular Japanese speakers, or *kōgakkō*, of which six offered an additional two-year program for accomplished students (*hoshū-ka*).<sup>345</sup>

In 1941, a decree on education was issued which changed all *shōgakkō* to *kōgakkō*, the name that had been used for schools intended for islanders up until this point. These changes reflect the increasing emphasis during the war on making imperial

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<sup>345</sup> Nan’yōchō, *Nan’yō Guntō yōran*, 143-55.



subjects of all schoolchildren, regardless of race. This decree separated schools into two divisions, lower and upper. The name for elementary school for regular Japanese speakers was thereby changed from *Jinjô shôgakkô* to *Kokumin gakkô shotô-ka*. The name for secondary school for Japanese speakers went from *Kôtô shôgakkô* to *Kokumin gakkô kôtô-ka*.

Although islanders were usually supposed to attend *Kokumin gakkô*, there were some who enrolled in regular Japanese school. The cases of Chamorros like Pedro Ada and Juan Blanco who studied abroad in Japanese schools were presented in an earlier section, and along with them there were also Chamorros who attended schools for regular Japanese speakers on the islands. For example, Nicholas M. Leon Guerrero (b. 1928) was adopted by a Japanese family after his father died when he was just a year old. He remembers that before attending the first year of *kôgakkô*, he enrolled for one year at the private school called Suzuki *gijuku*. Nicholas says that this training gave him a head start, and that when he entered *kôgakkô* he was way ahead of his classmates. Later he attended *shôgakkô* for three years because his Japanese family wanted him to have more education.<sup>346</sup>

Other children from multiracial families had bittersweet memories of attending Japanese school because the other kids identified them as islanders. Antonieta Ada attended Japanese kindergarten and elementary school, since she was Kimiko of the Nishikawa family at that time. However, her classmates saw her riding up to kindergarten on her neighbor Juan Ada's *kareta* (bull cart) and they assumed she was an islander, shouting "*tômin!*" at her. As she talked about memories of these taunts, her face

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<sup>346</sup> Ballendorf, "Oral History," 28-29.

conveyed the pain and anguish these experiences still seem to incite some seventy years later. Elias Borja (b. 1936), at the time known as Shing Eikai, had a Korean stepfather and a Chamorro mother. He remembers being called “*ainoko*” (love child) by his classmates in the *shôgakkô* in Saipan.<sup>347</sup> Edward T. Dela Cruz (b. 1935) was born in Rota to a Japanese mother and a Chamorro father. He attended *shôgakkô*, and also said that this was a difficult experience for him.

I liked school but used to get into fights when I was called Tomin-baboy [*sic*] (native pig). I was not always accepted as a Japanese and so the Japanese children used to tease me and so I fought them. Also, I was not considered a Chamorro either and I got into fights with the Chamorros. I fought with everybody. I couldn't even speak Chamorro until after the war because we had to speak Japanese then.<sup>348</sup>

These children with both Chamorro and Japanese guardians and parents had the potential to be viewed as embodying both or neither race at the same time, and were the targets of racial angst that pervaded Japanese imperial culture. Writing about similar multiracial children in Palau, Mark Peattie notes that the children of these marriages gained certain advantages in that they were able to attend *shôgakkô* instead of *kôgakkô*, but they also paid a certain price. He relays the stories of two boys born in Palau to Japanese fathers and Palauan mothers who “encountered considerable discrimination from [their] Japanese schoolmates in addition to slighting comments from [their] Palauan friends and relatives of [their] age group.”<sup>349</sup>

Even Chamorros who were not members of multiracial households during this period were able to attend schools for Japanese children. They could enroll as long as

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<sup>347</sup> Elias Manibusan Borja, interview with the author, Fleming Restaurant, San Jose, Tinian, November 28, 2012.

<sup>348</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 55.

<sup>349</sup> Peattie, *Nan 'yô*, 219.

they could speak Japanese well enough and could afford the additional costs including such things as classroom supplies and uniforms. Ignacio Sablan (b. 1926) received additional Japanese private school education when he was in the third grade. At that time, his parents decided to send him to the Suzuki *gijuku* (private school) in the evening that started at 6pm and lasted for several hours. Night classes were held in the basement of a leased building in Garapan and that attendees usually worked or attended public school during the day.<sup>350</sup> Ignacio remembers that this school enrolled both Chamorro and Japanese students, cost 1 yen 50 sen per month, and was taught by a husband and wife from *Teikoku Daigaku* [Tokyo Imperial University] along with other teachers. He said that after studying with them for three years beyond his primary school education, he could have entered Japanese high school, which meant that he had the equivalent of a Japanese eighth grade education. He planned to attend the Saipan Jitsugyo *gakkō* (Saipan School for Manual Arts). Around 1943 he was not able to enroll, but he remembered the names of many Chamorro and Carolinian individuals who did attend this school.

Unfortunately for me, a decision was made to admit no more Chamorro students to the Japanese high school. As I recall there were about ten Chamorro students in the private school, most of whom have eventually achieved leadership here on Saipan. The names I recall are Vincente D. Sablan (subsequently to become Mayor of Saipan), Juan B. Blanco (subsequently to become bank manager of Bank of Saipan), Francisco R. Palacios (subsequently to become a physician and prominent Saipan politician), Nichols M. Guerrero (subsequently to become Director of Natural Resources), Juan Tagabuel (subsequently to become Captain of Police on Saipan), Jesus Ilo (tourist guide), Tomas C. Dela Cruz (subsequently to become agriculturalist), Vincente S. Comocho [*sic*] (brother of the first governor of Saipan and who was to become finance officer), Benjamin Limes (tourist guide), Jose I. Seman (subsequently to become chief of sanitation).<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> Francisco Sablan Pangelinan in Ballendorf, "Oral History," 60-61.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-36.

Juan Blanco, mentioned here by Ignacio, says of his time in this school that when he enrolled in 1939, the only Chamorro students in the class of thirty-eight pupils were he and Vicente D. Sablan. He remembered that the teachers were all Japanese from Japanese universities, and he was able to graduate after three years.<sup>352</sup>

#### 4.3.3 Religious Schools

Another educational experience in which many islanders participated was attending Catholic schools. These religious schools offered an alternative to the *kôgakkô*. As of April 1935, there were also three religious schools in Saipan employing term *gaijin* (foreigner) employees, and enrolling 429 male and 632 female students for a total of 1,061 students.<sup>353</sup> Throughout the territory, there were a total of fourteen religious schools with the greatest number in the Chuuk district.<sup>354</sup> The missionaries who ran these schools had been part of the group who moved to the colony at the invitation of the Japanese government. Government administrators,

...recognizing the valuable influence which had been exerted upon the islanders by Christian institutions in the past, encouraged the Japanese Congregational Church to resume missionary work in the islands in 1920.<sup>355</sup>

Christian schools had been closed and missionaries left after the Japanese Navy took control in 1914, but they were reopened upon the 1920 return of missionaries to the islands. A large proportion of students at these schools had graduated from public schools

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<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>353</sup> Nan'yô Guntô Kyôikukai, *kyôikushi*, 244.

<sup>354</sup> Nan'yôchô, *Nan'yô Guntô yôran*, 149.

<sup>355</sup> The Japanese government also offered a subsidy to its new mission called the Nan'yô Dendo Dan (South Sea Mission). In addition, they successfully negotiated with the Vatican to have more missionaries sent to the area, and starting in 1921 Spanish Capuchin missionaries had been working to revive Catholicism in the islands. Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 233.

and wanted to learn about the Bible or handicrafts. Additionally, mission schools gave instruction in regular courses in areas when government schools were full.<sup>356</sup>

One person who remembered attending classes at a Catholic school in Garapan, Saipan was Escolastica. This may have been because the public school in Saipan was overcrowded by the time she tried to enroll: for example, in 1933 the Saipan *kôgakkô* had space for fifty students but received 120 applications.<sup>357</sup> She attended the Catholic school for one year before moving to the public school in Garapan. She recalls learning religious songs in Japanese from the Japanese Catholic nuns.

Others received religious education in other ways, and for other reasons. Many people attended catechism class after regular *kôgakkô* classes ended.<sup>358</sup> The Ballendorf group interview at the Rota Aging office said that church-sponsored catechism class was at 3pm after regular school, and was something with which the first Japanese administrators disagreed. Because of this, the group recalled, “students always took a circuitous route to the church so they wouldn’t be seen by the teachers.” But later after missionaries were invited back to the islands in the early 1920s, Japanese administrators encouraged islanders to attend catechism class.<sup>359</sup>

Sister Remedios remembers that when she was in fourth and fifth grades, when *kôgakkô* was closed for the afternoon, she attended private Catholic school where she participated in free classes in Chamorro grammar and writing, algebra, handicrafts, and religion. She remembers that for two yen and fifty *sen* per month, she took lessons in

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<sup>356</sup> Ibid., 242.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

<sup>358</sup> Augusto Atalig remembered catechism class at the Rota Tatachong chapel with Father Juan Pons. Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 20.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., 52.

Spanish, English, and art, and for five yen a month she took piano lessons where she learned to read and play music. After primary school, she had initially wanted to go to Japan to become a nurse but her mother would not allow it and she instead decided to become a nun. She remembers the Mercedarian missionaries of Berritz's arrival on Saipan in 1928, and that afterwards they stayed at the Reyes family home before they moved into a convent in Garapan in 1929 where she joined them.<sup>360</sup>

Maria said that she wanted to obtain higher education after elementary school, but in order to do this she would have had to "obtain a Japanese sponsor and adopt his name." Her father opposed this and so, like Sister Remedios, she went to a convent to become a nun. The Spanish sisters at the convent arranged for the wife of the Japanese man who ran the private school on Rota to tutor Maria, and there she received what she recalls was equivalent to Japanese eighth grade education.<sup>361</sup>

Another class was remembered to have been started by Francisco Songao of Rota, which taught Chamorro grammar and writing for free. But people remember that the Japanese government disapproved and cancelled his class.<sup>362</sup> It seems that although the Japanese government allowed for additional education to be supplied to islanders in Catholic churches and missions, they did not condone the teaching of the Chamorro language by an educator who was not affiliated with the church. As time went on, however, Catholic teachers and Catholic beliefs would come to pose a problem for late colonial period policies called *kôminka* (imperialization) that tried to more aggressively

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 57-59.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid. 52.

assimilate islanders into the Japanese emperor-centered religiosity associated with the total war period.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

Japanese colonial education programs were sites where many generations of indigenous islanders learned skills important in Japanese society, including especially learning to speak Japanese. Schools for islanders began during the period of naval occupation, which was a half-dozen years before the League of Nations Mandate required that islanders' development be monitored as a measurement of Japan's success in the area. The primary school system underwent changes during the four-year period of Civil Administration (1918-1922) between naval occupation and colonial bureaucratic control. This system changed again after the 1922 establishment of the Class C Mandate when schools were separated into two different tracks: one designed for regular Japanese speakers, and one for people who did not regularly speak Japanese. The system for non-regular speakers devoted most of its resources to teaching the Japanese language, and even created special Japanese language readers for this purpose. As textbooks designed specifically with islanders in mind, students spent most of their time on these readers that contained lessons that coached islanders towards becoming "Japanese."

Other education programs which trained islanders to live in Japanese societies also started as early as the naval occupation. These included social education classes, Seinendan (Youth Associations), group tours of the mainland, and study abroad policies. Regulations governing students who wanted to study abroad gave additional educational opportunities to both male and female children who excelled in the primary schools, who

wanted to further their own education, and who were able to secure the patronage of a Japanese sponsor. Many social education classes gave vocational education to adults or others who might not have attended primary schools, and they were supposed to educate people in basic skills that were intended to improve the health and productivity of island communities. They included things like agriculture and basic construction skills. The Seinendan gave young people (mostly men) in the islands training in ethics and physical education, and they regularly took on projects to improve their communities, while some afforded additional opportunities beyond elementary school. The summertime tours of major cities in the Japanese mainland were intended to impress upon islanders the ways of life of *naichijin* (mainlanders) so that these islanders might share their thoughts with local communities upon returning home. These tours were also intended to create the desire for money among islanders who might have been accustomed to indigenous socioeconomies.

Although islanders were educated and commonly understood to have been “third-class” people in Japanese colonial society, especially Chamorro men remember being able to work their way through education programs that had been designed with Japanese native speakers in mind. The *santô kokumin* term remembered by so many people to refer to islanders in Japanese society signified common perceptions of *tômin* or Micronesians as a low-ranking race-class: the term signified both racist beliefs about *tômin* but it also suggested a socioeconomic class ranking at the same time. While most islanders across Japanese colonial Micronesia were not able to obtain a superior education (or prestigious jobs upon graduation), several Northern Mariana Islanders were able to surmount certain to higher “class” positions in their local communities. They did this first by excelling in



colonial schools and wealth derived from land ownership also very often made these successes possible.

Many Northern Mariana Islanders attended Japanese schools in the Saipan district and in Japan, and these experiences influenced their lives thereafter. Some of Chamorro males in particular performed very well in Japanese colonial schools. Pedro Ada's desire to study abroad in the early 1920s forced the colonial government to create new policies to accommodate his desires, and he says that other Japanese on Saipan at the time urged him to go abroad. Juan Blanco, was taken to Japan and supported by university academics as an exceptional islander pupil who was given the chance to progress through Japanese primary schools. Still others including especially (but not exclusively) children of multiracial Japanese-islander families were able to learn the Japanese language skills needed to enroll in *shôgakkô* located in the islands.

Northern Mariana Islanders had grown up in Japanese societies where they were outnumbered, and where they did not control the systems into which they nevertheless did their best to excel. Chamorro boys in particular were treated like model minorities who had achieved a higher degree of socioeconomic success than the average member of the so-called *tômin* population in the territory.

These various education programs trained islanders to assume positions in government and business that were sometimes as prestigious and well paid as those of Japanese residents. Therefore education programs were successful to some degree in assimilating islanders into Japanese settler colonial cultures that were driven by economies of export-oriented agriculture, and which placed some elite islanders into positions of authority. Meanwhile the unofficial race-class hierarchies remembered by

many and that may have expressed lower expectations for islanders often conflicted with their actual academic and professional achievements.

What in hindsight is clearly an exploitative colonial economy and society comprised of two-tiered schools and hierarchical ideas about race and class, to many people who lived through it, was a period of relative happiness and prosperity. Francisco eloquently expressed the paradox of both knowing, in hindsight, that the Japanese policies toward islanders were racist, classist, and exploitative, while also knowing that he was happy during this period.

Though I was happy in those days, I now look back and realize that the relation between Japanese and Chamorro was that of slave owner and slave. I still admire the way that they went about educating us, for most certainly we knew more at the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade than children do now. And I admire the way they kept the island almost crime free and very clean. So different from the way it is today! Night after night I now sit up late listening to the overseas radio broadcasts and become terribly depressed at the way things are going—not just here on Saipan and in the United States, but in Japan too. There is no order in anything anymore. Just last night I heard a report from Tokyo telling of a Japanese student shooting his teacher. So, of course, I am worried. But in those days we didn't worry. We didn't even worry about being slaves.<sup>363</sup>

Francisco here expresses a certain kind of nostalgia for his childhood. It is common to hear members of elder generations everywhere making similar comments about the young people today, and to some degree the nostalgia expressed by Francisco and other members of this generation must be seen as longing for childhood. Yet he also expresses here the idea that although hindsight has afforded a new critical interpretation of what he suggests were slave-like conditions of islanders' lives back then, at the time life was on the contrary quite pleasant and even preferable to the present day.

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<sup>363</sup> Ibid., 64

While simultaneously representing a longing for childhood, nostalgia like Francisco's also refers to specific qualities of life during this period. Many people who attended the Japanese schools believe that their disciplinary tactics including corporal punishment were good for children's development. In general, the schools' hierarchal orientation to the maintenance of order, the emphasis on rote memorization and group harmony, and the swift and exacting punishments for students who did not follow protocols have been remembered to have produced a generation of islanders who learned more content faster and with less waste than children today. Although one author theorized that Northern Mariana Islanders' multiple colonial education experiences from the Spanish era through the Japanese period aggregated to produce "education for confusion,"<sup>364</sup> actually people who lived through the Japanese period have quite clearly expressed preference for its corporal punishment-enforced methods of teaching. The Ballendorf study concluded that interview participants tended to think that overall, the Japanese schools were better than American schools associated with the postwar TTPI and CNMI eras.<sup>365</sup>

The subjects people studied, and the discipline that molded them as people, were not the only important features of their memories of the schools. The experience of being schoolchildren together in those schools with highly ritualized routines bonded them as members of one generation. The act of singing the national anthem every morning and doing other memorized performances every day created emotional connections between people that they remembered all of their lives. The Ballendorf study summarized the

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<sup>364</sup> Laurel Heath, "Education for Confusion: A Study of Education in the Mariana Islands 1688-1941," *The Journal of Pacific History* 10 (1): 20-37.

<sup>365</sup> Ballendorf, "Oral History," 65.

moment when the group of elders at the Saipan Aging office, in the middle of the discussion of the school system, broke into song.

The emotional climax came when the old people decided to sing a Japanese song they had sung every morning, 40 some years ago, as they stood at rigid attention in precise lines before the school. Change of attitude came over them at this moment. Sarcasm in their voices about having been treated as slaves, disappeared and for the moment they became happy, contented school children, enthusiastically loyal to all they had been trained to be loyal to; now nostalgic and loving as they exchanged supportive glances. Memories were intact and no one hesitated or stumbled over a word. And as they sang, some smiling and some misty eyed, it occurred to us that we were getting a truly unbiased account of how it felt to be a Chamorro child in kogakko [*sic*] school during the Japanese mandate.<sup>366</sup>

The researchers' notes about the nonverbal features of this performance are a testament to the power of this ritual. As rituals are wont to do, this song pulled the group outside of the regular flow of time and transformed them for the moment into the schoolchildren they had been some forty years earlier. While singing Kimigayo possibly called to mind feelings of loyalty to the Japanese empire, at a more fundamental level, singing the anthem and sharing memories are moments allow people to perform old identities that have been dormant. Expressing memories in these ways validates identities that have been marginalized since those days.

Nostalgia for those days includes a longing for recognition of the accomplishments made by these pupils of Japanese schools whose educations were suddenly dismissed and looked down upon after the war. Some disciplined students at this time excelled beyond the low expectations of islanders expressed in mainstream culture and by the Japanese bureaucracy. When people talked approvingly about Japanese

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid., 50-51.

discipline, they were both pointing out the meaningful differences between their upbringings and those of kids today, as well as making overtures to the hard work they put into pursuing their own self-betterment during this formative period in their lives. Taken together, their memories suggest that although truncated in some cases by war, their Japanese formal and informal educations should not be dismissed or forgotten. Knowing about how indigenous Northern Mariana Islanders excelled in various Japanese schools and education programs helps to explain the technical aptitude and moral fortitude of the generation that rebuilt island communities destroyed by war.

## **Chapter 5) Colonial Civilians and Military Men: Common and Elite Indigenous Northern Mariana Islander Experiences of Japan's Total War (1937-1945)**

The war in the Mariana Islands has tended to be discussed in history and popular memory as a war defined by the actions of military men. As Keith Camacho argued in *Cultures of Commemoration*, public commemorative events in the Mariana Islands have focused on constructing a specific kind of memory of this war.

The gendered and social dynamics of these commemorative activities emphasized the place of elite men in the formation or disintegration of nations, as well as inscribed histories for the people premised on the lives of these various leaders. Women therefore occupied marginal spaces in the commemoration of events and individuals.<sup>367</sup>

In dominant narratives that present U.S. servicemen as having “liberated” the islands and islanders from Japanese rule, as Camacho points out, women are cast in a marginal role. In addition to women, history narratives that portray the actions of elite men have marginalized non-elite men and children. Indigenous islanders held different positions in Japanese colonial society by the time the winds of war began to blow, but it has been the elite Chamorro men who were recruited to serve in the Japanese military who have dominated war memory in Guam.

The Japanese colonial education and social systems promoted certain Chamorro islanders into positions of authority and prestige, and many of these men were called upon to serve in the war against their southern neighbors on Guam. According research conducted by a Antonio Deleon Guerrero who was a NMI Chamorro veteran of the Japanese Navy, about fifty-five Chamorro men served as interpreters and scouts in the Japanese invasion and occupation of Guam between December 7, 1941 and July 21,

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<sup>367</sup> Camacho, *Cultures of Commemoration*, 11.

1944.<sup>368</sup> They were the members of Japanese colonial society who were both trusted by Japanese military authorities to obey orders and perform their duties, while they had the language skills to communicate with Chamorros in Guam. As this chapter will show, conscripts made different choices during their time in Guam including lessening the workload of their captors, subverting authority, and resisting. Others were convicted during the Guam war crimes trials of beating Guam Chamorros to death. Some have expressed resentment for having been called to serve in Guam in this way, and others have tried to explain that it was wartime and that they were obeying orders like they had been educated to do in Japanese schools and society.

Meanwhile most islanders in the Northern Mariana Islands did not serve in Guam, but experienced the devastating battle in Saipan or bombardment of Rota. Most Northern Mariana Islanders were like their southern neighbors in Guam in that they experienced the war as a terrorizing conflict in which they were refugees and victims. Unlike Chamorros in Guam who were American nationals before the war, islanders in the NMI share the experience of Okinawans of fearing both the Americans and the Japanese forces as enemies. However dominant war memory from Guam has tended to focus on the elite Northern Mariana Island Chamorro men conscripted to serve in the Japanese military role as representative of the roles played by Northern Mariana Islanders in the war. Many diverse experiences that this chapter relays are obscured by this memory. These include changes happening not just the years corresponding with the occupation of Guam (1941-1944) but starting in the late 1930s and leading to the war. Shifts in the way that Japanese

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<sup>368</sup> Antonio Deleon Guerrero, "The History of the Second World War and the departure of some Saipanese and Rotanese by the order of the Military Japanese," (unpublished paper, Escolastica Tudela Cabrera's personal collection, Saipan, February 08, 1984).

authorities treated Northern Mariana Islanders began long before 1941, and included military schooling for some boys and increasingly restrictive regulations regarding especially Catholic religious practices.

### 5.1 Imperialization and Military Rule

In the mid-1930s, colonial policies began to change. Japanese authorities discouraged communication and commerce with Guam and eventually contacts were cut off entirely.<sup>369</sup> Ties with Guam, the only American territory in the area, were discouraged at this time when Japan's diplomatic relations with the U.S. were worsening. Amidst the growing separation between Guam and the NMI, people in the latter islands saw their lives changing and became increasingly aware that war was approaching. By the late 1930s, especially Chamorro Northern Mariana islanders had become a wealthy elite and occupied prestigious and well-paid jobs in town. But the start of Japan's all-out war in China in mid-1937 signaled a shift in the overall direction of the government in Tokyo. Elite men would be called to serve in the military, and average people were subjected to stricter codes of behavior.

At the dawn of total war (1937-1945), Japanese policies intended to assimilate colonial subjects became more focused and forceful. Wan-yao Chou writes that *kôminka* (imperialization) policies in Taiwan and Korea dating to between 1937 and 1945 were an "intensification of an ongoing process of assimilation and [were] an integral part of the wartime mobilization of the Japanese empire as a whole."<sup>370</sup> *Kôminka* literally means "make into imperial subjects," which in Japan's older and larger colonies of Taiwan and

<sup>369</sup> Alice Joseph and Veronica F. Murray, *Chamorros and Carolinians of Saipan: Personality Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951): 47.

<sup>370</sup> Chou, "The Kôminka Movement," 41.



Korea included four major platforms: religious reform, a national language movement, a name-changing campaign, and the recruitment of military volunteers.<sup>371</sup> All of these platforms focused on dismantling and replacing indigenous forms of loyalty to any higher authorities, real or spiritual, other than the Japanese monarch at the center of the empire. They specifically targeted any perceived challenges to Japanese emperor-centered rhetoric that mobilized subjects toward supporting the war.

Strict national language policies beginning in the late 1930s in Korea and Taiwan had been applied much earlier towards Micronesian islanders. In 1917 in Micronesia, the Japanese colonial government mandated that the Japanese language rather than the Chamorro language be spoken at schools for islanders. The school system in Micronesia did not include native languages in curricula although local languages had been taught in schools in Taiwan and Korea. In the latter two colonies, indigenous languages were not removed from elementary school curricula until the instantiation of the *kôminka* movement in the late 1930s.<sup>372</sup> The position of islanders as alien subjects in the Japanese empire combined with Japanese derogatory visions of Micronesians relative to other imperial subjects likely contributed to the much earlier creation of aggressive policies that forced islanders to speak Japanese.

As time went on, people recalled that Japanese authorities wanted to restrict the speaking of any language other than Japanese at home and on the street. In the Northern Marianas, centuries of colonialism and migration meant that many people spoke Spanish, English, and a range of other Micronesian languages. Moreover, the eldest generation of

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<sup>371</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid., 49.

islanders had not learned to speak Japanese by the late 1930s since they had been born and raised either in the Spanish or German eras, so it was impractical to try to force people to speak Japanese. Nevertheless, during the war, people caught speaking other languages might be subjected to harassment. In particular, Northern Mariana Islanders caught speaking Chamorro or English, which were two languages associated with the nearby American territory of Guam, were subject to interrogation or punishment.

In Micronesia, the most forceful and clearly remembered wartime imperialization policy was religious reform. Most significantly for local life, during the 1930s, people remember Japanese authorities targeting their Catholic activities and their beliefs in God. Although when they first took over, the Japanese Navy had kicked out all missionaries and shut religious schools, by the terms of the League of Nations Class C Mandate they were required to invite missionaries back to the islands. For a while, missionaries were described as a force for good in the islands where bureaucrats and government leaders generally held a very low opinion of existing indigenous traditions and cultures.<sup>373</sup> Yet as total war loomed, Christian missionaries with their teachings about a God who was more powerful than the Japanese Emperor came to pose a serious ideological threat to the military government. This government came to suspect and persecute especially religious clergy in the Northern Mariana Islands.

Japanese authorities on Saipan tried to displace the custom of 5am mass by ordering a compulsory morning military drill at that same hour. Chamorros responded by changing the hour of mass to 4am.<sup>374</sup> What's more, schoolchildren remember being

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<sup>373</sup> Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 233, 238.

<sup>374</sup> Joseph, et.al., *Chamorros and Carolinians of Saipan*, 47.

forced to demonstrate reverence to symbols of Japanese state Shinto at the heart of Japanese imperial ideology. Some remember that when they were students, they had to maintain the grounds around the *Saipan Katori jinja* (Saipan Shrine) in Garapan: Nicholas M. Leon Guerrero (b. 1928) says that every morning students got up early and went to the shrine to clean it and trim the vegetation.<sup>375</sup> Students' lives outside of school were closely monitored for compliance with rules mandating ritualized performances of deference to symbols of state Shinto. For example, Juan Sanchez (b. 1922) remembered that usually at the start of school, each student was expected to report on his or her activities on the way home from school the previous day and on the way to school that morning. This was to check on whether or not they said they had bowed before the Garapan shrine en route.<sup>376</sup>

Maria also remembers that the teachers would ask students if they had bowed before the shrine on the way to school, and “even assigned student monitors to check our bowing.”<sup>377</sup> It is still the custom of devout Catholics in the Northern Marianas to gesture in the sign of the cross over their head and chest when passing in front of a Catholic church. Mandated performances of obeisance before the Shinto shrine were probably intended to replace these habits that showed loyalty to an authority other than the emperor. Maria also recalls that each student was supposed to keep a picture of the emperor, or at least a Kanji scroll “that proclaimed the sacred state of the emperor” in their homes and that they were supposed to bow before these items every morning. During a group interview at the Saipan Aging office in the mid-1980s, the Ballendorf

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<sup>375</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 28.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid., 46.

research team reported that some people said they still had their copy of the emperor's picture from those days.<sup>378</sup> Maria says that teachers occasionally visited students' houses to make sure that they possessed these items and to ask if they were bowing as instructed. Maria said she did not do it very often, adding that her father did not think much of the idea: "‘You can bow,’ he said, ‘if you want to, but I’m not going to do it.’ So I learned to lie about it when the teachers asked me," she said.<sup>379</sup>

The Japanese calendar of school holidays also reinforced a general orientation towards the emperor at the center of life. Yearly, the schools mandated that children stay involved in activities centered on the imperial calendar with its emphasis on the imperial family and historical imperial conquests. An anthropological study conducted in 1951 by Joseph and Murray found that islanders remembered the following holidays: April 29 was the Shōwa emperor's birthday, May 27 was Navy day commemorating Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese war, December 25 was Christmas and the death anniversary of the Taishō emperor, and starting December 8, 1942 a ceremony commemorating those who had died in the war and calling for victory was held at the shrine in Garapan at 6am.<sup>380</sup> Juan Sanchez remembers that on holidays, children from grades one through five:

...were required to come to school to hear an explanation of the holiday's purpose and its significance for the emperor. Then they were given a bag of cookies or candies and sent home.<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid., 45-46.

<sup>380</sup> Joseph, et.al., *Chamorros and Carolinians of Saipan*, 344. Other holidays included the new year week of January 1-7, a day commemorating the first fall harvest of rice in Japan, as well as vacation at the end of the first school term from March 23 to April 1, and vacation at the end of the second term from August 24 to September 1.

<sup>381</sup> Ballendorf, "Oral History," 39.

Marking time according to the imperial calendar had been central among the Meiji state's various efforts to reorient the everyday lives of agrarian Japanese toward the state during the transition from early modern to modern Japan.<sup>382</sup> This modernizing reform was later applied across Japan's empire to try to train subjects in distant colonies to live by rhythms dictated from the imperial capital.

In contrast, Northern Mariana Island Catholics follow a different religious calendar. During the Japanese period and through the present day, Northern Mariana Islanders have held regular fiestas and ceremonies according to the church's calendar. These regular events often involve collective efforts by villagers that sometimes include parading across town holding religious symbols and singing hymns. These public performances came to be increasingly stigmatized by Japanese residents as the 1930s progressed. Nicholas relayed a story that I had also heard in informal settings from various people about an important Chamorro man who was punished for speaking out against the Japanese authorities in defense of his Catholic faith.

Once I heard that [Gregorio] Kili Sablan was punished by the Japanese for saying that our God—our Christian God—was greater than the emperor. It was the time of a village fiesta and the people were making their procession around the village. The Japanese would stand by the side of the road and make fun of the Chamorros who were carrying the cross. That was when Kili got angry at them and said: you should not do that because our God is higher than your emperor! This, reportedly made the Japanese angry at him and some of them told the authorities. The authorities later confined Kili to his house and wouldn't let him walk freely about the village. That is what I heard.<sup>383</sup>

Gregorio Kili Sablan was the same man who had attended the German higher school in Qingdao and had worked as Pedro Ada's teacher in the Japanese navy schools. He is

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<sup>382</sup> Stefan Tanaka, *New Times in Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

<sup>383</sup> Ballendorf, "Oral History," 29.

remembered to have been an intellectual and a polyglot who was fluent in up to eight different languages. Among all of the islanders in Saipan at this time, it is believable that Kiliti would have formulated opinions and beliefs that remained highly distinct from Japanese efforts to indoctrinate islanders as imperial subjects, and that he moreover would have possessed remarkable courage stemming from his bedrock of intellect.<sup>384</sup>

Another Chamorro woman named Urusula Atalig (b. 1909) remembers that she stood up to a Japanese mayor of Rota when he tried to force her, at gunpoint, to say that the emperor was higher than her God. According to what is probably an exaggerated story, a local priest came to her aid, saying that harmony must be preserved while admonishing the Japanese mayor for trying to intimidate such a young girl who had been speaking from her heart. Although this story is almost certainly embellished, it reveals awareness of the fundamental conflict between the Japanese wartime government's insistence on fidelity to Japan's divine emperor and the Catholic beliefs of the Chamorro people.<sup>385</sup>

Sometime in the early 1930s, a special school was created on Saipan to give islander pupils military training. Called the *Hôkokutai* (National Service Corps), people recall that this school was for male students who had graduated from five years of *kôgakkô* and constituted a sixth year of study. Juan Sanchez (b. 1922) recalled that he elected to enroll in 1935 and said about the school's goals, "I suspect that it was

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<sup>384</sup> Today, the current CNMI Resident Representative to the U.S. Congress who lives Washington DC is his grandson, and he is also known as "Kiliti" Sablan. The CNMI is today a U.S. territory without voting delegates to the Congress, and Kiliti holds the highest position possible for a representative from the CNMI in the United States federal government.

<sup>385</sup> Urusula describes the priest in her story switching to Chamorro to argue his point that the emperor is human and whereas God is divine, since the priest did not speak Japanese. It is extremely unlikely that the Japanese mayor spoke a word of Chamorro during this era when even Chamorro people were forbidden from using their native language, so it is not clear how this conversation could have transpired. Ballendorf, "Oral History," 17-18.

developed for the purpose of using Chamorros to perform certain unpopular military/police duties such as evicting Chamorro families so that a new road could be developed.”<sup>386</sup> Vincente T. Camacho (b. 1929) also enrolled in this one-year military training course probably around 1942. His teacher in this school was a reserve army sergeant named Nakano. Vincente recalls learning some agriculture, but mostly the difficult morning exercises including drills in various skills expected of Japanese soldiers. He says that they would climb up into the mountains and learn to communicate by semaphore (signal communications), shoot rifles, learn how to create air raid shelters, and how to dive into them. Because of this, he says, “we knew the war had started.”<sup>387</sup>

## **5.2 Chamorros in the Japanese Naval Invasion and Occupation of Guam**

Around the same time that the average person was being subjected to more religious restrictions or learning military drills, Chamorro men were called to serve in the military. The Imperial Japanese Navy’s 4<sup>th</sup> fleet headquartered in Chuuk had assigned an independent defense system to Saipan in 1939, and this included the 5<sup>th</sup> Base Force, the 5<sup>th</sup> Communications Unit, and the 5<sup>th</sup> Defense Force that was responsible for planning the seizure of Guam.<sup>388</sup> This 5<sup>th</sup> Base Force used NMI Chamorros as interpreters and scouts in the invasion starting in December 1941 because they could speak both Japanese and Chamorro. After Guam’s seizure, the Navy’s 5th Base Force on Saipan established the Guam Minseibu and ran programs on Guam under the authority of the Navy in Saipan.<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 39.

<sup>387</sup> Camacho, “Japanese Blood,” 130-136.

<sup>388</sup> Rottman, *Pacific Island Guide*, 375.

<sup>389</sup> Wakako Higuchi, *The Japanese Administration of Guam, 1941-1944: A Study of Occupation and Integration Policies, with Japanese Oral Histories* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2013): 52.

The Japanese military used NMI Chamorros to facilitate communications between the Japanese military and Chamorros from Guam.

Among the more than fifty men who are remembered to have served in the Guam invasion and occupation, around 30% had either worked for the Japanese government as administrators, patrolmen, or teachers during the colonial period, or had attended the Japanese *Hôkokutai* military academy on Saipan. The Japanese military turned to its established islander patrolmen, administrators, and military academy graduates—all people they trusted and who understood the Japanese system—to carry out the navy's goals in Guam. Many people who had worked their way up the colonial social ladder were suddenly asked to take on duties in the new military regime.

Among the Chamorros whose memories have been shared in this project, a handful were conscripted to serve in the invasion of Guam. Francisco Sablan Pangelinan (1927-2014) had worked as a Post Office messenger, learned auto mechanics, bought cars in Tokyo that he brought to Saipan, worked as a taxi driver and then married his Japanese sweetheart in Saipan. He was sent with the group of nine other men on December 8, 1941 to assist the Japanese invading force in Guam. Juan Sanchez (b. 1922) who graduated from the *Hôkokutai* military school and then worked as part of a local constabulary in 1939 before serving as a lookout at various places on Saipan was conscripted and sent to Guam to assist with the construction of the airfield at Alaguat in 1943. As a student, Ignacio T. Sablan (b. 1926) was brought to Japan by a Japanese man who had authored a book about the region, and together they made public presentations in which Juan was showcased as an islander who could speak the Japanese language exceptionally well. He returned to Saipan, graduated from primary school, attended the *Hôkokutai* one-year



military school, and was later involved in the occupation of Guam. Frank Tudela (b. 1921) who graduated from fifth grade, worked for the Post Office for three years, and did an additional two years of study in the Suzuki Gijuku private school in the evenings was later sent to Japan for training in quarantine inspection methods. He was also sent to Guam with the occupation forces. Antonio Deleon Guerrero (b. 1919), had become manager of the Marushin Shoten shop wholesaling *miso* and *geta* in south Garapan eventually left that job to work for the Post Office for two years before being invited by Okinawan businessmen to work at their tapioca starch factory. After two years of working at the tapioca factory, Antonio was drafted into the Japanese Navy and sent to Guam in early 1942. All of these individuals spoke and read the Japanese language well, many of them had military training, and all of them were familiar with Japanese government and/or possessed trade skills.

Gregorio “Goro” C. Cabrera (1925-2005) (Escolastica T. Cabrera’s husband) had heard the story about the invasion of Guam from his elder brother Jose, who had participated in the first deployment. When Jose received a conscription notice, he reported to the naval headquarters where he was told that he would be going “over there” but he did not know what this meant. He went with the first wave of ten Chamorros who had traveled south from Saipan on a fishing boat on the evening of December 7, 1941, the night before the Japanese invasion planned for the morning of December 8. When the boat neared the eastern shore of Guam in the early morning hours, two local-style canoes holding five men each launched and paddled toward shore.<sup>390</sup> Their goal was to cross the

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<sup>390</sup> Gregorio (Goro) C. Cabrera, “Japanese and Saipanese Lived as Friends Before War,” interview by Yoshiaki Kamisawa, “Marianas Oral History Series (English Translation-5), *Journal of the Pacific Society* 58 Vol. 16 No.1 (Jun. 1993): 117-18.

island of Guam and meet the troops scheduled to land the next day.<sup>391</sup> The canoe holding Jose was not discovered, but the other one hit the reef and capsized. Fishermen from Guam found the capsized canoe and the five men and reported them to the authorities. The discovered men were taken to prison and questioned, but Japanese aerial bombardment at 8am that day apparently destroyed the building and freed them.<sup>392</sup>

There were several waves of deployments, the details of which were researched by Antonio R. Deleon Guerrero, himself a member of the second wave of Chamorro recruits sent to Guam in early 1942. He helped to compile war damage claims in the Northern Mariana Islands in the 1970s and 1980s, and undertook research on the Guam interpreters as a separate report dated February 1984 that he presented to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands government for consideration. Figure 5.1 reconstructs a list of the different waves of this invasion and the number of Chamorros deployed in each.

<b>Date</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Deployment</b>
Dec. 6 or 7, 1941	10	In order to arrive before the Japanese, taken to Guam on fishing boats that were supposed to pick up tuna from Saipan
Dec. 8, 1941	10	Sent to Guam to join the Japanese military
Early 1942	15	Interpreters from Saipan and Rota sent to Guam with NKK and other companies
Jan. 13, 1942	17	Sent to Guam when the island was captured by the Japanese
Aug. 17, 1943	4	n/a
n/a	5	Sent to Guam to join the Japanese Kempeitai
1943	4	Sent to Guam to be interpreters during the construction of the airfield at Alaguat
Early Jan. 3, 1944	1	n/a

**Figure 5.1: Timeline of Deployments of Chamorros in the Invasion of Guam**

<sup>391</sup> Herbert Del Rosario, interview with the author at the NMI Archives at the Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje, Saipan, July 2, 2012.

<sup>392</sup> Cabrera, "Japanese and Saipanese," 117-18.

Antonio remembers that the group who traveled with him to Guam in January 1942 included members of the “Japanese civilian agricultural section, the police and the ward headman and school teachers, and I was their interpreter.” The Japanese invasion force set up various agricultural sections on Guam where the Chamorros there were conscripted to work cultivating food for the war effort, and Antonio says he was busy interpreting between the groups involved in “increasing the production of foods.” He also interpreted for NKK sugar company dealings.<sup>393</sup>

The Japanese Minseibu which administered occupied Guam set up elementary and middle schools on the island specifically to teach the national language. The teachers had been sent to Guam because they were tasked with teaching at these schools where Guam Chamorros were supposed to learn Japanese. In these schools, most learned a few greeting phrases and how to salute and stand in the presence of Japanese military personnel. Antonio says he had to interpret for all different kinds of groups on island at the time, including local second-generation Japanese living on Guam who did not speak Japanese, and that interpreting was very hard work.<sup>394</sup>

Antonio also remembers helping the newly arrived Japanese teachers and policemen move to various villages to which they had been assigned. He had to retrieve and escort four Guam Chamorro men from the local prison to assist in the transport of the Japanese people’s belongings. When one of the prisoners asked to be left behind, Antonio allowed it. On subsequent days, he let each one of them have a turn resting while the

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<sup>393</sup> Deleon Guerrero, “Served 23 Years,” 94.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid.

others did the work. In this way he avoided open conflict with them because although he carried a pistol, “I didn’t know how to fire it—it was just decoration.”<sup>395</sup>

He talked about how the seventy-five year old Japanese administrator of the island was hard on him and on all of his underlings. One time, Antonio was standing in a particular way while he was interpreting when the administrator suddenly yelled, “You bastard, what are you standing like that for?” Antonio says he was surprised, and thought how hard and severe this man was. “And of course I didn’t know those kinds of things, since I wasn’t in the military. So I just quickly apologized and said, “Yes sir. I’m very sorry sir.” Antonio added that one time the administrator even yelled at the general affairs supervisor when he failed to stand up as the administrator entered—it was standard practice for the administrator’s driver to blare the car horn upon arrival in front of a building which was the sign for everybody indoors to hop to their feet. He summarized these stories of harsh treatment by saying that this was wartime.<sup>396</sup>

When the Americans came, Antonio reports that he was lucky to be with his wife who had followed him to Guam about six months after he arrived. She had given birth to their second child at a school in Mangilao, and it was there with his wife and newborn child that the American military found them in July 1944. They took Antonio into a prisoner of war camp and his wife and child went to stay with relatives. Had he been in Yigo with the rest of the Japanese military encampment that was heavily bombarded, things might not have ended well for him. In the camp he was able to communicate with an American soldier in Spanish, since Antonio had learned this language from his

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<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid., 93.

Catholic priest when he was young—he suggests that this American soldier gave him a lot of food because they could communicate. There were about sixty people from Saipan in the camp where he remained for about six months. He had no problem being there, despite its discomforts.

It was good that I was in the camp. The islanders on Guam resented the Chamorro like me who had come from Saipan. We had been given Japanese education, and then been drafted by the Japanese, right? So even though we were the same Chamorro people, we were enemies, since we had come at the orders of the Japanese.<sup>397</sup>

Antonio and perhaps others may have benefitted from the protections that the American-run Prisoner of War camp afforded because of the disdain felt by Guam Chamorros toward the NMI Chamorros who had worked for the Japanese. At the same time, he explains that the reason he participated was because he, like others, had been given a Japanese education and was then drafted by Japan. He calls attention here to the paradox of having had no choice about the fact that he was educated and then drafted by the side that lost. He also points out the widespread feeling in postwar Guam that serving on the Japanese side was enough to quash any sense of shared Chamorro identity with people from the north. Nevertheless, Antonio's stories suggest that he was peaceable in the execution of the duties assigned to him. He said that he had many friends in Guam and that he “made off pretty well” during the period of the war crimes trials, since he was allowed to return to Saipan in 1945 and was never put on trial.<sup>398</sup>

After the war, many of the Chamorros who served in the Japanese military were tried and convicted in the Guam war crimes trials. Timothy Maga writes that 148

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<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

Japanese nationals and Pacific Islanders were charged for war crimes on Guam, and among these 123 had been Japanese military personnel.<sup>399</sup> Certain Chamorros faced prison time in Guam while Japanese military personnel who were judged to be war criminals were hanged. For example, citing war crimes trials records, Timothy Maga writes that NMI recruit Juan Villagomez beat Guam Chamorro Vincente Babauta to death with a bullwhip in 1942, meanwhile certain other interpreters used different weapons to beat anyone who resisted Japanese military commands.<sup>400</sup> Villagomez received ten years for the murder of Vincente Babauta, and “most of those men who were found guilty were deported to Saipan or received short terms of labor on Guam.” Maga writes that defendants claimed that they were acting in accordance with an “evil government” represented by their Japanese superiors, and that in Japanese justice systems throughout the empire “physical intimidation” was a standard procedure during interrogations.<sup>401</sup> Antonio remembers that about two years after the initial American recapture of Guam on July 21, 1944, about ten men from Saipan were arrested because people in Guam “said that during the war those men had been too hard on the Guam people. But nothing could be done. After all, they had acted at the order of the soldiers, or the military.”<sup>402</sup>

While the general assertion Antonio is making here about these men being in a position where they had to follow orders (or be punished themselves) is legitimate, it is too simple to say that they had no choice in their actions as conscripts in the Japanese

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<sup>399</sup> Tim Maga, “Judgment on Guam: Justice Under the Palms,” in *Judgment at Tokyo: The Japanese War Crimes Trials* (The University Press of Kentucky, 2001): 118.

<sup>400</sup> Maga expresses surprise that many of the Japanese interpreters on Guam had “Guamanian sounding names” like Juan Villagomez, Jose Villagomez, and Francisco Sablan—he apparently does not understand that these men were NMI Chamorros and not Japanese. *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, 110-11.

<sup>402</sup> Deleon Guerrero, “Served 23 Years,” 92.

military. They were expected to behave in very specific ways in this rigidly hierarchical, exploitative, racist and sexist military regime. But they had some choices, however few. It is not accurate to say that people who acted violently and killed others were blameless because the culture of the Japanese system had created certain expectations for their actions. On the other hand, indigenous islanders had been aliens in the Japanese colonial-turned-military regime with relatively few options available to them, even while some had managed to work the colonial systems to their benefit by rising to high-paying or prestigious positions before the war. These “third-class nationals” who made the most of racist and exploitative systems were now suffering for being affiliated with the Japanese authorities that had always unambiguously been in positions of governance over them.

The war crimes trials were lopsided in their design and application, but they did hand down punishments. Perhaps these trials led some people in Guam to achieve some sense of justice, however limited, for their wartime suffering. But it left other inconsistencies unaddressed. Ultimately the question of blame has to be put to the Japanese and American empires. This war was neither started by, nor fundamentally about, Chamorros or other indigenous peoples. To pit relatives against one another in this way was a rare cruelty of this Asia-Pacific conflict. There are almost no other such cases where members of one indigenous group were forced to fight on opposite sides of the Axis/Allied divide.<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> For stories from New Guinea about islanders who fought on opposing sides during WWII, see Michael Somare, *Sana: An Autobiography of Michael Somare* (Port Moresby: Nuigini Press, 1975).

### 5.2.1 Marginalized Stories

In positions of authority over Guam inhabitants, the individual interpreters acted differently from one another and not all of them engaged in beatings or murders. One woman in Guam contacted me in 2013 when she read about my project in the newspaper. Maria Sablan Augon (b. 1929) told me a story that she did not tell the War Claims Commission in Guam when they were collecting testimonies to put into a damage claim directed toward the U.S. government. She did not tell them because, she said, her story was not about damages or suffering. She told me she wanted to track down an NMI Chamorro interpreter who had helped her during the war. This Chamorro interpreter, Maria recalled, had warned her and the rest of the civilians he was watching over that the Japanese were going to murder them. When nobody else was looking, he encouraged them to flee in to the jungle instead. Maria says that the only reason she is alive today is because of this man's actions, and feels gratitude when she thinks about him. She says she had not generally shared this story with anyone but her own family.<sup>404</sup>

A similar story of resistance comes from Gordon Ichihara Marciano (b. 1967) who remembers that his maternal grandfather, Sei Ichihara, was born in Guam to a Japanese father and a Chamorro mother and was raised there. Sei spoke Chamorro, English and Japanese. Gordon said that when Guam was invaded by people from Saipan, the invaders "told him to translate to Chamorros to dig fox houses, and he knew that if they dug the fox houses, that will be just pretty much for, for them to get buried in. And

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<sup>404</sup> Maria Sablan Augon, interview with the author at Maria's residence in Agana Heights, Guam, Feb. 7, 2013.



when he denied it, they crucified him for three days.”<sup>405</sup> Sei Ichihara’s refusal to dig “fox houses” or foxholes in the ground, which he suspected were to be used as graves, caused him to be physically punished by the Japanese military.

Another Chamorro who was similarly subjected to violence from the Japanese forces on Guam had once been a kind of model islander child for the Japanese imperial project in Micronesia. Pedro Ada (1903-1995) or “Young Pe” had been an exemplary student in Japanese schools. His desire to study in Japan in the late 1910s goaded the colonial government into creating colonial policies that would enable students like him to study abroad in Japan and elsewhere. As a model pupil, he angered his Japanese benefactors when he moved to be with family in Guam from Japan where he had been studying. There he worked for the U.S. military as an interpreter reading papers and shipping manifests brought in by Japanese merchants. When Japan occupied the island in late 1941, Pedro was jailed along with all of the other Americans on the island and was thought to have been a spy. About six months into the occupation, all Americans were sent to Japan for imprisonment there, but Pedro was held prisoner in the naval compound with Chamorros who were in the U.S. military. He was slated for execution, but some Japanese residents of Guam with whom he was friendly intervened and got him released.<sup>406</sup>

One former Chamorro interpreter who spoke on record about his conscription expressed anger about having been put into this position. Frank Tudela (b. 1921) said: “In 1941 I was forced against my will to go to Guam to act as a translator and have felt great

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<sup>405</sup> Gordon Ichihara Marciano, interview with author in the Hafa Adai Beach Hotel lobby, Garapan, Saipan, September 6, 2013.

<sup>406</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 26-27.

resentment of this ever since.”<sup>407</sup> Among all of the interviews cited herein, Frank and Antonio were the only two who openly admitted to have been a part of this invasion although many more men actually participated. The fact that this conscription forced NMI Chamorros to treat Guam Chamorros as enemies despite their cultural, historical, and familial relations was probably a tormenting experience for many that would have been difficult to talk about.

### **5.3 Japanese Military Troops’ Arrival in the Northern Mariana Islands**

While the Guam occupation was ongoing, people in the NMI came to face their own challenges with Japanese military rule. As noted earlier, transition to the period of total war (1937-1945) saw the instantiation of imperialization policies including stricter national language regulations but especially regulations targeting Catholic beliefs and practices. These harsh policies came near the end of colonial rule and corresponded with Japan’s shift towards total war in China (1937), but most people talk about the start of the war in the NMI as the moment when military troops forced people to leave the towns and live on their farms sometime around mid-1943. About a year before combat reached the Northern Mariana Islands, islanders were ordered to leave their homes in the towns and move to their farms. Simultaneously, public Catholic mass celebrations were banned entirely because islanders were not allowed to leave their farms and thus could not attend.

Sister Remedios P. Castro (1915-2007) had joined the Mercedarian Order in the late 1920s and was with the other nuns from the convent throughout the war. The convent had been closed by the military, and the five Spanish sisters and Remedios lived in a

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<sup>407</sup> Ibid., 38.

series of private homes in the countryside. Remedios was frequently called in to the military office to answer questions about the nuns' activities and finances, but she always said she did not know anything.<sup>408</sup>

During the late 1930s many kinds of imported food became scarce, and eventually islanders were forbidden to purchase these foods entirely.<sup>409</sup> Rationing began before the invasion of Guam in 1941 at which point there had been a rice shortage on Saipan: rations afforded Chamorros five *gō* (about six ounces) of rice per week, and a large sack of sweet potatoes.<sup>410</sup> The Spanish Mercedarian sisters were given ration tickets but were under house arrest, so Remedios stayed with them so she could help them by going out to collect the rations instead of returning to live with her own family. She added that a Spanish priest and a Spanish brother were in a similar situation, and a Carolinian boy was living with them and retrieving their rations for them.<sup>411</sup>

During this period, one priest travelled from farm to farm to administer services like marriages and baptisms, but this became more and more difficult as the Japanese authorities increasingly opposed this activity.<sup>412</sup> These prohibitions in particular came to be bitterly resented, because shortly after this time the war took the lives of thousands of devout Catholic Chamorros who had never been baptized, given various customary sacraments during their lifetimes, or read their last rites.<sup>413</sup> This was a serious offense that communities of Catholic islanders believed had forever compromised their relatives'

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<sup>408</sup> Ballendorf, "Oral History," 57.

<sup>409</sup> Joseph, et.al., *Chamorros and Carolinians of Saipan*, 47.

<sup>410</sup> Cabrera, "Japanese and Saipanese," 120.

<sup>411</sup> Ballendorf, "Oral History," 57.

<sup>412</sup> Joseph, et.al., *Chamorros and Carolinians of Saipan*, 47.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

chances of achieving salvation and eternal life with God. Understandably, these prohibitions on religious freedom caused many people to resent the Japanese military.

Memory sources posit a clear distinction between colonial Japanese settlers who moved there in great numbers beginning the 1930s and the Japanese armed forces that arrived on the island in the mid-1940s. Memories of the Japanese military are often negative among indigenous islanders and Japanese civilians alike. However, people also remember that there were variations within the different branches of the Japanese military. Vincente T. Camacho (b. 1929) describes the differences as being connected to the fact that some Japanese military troops had been on the islands for several years and had gotten to know the islanders, and had even served as their teachers in the *kôgakkô* or *Hôkokutai* schools.

On the other hand, in February 1944, the U.S. attacked the Marshall Islands at the easternmost part of Micronesia, alerting the Japanese government to the impending attack on this part of their empire. In May 1944, various Japanese Army units arrived from Manchuria to help defend the island. These included the Army's 43<sup>rd</sup> Division and the 47<sup>th</sup> Independent Mixed Brigade, bringing the total number of army troops on Saipan by the start the battle to 25,500. These troops were highly disorganized because they had been fighting the war in China for several years, and many of these units were reconstituted from older units. They were the last survivors of a grueling conflict, and were accustomed to the cold Manchurian winter so their arrival in the tropical islands was somewhat shocking, uncomfortable, and deadly for a few that caught new diseases that they had not been exposed to in Manchuria. They were generally unruly and dangerous

according to islanders, whom the troops viewed as enemies and treated badly.<sup>414</sup> Vincente said about this motley military that occupied the island in the few months before the battle in June that, “the soldiers had completely gone wild, no matter who you saw. Even if you had a military insignia on your clothes, it was not good. They were just out of control.”<sup>415</sup>

After the Japanese military arrived in large numbers on the islands, people who were schoolchildren at the time remember being removed from school and forced to do hard labor to construct fortifications. Escolastica T. Cabrera (1930-2013) felt that the war had interrupted her studies, and remembered the war labor was harried.

The Japanese were in a hurry to do away with all this sugar cane farms, and tapioca farms, and made us work down at the airplane base—we had to carry sand from the Micro area to Woleai. We had to carry all the sand, to hurry up because the WWII was coming. So, our time was not good. We don’t have enough study.<sup>416</sup>

The hard labor was a stark contrast to their days spent learning the Japanese language, math, and agriculture in Japanese schools. Many who were in the Japanese *kôgakkô* at that time have recalled that the start of the war corresponded with the closure of the schools to use as barracks, and the transition toward hard labor.<sup>417</sup>

Among indigenous adults, the transition from the colonial to the wartime era also saw a shift in the nature of their day-to-day activities. Many were brought into heavy

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<sup>414</sup> Vincente said his grandfather was elderly and could not stand being inside the small cave for too long, so he went to the entrance of the shelter and put his face outside to get some air. A Japanese soldier saw him and said, “you’re an enemy” and then shot him. Camacho, “Japanese Blood,” 122.

<sup>415</sup> Vincente remembered that his uncle was beaten severely by Japanese soldiers for holding food he had collected and was bringing back to the family hiding in the cave. *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>416</sup> Escolastica Tudela Cabrera, interview with the author at Esco’s home in Capitol Hill, Saipan, July 8, 2008.

<sup>417</sup> Many have shared their stories of being conscripted in to war labor as children in Pacific Star Center for Young Writers, “*We Drank Our Tears: Memories of the Battles of Saipan and Tinian as Told by Our Elders* (Saipan: Pacific Star Young Writer’s Foundation, 2004).

labor of constructing fortifications while others worked for the military indirectly, through contracts. Gregorio C. Cabrera graduated from the *Hôkokutai* military school around 1939 and then went to work for the Sagami-gumi Corporation that had been hired by the navy to construct their headquarters in Saipan. Gregorio used a *kareta* (oxcart) to transport water and building materials to the construction site.<sup>418</sup> Jose B. Tudela (b. circa 1927) had graduated from the carpentry school in Palau, and he was hired as a civilian employee of the navy to construct naval barracks on Tinian and afterward managed a unit of workers in the construction of the As Lito airfield. He was there when the American air raids began and the entire group of about two thousand Saipanese and Korean laborers fled into the hills.<sup>419</sup>

Another Chamorro man told a remarkable story of working for the Japanese navy as a civilian employee. Manuel S. Sablan (b. 1917) was born and raised in Angaur, Palau where his father had been working in the phosphate mine since the German era. He attended three years of primary school there after which he worked for the Yamada Shoten taking orders from other businesses on the island. He later worked for a different trading company called Ngiradelemel Shoten owned by a Palauan businessman, at which time he learned to repair and manage the engine of a boat owned by the company. A few years later when he was working on Babeldaob island at the Nan'yô Aluminum company, the war was underway and the island was covered in troops. A friend of his, Lt Junior Grade Wada of the Japanese Navy, was looking for people to work on pearl fishing boats alongside Indonesians that he had brought to Palau. Because of his skills as a boat engine

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<sup>418</sup> Cabrera, "Japanese and Saipanese," 118.

<sup>419</sup> Tudela, "Carpentry Skills," 97-98.

mechanic, Manuel traveled with the *Taihei Maru* towards New Guinea, but an American submarine sank their boat. He and a few men floated all night and then swam towards a Japanese boat nearby, which picked them up. On board the *Honan Maru*, Manuel fixed the broken engine and the captain, unable to pronounce his name, called him “Minami Tetsutarô.” With that crew, he traveled to Tobi Island in Palau, Kasim in Western New Guinea, Borneo, then Tarakan Island in Indonesia. In Indonesia the Imperial Japanese Army placed him on the front lines of battle, and with a little military training, he and another Chamorro man he remembered was called Hayashi Tarô were made to fight alongside the Japanese Army and Taiwanese troops against the Australian military. He remembered that the Army commander told them:

You are military employees, but if the enemy lands here, you’re not military employees anymore, you’re soldiers who are to defend Tarakan; and since you’re soldiers, you’d better be resigned to it.<sup>420</sup>

Manuel eventually surrendered to the Australian troops who mistook him for a Japanese soldier and did not believe him when he tried to tell them otherwise, and he was sent through Japan by an American ship for repatriations processing. He eventually made it back to Saipan in 1946. He knew other civilian employees like himself from across Japan’s empire who died with the Japanese Navy and Army, but they were never included among the enlisted troops and so never got any recognition, pensions, or compensation from the Japanese or U.S. government. Manuel remarked that although Sergeant Yokoi of the Imperial Japanese Army received compensation for serving until

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<sup>420</sup> Manuel S. Sablan, “My Name was ‘Minami Tetsutarô’ in the Imperial Japanese Navy,” interview by Yoshiaki Kamisawa, “Marianas Oral History Series (English Translation-2), *Journal of the Pacific Society* 54 Vol. 15 No.1 (Apr. 1992): 123.

1972 when he was discovered in the Guam jungle, “I didn’t get anything!”<sup>421</sup> Thus even civilian contractors whose jobs carried them to the front lines of battle, while not generally thought of as being members of the Japanese military, did end up being made to serve as combatants and had many of the same experiences as military personnel.

Others remember that their parents worked for the military. Vincente said that his father was conscripted to work for the military in a unit that was based on Saipan, but his location was always secret. He would be gone for two to three months at a time. Because Vincente’s elder brother was living with his grandmother, this made Vincente the eldest boy in the house and his mother entrusted the care of his younger siblings to him. This was the reason he did not leave to attend school in Palau, and it also may have been the reason he was able to survive the war.<sup>422</sup>

Vincente had completed one year of training in the *Hōkokutai* where he learned semaphore signaling among other military skills. After all Chamorros had been sent out of their homes to live on their farms, two policemen visited them along with a member of the Kempeitai (military police). He says his mother became very scared and started to cry when she saw them. They had come to take Vincente to work for the Kempeitai, as he and another member of his class, Henry Pangelinan, had been selected for duty. They were supposed to trade off—one would go to Guam for six months while the other worked in Saipan, and then they would switch. Vincente was supposed to go to Guam first, but his mother pleaded with the men, explaining that the military had already taken

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<sup>421</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>422</sup> Camacho, “Japanese Blood,” 133.



her husband and that she needed Vincente to help with the family during that difficult time. Vincente said,

Well, the Kempeitai eventually took pity, and when they saw the state my mother was in, they gave me permission to stay back, and sent Henry to Guam first. But Henry went there and never came back. He was caught up in the war, and that was the end.<sup>423</sup>

Henry left Saipan with the fifth group of Chamorros to be deployed with the Japanese military to Guam sometime in late 1943 and died there.

Similar to the experiences of interrogation in Guam, many Northern Mariana Islanders recall being treated with suspicion by the Japanese military authorities. For example, David Mangarero Sablan (b. 1932) told me he remembers that his family's piano was chopped to pieces with an axe by the Japanese military because they suspected the family of using the instrument to send signals to Americans.<sup>424</sup> Maria Sablan Reyes (b. 1922) said that her safety was more threatened by the Japanese military when she was living with her family on their farm before the battles than during the battle itself. The soldiers searched the farm and found several books that belonged to her educated father, including some books in English. Seeing these, the military suspected that he was a spy. They also found an old-fashioned reed organ belonging to Maria that they thought she used to transmit her father's messages to the Americans. They took them both down to their offices and interrogated them violently, at one point cutting the skin on her father's neck with a bayonet. They released Maria after one day but kept her father there for a

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<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>424</sup> David Mangarero Sablan, interview with author at his office in Garapan, Saipan, October 11, 2012.

week, making constant threats to his life. “And they dismantled my organ to search my organ for evidence to prove that it was some kind of new-fangled subversive device.”<sup>425</sup>

Fear of spying and rigorous efforts to control communications pervaded Japanese military command on the island. Juan Camacho Diaz (b. 1928) remembered working for the Japanese radio communications office just before the battles, when he was a young boy of twelve or thirteen. He remembers that he was trusted with operating the radio that would send and receive messages at set times of day to other islands in Micronesia and to Japan. As a radio operator, he was given a lot of responsibility and he remembers the fateful day when this trust turned to suspicion. He said this was the day before the U.S. began bombing operations on the island. In order to warn island residents of the impending bombardment, he said that the U.S. broadcast a message in English over the radio explaining that the war was coming. He did not speak English at the time and did not understand what was going on, but as the English language message filled the radio office his Japanese supervisors ran over and began interrogating him. They thought he was somehow responsible for the broadcast. Thinking that he had something to do with it, one of his Japanese superiors took the radio wires off of the machine and electrocuted him so badly that he was barely able to walk out of the office.<sup>426</sup>

As Juan began to mount his bicycle to try to bike home for the day, Gregorio “Kilili” Sablan came over and told him in Chamorro that the English language message that had just been broadcast to the neighborhood had been important. Kilili said that the announcement warned of an impending invasion, and that people should flee into the hills

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<sup>425</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 46-47.

<sup>426</sup> Actually, the U.S. had been broadcasting messages like this one in the range of islands they planned to attack to warn people to run and hide. Once they took Saipan, they would print leaflets there to be dropped over the main islands of Japan in advance of bombings.

and out of the towns that were targeted for attack. Diaz remembered that Kilili told him to go warn his family and everyone he knew to get out of town, and to bring everything they could out of their homes and into the hills for safety. That is what he did.<sup>427</sup>

Historian Timothy Maga writes that some allegations about indigenous islanders being spies against Japan had surfaced after the war during the war crimes trials in Guam. There was a trial held around the charge that three Japanese Army men who had been stationed in Rota had executed several Chamorros for “espionage activities” in June 1944, just a few weeks before the American invasion of Rota.<sup>428</sup> Maga reports that a longtime Catholic missionary on the island was ordered by a Japanese Captain to drink poisoned coffee, and was bayoneted when he did not die right away. A handful of other Chamorros on Rota were made to drink the same coffee laced with higher dosages of the poison because they were all suspected of being friends with the missionary, while still others were shot for the same reason. Maga reports that other Japanese survivors on Rota had never heard of “spies” on the island and actually learned of it for the first time when these stories were told in the trials commission room. So in a way similar to the Chamorros in Guam, in this case Chamorros in Rota were suffering and being killed by Japanese military authorities that suspected them of being spies. Augusto Atalig (b. 1931) remembered the names of six men who were killed for being spies on Rota, although “not one of them was a spy nor had the opportunity of spying if he had wanted to.”<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Juan Camacho Diaz, interview with the author at the Diaz residence in Chalan Kiya, Saipan, December 1, 2012.

<sup>428</sup> Maga, “Judgment on Guam,” 113-14.

<sup>429</sup> Augusto Atalig listed the following men as having been wrongfully killed by the Japanese as spies: Ignacio Maglona, Brother Miguel Timoner, Andreas Masga, Bonifacio Estebes, Sabino Estebes, and Ignacio Cruz, “better known as Cha’la.” Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 23.

#### 5.4 Combat in the Northern Mariana Islands, 1944

U.S. Army and Marine Corps invaded the Northern Mariana Islands along with navy and coast guard support in June 1944. The U.S. invaders landed first on Saipan's southwest coast and pushed Japanese military and civilians northward. In the invasion, Marines used flamethrower-armed tanks and the Army Air Corps dropped napalm, both for the first time.<sup>430</sup> Flame-throwers were used to clear out many natural limestone caves where both civilians and military personnel were hiding, and death counts are approximations because an unknown number of people died by incineration inside the caves.

The Japanese military used human beings as weapons in these battles, much like they did a year later in Okinawa. U.S. military records attest to instances when Japanese soldiers and even civilian Japanese women would place American grenades (taken from corpses) under their armpits and pull the pin, so that when they raised their arms and approached American troops as if to surrender the grenade would fall to the ground and kill people nearby.<sup>431</sup> Men, women and children were also used as decoys. The Japanese military would do things like send a child out of a cave to ask the U.S. troops for help, and when the child would return to the cave followed by the Americans a shower of bullets would rain down on the group.<sup>432</sup> As time passed, the Americans grew more and more wary of such tactics and became more likely to throw grenades or flames into caves as a precaution.

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<sup>430</sup> Rottman, *Pacific Island Guide*, 378.

<sup>431</sup> Goldberg, *D-Day*, 137.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*

The Japanese military also employed civilians in their attacks, especially near the end of the battle when civilians and military personnel running from the battlefield had been pushed to the northernmost end of Saipan. In the early morning of July 6<sup>th</sup> General Saito of the Imperial Japanese Army ordered one final all-out banzai charge against the enemy. He called for each person to follow his example and take “seven lives to repay our country,” meaning that each person should strive to take seven enemy lives before dying. However, Saito was too feeble to lead the charge himself and he took his own life shortly after giving the order.<sup>433</sup> In the early morning hours of July 7<sup>th</sup>, thousands of Japanese military troops from a range of disorganized units along with probably several hundred civilians—some armed only with sharpened sticks—ran southward on the Matansha coast (today Tanapag) and attacked various U.S. Army and Marine units. The Americans lost over four hundred men whereas the Japanese attackers lost over four thousand men, women and children in this attack.<sup>434</sup>

Chamorros and Carolinians did not participate in this attack. However, Vicente was hiding with his family in a cave nearby and they heard the barrage of cannon fire, bombs, rifles, machine gunning—all of this made his family so scared that everyone was crying, thinking it was the end and embracing each other. Vicente said he remembered thinking that they should not cry so loud because “we’d be heard, and we’d either be killed by the Americans, or else by the Japanese soldiers. Because both sides were enemies to us then.” But the sounds of fighting died down the next morning and they

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<sup>433</sup> Philip A. Crowl, *Campaign in the Marianas* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1993): 257.

<sup>434</sup> The U.S. Army reported 406 Americans dead, and 4,311 Japanese dead after this incident. *Ibid.*, 257-261.

emerged from the cave to see the barren hillside. A little while later, the American troops advanced on the family and they surrendered.<sup>435</sup>

Americans used loudspeakers to broadcast a call to surrender into the caves and hilly jungles. Guy “Gabby” Gabaldon was a Hispanic American who spent much of his childhood in a Japanese-speaking home in Los Angeles who served in this battle. Over loudspeakers he was able to coax several hundred Japanese to surrender, including at least eight hundred Japanese in one day.<sup>436</sup> Other people who had already surrendered were also recruited to call into the jungles through the loudspeakers. Jose B. Tudela remembers that after being captured by the American troops, he worked with second-generation Japanese-Americans and with an American officer who knew Japanese to talk through the loudspeakers into the jungles and coax people to surrender.

At that time, I was making announcements to the Japanese who were hiding. I told them not to worry about the American soldiers, not to be afraid. I said I was with them, so it was alright. [*sic*] Anyway, I was talking to them in Japanese, since I was of the same mentality—I was raised during the Japanese period—so they had me broadcasting to them that it was alright [*sic*] to come out. An interpreter, really.<sup>437</sup>

Jose was serving as a different kind of interpreter between the American and Japanese sides, one whose role departed significantly from the interpreters used in Guam. In this instance he was able to help save the lives of many women and children who heeded the call and turned themselves in to the American military. Chamorros’ multilingual roles as intermediaries between different groups in the 1944 battles in the Marianas were thus not limited to their role in the Guam invasion and occupation.

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<sup>435</sup> Camacho, “Japanese Blood,” 124.

<sup>436</sup> For this Guy Gabaldon was awarded a Silver Star, which was upgraded to a Navy Cross after the movie *Hell to Eternity* about his wartime service came out in 1960. Goldberg, *D-Day*, 197.

<sup>437</sup> Tudela, “Carpentry Skills,” 96.

The moment of surrender to the advancing U.S. forces is generally remembered as both a terrifying and a relieving experience. Antonieta Ada remembers that when they heard the Americans shouting over the loudspeakers that there was food and water for anyone who surrendered, the Okinawan women with whom she had been hiding in the cave suggested that they should surrender because they were out of supplies. She recalls walking out with her hands up, and climbing up into the trucks with other people where she was given water and candy. Edward T. Dela Cruz (b. 1935) whose father was Chamorro from Guam and mother was Japanese, recalls that the moment he learned that his father could speak English was the moment they saw the Americans approaching their hiding place in the mountains. “There was my father running across the field toward them, calling them in English, and embracing and kissing them. None of us knew, up to then, that he could speak English...”<sup>438</sup> Because speaking English was regarded so negatively by the Japanese military, and sharing one’s family connections in Guam in this period would have been risky, it makes sense that he would have kept this fact a secret until this moment.

David M. Sablan had a different experience. When he started to recall the moment of his first encounter with Americans, this was the only time during our meeting when he was overcome with emotion and could not speak. When I asked him what he was feeling, he said that it was terrifying to encounter these Americans who he had been told were monsters that would torture and kill anyone they caught. Reliving that moment brought back that intense fear and forced him to take a moment to regain his composure.

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<sup>438</sup> Ballendorf, “Oral History,” 55

Civilians who surrendered were trucked to Camp Susupe on Saipan and Camp Chulu on Tinian where the U.S. maintained temporary, guarded housing for civilians away from combat zones. The Americans also constructed separate and adjacent camps for prisoners of war, the term for surrendered or captured military personnel. Civilian Chamorros and Carolinians were held in these camps until July 4, 1946 when they were released and allowed to live in other parts of the archipelago.

But many civilians did not surrender. They had been told by the Japanese military that the Americans would torture and kill them, and many may have been acting out of fear by refusing to leave the caves or by choosing suicide. The Japanese military may have also prevented civilians from surrendering and are likely to have killed people who showed willingness to give up the fight. A U.S. military intelligence investigation involving the interrogation of 150 Japanese and Chamorro civilian survivors did not elicit testimony of civilians being threatened or being used as shields by the Japanese military, yet: “there is a strong possibility, however, that those who would have testified differently are dead.”<sup>439</sup> Many civilians took their own lives by jumping off of Saipan’s northern cliffs or by gathering around hand grenades and pulling the pin. Probably several hundreds of non-combatants died in these horrific ways.

Despite its common use, the word “suicide” is not quite accurate to describe these deaths. Doing so makes it seem as though these people died willingly in service of the Japanese empire, but several facts counter this assumption. The Japanese military propagandized a vision of Americans who would torture civilians they captured, and thus generated widespread fear so as to mobilize non-combatant populations into complying

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<sup>439</sup> Hoffman, *Saipan*, 245.



with their demands. The Japanese military also used human beings as weapons and decoys during the fighting, and many people who survived the battle of Okinawa remember that the Japanese military coerced people to take their own lives or even murdered them. The fact that the Japanese military manipulated people in these ways not only calls into question the loyalties civilians may have felt toward the war effort in the face of such violent actions directed toward them. Such tactics also call into question the ability people had to choose a course of action that did not comply with the military's demands. Thus, the "suicides" at the end of the battles of Saipan and Tinian should be understood as having been made up of a combination of voluntary and involuntary self-immolations during a period of intense wartime fear mongering and manipulation.

The estimated total human costs of these battles are presented in Figure 5.2.

- 23,811 of the 31,600 Japanese troops were killed and buried on the island (many died in caves and bunkers and were never counted). Buried means that the U.S. pushed their corpses into mass graves after the battles, or dynamited shut bunkers or caves containing charred remains.
- 1780 were captured (including 838 Koreans)
- 14,560 civilians were interned (including 1,173 Koreans, 3,129 islanders)
- 22,000 Japanese, Okinawans, and Korean civilians died
- 5,204 Americans died
- 929 Chamorros and Carolinians died<sup>440</sup>

**Figure 5.2: Approximate Number of Casualties, Deaths and Refugees in the Japan-U.S. Battles in the Northern Mariana Islands**<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> The latter two figures were compiled through research done by the National Park Service, and the islander deaths range from June 11, 1944 through July 4, 1946. U.S. National Park Service, "American Memorial Park, Northern Mariana Islands," assessed April 29, 2015, <http://www.nps.gov/amme/index.htm>.

<sup>441</sup> These figures are from Rottman, *Pacific Island Guide*, 379.

#### 5.4.1 Noncombatant Islanders Caught in the Battle

The total number of NMI Chamorro men sent to Guam in the invasion included about fifty-five whereas of the overall number of Chamorros and Carolinians who lived through this period of war across the islands was several thousand. The average man, woman and child were suffering and running from a war not of their own making. The most common experience of war in the Northern Mariana Islands was thus one of civilians fleeing this combat, and of being subjected to fear, manipulation, assaults, and murder by the Japanese military. Moreover, people were also facing an approaching American enemy, a situation about which Vincente said, “both sides were enemies to us then.”<sup>442</sup> This experience is similar to some civilians in Okinawa where civilians there faced a two-pronged attack. Matthew Allen writes about a phrase often spoken by Okinawans to describe their circumstance: “We had a tiger at the front gate and a wolf at the back.”<sup>443</sup> Most people in the NMI had not been trained to fight in the war, and although people knew that a war was coming, most did not have the option to leave the island. However, many Japanese and Okinawan civilians are remembered to have left the island in before the battle, and sometimes this included indigenous islanders who were married to or otherwise a part of multiracial families.<sup>444</sup>

During the war on Saipan, most Chamorros and Carolinians fled into the hills and hid in limestone caves or other kinds of bomb shelters. People who survived remember

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<sup>442</sup> Camacho, “Japanese Blood,” 124.

<sup>443</sup> Matthew Allen, “Wolves at the Back Door: Remembering the Kumejima Massacres,” in *Islands of Discontent: Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power*, edited by Laura Elizabeth Hein and Mark Selden (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003): 57.

<sup>444</sup> Gordon I. Marciano said that his grandmother Tereko left on a civilian ship headed for Japan while her husband, a Japanese Navy officer, was on a military ship. She saw his ship destroyed as it was leaving the island, and she went to Japan without him. She spent the war in Japan and returned afterward. Gordon Ichihara Marciano, interview with author in the Hafa Adai Beach Hotel lobby, Garapan, Saipan, September 6, 2013.

hiding in caves during the day, scrounging for food at night, and cooking meals in the evenings and inside the caves so that the smoke from fires would not give away their location. Although dangerous, generally people were able to sneak around at night and find sweet potatoes, sugar cane, coconuts and other plant-based sources of food. But they suffered from dehydration. There were lots of water cisterns and wells around the island, but people remember that the cisterns were being used as bomb shelters and the wells held battle-torn corpses, so the water in them was not drinkable.<sup>445</sup> Open ponds were full of fallen trees, dirt, and other combat debris. Moreover rain fell only once during the intensive three-week battle, making rainwater collection impossible. Hiding in the caves in cramped conditions was uncomfortable and very hot, especially when fires burned outside, and people lost moisture from sweating. So dire was the people's thirst as they hid from the battle that one collection of Chamorro and Carolinian war memories published in 2005 is entitled, "*We Drank Our Tears.*"<sup>446</sup> This book and others have chronicled the suffering and resilience of indigenous islanders as they weathered the uncertain *Typhoon of War* conditions that destroyed their island homes in a way similar to the storms that regularly blow through this area.<sup>447</sup>

In general, people would hide together in caves with other people who were considered family or people of their same ethnic group. So Okinawans would hide with Okinawans, Chamorros with Chamorros, and Carolinians with Carolinians, but there were examples of mixing particularly among groups that had been friendly before the war. The Japanese military were generally not trusted, although Elias Borja (b. 1936)

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<sup>445</sup> Camacho, "Japanese Blood," 125.

<sup>446</sup> Pacific Star Center for Young Writers, "*We Drank Our Tears.*"

<sup>447</sup> Poyer, et.al. *Typhoon of War.*

(then Shing Eikai) remembers hiding with the Japanese military because his Korean stepfather was a cook for the military and his services were employed in this way during the war. For this reason, Elias remembers having access to rice during the war on Rota, which was unusual among islanders since rice was reserved for the Japanese military.<sup>448</sup>

Some people were understandably reluctant to talk with me about their war memories, and I received several polite rejections to my request for an interview. I was fortunate to be granted permission to speak with one woman who had never talked on record about her memories. Julia Quichay Barto (b. 1928) granted me the interview partly because I had grown up attending school with her grandchildren, who also wanted me to talk with her to see what she would say because they had never been able to get her to tell them about the war. She seemed wary of me but did share details about her life during the Japanese era. But when we started talking about what happened at the north part of the island in June 1944, the conversation became highly one-sided with me asking questions and she giving short and soft-spoken answers.

Julia told me that her part-Japanese family had fled the oncoming battle on Saipan and headed northward like everyone else. I asked her to tell me about whether or not she was among the civilians who were taking their own lives at Suicide or Banzai Cliff. She said no, she was not there and that she was hiding in a cave. When I asked her if she knew of anyone who did take their own life, she said yes. Her bother and his girlfriend had committed suicide. She heard that her brother had killed his girlfriend and then himself with a pistol in the San Roque (Matansha) area before the Americans reached

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<sup>448</sup> Elias Manibusan Borja, interview with the author, Fleming Restaurant, San Jose, Tinian, November 28, 2012.

them. She did not say any more and I did not push her. Her reluctance to talk about this horrific memory is understandable, and by the end of our conversation I was asking myself why I would bring it up at all.

Julia's anguishing experiences do have lessons to impart. It is clear that this memory has been a difficult one for her, and one that has not made it into the mainstream understanding of indigenous Northern Mariana islanders' experiences of this war. These kinds of stories—people who witnessed suicide or lost family members to suicides—are clearly difficult to share and to hear, and they remain largely untold and uncirculated. The lack of shared stories about Japanese people who were once members of indigenous senior citizens' families and who took their own lives near the end of the Saipan battle is understandable. It is hard to make sense of any suicide, but perhaps especially one committed during this failed war. The absence of circulated stories must not be interpreted as an absence of experiences, however. On the contrary, these kinds of losses are absent from public consciousness about this war partly because they do not easily fit into liberation narratives that construct islanders as Americans. As a Chamorro elder who lost a family member to suicide at the end of the war, Julia's memory poses a challenge to the nationalized war memory categories that valorize the actions of Americans and indigenous islanders in this battle while viewing those of "Japanese" people as separate.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The outbreak of total war conditions in the Japanese empire by 1937 changed life in the islands for both adults and children. A system of rationing was instituted in the late 1930s that especially restricted the consumption of rice among islanders. At the same

time as rigid imperialization (*kôminka*) policies were instituted in Taiwan and Korea, people who were schoolchildren in the NMI remember that rules about performing deference to state symbols were strengthened. Children were supposed to bow to the Shinto shrine in Garapan when walking by, and each household was to possess of a photo of the emperor before which students were instructed to bow every morning.

Some remember that conflicts erupted between Japanese authorities and Chamorros about the primacy of their Catholic God over the emperor. People recall that as the war drew nearer, the activities of Catholic clergy members became heavily constrained and policed, and paranoid Japanese military troops destroyed musical instruments that were imagined to have been used to communicate with the Americans. Some islanders who spoke English or who had family members in Guam were the targets of suspicion and a handful of people in Rota were murdered by the Japanese military for allegedly being spies, which was an inaccurate charge.

In the 1930s, a military academy called *Hôkokutai* was opened in Saipan to train young men who had completed their primary school courses. In late 1941, some graduates from this academy as well as especially men who had been employed by the Japanese government were sent to Guam to facilitate the invasion and occupation of that island as scouts and interpreters. As the Pacific war battle lines drew nearer to the Northern Mariana Islands, by early 1944 thousands of Japanese Army troops arrived on the islands. At this point, regular school courses were stopped and school buildings were used as military barracks. Children were conscripted as laborers in the hasty construction of airstrips and other fortifications.

During the Japan-U.S. fighting that began in June 1944 and continued for about a month, most islanders were terrified as they fled both the Japanese and the U.S. military troops. The eldest generation of indigenous islanders spoke Spanish because they had grown up during the last years of Spanish rule, and they and others who had learned Spanish in Catholic schools often used this language to communicate with American troops upon first contact. Some Chamorro men in the NMI served as interpreters and intermediaries between Japanese and American troops using their knowledge of Spanish, English and Japanese to communicate across the battle lines. Most were terrified of both the American and the Japanese troops that were enemies to the islanders during the fighting, though some Chamorros with relatives in Guam trusted the Americans.

Whereas most islanders across the Mariana archipelago experienced the war as civilians terrorized especially by Japanese military personnel, memories of elite Chamorro men's service in the Japanese invasion and occupation of Guam have dominated war memory discourses in postwar Guam. These have been a polarizing source of pain that have driven a wedge between communities in Guam and the rest of the Northern Mariana Islands in the postwar period: in connection with this dominant memory, Northern Mariana islanders' former status as "Japanese" subjects has taken on profoundly negative connotations in Guam. So negative was the impression of NMI Chamorros in Guam that many remember that term "Guamanian" was coined in Guam after the war to distinguish Chamorros from Guam from those in the Northern Mariana Islands.

Within all of the former Pacific War battlefield sites, the Mariana archipelago is one of the only places where an indigenous group—the Chamorro Mariana islanders—

found themselves facing off against each other along the WWII Axis-Allied battle lines. In contrast to the actual experiences of most islanders under Japanese rule, postwar memories from Guam about elite Chamorro men's roles as aggressors have dominated postwar intra-archipelagic discourses about Northern Mariana Islanders under Japanese rule. What is missed by this dominant memory is the far more common set of war experiences had by most men, women, and children in the Northern Mariana Islands where the devastation was equally fierce, and where unlike Guam, the mass suicides at the end of the battles represent a tormenting experience that unfolded in a way similar to the battle in Okinawa and which incorporated members of indigenous families.

Memories of family members who were coerced to choose suicide are extremely difficult to talk about within popular postwar culture that demonizes Japan and valorizes America. This wartime pro-American culture of memory probably exacerbates the pain experienced by people who remember friends and family members who were fed propaganda or terrorized until they took their own lives in vain. Ultimately, the Japan-U.S. conflict in the Mariana Islands is the original source of this inter-island, intra-family legacy of local conflict. Blame placed on individual islanders must be filtered through an understanding that they were trapped by wartime conditions beyond their control.

The presence of pronounced postwar anti-Japanese sentiment in Guam continues to cause suffering for people on all sides of this incident. Individuals could not escape the war, yet they had some ability to make different choices when faced with dire situations. The dominant form of memory about Chamorro conscripts and/or volunteers in the Japanese military sees them as war criminals because U.S. war crimes trials judged several dozen Chamorro men as such and afterward they served up to ten years in prison



for their crimes. While in no way an excuse for murder, it is worth remembering that NMI Chamorros were subjected to Japanese corporal punishment from elementary school through adulthood, and that this was the long-term historical-cultural context within which these men were acting. Individuals on all sides of this incident were acting within historical constraints and made different choices within the range of options available to them.

Gordon I. Marciano today gives historical tours of Saipan where he sometimes shares this story about his grandfather who resisted Japanese conscription on Guam and was physically beaten as a result. Gordon suggested that this story has the potential to be therapeutic. He said that he tells visitors to the island that his grandfather did not hate the Japanese despite what they did to him during the war. He speculated about how he thinks American tourists see him when he talks about his grandfather:

For someone to be in this position right now, and knowing the fact that what the Japanese did to his grandfather, and does not even hate the Japanese, and he's standing here today telling his story, it is something that is teaching them, and that is to heal.<sup>449</sup>

Gordon demonstrates how he, like his grandfather, has lived with ambivalent memories and legacies of this war as an indigenous islander who is himself part Japanese.

Ultimately, the Japan-U.S. conflict in the Mariana Islands is the original source of this inter-island, intra-family legacy of conflict. The empires and nations that brought the war to these islands' shores in this case are responsible for inciting regional conflicts and lasting legacies of divisive and painful memories. Rather than think that the wartime and postwar experiences of military troops on various sides of this conflict represent the

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<sup>449</sup> Gordon Ichihara Marciano, interview with author in the Hafa Adai Beach Hotel lobby, Garapan, Saipan, September 6, 2013.

stories worth narrating as history, the numerically dominant experiences of non-combatants whose descendants still live on these islands today must have a prominent place among the accounts of battle. Thinking about war history as the everyday experiences of common men, women and children reveals certain commonalities shared by war refugees throughout the Marianas archipelago, and indeed the entire Asia-Pacific region. If memories and histories of combatants can be divisive, civilians' recollections have the potential to bring people together and promote healing beyond wartime divisions.

## **Chapter 6) Broken Homes, Torn Families: U.S. National Security and Postwar Repatriation Campaigns in the Northern Mariana Islands**

At the end of the Pacific war, interagency U.S. military and civilian committees decided to remove almost all East Asian settlers from the Western Pacific islands captured from Japanese control. Tens of thousands of settlers including Japanese, Korean, and Okinawan men and women had moved to especially the Northern Mariana Islands within Japan's colony in Micronesia. Some of these settlers lived on the islands for decades and were members of multiracial families. U.S. State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) planners thought that removing settlers would ensure the establishment of more secure U.S. postwar rule in the NMI. Tens of thousands of surviving civilians—at least several dozen of whom were probably members of multiracial families—were separated from one another by U.S. repatriation policies. This chapter describes what populations are recorded as having survived the WWII battles in these islands, and where, when, and why these groups were removed at different times. In addition, an interview with one Chamorro man provides insight into the outcomes of these policies in the NMI.

This chapter begins with a summary of the sequence of repatriations from 1945 through 1947 and reconstructs WWII-era and immediate postwar discussions ongoing mainly within the SWNCC. These discussions were about how to create policies to manage war refugees and former enemy combatants in these former Japanese islands. The U.S. government treated settler populations as political bodies who were subject to the protocols of international treaties, and did not see them as long-term residents with local relationships at stake in their removal from the area. The way that Japanese,

Koreans, and Okinawans were differently managed during this period reflected American military-strategic priorities toward the nations from which they had originally emigrated.

In order to consider the consequences of these repatriations for people indigenous to the NMI, in the second half of this chapter I consider the memories of a Chamorro man named Elias M. Borja (b. 1936) who was a member of a Korean and Chamorro family during the Japanese era. Although he held public office for many years after the war on the island of Tinian, he has not talked about his childhood with many people, and those years of his life have remained relatively secret. His stories suggest that racist postwar U.S. policies for managing indigenous populations who were living next to military installations have been one reason why islanders may have chosen to be secretive about their prewar family relationships with East Asian settlers. His memories frame the mass repatriations of civilian East Asian settler populations from the NMI in terms of their lasting impact on local communities.

### **6.1 Establishing Protocols for Managing Refugees**

The large number of settlers and a smaller number of indigenous civilians living in the NMI were profoundly affected by the U.S. WWII invasion of these islands that decimated most developments and took a high number of lives. Operation “Forager”—code for the U.S. invasion of the Northern Mariana Islands—was the first time in the island hopping campaign when U.S. troops encountered such a large number of civilian residents.

People who survived were taken to internment camps. Civilians were separated into different areas: there was a civilian camp for Japanese, Okinawans, and Koreans

with different living quarters for each group, and a separate camp for Chamorros and Carolinians in Saipan. No indigenous islanders had been living on Tinian island and the internment camp there held only civilians originally from East Asia. Captured or surrendered Japanese armed forces were housed separately from civilians in Prisoner of War camps on both islands.

U.S. forces overtook the last organized bastion of Japanese resistance on Saipan on July 9, 1944 but civilians were kept in the guarded camps until July 4, 1946. This was because pockets of Japanese resistance were often hiding in the limestone caves across the island, and intermittent fighting waged on well after July 9 when U.S. armed forces officially declared the island secured.

After the war ended and before any movement of populations could occur, the first priority of the U.S. Naval commanders was to make areas safe for the transport of goods and people. This meant removing dangerous unexploded ordnance and mines from land and sea, searching for and burying American war dead, finding and capturing holdouts, and bulldozing corpses thought to be Japanese into mass graves.

Amidst the ensuing chaos, U.S. Navy historian Dorothy Richard noted that the repatriation of “former enemy and alien personnel...was a job of mammoth proportions....it is small wonder that the postwar confusion in the Pacific simulated the wartime fighting in its intensity.”<sup>450</sup> As of August 1945, over six million armed forces

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<sup>450</sup> Dorothy Richard, *The United States Naval Administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Volume II* (United States Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1957): 26. Although the name “Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands” refers to the political designation for this U.S. territory in the Western Pacific from 1947 to 1990, Richard’s report covers the planning, invasion and occupation of Micronesia through the transfer of the islands from Naval control to the U.S. Department of the Interior on July 1, 1951.

and civilian Japanese were scattered throughout the Western Pacific and Asia.<sup>451</sup> A report from General MacArthur's files states that within a month of V-J Day (August 15, 1945), the U.S. had already begun to move the approximately 131,000 Japanese, 26,000 Ryūkyūans (Okinawans), 14,000 Koreans, 600 Formosans (Taiwanese) and 100 Chinese out of the Pacific Ocean Areas.<sup>452</sup> Reporting slightly different numbers, Richard's navy history notes that 147,314 "Oriental" people were in the Japanese Mandated Islands when the war ended: within this figure, about 52,000 were identified as civilians and the rest as military personnel, defined as "all members of the Japanese armed forces whatever their nationality."<sup>453</sup>

U.S. top-level discussions about how to plan for repatriation had initially begun in the fall of 1943 among a group of U.S. Far Eastern specialists, including military and civilian government leaders. A meeting was organized on October 19, 1943 to create a "general policy for the movement of large numbers of Japanese and to the determination of the effect which their removal would have upon the economy of the islands."<sup>454</sup>

However,

It was not until...just as the invasion of the Marshall Islands began [January 29, 1944], that CinCPOA [Commander in Chief, Central Pacific Ocean Area] officially requested that a policy be established for the ultimate disposal of Japanese civilians and civilian officials in the mandated area.<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> U.S. Army Center of Military History, "Chapter VI: Overseas Repatriation Movements," Reports of General MacArthur, MacArthur in Japan, Last updated 11 December 2006, <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/MacArthur%20Reports/MacArthur%20V1%20Sup/ch6.htm#ch6:148-9>.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>453</sup> Richard, *Volume II*, 27.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

How to deal with war refugees was one among several challenges facing United States planners at the time. In the final years of the Pacific War, these planners were actively meeting to prioritize management questions pertaining to Japan's defeat, surrender, and occupation. The U.S. created policies about the territories and populations in the growing list of areas under U.S. and Allied control as their need became pressing.

U.S. planners gave first priority to the repatriation of Japanese military personnel, and second to civilians. This was not a decision made by the inter-agency State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC),<sup>456</sup> which was the committee that was to be responsible for creating repatriation policies. Actually a clear policy had been placed for the repatriation of military personnel per a definition in the July 26, 1945 Potsdam Conference via the "Proclamation Defining Terms for Japanese Surrender."<sup>457</sup> However, many Japanese demobilized personnel (DMPs) and prisoners of war (POWs) in the Pacific areas who could have been sent back to Japan per the Potsdam Declaration were to be retained until January 1, 1947 in order to assist with repatriation.<sup>458</sup> The POWs and DMPs were used in the disarmament and reconstruction of the islands and allowed for the minimum use of American personnel in this effort.<sup>459</sup> In other words, the use of POWs and DMPs permitted more American personnel to return home faster. "Sailors who had

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<sup>456</sup> Acting Secretary of State Edward Stettinius proposed to establish the SWNCC in a letter dated November 29, 1944 to the Secretary of War Henry Stimson and the Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal. The idea was approved and the committee met for the first time on December 19, 1944 with the goal of addressing specific questions that were of both military and political importance.

<sup>457</sup> Paragraph 9 of the "Proclamation Defining Terms for Japanese Surrender," stated, "The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives" (from Department of State Bulletin, Vol. XIII, No. 318, July 29, 1945). University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "The Japanese Surrender Documents—WWII," *ibiblio: The Public's Library and Digital Archive*, accessed April 29, 2015, <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1945/450729a.html#1>.

<sup>458</sup> This schedule was not followed and the final group of Japanese military was removed from the area on December 27, 1947. Richard, *Volume II*, 33.

<sup>459</sup> Richard, *Volume II*, 33.

formerly manned ships in the [Imperial Japanese] merchant marine and navy were immediately available for assignment to repatriation ships.”<sup>460</sup>

In early September, an increased demand for a civilian repatriation policy was influenced by the “large number of...displaced persons [who] flocked to the ports in southern Honshu and Kyushu, hoping thereby to obtain preferential treatment for their repatriation.” General MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) recognized that this phenomenon posed public health challenges and was a pressing problem. In response, SCAP placed the program for managing repatriations under the “staff supervision of G-3 [Army operations] in conjunction with the Naval High Command.”<sup>461</sup>

General MacArthur’s records separate the repatriation into four phases: the first was from September 14, 1945 to February 28, 1946 when most of the ships used were Japanese and removing people from Micronesia, because the “United States controlled areas in the Western Pacific [were] given priority.” The U.S. did not have to consult with other Allied powers in order to make decisions regarding populations on these islands that were under exclusive U.S. control, and the decision to make them a priority helped the U.S. forces move more quickly through the repatriations process. In the Western Pacific, the mass repatriation of “Orientals” excluded people identified as “Occidentals,” diplomats, or missionaries who were “handled on their own individual merits.” U.S. repatriation policies were applied to all points of the Pacific west of the 180<sup>th</sup> meridian. At the same time as the U.S. military in Micronesia began repatriations, the SWNCC was

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<sup>460</sup> U.S. Army, “Overseas,” 150.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid, 149.



working on plans for the general program of repatriations of people from the rest of the former Japanese empire. At the end of this first phase, about 1,500,000 Japanese were repatriated and 800,000 non-Japanese were removed from Japan.<sup>462</sup>

## 6.2 “Undesirable from a Military Point of View”<sup>463</sup>

Questions about protocols for managing war-torn territories and populations faced U.S. government planners in a focused way by late 1945. The SWNCC body designated to create policies did so in increments. The first communication in the SWNCC file number 221 about the “repatriation of Japanese and other persons from the Japanese Mandated Islands” was concerned with Koreans in the islands. This may be because SCAP administrators had become concerned with Koreans who had congregated at ports in Japan’s main islands in September 1945. In a dispatch dated November 13, 1945, A.J. McFarland of the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked SWNCC whether or not an earlier document<sup>464</sup> that said that Koreans formerly employed by the Japanese in labor battalions outside Korea should be repatriated “by mutual agreement.”<sup>465</sup> Prevailing uncertainty about what to do with Koreans apparently led the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas on November 20, 1945 to request the SWNCC to comment on his working ideas on the issue of non-native people in the Japanese Mandated Islands. In

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<sup>462</sup> Ibid., 149-154.

<sup>463</sup> Hal Friedman argued that the appointment of white American military personnel in this area was unofficially favored in order to foster cultural Americanization. My use of this phrase refers to Friedman’s article as well as the appearance of statements about what was “desirable from a military point of view” in several SWNCC files cited in this chapter. Hal M. Friedman, “Races Undesirable from a Military Point of View:’ United States Cultural Security in the Pacific Islands, 1945-47,” *The Journal of Pacific History*, 32:1 (Jun 1997): 50.

<sup>464</sup> Specifically, this document was JCS 1328/5 subparagraph d.

<sup>465</sup> A.J. McFarland, Memorandum for the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, SM-0477, 13 November 1945, SWNCC 221.

this memo, the Commander's opinion was that non-native civilians ought to be repatriated and that Spanish priests and nuns should be replaced by U.S. priests and nuns, while also explicitly recognizing the complexity of the issue. Nevertheless, the memo continued:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that it would be desirable from a military point of view to evacuate all non-native civilians from the Japanese Mandated Islands, but recognize that political as well as military considerations are involved.<sup>466</sup>

Shortly thereafter, a directive of the SWNCC on November 23, 1945 containing a memo by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air requested urgent action on the question of repatriating Japanese, Koreans, and Okinawans from the Marianas, Marshalls/Gilbert and Caroline island areas because shipping not used in Operation Magic Carpet would soon be available.<sup>467</sup> The upcoming availability of shipping space was largely why he was requesting an urgent decision on this matter. He added that he thought that the repatriation of these people would be desirable.<sup>468</sup> SCAP agreed and stipulated that Uruga and Yokohama ports would receive no more than 6000 people per day into both.<sup>469</sup>

In response to the question about Korean repatriation, the SWNCC Subcommittee on the Far East on November 30, 1945 sent a memo to the SWNCC main body that included minutes from their fifty-third meeting. They said that no, the discussed policy<sup>470</sup> regarding Korean repatriation was not applicable to this case because this document had

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<sup>466</sup> A.J. McFarland for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Memorandum for the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, SM-4141, 20 November 1945, SWNCC 221.

<sup>467</sup> Magic Carpet was the name for the operation of moving military personnel from the Pacific area to the United States.

<sup>468</sup> Directive of the SWNCC, 23 November 1945, SWNCC 221/2/D.

<sup>469</sup> Richard, *Volume II*, 30.

<sup>470</sup> Specifically, JCS 1328/5 subparagraph d.

been written in reference to refugees in areas occupied by the Allies, but the former Japanese Mandated Islands were only occupied by the United States which meant that unilateral decisions on this question could be rendered. The problem being considered was “relative to the return to that part of Korea south of the 38<sup>th</sup> degree north latitude of Koreans in Pacific Ocean Area formerly employed by the Japanese armed forces in labor battalions outside Korea.” The memo concluded by saying that these Koreans may be returned to this portion of Korea by arrangement between the Commander in Chief United States Air Forces Pacific (CINCAFPAC) and the Commander in Chief Pacific Command (CINCPAC).<sup>471</sup>

The above dispatch was circulated to the appropriate departments of the SWNCC for assessment and amended recommendations. On December 15, a report numbered SWNCC 221/4 was approved and forwarded to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for review and implementation. That approved document would become policy. The following paragraphs explain key elements of that policy.

The SWNCC did not agree to evacuate non-American religious authorities. They instead decided that (a) all non-native civilians who wished to leave would be repatriated, along with everyone who (b) “constituted an active threat to security.” In addition, (c) everyone whose place of origin was the main Japanese islands would be repatriated (excepting anyone selected by CINCPAC to remain), along with (d) all Japanese nationals whose place of origin was the Liuchiu Islands [Okinawa] who had resided in the Japanese Mandated Islands for less than ten years. Okinawans who had been on the islands for less than ten years would be sent to either the Japanese main islands or to

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<sup>471</sup> Memo of the Subcommittee for the Far East for the SWNCC, 30 November 1945, SWNCC 221/3: 3-4.

Okinawa, but not to the latter location until adequate housing facilities had been established. At that time, Okinawa was still heavily damaged by the war. Sections (e) and (f) stipulated how the repatriation movements were to be organized and recorded, while section (g) stated that the situation of “non-natives” would again be examined and reports written once the repatriations authorized in this document were completed.<sup>472</sup>

An earlier report that had been written by the SWNCC Subcommittee for the Far East and circulated for consideration by the SWNCC had helped them to arrive at the above policies. This report was sent on December 6 and included an Appendix A detailing the “facts bearing upon the problem.” This appendix opened by stating that the most recent population figures showed that the total Japanese population in the islands was just over 100,000 and that overall, there were about as many immigrants as there were islanders. The non-native civilian population was said to be comprised of:

...22,296 Japanese from the main Japanese islands, 26,785 Okinawans, 4,761 Koreans, and 146 others of whom the bulk are Chinese although it is reported that there are some Germans and Spaniards.<sup>473</sup>

A chart recreating the total number of different ethnic groups residing on the main population centers as reported in this document is included in Figure 6.1.

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<sup>472</sup> Memo of the SWNCC for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 15 December 1945, SWNCC 221: 1-2.

<sup>473</sup> Memo from the SWNCC Secretariat to the SWNCC, 6 December 1945, SWNCC 221/4: 12. The population numbers cited in the report and quoted here do not match those displayed in the memo’s Appendix A. These numbers were produced, “according to the latest information and estimates available,” and cannot be seen as exact.

	Natives	Japanese	Okinawans	Koreans	Total
<b>Marianas (reported total)</b>	<b>4,575</b>	<b>10,293</b>	<b>17,474</b>	<b>3,941</b>	<b>36,283</b>
Marianas (sum total, pop. centers)	4,585	10,075	17,154	3,949	35,763
Rota	790	1,019	3,572	181	5,562
Saipan	3,795	5,415	8,121	1,395	18,726
Tinian	-	3,641	5,461	2,373	11,475
<b>Carolines (reported total)</b>	<b>35,814</b>	<b>10,765</b>	<b>9,170</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>56,561</b>
Carolines (sum total, pop. centers)	24,062	10,523	8,851	779	44,215
Palau	6,500	5,706	4,044	97	16,347
Yap	2,275	1,637	410	228	4,550
Truk	9,875	665	925	95	11,560
Ponape	5,412	2,515	3,472	359	11,758
<b>Marshalls</b>	<b>9,670</b>	<b>1,248</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,056</b>
<b>Overall TOTAL</b>	<b>50,059</b>	<b>22,306</b>	<b>26,782</b>	<b>4,753</b>	<b>103,900</b>

**Figure 6.1. Populations in the Japanese Mandated Islands, 1945<sup>474</sup>**

In addition to the non-native peoples reported here, Richard's navy history stated that there were thirty Europeans, two South Americans and two North Americans residing in the area, all of whom had been there for many years. The Europeans consisted of thirteen Spanish missionaries, eight German missionaries, seven Belgians of whom two were traders, one Czechoslovakian trader and one Russian merchant. One South American was a missionary and the other a farmer. The two North Americans were

<sup>474</sup> The original SWNCC report's population figures reproduced in this spreadsheet do not add up to the subtotals reported by area in the Mariana & Caroline islands. I have added an additional two lines to the Mariana and Caroline island groups' totals, called "sum total, pop. centers." These totals show the difference between the reported totals versus the sum total of population centers representing the products of the reported numbers. Population center totals are lower than the reported totals, and the discrepancy amounts may be assumed to represent populations residing on islands other than population centers. These figures were reported as estimates, and oddly the numbers of "natives" reported in the Marianas area is less than the sum total figure of each population center. Appendix A, Memo from the SWNCC Secretariat to the SWNCC, 6 December 1945, SWNCC 221/4/D: 12.

merchants. The policy of compulsory repatriation was not applied to any of these people.<sup>475</sup>

Appendix A attached to the SWNCC 221/4 report further states that:

The recommendation concerning the repatriation of non-native civilians is based primarily in the Navy's conviction that the interests of security demand the removal of the Japanese and Okinawans, and secondarily on the desire to secure administrative simplicity and to protect the native society and economy.<sup>476</sup>

What's more, a summary statement in Appendix B of this document reiterates the above point by making it clear that, "the repatriation of Japanese is held to be necessary in the interests of security inasmuch as the islands will be developed primarily as strategic bases."<sup>477</sup> A prerequisite for constructing bases was the establishment of "administrative simplicity" which hinged on an absence of Japanese and Okinawans who were viewed by the navy as threats to security. But despite this recommendation, the SWNCC would decide to treat Okinawans differently from Japanese, at least at first.

### 6.3 Managing Populations Differently

The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff accepted SWNCC report 221/4 and used it as their repatriation policy for populations in the former Japanese Mandated islands. This policy gave Japanese residents no option about whether to stay or go—they all had to go. The only exceptions included the POWs and DMPs who were retained as laborers for a few months, and a handful of Japanese who were integrated into local Chamorro and/or

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<sup>475</sup> ComMarianas ltr ser 03456 dtd 6 Oct 45 and ComMarianas ltr ser 1570 dtd 15 Jul 47 (Richard, *Volume II*, 35).

<sup>476</sup> Appendix A, Memo from the SWNCC Secretariat to the SWNCC, 6 December 1945, SWNCC 221/4/D: 12.

<sup>477</sup> Appendix B, Memo from the SWNCC Secretariat to the SWNCC, 6 December 1945, SWNCC 221/4/D: 13.

Carolinian families such that they almost went unnoticed by authorities. Okinawans and Koreans residing on the islands were given a choice about whether to stay or go, but for Okinawans that choice would later be revoked. Paragraph three of Appendix B of the December 6 report explained the following rationale for these variances:

In view of the differences which exist between the Japanese and the Okinawans, it is appropriate to differentiate the treatment accorded to these two racial groups. In the case of Okinawans who have settled in the islands for more than a decade, it appears to be wise policy to give them an option to remain in the islands if they do not constitute an active threat to security.<sup>478</sup>

As for Koreans, paragraph four states that they would be handled differently than heretofore discussed. This is because Korea was said to soon be an independent country and Koreans were therefore regarded as liberated people, so with the exception of people formerly employed by the Japanese Armed forces, “it would not be proper to forcibly repatriate them...but it is probable that many Koreans would avail themselves of an offer of voluntary repatriation.”<sup>479</sup> Mindful of the Soviet presence in Korea and the standing U.S. agreement to administratively split the peninsula along the thirty-eighth degree parallel line, these U.S. planners were concerned with following through on their trusteeship promise and thus treated Koreans as liberated peoples. Further, paragraph six speculates that retaining some Okinawans and Koreans would “help bridge the gap from the old regime to the new one and would provide at least the nucleus of the labor force which will presumably be necessary for the American military authorities.”<sup>480</sup> This statement was the only instance in this file when SWNCC members made reference to the idea that these people’s residence might “help bridge the gap from the old regime to the

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<sup>478</sup> Ibid.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid., 14.

new one.” However the idea of letting some Japanese stay for the same reason was never entertained, and Japanese were always seen a threat to security.

The next step for SWNCC was to devise policies for dealing with these people who might decide to stay. They undertook more deliberations on the repatriation policy in early 1946. At issue was how to manage Okinawans who had been in the Marianas for more than ten years and who were not former members of the Japanese Armed Forces. SWNCC did not consider these people “Japanese,” and they might have been seen as having the potential to “bridge the gap from the old regime to the new one.”

From January 15-17, 1946, representatives of all U.S. armed forces commanders who were dealing with repatriation questions held a meeting in Tokyo to establish mutually agreeable standardized operating procedures.<sup>481</sup> The meeting determined areas that would serve as processing centers for repatriates: “the commander of the Marianas area at Guam was made responsible for onward routing and supply of repatriation vessels while within the limits of the Pacific Ocean Area.”<sup>482</sup> These commanders reached a decision that they announced on January 15, 1946: Japanese married to “natives” of the islands would not be exempted from the rule that all Japanese males and females had to be repatriated. As for people who were not Japanese but were married to Japanese, they said that “native wives and children of Japanese native marriages could remain or be evacuated with the Japanese husband as each native wife desired.”<sup>483</sup> This same policy would later be applied to Okinawan people.

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<sup>481</sup> U.S. Army, “Overseas,” 166.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>483</sup> Richard, *Volume II*, 38.



On January 30, 1946, a memo from the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air, John R. Sullivan, in regard to SWNCC 221/4 recommended that the SWNCC adopt CINCPAC's plan for concentrating on Tinian island all remaining Okinawans throughout the Mandated Islands. Tinian island had been inhabited during the last few years of the colonial era almost exclusively by people classified as *hōjin* (countrymen) of the Japanese empire, or East Asian settlers. People from Okinawa Prefecture had moreover made up the majority of the settler residents on Tinian island. When Sullivan wrote his memo, the only residents on the island were U.S. armed forces overseeing several thousand civilians in Camp Chulu. Sullivan writes that CINCPAC's main reasons for proposing Tinian for potential resettlement by Okinawans included that it was the most agriculturally viable location where they might develop a livelihood beyond a subsistence level. The committee thought that "concentration of Okinawans in a single community will eliminate many social, political, and administrative problems."<sup>484</sup> This matter was labeled SWNCC 221/5 on February 1<sup>st</sup>. At the time, CINCPAC estimated that upon completion of the repatriation program the total number of Okinawans who might want to remain would not exceed 6,500 in the entire Mandated Islands area, with no more than 3000 on Saipan and Tinian.<sup>485</sup>

It is not clear how this estimate was calculated, and on February 7 a person named JK Penfield wrote a note requesting that CINCPAC give further information to SWNCC before final approval. Specifically, Penfield outlined the following two issues: first, s/he wanted to know the probable number of Okinawans who would not accept Tinian

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<sup>484</sup> Memorandum from John R. Sullivan, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air for the SWNCC, 30 January 1946, SWNCC report 221/4.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

settlement and second, what kinds of hardships would they face if they were settled on Tinian compared to the hardships they would face if they were repatriated to Okinawa.<sup>486</sup>

In response, on February 8<sup>th</sup> SWNCC secretaries referred a new report labeled 221/5 to the Subcommittee on the Far East for further study and recommendations. Their directive stated that the Operations Division believed that the information in the CINCPAC statement was insufficient to allow for a decision to be reached, and stated that careful consideration of the facts should be weighted before deciding upon a course of action. Specifically, SWNCC suggested that the following be considered: a. Repatriation to Okinawa in lieu of resettlement on Tinian; b. Plans for bases or base rights for Tinian and the bearing this will have upon proposed resettlement; and c. Obtaining the views of CINCPAC on the plan.<sup>487</sup> The directive also recommended that since it did not appear that General MacArthur had been privy to this discussion, the Joint Chiefs of Staff committee should study this problem for comment from a military point of view prior to SWNCC review because, “these and possibly other related questions may have a bearing on the resettlement problem.”<sup>488</sup>

A reply arrived shortly. On February 22<sup>nd</sup> a classified message was sent from CINCAFPAC Tokyo to the War Department. The message recommended instead that Okinawans not be resettled on Tinian because they wanted to retain a heavy bomber base there, and instead suggested: “Consider maximum economy and efficiency of

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<sup>486</sup> JK Penfield, unaddressed note, February 7, 1946, SWNCC 221.

<sup>487</sup> Directive from the SWNCC Secretariat to the State-War-Navy Coordinating Subcommittee for the Far East, 8 February 1946, SWNCC 221/5.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

administrative effort can be achieved by integrating U.S. controlled islands of Marianas, with U.S. Army governmental administration of entire group.”<sup>489</sup>

This opinion from SCAP in Tokyo influenced final policy. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 1946, a memo from SWNCC proclaimed their decision on the matter of the Okinawan resettlement on Tinian. With an amended clause added (the clause preceding note 490, below), the following excerpted portions of SWNCC report 221/7 became policy on April 11, 1946.

4. Subsequent to the formulation by CINCPAC of his plan, additional information became available. CINCPAC now considers that although forceful repatriation to the Ryukyus [Okinawa] of the remaining Okinawans in the Mandated Islands would work a temporary hardship on them because of the housing situation, the long term interests of the people would best be served by repatriation in view of their future social, political, and economic status. The United States has no interest in retaining any Okinawans in the Marianas as a possible labor force. Because of the radically differing culture, traditions and customs of the Okinawans from that of the natives, together with the marked antipathy of the natives for the Okinawans, CINCPAC recommends that all Okinawans be repatriated.

... 6. Army Air Force plans for the retention of a heavy bomber base on Tinian in a caretaking status make it undesirable from a military point of view to concentrate on that island all Okinawans remaining in the Mandated Islands or to allow those now on Tinian to remain there.

7. Although this Government is opposed to any general policy of forcible repatriation of persons unwilling to return to their home countries,<sup>490</sup> in view of the special circumstances existing in the Mandated Islands, the relationship between the natives and non-native civilians, and the needs of national security, it is concluded that in this instance CINCPAC should be authorized to repatriate all Okinawans in the Mandated Islands in lieu of concentrating them on Tinian. In carrying out this repatriation, adequate records should be kept concerning all persons who are repatriated in order

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<sup>489</sup> Classified message from CINCAFAC Tokyo Japan, to the War Department, 22 February 1946, SWNCC 221.

<sup>490</sup> The Acting State Department SWNCC member in a memo sent sometime before 11 April 1946 added this amended clause to SWNCC 221/7. Memorandum from H. Freeman Matthews for the Acting State Department Member of SWNCC, undated memo, SWNCC 221/7.

to make it possible to deal with any claims for compensation or reimbursement which may arise.<sup>491</sup>

Contrary to the rationale presented in this policy decision, Dorothy Richard's widely cited history of this period published in the 1950s provided a different explanation for this outcome. Richard reported that Okinawans had lost their right to stay in the Marianas due to their own indecision. Among the 6,500 Okinawans who wanted to remain in the area, her report stated:

...of these only about 3600 were willing to go to Tinian. The number kept constantly changing, however, because the Okinawans could not make up their minds about staying and CinCPOA, disturbed by their indecision, reverted to its original position that it would be preferable to repatriate them all. By March 22, the total number of those wishing to remain had decreased to 1088. SWNCC finally, early in May 1946, authorized repatriation of all Okinawans and eventually, as shipping became available, they were sent home.<sup>492</sup>

Richards' military history makes it seem as though these Okinawans had sealed their own fate by being indecisive. It is possible that officers at the lower levels of command in the Mariana Islands were disturbed about Okinawan expressions of ambivalence or indecision, as Richard reports, but this was not the reason why SWNCC decided to remove all Okinawans from the Northern Mariana Islands. Richard researched and published her volume in the early 1950s, and she may have been working from anecdotal information that was available to her at the time. The SWNCC committee files were moreover not declassified until the early 1970s and Richard had no way of gaining access to these reports.

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<sup>491</sup> Memo of the SWNCC for the SWNCC Secretary, 20 March 1946, SWNCC report 221/ 7, pp. 1-2.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-1.

The decision to remove all Okinawan settlers and to abandon working plans to resettle them on Tinian had to do with the perceived need as expressed by SWNCC military members to prepare the island to become a military base. Once military members of the SWNCC had given the opinion that Tinian would be better used as a military base, the wider committee adopted the suggestion to reject Okinawan relocation to Tinian.

Therefore while Japanese and Okinawans were repatriated with few exceptions, civilian Koreans had all been given an option to stay. This meant that very few East Asian settlers were exempted from repatriation, the largest group being Koreans. However seventeen Japanese are recorded as having remained on Saipan, but these people had married local indigenous islanders and “had become thoroughly assimilated with the Saipanese.” They had been included in the population of Chamorros and Carolinians entering the civilian Camp Susupe in Saipan, and their presence was not discovered until August 1946. These seventeen had probably also hid in the caves together with Chamorros and/or Carolinians during the battle. The Commander in the Marianas recommended that they be allowed to stay, and CINCPA agreed.<sup>493</sup> It is likely that more Japanese or Okinawan people were never discovered by U.S. authorities and ended up staying in these islands after the war as indistinguishable members of indigenous families.

Then, “in early June it was realized that shipping available for repatriation far exceeded the number of repatriates that could be sent to evacuation ports.” By June 1946 repatriation numbers began to decline and for the first time, shipping was becoming more widely available. Okinawans were returned to Okinawa “after the transfer of military

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<sup>493</sup> Richard, *Volume II*, 44.

government from CINCPAC to CINICAFPAC was effected on 1 July 1946.” By the end of that year, Army records state that all non-Japanese and Ryûkyûans [Okinawans] who wanted to be repatriated had been sent home if they had not been granted the opportunity to elect to stay where they were. By the end of the repatriation program’s third phase, in total about 130,800 people had been sent to Japan and 40,700 to Formosa, the Ryûkyûs, China and Korea.<sup>494</sup>

Some Micronesians had been living in Japan before and during the war, or had been sent to Japan along with their repatriated Japanese family members. Many of these Micronesians were subsequently allowed to return to the islands after the war. The numbers of people in this situation are reported to have been as follows: in January 1946, one person returned to Yap and one to Palau; in April, six people returned who had accompanied their husbands to Japan earlier that year; in July, eleven people returned; in August, four people returned; in October: fifteen Palauans returned. In March 1947, seventeen returned; in November: ten Yapese returned via a Japanese phosphate ship en route to Angaur, Palau, because the designated repatriation program had by then ended and dedicated vessels were no longer operating.<sup>495</sup>

After the repatriation program ended, Japanese members of Micronesian families made many requests to resettle in the former Mandated Islands. There were so many of these requests that on May 2, 1947 the Commander in Chief of the Far East asked the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT) to restate navy policy regarding certain cases. These cases included people residing in Japan who were: 1.

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<sup>494</sup> U.S. Army, “Overseas,” 158-68.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

Japanese people sent to Japan without their Micronesian families; 2. Micronesian people with a Japanese husband, wife, or “half-breed” children who had been living in Japan at the end of the war; 3. The same as 2 but who had been repatriated to Japan after the war; or 4. The same as 3 except that the Japanese member of the family was not supporting the family or had since died.<sup>496</sup>

On May 8<sup>th</sup> CINCPACFLT “agreed that the integrity of the family unit should be preserved but only to the extent that it did not conflict with the stated repatriation policy.” His statement regarding the specific groups of people was as follows: 1. These people were not allowed to return, and if their families had not been given the choice to go to Japan they could not do so now; people in groups 2. and 3. “could maintain integrity of the family unit only by remaining outside the ex-mandates since the Japanese member of the family could not return;” and people in group 4. could go back to the islands “if the break in the relationship with the Japanese family member was complete and final as established by divorce decree or death certificate.”<sup>497</sup> Under no circumstances were Japanese members of local Micronesian families to be granted re-entry into their former Western Pacific homes. Many of these islands had been turned into U.S. military bases and these populations were viewed as treats to the security of these bases.

The phrase “integrity of the family” as these petitioning individuals might have defined it was clearly not entertained by the U.S. military in Micronesia. Their petitions were submitted to the logic of the wartime repatriation policies. The rigor with which they were enforced was unwavering in the years that followed. Richard writes,

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<sup>496</sup> Richard, *Volume II*, 45.

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-46.

Such definite policy statements failed to stop requests from non-natives, especially Japanese, to return to the islands. CINCPACFLT remained adamant but the problem arose again and again to plague the island administrators.<sup>498</sup>

U.S. postwar administrators' strict adherence to repatriation policies demonstrates a strategic orientation to interpreting the meaning of family integrity. These administrators prioritized decidedly military political objectives toward managing these civilian populations, and relied upon inflexible race categories to separate people towards the maintenance of security for U.S. military command of the area.

#### **6.4 Broken Homes**

Although the U.S. policy decisions represented indigenous islanders as having felt antipathy toward settler populations, this statement must be questioned. Given what is known to have been true of popular attitudes toward Japanese people in the U.S. during the 1940s, it is clear that this statement more directly speaks to American attitudes than those of indigenous islanders.

The dominance of anti-Japanese sentiment in mid-century mainstream American culture strongly suggests that the negative opinions about Japanese settlers cited as partial justification for their mass removal were far more reflective of American leaders' opinions than those of indigenous islanders at the time. Institutionalized racism had disproportionately targeted people of Japanese descent in 1940s America, and anti-Japanese feelings were common among American civilian and military personnel at this time.

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<sup>498</sup> Ibid.



In the NMI, American military culture dominated public sites especially in the period of Naval control from 1945-67. Saipan was called “The Navy’s Island” in 1959 by author Robert Trumbull because the entire island was a U.S. Navy base.<sup>499</sup> In the postwar NMI, a pro-American cultural climate influenced locally circulating narratives about recent history. For indigenous islanders who survived the war, especially in the immediate postwar years it was probably important to speak to the expectations of American military authorities in order to best ensure not just survival but also prosperity under American military rule. The newly arrived military personnel had recently demonstrated that they could be menacing and violent. Then they built large military bases in these islanders’ backyards that can appear intimidating to both locals and to people in nearby countries. When talking to American combatants whose war machinery had just decimated the island and taken the lives of hundreds of islanders, many survivors probably assumed that it would be safest to avoid disagreements with the troops.

It is more accurate to describe indigenous islanders as having ambivalent and sometimes affectionate relationships with settler peoples, although antipathy is probably accurate in the case of islanders’ attitudes towards the Japanese military. Feelings of affection would have been especially likely for members of households that ended up being broken apart by repatriation orders. The fact that the problem of re-settlement requests starting in 1947 “arose again and again to plague the administrators” stands as evidence of lasting ties between Japan, Okinawa and Micronesia resulting from decades of cohabitation. In contrast to the dominant opinion of American military personnel as

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<sup>499</sup> Robert Trumbull, “2. The Navy’s Island,” *Paradise in Trust: A Report on Americans in Micronesia—1946-1958* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1959): 18-25.

expressed in the racist repatriation policy decisions, as this research has shown, islanders who lived during this period had intimate, ambivalent, and often positive relationships with their former Japanese neighbors, friends, classmates, and colleagues.

According to people who lived through the Japanese period and war, much of the anger and antipathy that has existed in the NMI towards “Japanese” people has been expressed especially in reference to Japanese military personnel. There are exceptions to this generalization. Commonly, however, antipathy toward Japanese rule expressed by Chamorros and Carolinians in the NMI tends to pertain to the time period when the military took over island affairs and conscripted men, women and children into the war effort. This antipathy is not as often associated with the thirty years of Japanese colonial rule of the NMI between 1914-1944.

Some indigenous islanders were members of multiracial families who were torn apart by war and repatriation orders, and their feelings toward settler populations would have been far more complex and affectionate than the SWNCC records suggest. The following example is of a first-hand account explained to me on record by a man named Elias M. Borja who had been part of a Korean-Chamorro family during the Japanese era. His stories suggest that it is sometimes not possible to tell what ethnic background an indigenous islander in the NMI might claim as his or her own. His stories similarly demonstrate that the definition of what it means to be “Japanese,” “Korean,” and “Chamorro” sometimes have overlapping boundaries. Talking about colonial Japan in dismissive or derogatory ways, however common it may have been in the past, can come across as insulting or hurtful to people who claim East Asian settlers as family members, or indeed to anyone who feels affinity for these people.

#### 6.4.1 'I used to be Korean-Chamorro'

Elias Manibusan Borja is a Chamorro man who told me about his Korean-Chamorro family from the Japanese days. Elias retired in 2012 from a lifetime of Chamorro family from the Japanese days. Elias retired in 2012 from a lifetime of government service and now lives on Tinian island. Before our conversation, he said he had not told many people about this part of his past—he was a politician on Tinian for many years after the war, but the nature of childhood days had never been an object of local public knowledge.



**Figure 6.2: Elias Borja with a Friend in San Jose, Tinian, November 28, 2012**

I was introduced to Mr. Borja when I spent a few days on Tinian in late 2012. On the second or third day of my visit, the owner of the Fleming Hotel called me at my motel to let me know that a man who remembered the Japanese days was eating breakfast at her restaurant. She told him about my project, he agreed to meet with me. I walked across the street and had coffee with him and his friend Annie Tang (pictured).

He spoke in a mixture of English and Japanese, often starting a thought in one language and completing it in another. This back-and-forth use of languages was common among senior citizens with whom I spoke for this project. He told me that a Japanese researcher had interviewed him once several years ago, but also that he had never talked on record about some of the things he told me that day.

Elias was born on July 20, 1936 in Garapan, Saipan. As a child, he says he was known as Shing, Eikai. He was the second to the last of eighteen children in his family—nine from his father and nine from his mother. His biological Chamorro father had died and his Chamorro mother remarried during the Japanese times. His biological father's name was Giellemo C. Borja, and his mother's name was Maria Manibusan Shing. His stepfather's name was Antonio M. Shing, and he emigrated from Korea to work as a cook on the islands of Saipan and Rota for the Nan'yô Bôeki Kaisha (South Seas Trading Company).<sup>500</sup> His stepfather would speak to him in Japanese. Elias was called Shing, Eikai when he was young, where Shing was his stepfather's last name and Eikai was his first name. He went to Japanese school, *shôgakkô*, rather than public school for islanders, *kôgakkô*, because of his stepfather's Korean background and because he had learned to speak Japanese before he was old enough to enroll.

He says he was in first grade when the air raids came and he stopped going to school. When it came time to flee the air raids, he hid in a cave with Japanese people because his stepfather was a cook and would make meals two or three times a day for the group.<sup>501</sup> Island residents usually hid in caves during the war with other people they

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<sup>500</sup> Elias Manibusan Borja, interview with the author, Fleming Restaurant, San Jose, Tinian, November 28, 2012.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

trusted, and this usually meant sharing a cave with people of similar ethnic background. The fact that Elias remembers hiding with Japanese people suggests that his multiracial Korean-Japanese family had trusting relationships with Japanese people at that time, to the extent that they ran away from the war together. At the same time, this detail underscores the importance of his stepfather's social role as cook.

We talked about other Korean-Chamorro families in the NMI. After the war, Elias remembers that some Japanese families changed their names to Korean names because of the American policy that forced the repatriation of Japanese and Okinawan people, but not Koreans. "When the war is over you know, he changed his, nu...name nu? Because afraid, because he's pure Japanese but he put him as a Korean...because when he puts you as a Korean, you safe."<sup>502</sup> Elias was describing either Japanese or Okinawan settlers who changed their names to Korean names to be "safe" in the postwar American period. I was not sure what he meant at first, and I followed up by asking what specific family he had in mind.

Elias remembers that one local Chamorro family known to be of Japanese descent had decided it was in their best interest to claim Korean instead of Japanese ancestry because that would have allowed them to stay on the island after the war. "...They don't send back to the country except only the Japanese...especially when you Korean and you married to Chamorro, they tell you it's up to you to choose."<sup>503</sup> Chamorro descendants of the family he referred to in this story have told me informally that they are of partial Korean descent, not Japanese. As far as I know, none of this family's living descendants

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<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.

have said that their elders decided to tell everyone that they were Korean in order to be allowed to remain in the islands after the war. Elias' memory about this particular family could be mistaken, or it could be that living members of the family in question do not know that they were once Japanese or Okinawan settlers who were actually not of Korean descent, and somebody in the family chose to tell people this story so that the Americans would let them stay. Whether or not this particular story is true, the American SWNCC repatriation policies that gave Korean settlers the status of "liberated peoples" as opposed to the Japanese and Okinawan settlers would have created incentives for the emergence of this kind of tactic.

Elias told me that after the war, the Americans wrote his last name as "Shing" when they recorded him in their registry, but that this was incorrect. He remarked that while there are Cing or Sing families in Korea there is no Shing. Shing, Eikai went to court to change his name to Elias Borja in May 1955 before he married his late wife. He said, "if I don't do that, nu, you know so—I think they gonna be ah, hard to give us a ID card or a passport to the family."<sup>504</sup> "They" refers to the U.S. Navy administration. Elias changed his own and his family's surname by taking his birth father's Chamorro last name. Doing this gave them a more Chamorro-sounding name and a far better chance that they would not be the targets of questioning or scrutiny on these islands that had been transformed into U.S. military bases.

While at first resident Koreans were "liberated" and granted more personal liberties by the SWNCC than Japanese and Okinawans, during the 1950s era of the Korean War it seems that they too came to be regarded with suspicion by navy

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<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

administrators. Elias's story about changing his name to the Chamorro Borja (his biological father's last name) in 1955 in order prevent having trouble with the American military government points to the existence of discriminating attitudes held by American administrators at the time. He changed his name a full ten years after the end of the war. Elias's stories suggest that people from multiracial families had incentives to change their names to comply with American postwar desires for them to meet certain racial criteria if they wanted to continue to live in these new military base and base-adjacent areas.

Given the option granted to Koreans in 1946, Elias' father Antonio Shing chose to stay. I asked Elias what happened to the rest of the Shing family, and he said,

...I was asking the government in Korea, but they said sorry because you cannot go there...what I hear is, nu, [my father's] father and some of the family like brother and sister died except one lived... in North Korea.<sup>505</sup>

He has never found out anything more about his stepfather's family, nor has he ever met any of them. The tense relationship between the U.S. and North Korea today makes it unlikely that he or his descendants might be able to easily find them.

### **6.5 Repatriation as the Final Act of War**

Although the war was officially over by the time repatriations began in 1946, the transition to the postwar U.S. administration involved removing populations who were seen to pose a threat to security for the new regime. The war was thus not really over until the Japanese and Okinawan civilian settlers, not just military personnel, were all removed. These people were treated as remnants of war rather than as people with intimate bonds at stake in their dispossession. They became casualties of war in this

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<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

sense—they lost family members, they could not remain together on the islands, and their appeals were repeatedly denied. Japan’s loss of the war had made these people’s former colonial lives untenable. Ultimately civilians who were members of multiracial households in this Japanese-turned-U.S. colonial location had to give up their family ties, and if they had not been discovered, it was in their interest to keep them concealed throughout the Cold War period.

The Japanese Americans in the U.S. mainland who had been interned in civilian camps and dispossessed of their properties and rights for being “Japanese” on American soil is in some ways a similar example. Both of these incidents represent the unfortunate consequences of period American racism that viewed all Japanese as enemy combatants. In the former Japanese Mandated Islands area, multiracial Japanese families faced dispossessions when they found themselves occupying the role of political subjects caught between two competing empires (roles they had played during the war as well). However, as opposed to Japanese Americans in the U.S. mainland, the Japanese colonies were changing hands from the crumbling to the conquering empire.

To date, entrapped civilians have tended to be seen as either the victors or the vanquished in this “good war” with clearly demarked sides. You were settler or indigenous, but not a mix of the two. War demanded that people take sides—perhaps especially those people occupying the vague middle, multiracial space. Indigenous Northern Mariana islanders who had been imperialized aliens in the Japanese empire became wards of the U.S. as a result of the war, and had no rights to protest the loss of their loved ones marked for deportation. U.S. repatriation policies broke apart households while foreclosing upon the possibility that these experiences could be thought of as



damage or suffering resulting from the Japan-U.S. conflict. Yet this is precisely what they were. For these reasons, the race-based and U.S. military security-driven repatriation policies and their strict maintenance in the years that followed can be considered the final act of war by the U.S. against the “Japanese” in the NMI.

## **6.6 Americanized History Constrains Multiracial Japanese Legacies**

In the years immediately following the conclusion of WWII hostilities, U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force planners were narrating the importance of their historical role in winning the Pacific War in order to compete for the lion’s share of U.S. military funding in the postwar period. Inter-service rivalry had been rampant during the war and famous stories of conflicts in command abound from the Army and UCMC units that landed on Saipan.<sup>506</sup> What is not as well documented is that inter-service rivalry in the immediate postwar period included debates between military and civilian branches of government over how to best manage the region.<sup>507</sup> Yet among the many issues being debated at the time, it seems that the Department of State civilian branch of government was never opposed to the idea that the U.S. military should have the right to build bases on the Pacific Islands acquired by the U.S. from Japan. There was widespread agreement that the U.S. needed to maintain these forward bases to prevent another Pearl Harbor from happening in the future.

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<sup>506</sup> An infamous rivalry for control of the advancing battle line on Saipan erupted between Army 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Major General Ralph C. Smith and Marine Corps commander Lieutenant General Holland “Howlin’ Mad” Smith.

<sup>507</sup> Hal M. Friedman, *Governing the American Lake: The U.S. Defense and Administration of the Pacific, 1945-1947* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007): 209.

Citing WWII history to justify strategic decisions was common in planning discussions at the time. Hal Friedman writes:

These individuals, both military and civilian, were concerned enough about the United States' future position in the Pacific Basin to be willing to weaken the United States' commitment to UN principles and argue for predominant U.S. control in the area, whether by strategic trusteeship or annexation.<sup>508</sup>

This civilian branch of the U.S. government in these 1945-47 debates appears to have used its knowledge of history, existing treaties, and diplomatic norms to support policies that would ensure that the U.S. military had special access to these islands. Friedman argued that, "the Pacific was the region of the world where the U.S. most clearly violated its traditional rhetoric about being anti-colonial and anti-imperial" through what he calls "strategic imperialism."<sup>509</sup>

Strategic imperialism is a useful term for summarizing the overall policy goals motivating U.S. decisions regarding resident populations in the former Japanese Mandate in Micronesia. Strategic objectives for these islands still tend to obfuscate the contingencies of daily life on these islands that have been and still are people's homes, and are not just strategic locations within the U.S. military base network.

The frameworks of knowledge that organized colonial Japanese and U.S. military sources have structurally been unable to acknowledge the existence of multiracial families dating to the Japanese colonial period. There remains a lack of widespread knowledge of the existence of multiracial families that formed during this period. There is also a lack of recognition of the suffering they may have faced for being part-

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<sup>508</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid., xxvi.

“Japanese,” especially in the postwar years of U.S. Navy rule from 1945 to 1962 when travel and commerce were severely restricted, and about which few histories have been written to date. Rather than assume that postwar mass repatriation campaigns resulted in a virtual absence of Japanese members of Northern Mariana Island families, it also must be recalled that families of multiracial descent do continue to live in these islands even if they have largely been ignored by official sources and remain understudied.

U.S. postwar policy in Micronesia, and in the NMI especially, made it difficult for former settlers to visit and maintain friendly relationships after the war. After the war, except with special permission, repatriated populations could not return to visit the islands until the U.S. ban on travel was lifted in 1962.<sup>510</sup> After restrictions were lifted, visitation increased and friendships were rekindled. With the 1980s tourism boom, even more connections could be made. Some stories exist about reunions that happened when Japanese repatriates travelled back to Micronesia in the 1970s, 80s, or 90s as tourists to find their long-lost relatives. By then, people had remarried and families had remade themselves. Despite the strict initial postwar policies, these people did not forget about each other but their situations had changed drastically by the time they found each other again in the late twentieth century.

The dominant liberation paradigm for NMI history has likely constrained some people’s willingness to admit that Japanese, Okinawans, or Koreans were or are members of their families. Elias Borja admitted that it was difficult to talk with me about his Korean stepfather. He said:

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<sup>510</sup> Even during the period of restricted access, at least one Japanese group visited Micronesia and constructed memorials in memory of war dead.

I'm so... ashamed to mention you know, lot of people in our island they don't know me, what my mother happened and you know. But I cannot nu, I cannot withhold that—how to say that, that my father's Chamorro, but they put me as a Shing, like a half-caste ah? At that time.<sup>511</sup>

Other people like Elias might be quietly holding onto memories of their multiracial childhood homes. It is likely that these people understandably want to distance themselves from dominant histories of Japan in the Pacific, which portray the Japanese empire in an overwhelmingly negative light and are based in U.S. nationalistic historiography with its goals of mobilizing citizens. People may have also felt reticence to share these memories because of Mariana intra-archipelagic tensions surrounding the vast differences between Guam islanders' versus Northern Mariana islanders' experiences under Japanese rule.

Rather than stigmatizing NMI indigenous people or their family members for their entanglement in Japanese imperial history, it is time that dominant discourses recognize existing local knowledge: many repatriated Japanese, Korean, and Okinawan former settlers are still the friends and family members of NMI indigenous people. A few of these people remained on the islands after the war and are by now elder members of indigenous families. These relationships are not defined by Japanese imperial rhetoric or American political identities, but are the products of intimacies arising from decades of cohabitation.

The violence with which the U.S. removed the tens of thousands of people from this area to make way for military bases and then kept former East Asian residents out of Micronesia during Cold War have never been recognized by dominant histories or

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<sup>511</sup> Elias Manibusan Borja, interview with the author, Fleming Restaurant, San Jose, Tinian, November 28, 2012.

memories. Friendly and familial relationships between these repatriates and islanders should not be dismissed as shameful or treasonous bonds that ought to have been broken. They emerged on their own merits and need not be justified. These colonial subjects did not create the conditions in which they lived, but they did have the ability to create meaningful lives within them.

U.S. Navy logs kept by Guam commanders to record the repatriation of individuals along with the records of unsuccessful petitions for re-emigration should be consulted to piece together the individual cases and the overall number of multiracial families who were torn apart after the Pacific War. In addition, researchers ought to try to locate the living descendants of families who may have lost contact with their East Asian relatives as a result of American strategic imperialism. These descendants ought to be given the opportunity to make their own decisions about what actions to take to cope with this historical violence.

## **Conclusion: History According Indigenous Agents**

Colonial and neo-colonial rule has characterized Northern Mariana Islands history for what is now approaching five hundred years. These islands have been strategic locations to a sequence of foreign powers with more guns and resources, and indigenous inhabitants' roles and representations of these roles in history texts have been marginalized many times over. The lifetimes of the islands' eldest living residents have spanned more than one colonial regime, as did the lives of their parents and grandparents. As historical frames of reference, these people's lives pose a challenge to shorter, nationalized history narratives that appear stunted and self-referential by comparison.

The act of writing history has the potential to foster imagined and real links between people and national political bodies, and narratives about this multiply colonized region have most often taken the form of stories that explain why the islands and islanders belong to the newest political regime. This dissertation has departed from this dominant historiographic mode and has instead pushed the boundaries of nationalized frameworks for historical narration. I have done this by researching and assessing elderly indigenous Northern Mariana Islanders' marginalized interpretations of their experiences of living under more than one colonial regime, and have focused especially on their memories of the Japanese period.

This concluding chapter interprets the findings of my research and summarizes recent local histories that are helpful for understanding contemporary cultures of memory. I start by reviewing the ways in which the dominant liberation paradigm constrains local discourses about memory and identity related to the Japanese colonial era and war in the Northern Mariana Islands. Next, I outline under-researched topics related

to the lasting consequences of Japan-U.S. fighting in the Northern Mariana Islands. I explain that after the war, repatriated settlers formed groups that continue to return to the islands regularly to commemorate war dead and reconnect with local people.

Next, I outline the most important topics presented in this dissertation that have been elided by mainstream liberation narratives. These include the idea that colonial regimes have not been antithetical, but that incoming colonial governments have utilized systems and records created by earlier regimes. Another important idea missed by dominant narratives is that the Japanese and U.S. colonial eras are comparable. This became clear as indigenous interview participants recalled the roles they played during the Japanese period versus the postwar period of control by the U.S., and interpreted the differences between them. These comparisons reveal insights about the nature of everyday life during the years from about 1930-1960, or from the end of the Japanese period through the period of control by the U.S. Navy. Still another idea that escapes the liberation paradigm is that multiracial families were broken apart when the U.S. military removed Japanese and Okinawan settlers from the NMI.

I next point out certain insights that become possible when viewing history and memory of the Japanese period in the Northern Mariana Islands through various regional rather than national frames of reference. I review viewpoints on NMI history that become possible when the geographic and cultural context for comparison is the Mariana archipelago (which includes Guam), Micronesia, and East Asia. I conclude by summarizing some of the ways in which the elderly indigenous islanders who participated in this study, the *man'amko*, share certain experiences as a distinctive generation of islanders who have been agents of change and continuity in local history.

## CNMI History and Liberation Narratives

After WWII, the United States administered the islands of Micronesia as a United Nations strategic trusteeship. The region was organized according to the same six geographic districts created by the Japanese colonial government, and was called the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The U.S. Navy initially controlled these islands, and in 1951 they were transferred to the U.S. Department of the Interior. Beginning in 1946 and continuing through the 1980s, public celebrations of United Nations Day were common in the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI).<sup>512</sup> These yearly public celebrations attest to a certain impact that the United Nations' status as sovereign power may have had upon indigenous islanders' consciousness of their political subjectivity during the TTPI years. Thus recognition that at one time, world bodies of nations had directive authority over this area seems to have become less and less a part of common knowledge in the islands as time has passed.

Changes to the postwar TTPI designation began when a U.S. secretarial order called for an elected Congress of Micronesia in 1964, which was followed by committees and commissions that gave island leaders across Micronesia votes before the United Nations general assembly over the future political status of the various island groups.

From an early stage in the political status negotiations, leaders in the NMI (as opposed to

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<sup>512</sup> United Nations Day (October 24) was the biggest holiday in the Trust Territory for many years. Public recognition of UN day seems to have begun in October 1946: "Trust Territory Observes Eleventh Annual United Nations Day," *Micronesian Reporter* V:1 (Jan-Feb 1957): 23-26. The last *Micronesian Reporter* article that covered regional United Nations Day celebrations was by June Dena Winham, "Micronesia Celebrates United Nations Day," *Micronesian Reporter* XIV:5 (Oct-Nov 1966): 5-8 & 28. Linda Tudela Cabrera told me she won the title of United Nations Day queen in 1969 that she remembers was the last year UN Day was celebrated in Saipan (personal conversation in February 2013). As late as 1985, "United Nations Day was observed in most parts of the Trust Territory as an official holiday." United Nations, "Trusteeship Council Official Records: Sixteenth Special Session 4-6 February 1986, Fifty-Third Session 12 May-30 June 1986," (New York, 1989): 41.



those in other Micronesian island groups) wanted to break away from the rest of Micronesia when negotiating a relationship with the U.S. They sought reintegration with Guam as a means of affiliating with the United States. When a handful of attempts to reintegrate failed, NMI leaders pursued a more direct relationship with the United States in the form of Commonwealth status. The intimacies and familiarity with Americans resulting from the postwar years of pronounced American military presence contributed to reasons why NMI leaders desired this close political relationship.<sup>513</sup>

Today, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) is a territory of the U.S. and is no longer under the authority of a group of nations, although they had been for much of the twentieth century. The CNMI is a territory that exists “in union with the United States,” and is further defined in the language of the laws establishing its foundation.<sup>514</sup> Reflecting this changed political status, nowadays public commemorations

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<sup>513</sup> Certain Northern Mariana indigenous islanders resisted these efforts. Some opposed the vote for Commonwealth status on the grounds that it was hurried and that it was not taking place “among equals” but in a relationship where “the Marianas had never existed as a sovereign nation recognized by the international community.” Saipan Refaluwasch (Carolinian) opposition groups expressed concern that their family connections to other Caroline islands in the rest of Micronesia would be compromised if the NMI were to be politically separated from Micronesia. In addition to Refaluwasch community members, many from the Saipan Women’s Association also argued that there had been inadequate time to educate voters about the content of the lengthy and technical Covenant document at the time that the vote for Commonwealth status commenced. Howard P. Willens and Deanne C. Siemer, *An Honorable Accord: The Covenant Between the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002): 258-260. While indigenous NMI leadership is reported to have believed that they had the right to sovereignty during political status negotiations, whatever indigenous sovereignty may have existed was forfeited when leaders voted for Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) status in 1976 and it became law in 1978. Samuel McPhetres quoted Edward Deleon Guerrero Pangelinan at the opening of the Congress of Micronesia in 1971 as saying, “We believe that our people have the sovereign right of self-determination, as do other people in the world.” Samuel F. McPhetres, *Self-Government and Citizenship in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands U.S.A.* (Saipan: CNMI Public School System, 1997): 48.

<sup>514</sup> See the Commonwealth Revision Commission website for details about CNMI foundational legal documents, especially the CNMI Constitution and the Covenant. The former establishes the Commonwealth in relationship to the U.S. Federal government and the latter establishes specific laws applicable in the Commonwealth. The CNMI Commonwealth Law Revision commission is a “judicial branch agency established in 1983 by the CNMI Legislature” that “codifies all permanent CNMI laws and publishes decisions of the CNMI courts.” “Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Law Revision

constructing national consciousness in the CNMI start with the story of U.S. “liberation” of the islands from Japanese rule during World War II as the origin of American dominance.

Especially under CNMI status (1978-present), liberation narratives have become commonplace in local sites of history interpretation.<sup>515</sup> The U.S. Congress passed legislation enabling the establishment of a National Park Service park on the island of Saipan that took effect the same year the CNMI was created—in 1978. This National Park has a mission of honoring American WWII dead that is reflected in the name American Memorial Park. This signaled the practical emplacement of the U.S. nation-state at the center of public programming for the interpretation of WWII history in the CNMI, including narratives that focus on the “liberation” of the islands from Japanese rule and the teaching of American identities to islanders. Thereafter and despite uncertainties unfolding on the ground, in the CNMI local pasts would most commonly come to be written and talked about in public spheres as a part of U.S. history. The transition from the capital of the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands to Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands was thus a political moment when the islands and islanders were growing historically closer to the United States, both

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Commission,” last assessed November 6, 2013, <http://www.cnmilaw.org/>.

<sup>515</sup> The CNMI era thus also saw the entrenchment of the American ‘liberation narrative’ paradigm for explaining Japanese colonialism, WWII, and contemporary national identity. This paradigm casts colonial Japanese influences in a negative light and has constrained the emergence of local discourses about the era before the Americans stormed the beaches. As Keith Camacho has shown, contemporary American public commemorations construct postwar liberation narratives about history and identity and contribute greatly to this process of making and mobilizing Chamorro Mariana Islanders into U.S. citizen-subjects. For critiques of the liberation narrative paradigm in the Mariana Islands, see Camacho, *Cultures of Commemoration*; see also Vincente M. Diaz, “Deliberating ‘Liberation Day’: Identity, History, Memory, and War in Guam,” in Takashi Fujitani, et.al., eds., *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001). I address this paradigm in more detail in Chapter 2.

according to new laws and in public sites of history interpretation.

The liberation paradigm is therefore a historical construct and is available for critique and reinterpretation. Rethinking the meaning of the war at the center of liberation narratives through local frames of reference reveals a range of topics that ought to be assessed with greater scrutiny. As was discussed in Chapter 2, histories of the seminal Japan-U.S. battle for Saipan and Tinian are popular but they are rarely concerned with the war's effects on island residents today.<sup>516</sup> The scale of the devastation during the war was horrific yet it has hardly been explored in terms of its lasting legacies for current populations.<sup>517</sup> The following topics related to the lasting affects of WWII in the NMI should be researched further before more histories in the style of the dominant paradigm are written and published.

Researchers might spend more time considering the physical and mental trauma sustained by islanders after the war. Some survivors dealt for years with wounds that never healed correctly in the terrible conditions of battle. In addition to physical scars, the mental trauma sustained by indigenous people in both an individual and collective sense

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<sup>516</sup> For popular histories of these battles, See O'Brien, Francis A. *Battling for Saipan* (New York, NY: Presidio Press, 2003); Nathan Prefer, *The Battle For Tinian: Vital Stepping Stone in America's War Against Japan* (Havertown, PA: Casemate Publishers, 2012); and Gordon Rottman, *Saipan & Tinian 1944: Piercing the Japanese Empire* (Oxford, UK: Osprey, 2004).

<sup>517</sup> The battle was devastating on a mechanical and a human scale and it left the islands and people severely wounded. When calculated over a period from June 15 through July 9, during the twenty-five days of land battle, an average of about 10,000 rounds per day were fired on this small fifty-square mile island. The total number of rounds fired on Saipan (excluding some regiment totals) was recorded at 291,495. A weight of 8,500 tons of rounds was recorded to have been expended on missions supporting troops (excluding pre D-Day bombardment). Carl W. Hoffman, *Saipan: The Beginning of the End* (U.S. Marine Corps Historical Division Headquarters, 1950), 247-50. The number of war dead by ethnic group resulting from the battle of Saipan is contentious. Estimates are usually reported as follows: 30,000 Japanese combatants, 20,000 Japanese, Korean, or Okinawan civilians, 5,000 U.S. combatants, and 1,000 Chamorro / Carolinian islanders. The grand total was over 50,000 people, a figure in the range of the CNMI's current population of about 54,000 people. Because of the broad scale of devastation and the high number of lives lost, it is not uncommon on the islands of Saipan and Tinian to hear local tour guides to refer to the entirety of these islands as "hallowed ground." No matter where you go, that location was most likely the site of combat, death and destruction in mid-1944.

is probably by now so insipient that it manifests as habits that remain active because they have not yet been made explicit in the minds of sufferers. One woman said that the sounds of the loud American machinery and airplanes passing by her house in the north part of Saipan in the 1950s brought back tormenting memories of the war. She said the noises made her think that another war was coming at any moment.<sup>518</sup> To make people who had just survived the brutal Japan-U.S. fighting on Saipan live next to the same war machines that had just destroyed the island and many of its residents is an unacknowledged cruelty of the immediate postwar period. To what degree, and in what ways this kind of trauma may persist in the present day are important yet under-researched topics.

What's more, researchers might ask more questions about the destruction and modification of topography and biodiversity that resulted from the war. Japan-U.S. fighting in the NMI created new channels in the reef, blasted out massive land craters that made piles of rubble later bulldozed to form hills, set back natural cliff lines when ordinance removal explosions went awry, and saw to the widespread planting of one species of tree to retain the soil after the deforestation caused by war.<sup>519</sup> Once the fighting stopped, the U.S. military set free hundreds of intelligent dogs that had been acquired for military service and that today represent one likely source of the so-called boonie dog

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<sup>518</sup> Rosa "Chilang" Tudela Palacios, interview with the author, Palacios residence, San Roque, Saipan, January 10, 2013.

<sup>519</sup> The U.S. military dropped tens of thousands of *Tangantangan* (*Luecaena glauca*) seeds from aircraft to reforest the islands after the war, and today these trees are everywhere especially on the islands of Guam, Saipan and Tinian. See Robert F. Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011): 191.

animal problem.<sup>520</sup> The long-term physical changes to landscapes and biodiversity caused by Japanese military buildup, combat, and American military rule are topics that might be researched in more depth.

Relatedly, there are also troubling questions remaining about the scale and locations of shrapnel and unexploded debris still buried in island jungles and submerged in lagoons and fringing reefs. Even though many islanders arguably benefitted in the postwar from collecting scrap metal and selling it back to the U.S. in the 1950s and afterward, some were injured when unexploded ordnance detonated. At a recent history conference in Guam, Diego L. Kaipat told stories about growing up on Pagan island where he and his friends did not know it was dangerous to hammer unexploded bombs in order to separate the different pieces to sell them back to the U.S. military as scrap metal.<sup>521</sup> Today whenever someone finds unexploded ordnance, they are supposed to call the CNMI Historic Preservation Office. Staff members at this office then contact the U.S. Department of Defense to dispose of the debris during their annual and sometimes semi-annual detonation exercises. However this protocol is not always followed nor do I suspect is it widely understood, and private (potentially volatile) collections of bullets, bombs and grenades taken directly from the jungle are common. Publically accessible reports about the nature of live ordnance along with detailed explanations about the proper protocols that should be followed for their safe disposal would be helpful to local communities. To date, the dissemination of information about these protocols has, to my

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<sup>520</sup> For more on war dogs in the Marianas during WWII, see William Putney, *Always Faithful: A Memoir of the Marine Dogs of WWII* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 2003).

<sup>521</sup> John Castro Jr. and Diego L. Kaipat, "Guardians of Gani-Protecting Pagan for Future Generations," presentation as part of the "Political Futures" panel at "2<sup>nd</sup> Marianas History Conference," University of Guam, Mangilao Guam, August 31, 2013.

knowledge, been the responsibility of the local CNMI government. The U.S. military ought to take a more active role in managing this problem that they co-created along with the Imperial Japanese armed forces.

Similarly, research about un-retrieved dead bodies (now skeletons) still turning up in the caves and jungles (indigenous islanders, Japanese, and U.S. armed forces might be among them) could be the topic of a more exhaustive project. These un-retrieved human remains have tended to be the concern of politically or religiously motivated groups rather than scholarly researchers, and the results of digs and surveys are not always shared publically nor are they necessarily executed according to duplicable, scientific methods. A project organized by a trained group of archaeologists, forensic anthropologists and historians to find human remains in especially Saipan and Tinian might benefit people whose loved ones (civilians and armed forces) did not return from this war while also making scientific and historical contributions to existing knowledge.

Researchers might also explore further how islanders and settler civilians' wartime experiences continue to remain relevant to these groups. Relationships that formed during the polarizing war years have impacted local politics and popular memory: local people formed lifelong bonds while hiding in the caves together, as well as lifelong rifts after struggling against one another during the divisive conditions of battle. Another related potential topic pertaining to the postwar repatriations process investigated Chapter 6 would involve researching indigenous islanders' Japanese, Okinawan or Korean family members who were removed from the islands after the war and who never reconnected with their relatives in the NMI. Finally, there are also lingering questions I will review later in this chapter about how the U.S. managed the dissolution of the Japanese empire.

These include unresolved war reparations, as well as the management of islanders' dual victimization by colonialism and war within structures that could not acknowledge their various subjectivities within shifting power structures.

However widespread the collective and ongoing consequences of this battle may be for long-term residents of these former battle sites, these are rarely the kinds of questions asked of Pacific Islands' WWII history. Questions about what it means to live on a former battlefield, or to rebuild from the ashes of war are not generally part of American investigations into the meaning of the Pacific War.<sup>522</sup> Yet island residents who can speak knowledgably to these kinds of questions are still alive. Among first-hand survivors who are now in their eighties and older, there are probably still more people willing to talk than there are researchers interested to listen, record, and ruminate upon the wide array of ideas entangled in their memories that connect violent pasts to specters of these pasts that manifest in present day life on the islands.

Mainstream liberation narratives are also fundamentally misrepresentative in another way. As I have already argued, Japanese colonialism in Micronesia has been marginalized by most American histories that conflate war history with the history of

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<sup>522</sup> Reflections on war's affect on landscape and consciousness come up from time to time in Japanese cultural productions. For example, A 2002 NHK documentary suggested that a similarity exists between Japanese mainland and Northern Mariana Islander experiences of war's destruction and aftermath. A video produced by NHK for a series called "Midori no shima wa senjō ni natta" [Green Islands Became Battlefields] featured an interview with Escolastica Cabrera about her memories of the Japanese days and the war. The film explores first-hand accounts of the war on the island, and the video's Japanese narrator is moved by the scenery of Marpi, Saipan to ponder the meaning of the word "sensō" [war]. He remarks that *sensō* should be considered more broadly to include the idea that "*fukei kaite ikun dato...*" or that scenery changes (21:36 MIN). Looking over the landscape at Marpi, Saipan he says makes him remember that Tokyo is also a postwar landscape. He remarks that this is an *atarimae* [obvious] observation, yet this addresses the relevance of memories of war survival for the present day. Nippon Hōsoku Kyokai (NHK), "Midori no Shima wa senjō ni natta—taiheiyō, shishatachi no koe (2): Dai ni kai, 'hitobito wa misuterareta' Saipantō" [Green Islands Became Battlefields—Voices of Pacific War Dead (2) Part 2: Saipan Island where 'people were deserted.'] (Tokyo: Nippon Hōsoku Kyokai (NHK)), aired August 13, 2002. DVD, 49 min.

Japanese imperialism in the Pacific. This conflation not only erases the years of economic and social transformations of the Japanese colonial period, but also disavows the relevance of historical circumstances that profoundly influenced the lives of island residents and contributed to the ways in which the war unfolded. This active forgetting of Japan's colonial history in this area now under U.S. control is required to think that the U.S. "liberated" the islands from a wartime regime. Acknowledging Japan's colonial project challenges the idea that "liberation" adequately describes the transition from Japanese to American rule.

As this dissertation has shown, indigenous islanders were members of Japanese colonial societies to a significant degree. The Second World War's violent upheaval and overturning of the colonial social order was extremely dislocating and deadly for members of these island communities who cared for one another and who did not always draw clear lines between residents as "Japanese" versus "islanders." Liberation narrative histories disavow the preexisting communities where islanders and settlers had created overlapping households, and ignore everything before the moment when the U.S. forces entered the historical picture. To my mind, there is hardly a more colonial gesture than writing histories so that they begin when your armed forces arrive on the scene.

### **Complicity of Colonial Regimes**

Although the dominant liberation paradigm imagines a clear break between the Japanese and American periods, similarities exist in the ways these two regimes managed local affairs. In NMI history, incoming colonial regimes have tended to build upon the achievements of earlier colonial projects. As noted in Chapter 3, the Japanese colonial



government used German land records as a starting point from which to create their own land records, and they also continued to use other German social management strategies<sup>523</sup> as they created laws to govern their new territory in Micronesia. Germany drew upon Spanish title deeds, then Japan seized and updated the German land records, and finally the U.S. government reassembled and translated the Japanese records in order to facilitate postwar territorial management. The U.S. also used Japan's six-district structure for managing the archipelagos in Micronesia when they created the United Nations strategic trusteeship called the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

In these ways, to a significant extent these powers each recognized the legitimacy of the systems established by the earlier colonial regime. The fact that the U.S. government has used Japan's colonial records to help establish postwar social order complicates the assumption implicit in the liberation narrative that the Japanese period was something distinct from which the U.S. had to free the islands and islanders. The transition from Japanese to U.S. control was less of a revolution (implied in the word liberation), and more of a takeover. The islands had already been organized under what U.S. leaders deemed to be acceptable forms of governance that did not need to be destroyed with the Japanese empire.

The continued reliance by incoming colonial regimes on land title deeds dating to the Spanish era established some continuity in wealth distribution in local Northern Mariana Island communities. Chapter 3 described how some Chamorro landowning families grew wealthy after restrictions on the sale of land were liberalized in the 1930s.

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<sup>523</sup> Some German laws that the Japanese government perpetuated (with some modifications) included keeping traditional Micronesian chiefly systems in place and effectively governing through them, as well as outlawing alcohol consumption by islanders.

The socio-economic class of islanders whose grandparents obtained land title deeds during the Spanish era and who owned land by the time the Japanese government took over grew wealthier in the booming colonial economy of the late 1920s and 1930s.<sup>524</sup> Therefore, the elite class of islanders described in Chapters 3 and 4 who excelled in Japanese institutions owed part of their successes to sources of wealth established well before the Japanese period.

Thus the success of some landowning islanders in the Japanese colonial socio-economy was shaped partly by forces which had precedents in systems created long before the Japanese arrived, and which had very little to do with Japan. Some wealthy Chamorro boys to become good “Japanese” in the sense that they could afford to devote time to schooling rather than work, attend good schools, and learn the Japanese language fluently, as explained in Chapter 4. These highly educated islanders were then able to get civil service or high-paying technical jobs after graduation, and to afford lifestyles that competed with Japanese settlers. These successes can partially be explained by their wealth as landowners—a status with precedents dating to the days of Spanish control. Some of what it meant for an islander to be a good “Japanese,” then, was to draw upon wealth first acquired as private land plots during Spanish rule.

Therefore understanding the historical origins of class differences among islanders suggests that it is misleading to portray the “Japanese period” as completely separate from preceding eras. The fact that the era of Japanese colonial rule was not

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<sup>524</sup> Meanwhile the islanders who did not own land had to work harder to compete for jobs that were increasingly being filled by settlers, and therefore did not benefit as much as landowners from the rapid influx of settlers. This is because mass immigration increased the value of land but decreased the relative value of island labor.

totally distinct from earlier periods complicates the assumption that the islanders' successes were attributable to Japanese influences, at the same time as it complicates the liberation narrative's assumption that the Japanese period was a distinct period from which the U.S. freed islanders.

### **Economic Subjectivity, Political Subjectivity**

Although colonial regimes were complicit and continuities existed between them, islanders' memories nevertheless also point to an important sense in which the Japanese and U.S. periods were different. When reflecting upon the experience of living under control by Japan during the 1930s as compared to the years when the U.S. was in control per the United Nations strategic trusteeship, people have often expressed comparative nostalgia for the Japanese era.<sup>525</sup>

When comparing the Japanese era to the immediate postwar period of control by the U.S., indigenous islanders have often said that the economy was good in the Japanese days. The more I spoke with people and read interviews done by other researchers, the more I encountered this idea. When I pondered what this could mean, I realized that they were talking about how it was satisfying to live in a thriving economy in which they performed jobs. People who were born and raised in the NMI during the years when the

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<sup>525</sup> Yet it is important to note that many people told me that they like the way that life is now and that things are comparatively better than ever before. As explained earlier, the CNMI is a U.S. territory today and civil liberties and laws today grant rights and privileges to indigenous peoples of Northern Marianas Descent that have never before existed. However, the CNMI is not necessarily primarily an "American" territory in the eyes of many local people. One also cannot assume that people of Northern Marianas Descent consider themselves to be American citizen-subjects even if they hold U.S. passports. One's national citizenship and one's cultural or personal identity still tend to be handled by local NM indigenous residents as separate questions. See Beret E. Strong and Cinta Mataolai Kaipat, *Lieweila: A Micronesian Story* (Boulder, CO: Landlocked Films, 1999). DVD, 57 min.

diverse and thriving Japanese economy transformed the islands into busy, export-oriented agricultural towns with modern infrastructure remember that they were able to go to demanding schools and get good jobs that paid well and bestowed upon them a certain prestige. Even islanders who did not advance to higher social or economic levels in the local communities were usually able to find work as laborers supporting various enterprises in the diversified economy. People expressed the sense that they had played active roles in society, they worked long hours for wages or a salary, they made money to buy luxury goods, and they traveled to Japan and to other islands for pleasure, education, or even work. All of this changed after the war and U.S. takeover.

After the U.S. armed forces seized the Northern Mariana Islands in mid-1944, the U.S. Navy controlled the islands until 1947 when the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) was established. In 1952, the U.S. Navy took back most of the NMI and constructed the Naval Technical Training Unit (NTTU). The 1952 reversion to U.S. Navy control excluded the island of Rota, which remained under TTPI control from 1947-1978. Although the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency has not officially acknowledged their presence in the Northern Marianas, they are remembered to have been active at the NTTU facilities.<sup>526</sup> This period saw strict U.S. Department of Defense control of access to the NMI north of Rota, and prohibited travel, foreign investment, and labor migration to these islands. These restrictions meant that no independent, extra-military activities could take place. The CIA is said to have taken, “advantage of these restrictions to construct and operate a highly secure (and expensive) facility...for the training of

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<sup>526</sup> Scott Russell is currently researching this time period and has for thirty years been trying to get the CIA to release documents attesting to their involvement at Navy Technical Training Unit facilities.

Chinese nationalists to infiltrate or invade communist China.”<sup>527</sup> Starting in 1962, the NTTU was dissolved and all of the Northern Mariana Islands were returned to the TTPI.

The U.S. Navy developed extensive infrastructure on the islands of Saipan and Tinian in the NTTU period of the 1950s. They decided to continue to use this infrastructure by creating the Trust Territory Headquarters on Saipan in 1962.<sup>528</sup> As noted previously, until that year, travel between the NMI and the rest of the region was cut off. Travel throughout other islands in Micronesia was also restricted, including the Marshall Islands where the U.S. military was conducting weapons testing. Greg Dvorak writes that Marshall Islands Foreign Minister Tony deBrum described the period of takeover by the U.S. as the time “when the ocean was closed” (*ear kiilok lometo*).<sup>529</sup> By contrast, as Chapter 3 explains, during the Japanese period islanders traveled frequently within and between the Micronesian islands and Japan on commercial vessels.<sup>530</sup> A rapid flow of

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<sup>527</sup> Willens and Siemer, *An Honorable*, 4.

<sup>528</sup> At the same time, the substantial U.S. developments on the islands of Saipan and Tinian and the American administrative presence in the new Trust Territory capital on Saipan gave rise to communities where islanders were heavily employed on the military bases or in adjacent areas where they provided services to resident U.S. personnel. These intimate relationships engendered familiarity and bonds between U.S. personnel and islanders that did not emerge as frequently elsewhere in Micronesia.

<sup>529</sup> Greg Dvorak, “Who Closed the Sea? Archipelagos of Amnesia Between the United States and Japan,” *Pacific Historical Review* 83:2 (May 2014): 366. The Marshall Islands are comprised of the biggest and oldest atolls in the world, which are low elevation islands that are separated from one another by hundreds of miles. It makes sense that of all Micronesians, especially the oceangoing Marshallese would remember that frequent ocean travel was possible under Japanese rule whereas postwar U.S. domination of the islands involved the construction of U.S. bases and weapons testing that forever cut islanders off from access to certain atolls and oceans. This especially includes the Kwajalein atoll that is a U.S. Army base, and the Bikini and Rongelap atolls where hydrogen bomb testing starting in the 1950s contaminated the islands and ocean areas to the extent that today they are no longer safe for human habitation.

<sup>530</sup> Japanese monthly colonial reports in 1930 show that ships between islands were arriving once every week to two weeks. Nan’yôchô, *Nan’yôchô Kôhô*, 1930. The Nan’yô Bôeki Kaisha (NBK) steamship service that ran between the Micronesian islands was well traveled by islanders, who could buy tickets to travel on deck at one-third to one-half of a full ticket price. In 1932, NBK had almost 7,000 islander passengers and twice the number of Japanese passengers. Yanaihara, *Pacific Islands*, 63. However in Yap in 1928, the branch office prohibited islanders from traveling by canoe supposedly to prevent accidents but this also brought more business to NBK. *Ibid.*, 150, 224. Therefore islanders’ decisions to travel on Japanese ships rather than traditional vessels may have been coerced or forced in many cases.

people and goods within Micronesia ceased to exist with the onset of U.S. military rule, and those conditions have never returned in quite the same way. Today, instead of traveling on the surface of the sea, most islanders travel on commercial airlines. The changed nature of contemporary inter-island travel has removed most islanders from contact with the ocean terrains with which older generations had been more familiar.

This strategic rather than economic orientation of the U.S. administration has not prioritized capitalism or profit-maximizing potential of island land and sea spaces. In the U.S. NTTU period in the NMI, jobs available included roles that supported the U.S. military. After the war, only one company called the United States Commercial Company that was established by the U.S. government was allowed to engage in commerce in the region until 1962. In the postwar period, islanders were living next to U.S. military bases, and the sense of freedom of choice available in education, leisure, and employment was severely restricted when compared to the Japanese period. This was because the U.S. made the NMI (and other islands) into military bases after the war, islanders were pushed out of certain areas to make room for bases, there were a limited number of jobs islanders could perform, travel to and from the area was severely restricted, and life in general was subject to oversight by the U.S. military.

For people who remembered the Japanese period, this life subject to the strategic, U.S. military goals for use of the islands was far less satisfying than performing roles as economic actors in the Japanese socioeconomies. Many people have said, *the Japanese economy was better*, and gave evidence in the form of stories about the jobs they worked all day long that kept their bodies healthy and their minds alert. In cases when families

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worked as tenant farmers, ran cottage industries to serve local settler consumers, or even opened their own businesses in town, people said that working in the Japanese economy brought the whole family together towards common goals. I heard many people lament that family-oriented daily life ceased to exist in this same way after the war.

Thus, when compared to their daily lives during the Japanese period, islanders' primary roles after the war were to support strategic U.S. initiatives for use of the islands as bases where local socio-economies have been dominated by the U.S. military industrial complex. Private contracts issued by the U.S. military are today often given to companies with existing relationships with the military. Compared to the Japanese period, the barriers to establishing business relationships with the primary industry in town have been relatively harder to surmount. Living as economic actors in a diversified socioeconomy (despite the Japanese period's racism-classism towards islanders) was preferable to being relegated to the margins of U.S. military bases where there have been fewer economic opportunities.<sup>531</sup>

Islanders' stories assessed for this study can therefore be understood as having quite often expressed a sense that they have primarily been cast as political subjects during the period of U.S. control. It is not hard to understand why people would feel nostalgic for the Japanese era when their skills as productive agriculturalists and businesspeople were valued. Back then, they played roles in the success of the regime, and it was not just the land, ocean, and islands' location in relation to Asia that were

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<sup>531</sup> In a similar situation, Okinawans who petitioned the U.S. in 1949 to re-emigrate cited dissatisfaction with base-adjacent living conditions as their primary motivation. Tomoko Ohara, "Sengo Okinawa Shakai to Nan'yô Guntô Hikiagesha—Hikiagesha dantai katsdô ni chûmokushite— [Postwar Okinawa Society and South Sea Island Repatriates—Focusing on Activities of the Repatriate Groups—] *Immigration Studies* 6 (March 2010): 32.

attractive to colonial administrators. People thus understandably preferred to be economic subjects in a Japanese socioeconomy that offered comparatively more opportunities for personal advancement in a capitalistic society, rather than being political subjects relegated to the margins of military bases where economic opportunities have been fewer and more tightly controlled by colonial authorities.

### **Dismembering and Remembering the Japanese Empire**

The Japanese colonial period in Micronesia entailed economic productivity and extensive Japanese settlement, yet the impact of this history has been inadequately addressed in terms of its relevance for people who still call the region home. This impact was perhaps the most profound and transformative for the Northern Mariana Islands. As I explained in Chapter 3, the Japanese NMI colonial towns housed the highest ratio of Japanese and Okinawan settlers to indigenous islanders in Japan's entire *Nan'yô Guntô* territory, along with the largest overall population in the territory. The dense population of settlers outnumbered indigenous islanders by a ratio of ten to one by 1937, and islanders found themselves immersed in introduced cultures and coming into daily contact with various people originally from Japan, Korea, and Okinawa. As I have shown in this dissertation, these new living arrangements opened up opportunities for islanders and settlers to become work associates, friends, lovers, and to have children together.

The U.S. military had control over the fate of these resident populations after the war. Chapter 6 explains that after Japan-U.S. fighting ended, the U.S. had sole control over the former Japanese Mandated Islands. This meant that the U.S. did not have to consult with leaders of other Allied power nations when creating policies for managing



these territories. As a result, Japanese military and civilian subjects in Japan's Mandated area were the first to be repatriated from Japan's former empire while policies for repatriation of Japanese subjects from other areas were still being created. And while U.S. civilian leaders were involved in formulating policies, military goals for the area more heavily impacted the decision to unilaterally remove Japanese and Okinawan settlers.<sup>532</sup> Ultimately both military and civilian branches of government supported the idea that with few exceptions, no Japanese people could remain in the former Japanese Mandated Islands after the U.S. takeover.

Settler Japanese, Korean, and Okinawan political subjectivities as defined by the United States inter-service SWNCC after WWII were the most important considerations in determining whether to let them stay on the islands or to send them to their country or prefecture of origin. The SWNCC came to view Koreans in the Northern Marianas as newly liberated peoples: at the time, the country of Korea was emerging from decades of Japanese colonial rule. In an effort to adhere to multilateral arrangements for the management of postwar Korea, U.S. planners treated Koreans as deserving of as many protections as could be afforded. Japanese and Okinawans, on the other hand, were managed as potentially risky populations who had to be removed. Okinawans along with people whose original prefectures of embarkation were in the main islands of Japan were both considered Japanese. Because Japan was a place requiring transformation from wartime government into a cooperative political body that might support U.S. interests in

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<sup>532</sup> The U.S. Navy had administered the Mariana Island of Guam continuously from the conclusion of the Spanish-American war to 1950, which meant that from the perspective of the U.S. government, the navy had an established precedent in governing civilians in the region.

the region, the subjects of Japan were seen as not-yet rehabilitated or liberated peoples who could not live in U.S. occupied areas.

Among the various groups of settlers, quite a few indigenous NMI families openly self-identify as being of Korean descent: about a dozen or so indigenous NMI families' Korean genealogies have been investigated in recent research conducted by a Korean scholar and presented at an international academic conference at the University of Guam.<sup>533</sup> There may be a relatively high number of Korean-Chamorros in the islands because Korean settlers in the NMI during the Japanese days were almost all single males who had more reasons to seek companionship from indigenous islander women. This contrasts with the high number of Okinawan families that immigrated to the islands. What's more, the choice granted to Koreans after the war about whether to stay or go is probably the biggest factor influencing the presence of a relatively high number of self-identified indigenous NMI families of partial Korean descent. But Elias Borja's (b. 1936) memories, as described in Chapter 6, suggest another explanation. It might also be the case that some Japanese and Okinawans facing deportation decided to self-identify as Koreans as a way to remain on the islands.

A history of widespread Japanese settlement disproportionately impacting the NMI over other Micronesian islands colonized by Japan, combined with the postwar U.S. military presence also disproportionately heavy in the NMI compared to other islands in the region—has led to the emergence of postwar cultures that embody pronounced anxieties about the hidden “Asian”-ness of indigenous NM islanders. In this climate,

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<sup>533</sup> Sung Youn Cho, “Memories of the Koreans in the Mariana Islands During Japanese Rule,” paper presented as part of the “Japan in the Marianas” panel at the “2<sup>nd</sup> Marianas History Conference,” University of Guam, Mangilao, Guam, August 30, 2013.

multiracial households comprised of East Asian settlers and indigenous islanders have been ignored by most histories of the area.

It may never be possible to know what contemporary NMI indigenous families include members originally from East Asia who immigrated during the period of Japanese colonial rule. Postwar U.S. military base and base-adjacent social constraints facing indigenous islanders from multiracial families, including the apparent threat of removal or differentiated treatment, have probably prevented many people from talking publically about their Japanese, Korean, or Okinawan ethnic backgrounds. This climate may have inspired some indigenous islanders to keep their connections to colonial Japan out of common knowledge and to instead keep these memories private, or to change their names to sound more indigenous.

The history of heavy Japanese settlement and the memories of people like Elias Borja suggest that there are probably many more unacknowledged traces of intimate relations with former Japanese settlers in these islands. Postwar Americanizing U.S. policies for managing this territory did not embrace or tend to circulate stories of indigenous islanders' intimacies with old Japan. But the lack of discourses about Japanese-U.S. era in postwar English language histories does not amount to evidence of a dearth of multiracial family ties or other lingering connections to colonial Japan. On the contrary, the persistent lack of scholarly and popular reporting on this issue juxtaposed with contradictory archival (SWNCC records) and interview-based evidence attesting to the presence of such families strongly suggests a need for further research.

These children and the families that formed during this time are perhaps the single most important legacy remaining from the Japanese period in the Northern Mariana

Islands and elsewhere in Micronesia. Multiracial settler-islander households represent a persistent, structuring feature of local NMI society originating in the days when settlers from East Asia dominated island life. As much as the U.S. postwar militarized regime has tried to eradicate Japanese colonial influences and to distance the historical Japanese era from consciousness about what it means to be from the Northern Mariana Islands today, many indigenous families tell different stories. Certain indigenous families of partial Japanese, Korean, or Okinawan descent might never find a reason to share their affection for these people and their cultures in U.S. commemoration-oriented public interpretive spaces. Meanwhile, they have often told stories in languages other than English to researchers willing to listen and who understand something about the days before the war. Antonieta's story demonstrates that one might never know that she was "Japanese" before the war if she had not volunteered to talk about her past.

Like the title of this dissertation suggests, the names of these individuals and of the islands to which they are indigenous have been insufficient for signifying the identities they have embodied throughout time. Northern Mariana Islands and islander names must be understood in part as constructions beholden to violent colonial policies and nationalistic constraints placed upon discourses about identity and belonging. Multiracial family stories remain within the domain of what might be called private knowledge and are generally not written about in history books or featured in museum displays.

As Antonieta's story demonstrates, islanders have a choice about what kinds of memories they share with different audiences. The kind of stories researchers are likely to hear depend a great deal upon what they demonstrate they are capable of hearing.

Researchers in years past who opened interviews with senior indigenous islanders by asking, *what terrible things did the Japanese do to you?* made it clear that they thought of the “Japanese” as a military force. Opening an interview with this kind of question forecloses upon the possibility of creating a safe space to talk about a range of ambivalent and nostalgic memories that people may hold onto, or about the intimate relationships that formed between settlers and islanders. Researchers who conflated the Japanese colonial presence with war have done a disservice to local communities by ignoring the colonial period leading to the war and errantly suggesting that the historical Japanese era is something to be ashamed of or frowned upon. These local communities, my research has shown, suffered the loss of loved ones at the hand of American military personnel who have reductively portrayed the Japanese colonial presence and its lasting outcomes using words like, “The Japanese” and “military.”

#### Postwar Memory Activities and Former Settlers

Although not acknowledged in the mainstream liberation paradigm, groups of former settler residents maintain relationships with the islands and islanders and many still hold annual memorial ceremonies in the islands to remember war dead. Active memory networks exist where former settlers and islanders alike have cultivated connections between indigenous Northern Mariana Islanders and former Japanese, Korean, and Okinawan settlers.

A variety of groups still regularly visit Japan’s former territories in Micronesia to remember war dead. The largest group that has been active for the longest amount of time (since the 1949) is the Okinawa Kikansha Kai (Returnees Association), which has

undergone name changes over the years and is now known as the Nan'yô Guntô Kikansha Kai. This group translates their name into English as the "Micronesian Repatriation Association" and they are based in Naha, Okinawa. They originally formed for the purpose of petitioning the U.S. government for permission to re-emigrate to the former Mandated Islands, a request that was denied in 1958. After this rejection, the group proclaimed a new mission: "planning for the well-being and welfare of repatriated people from abroad." They created the Okinawa Gaichi Hikiage Kyôkai [Okinawa Foreign Repatriates Association] that joined forces with the older re-emigration movement to concentrate on the condition of graves overseas.<sup>534</sup> In 1983, the 1954 bylaws of the Kikansha Kai whose mission had been re-emigration were revised toward remembering the old days and building a community. Today, the Kikansha Kai and other organizations regularly visit the Northern Mariana Islands to commemorate war dead in ceremonies at various memorials (*ireihi/ireitô*) across the islands. These yearly memorial pilgrimages have taken place especially since the establishment of commercial air travel in the late 1970s.

In December 1974, the Japan-Micronesia Association was chartered by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an affiliate in order to "contribute to developing friendly relations between the people of Japan and Micronesia by promoting cultural and economic exchanges."<sup>535</sup> The Association continues to operate today as the Japan Institute for Pacific Studies (JAIPAS) in Akasaka, Tokyo under the direction of Kobayashi Izumi, scholar and author of several titles including the study mentioned

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<sup>534</sup> Ohara, "Sengo Okinawa," 23-44.

<sup>535</sup> Goodman and Moos, *The United States and Japan*, 248.

earlier about indigenous families of Japanese descent in Micronesia. The JAIPAS produces a quarterly newsletter called “The Pacific Way” which focuses largely on Japanese business interests in the region. Whereas a group known as the Nan’yô Guntô Kyôkai [South Sea Islands Association] with origins in the colonial era consisted of people who used to reside in the region or work in the Nan’yôchô government, the Japan-Micronesia Association was established with contemporary youth programs (such as educational exchanges) and business activities in mind, especially the promotion of tourism from Japan. A 1981 study on Japanese and American interests in Micronesia stated:

As the Japan-Micronesia Association serves the present and future interests of Japan in Micronesia, the Nanyo Gunto Kyokai [*sic*] reflects the past involvements of Japan in the same way. Thus, the Nanyo Gunto Kyokai [*sic*] members are particularly useful in contacts between Japanese and senior Micronesians, many of whom... either speak the Japanese language or are filled with nostalgia for the “good old days” of Micronesia under Japanese rule.<sup>536</sup>

The emergence of the Japan-Micronesia Association and its contemporary re-organization as JAIPAS in Tokyo shows that many Japanese maintain relationships with Micronesia that are cognizant of histories of Japanese colonialism and war in the region while remaining focused on present and future relationships.

In Micronesian islands today where memories of Japanese rule have often been recorded as nostalgic, communities of Japanese-descent Micronesians continue to live and work. Many Japanese have moved to the NMI to work largely in tourism industries that have been dominated by visitors from Japan until about ten years ago. These resident populations also participate in regular local Japanese cultural activities, including for

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<sup>536</sup> Ibid., 251.

example a yearly Japanese festival centered on the Saipan Shinto Shrine in Garapan, Saipan and hosted by the Japanese Society of the Northern Mariana Islands. This group is similar to the Japan-Micronesia Association in that they focus on present and future interests rather than cultivating programs or knowledge about historical ties between Japan and the NMI.

In the postwar years, some indigenous families have maintained communications with Japanese and Okinawan friends and relatives whom they have known since the colonial days. Especially since the 1970s, many local Chamorro and Carolinian people have had the chance to meet with former Japanese and Okinawan residents of the Marianas when repatriate groups have returned to pray for and remember war dead. In addition to participating in local ceremonies organized by various visiting repatriate groups, some Chamorro and Carolinian families have hosted visiting Japanese and Okinawan repatriates in their homes during visits. This was especially true among islander families with senior members who speak Japanese and take pleasure from chatting about the old days with the repatriates. As generations of seniors who remember those days have continued to pass away, these kinds of connections have become less and less common. Many younger generations of indigenous islanders today attend memorial ceremonies unofficially or even in an official capacity on behalf of the local Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands government. For some local attendees, the relationship with the Japanese returnees has become more formal or perhaps symbolic, as many island youth do not speak Japanese and are less likely to socialize with returnees than were their elders.



For example, Representative Edward Villagomez has recently been attending Japanese memorial ceremonies for war dead out of respect for his Hosono family connection to Japan. At the May 2013 ceremony at the Okinawa no Tô (Okinawan Memorial) at Marpi, Saipan, Representative Villagomez along with other members of the CNMI government placed offerings before the memorial one by one when they were called upon by name to do so during the ceremony. The Japanese emcee at the ceremony introduced Representative Villagomez to the visiting crowd of Japanese repatriates and their families as a Chamorro man of Japanese descent. Edward does not speak Japanese well, and when I translated this statement for him after the ceremony he told me he was happy to learn that the gathered crowd was informed about his Japanese ancestry.

Many other islanders of part-Japanese descent are aware and proud of their lineages. The well-known and respected Chamolinian (Chamorro and Carolinian) tour company director named Gordon I. Marciano often shares stories about his family when showing the islands to American battlefield tourists. Gordon also has Japanese family members, but he does not share this information with all of his tour groups—whether or not he talks about his Japanese heritage depends upon his assessment of a group’s ability to hear and accept this information. American battlefield tourists often express patriotism for the U.S. using language that suggests that they might harbor animosity toward Japanese people.

Gordon’s grandmother Tereko Ichihara—a woman of NMI Carolinian descent—was unexpectedly reunited in the 1980s with her first husband who had been a Japanese Navy officer. After the war he was repatriated to Japan and she remained in the islands. They both moved on with their lives because they each assumed the other had not

survived the war. The circumstances leading to their reunion were accidental. She had been working as a Japanese-speaking tour guide in Saipan and had been featured in a Japanese newspaper in 1986. The former Navy officer saw the news story in Japan, realized who she was, and booked a flight down to Saipan to try to find her. Gordon explained,

He flew in just to see this lady. And lo and behold, met her here in the Hafa Adai [hotel], and that was the first wife from the war...she thought he died, he thought she died, and they both got married.<sup>537</sup>

After the war, Tereko had married a half-Japanese half-Chamorro man named Sei Ichihara<sup>538</sup> from Guam in the early postwar years and together they had thirteen children, the first of whom was Gordon's mother.

Gordon told me that his family had tried to keep this story about Tereko's first husband a secret for many years, and had preferred to let it be a part of the forgotten past. But nowadays Gordon Ichihara Marciano sometimes shares this story and other stories about his grandfather Sei Ichihara on his tour buses when he talks about WWII on Saipan. His family's past is no longer a guarded secret, but it is still somewhat privileged information since there is some risk involved in his telling American tourists about his multiracial Japanese background. However he tells me that the risk often pays off because customers walk away with an unexpected understanding of the complex, living legacies left behind by Japan's historical presence on the islands.

These are just two examples of young indigenous islanders who take an interest and pride in their Japanese heritage, but there are countless others. In this project I

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<sup>537</sup> Gordon Ichihara Marciano, interview with the author at the Hafa Adai Beach Hotel lobby in Garapan, Saipan, September 6, 2013.

<sup>538</sup> Gordon's grandfather, Sei Ichihara, was mentioned in Chapter 5 as a part-Japanese Chamorro man who resisted Japanese military conscription in Guam.

focused on recording the memories of the elders, and much more research still needs to be done about younger generations' memories and active identities as Northern Mariana Islanders of partial Asian descent dating to the period of Japanese empire or even earlier. Thus, despite being absent from mainstream histories, multiracial Japanese/Okinawan/Korean and Chamorro/Carolinian kinship ties and identities remain active in the present day. Networks of former settlers known as repatriates (*kikansha*) described earlier still return to the islands regularly where they rekindle relationships especially with these multiracial indigenous communities with family ties to former settlers.

### **Regional Connectivity**

Rather than concentrating on histories of the 1944 battle and constructing identities around ideas of national patronage tied to this battle, researchers should focus instead on the present-day consequences still faced by NMI indigenous people, and Japanese, Okinawan, and Korean civilians who survived and who were removed from the islands after the war. Not only do these people share in common experiences of living under Japanese colonial rule, but these countries and territories also sustain many U.S. military bases today. Recent scholarship has issued a call for exploring connections between populations in these areas and the Mariana Islands who live in U.S. military base and base-adjacent socio-economies.<sup>539</sup> Comparing and contrasting the case of the Northern Mariana Islands to the historical contexts of the Mariana Archipelago, Micronesia, and East Asia reveal some important unresolved questions related to memories of Japanese colonialism and war.

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<sup>539</sup> Shigematsu and Camacho, *Militarized Currents*.

## The NMI and the Mariana Islands

The recent history of various Mariana Islands' separate political relationships with the U.S. impacts local intra-archipelagic discourses about history and identity.

Differences between historical experiences and memory in Guam and the NMI, which are both in the Mariana archipelago, exposes the ways in which colonialism has created and exacerbated rifts between families within the archipelago.

About forty miles south of Rota island in the CNMI, Guam is still listed by the United Nations as a non-self-governing territory.<sup>540</sup> This has to do with the fact that political status talks of the 1970s never took place in Guam like they did throughout the rest of Micronesia formerly under Japanese control. The people of Guam were never given a vote before the United Nations General Assembly to decide their own political status in relationship to the U.S.<sup>541</sup> The rest of Micronesia broke into the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau (ROP).

Guam has been under U.S. control since 1898, and since the earliest days of U.S. rule local Chamorro thinkers and activists on Guam have sought for increased rights in

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<sup>540</sup> United Nations, "The United Nations and Decolonization: Non-Self-Governing Territories," assessed April 29, 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/nonselvgovterritories.shtml>.

<sup>541</sup> In the 1970s-80s, a series of local commissions and grassroots political activism in Guam culminated in decolonization legislation that was approved by local voters and presented by Guam delegates starting in the Spring of 1988 and continuing through several sessions of the U.S. Congress. The bill drew from UN decolonization ideas and international treaties, but was rejected by the U.S. George H.W. Bush and Clinton administrations citing among other objections, conflicts with strategic defense interests and the exclusion of U.S. citizens (based on ethnicity) from voting on final political status. Frank Quimby, "Fortress Guåhån," *The Journal of Pacific History* 46 (3): 366. What's more, Guam's Legislature in 1997 established a Commission on Decolonization by Public Law 23-147, and a Chamorro Registry by Public Law 23-130, both of which continue to further the aims of the local bill that establishes protocols and principles for Guam's self-determination. Leheslaturan Guahan, Hagåtña, "32<sup>nd</sup> Guam Legislature, Public Laws-23<sup>rd</sup>," last accessed April 29, 2015, [www.guamlegislature.com/23rd\\_public\\_laws.htm](http://www.guamlegislature.com/23rd_public_laws.htm). The work of the commission and registry established by these public laws remains unfinished.

the management of affairs on the island.<sup>542</sup> The fact that the Northern Mariana Islands were allowed to select Commonwealth status in the 1970s while Guam was not given the same opportunity despite the island's long history under U.S. rule—combined with the fact that Guam Chamorros were at the time U.S. citizens while people in the NMI were not—has understandably frustrated Guamanian political leaders and others.<sup>543</sup>

The unresolved nature of ongoing struggles by the people of Guam give rise to cultures of anger and mistrust that have undergirded war memory narratives coming from Guam. As Chapter 5 explains, the history of elite Chamorro men's service in the Japanese military against Chamorros in Guam has dominated war memory discourses and strained relations in family networks. Anger and mistrust in Guam has sometimes been directed towards the people in the CNMI, the islands with which Guam otherwise shares much in the way of history and family bonds. Palpable dissatisfaction about American differential treatment of the Mariana archipelago exacerbates, or perhaps should be cited as the major source of, intra-archipelagic political and personal tensions. It seems that the targets of angst often become islanders themselves who are actively making life work within these lopsided historical circumstances, meanwhile the original colonial architects fade into the background. American and Japanese colonialisms in these ways have created and complicated rifts between indigenous Mariana Islanders with family members in Guam

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<sup>542</sup> Penelope Bordallo, *A Campaign for Political Rights on Guam, Mariana Islands, 1899-1950*, Master's Thesis in History (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1982). This was later published as Penelope Bordallo-Hofschneider, *A Campaign for Political Rights on Guam, Mariana Islands, 1899-1950* (Saipan: CNMI Division of Historic Preservation, 2001).

<sup>543</sup> While overseeing political status negotiations in the rest of Micronesia, the United Nations commissioned a secret study of Guam which recommended that the U.S. also offer commonwealth status to the people of Guam: meanwhile, Guamanians were hard at work drafting their own ideas about what a commonwealth of Guam might look like. Although President Ford had given this UN paper his support, the U.S. government never adopted the study. Howard P. Willens and Dirk Anthony Ballendorf, *The Secret Guam Study: How President Ford's 1975 Approval of Commonwealth Was Blocked by Federal Officials* (Mangilao, Guam: University of Guam Press, 2008).

and the NMI.

The U.S. also treated war damage claims from Guam differently from those originating in the rest of Micronesia. A formal war claims and reparations process took place in Micronesia in the 1970s. The U.S. established the Micronesian Claims Commission to collect and assess claims for damages sustained between December 7, 1941 through the various dates when individual islands or areas were proclaimed secure (Title I) and damages sustained from 1944-51 (Title II). The U.S. received claims under both Titles from October 1972 to October 1973. 11,000 claims were received by December, and the total for the Marianas was \$31,210,000. This was more than 250 times the amount that the U.S. and Japan had set aside for this purpose. In the end, 84% of claims deemed valid were not paid, and (compounded by the fact that accounting for inflation was not originally budgeted) by 1976 unpaid claims were a point of tension according to a UN Visiting Mission report.<sup>544</sup>

These outstanding claims remain largely unpaid. They were focused on the losses of property or human life resulting from the war and the U.S. territory-wide military occupation period. Reparations did not account for the breaking apart and maintenance of separation between multiracial families that had formed prior to the U.S. takeover. Instead, they focused on paying back what is often called collateral damage to physical properties (lands and lives).

Whereas partial payments were made to Micronesians, there have never been payments made to the people of Guam. In 2002 a Guam War Claims Review

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<sup>544</sup> Wakako Higuchi, "Japan and War Reparations in Micronesia," *The Journal of Pacific History* 30: 1 (1995): 88-98.

Commission was formed to address the matter, which by then had already been the topic of several reports and congressional attempts. The Commission submitted a report to the U.S. Congress in 2004. Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo used this report as a basis for submitting a “Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act,” which was approved by the U.S. House and is now pending in the Senate. At issue now is whether or not heirs to claimants may receive payments, despite the fact that precedent for payments to heirs exists in the Micronesian Claims Act of the 1970s.

The ongoing struggles for war reparations and political self-determination by the people of Guam are an embarrassment to Japan and the United States, and they ought to be addressed and redressed. It is unnerving to consider that the people of Guam—the only indigenous islanders in Micronesia who were American subjects prior to the Second World War—are also the only Micronesian peoples to be routinely denied reparations payments and requests for political status talks through the present day. The unresolved nature of this ongoing struggle by the people of Guam against the U.S. military industrial complex that is supported by the Japanese government is a reason for what appears to be a justifiable local culture of anger and skepticism among some Chamorros from Guam towards leaders in Japan, the U.S., and often the Northern Mariana Islands as well.

#### The NMI and Micronesia

People familiar with legacies of Japan in Micronesia point to the Palau islands as the place where about half of the names of indigenous Palauan families today sound Japanese. Koror, Palau was the capital of Japan’s Nan’yôchô, and the Palau islands are the other major area in Micronesia where Japanese colonial settlers outnumbered

islanders (by five to one—about half the density in the Northern Mariana Islands). But unlike the NMI, Palau never hosted U.S. military bases after the war. Of all of the former Japanese Mandated Islands, Palau sought after the most distant political relationship with the U.S. in the postwar period. By contrast, the NMI was the area of Japan's former Micronesian Mandate that was most comprehensively incorporated into both Japanese settler and American military colonialism. This suggests that although possibly not as transformative as the Japanese colonial influences experienced by islanders in the NMI, the influences of Japanese colonialism in Palau were probably less constrained by political, social, and cultural forces at work in postwar Palau.

In the case of the NMI, as opposed to Palau, the culturally, historically, and geographically connected island of Guam has played a role in the tone of dominant currents in postwar memory. Harsh war experiences under Japanese military rule in Guam meant that significant anti-Japanese feelings emerged there. Being anti-Japanese on postwar Guam also implied hostility toward the relative Japanese-ness of NMI Chamorros. Popular anti-Japanese sentiment expressed by Chamorros from Guam very likely further marginalized the acceptability of expressing affection for Japan in Northern Mariana Island public places where gossip might travel south and be heard by friends and family members in Guam. Palau has no neighboring island like Guam, and no history of differentiated options for self-governance that were given to some islanders but not others within the archipelago.

Thus I surmise that in Palau, where the ratio of Japanese settlers to islanders was also high and Japanese influences were significant, nostalgia for Japan and openly Japanese-sounding names could have more easily remained a part of the publically-



acknowledged sociocultural landscape with potentially fewer negative social consequences than in the NMI. The pronounced U.S. military presence in the NMI and in nearby Guam fostered “cultures of commemoration” modes of interpreting the recent Japanese era and war.<sup>545</sup> When compared to Palau, these postwar cultural conditions might have more often led to the disappearance of family names adopted during the Japanese era alongside other traces of old Japan.

#### The NMI and East Asia

Recently Keith Camacho and Setsu Shigematsu in *Militarized Currents* proposed thinking about commonalities between Okinawa and Guam histories since both islands have been subject to Japanese wartime control and Japan-U.S. treaty-based administrative arrangements in the postwar period.<sup>546</sup> In this co-edited volume, contributing authors also theorize commonalities between U.S. base-adjacent experiences and discourses across East Asia—the U.S. has bases in Korea, Japan, and Guam, and new bases and training sites are planned for construction in the CNMI. Authors in this volume think toward regional and local forms of consciousness based not just in one experience of subjugation to militarized imperialism, but in several all at once. This volume contributes to conversations about how scholars can incorporate histories of interconnected experiences of military base and base-adjacent life into dominant cultures in these areas. These dominant cultures continue to categorically exclude voices from people of color and women, unless these voices fit into nationalizing agendas for historical interpretation on

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<sup>545</sup> Camacho, *Cultures of Commemoration*.

<sup>546</sup> Shigematsu and Camacho, *Militarized Currents*.

and around military bases where dominant historiography tends to serve specific political agendas.

As with histories of Guam and Okinawa, as this dissertation has shown, there are also many similarities between NMI and Okinawan histories. Islanders in both locations experienced WWII as a conflict between two powers that were both enemies to islanders. Civilians in Okinawa, Saipan and Tinian all experienced similar kinds of battles that were characterized by high rates of civilian deaths. In addition to similar wartime experiences, the heavy settlement of the NMI by people from Okinawa prefecture and the repatriation of most of these settlers to Okinawa inextricably connect the histories of these two islands. Tomoko Ohara has argued that in some iterations of postwar Okinawan identity, if a person did not survive the battles of Saipan, Tinian, or Okinawa, they could not readily lay claim to being “Uchinanchû” (Okinawan).<sup>547</sup>

Despite these shared experiences and the existence of memory discourses in Okinawa that incorporate the NMI, the Asia-Pacific areas formerly under Japanese imperial control have been separated from one another by postwar U.S. cultures of knowledge production. Through texts that misunderstand, discount, or do not acknowledge histories of Japan in this region, Japan’s colonial presence remains largely ignored by most histories although it is relevant for many former settlers and islanders alike who are still living in these areas. In the case of Taiwan, Leo Ching argues that this gap between the lingering traces of the historical experience of Japanese colonial rule and the explicit awareness of these histories gives rise to an inexplicable cultural yearning for

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<sup>547</sup> Ohara, “Sengo Okinawa,” 35.

Japan.<sup>548</sup> A similar kind of yearning for Japan has been expressed to me during the course of my research, and which I describe as nostalgia in this dissertation. While I acknowledge that taking nostalgia seriously might at first appear to downplay the violence of colonialism, dismissing nostalgia conversely enables the erasure of significant historical experiences.

Comparing Northern Mariana Islanders' experiences to other former Japanese colonial subjects also reveals some unresolved problems in the ways that they were managed by Allied wartime and postwar policies. First, a few blind spots pervaded the Allied War Crimes Trials and the postwar treaties that established the conditions for contemporary U.S. domination over Japan's former empire. When the war was over, the Allied powers put an end to decades of Japanese colonial rule of Korea, Micronesia, Taiwan, and all of Japan's other informal and formal colonies. Certain colonial subjects—Koreans and Taiwanese—who served in the Japanese military were, like the NMI Chamorros in the war crimes trials in Guam, treated as POWs mostly for crimes against Allied prisoners at Japanese POW camps. Yuma Totani writes of the 148 Korean and 173 Taiwanese who were prosecuted as Japanese POWs at the Tokyo Trial that:

... the allied powers regarded Korea and Taiwan not only as victims of Japanese colonialism but also as *victimizers* who had assisted in Japan's aggression and atrocities. There is considerable irony in the double historical victimhood of these two former Japanese colonies. The tragic fact, however, is that the Tokyo trial, being a war crimes trial, was ill-equipped to deal with problems associated with Japanese colonialism.<sup>549</sup>

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<sup>548</sup> Leo Ching, "Give Me Japan and Nothing Else!": Postcoloniality, Identity, and the Traces of Colonialism," in *Japan After Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006): 142-166.

<sup>549</sup> Yuma Totani, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial: The Pursuit of Justice in the Wake of World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008): 13.

Like the Korean and Taiwanese subjects of the Japanese empire, prosecutors at war crimes trials in Guam treated the Chamorro conscripts in the Japanese military as war criminals without acknowledging their subjugated colonial status within the Japanese empire. They were, in other words, victims of Japanese aggression who were not invited to help evaluate Japan's aggression because they were never asked to participate as judges or counselors. The convicted Chamorros were punished for acting in ways that were deemed war crimes, but their preexisting subjectivity as "third-class" subjects under the racist and classist Japanese empire was not acknowledged by the structure of the trials. The prosecutors' total lack of engagement with the historical circumstances faced by colonial subjects in the period leading to the war can be described, to draw upon Totani's words excerpted above, as a "double historical victimhood."

What's more, just like the Allied war crimes trials did a poor job of dealing with the legacies of racist Japanese colonialism in the making of Japanese militarism and war, the multinational Treaty of Peace that Japan signed with forty-eight nations to formally end hostilities notably excluded many signatories from formerly or currently colonized countries. Micronesians were among them.

The omissions from the list of nations that signed the peace treaty are significant. Neither Communist China nor the Chinese Nationalist regime were invited to the peace conference, despite the fact that China had borne the brunt of Japanese aggression and occupation. Both South and North Korea were excluded, although the Korean people had suffered under Japanese colonial rule and oppressive wartime recruitment policies particularly between 1910 and 1945. The Soviet Union attended the peace conference but refused to sign the treaty on several grounds, including the exclusion of the PRC and Washington's transparent plans to integrate Japan militarily into its Cold War policies.<sup>550</sup>

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<sup>550</sup> John Dower, "The San Francisco System."

As John Dower makes clear in this excerpt, many nations affected by World War Two in Asia and the Pacific were excluded from the signing of the Treaty of Peace that concluded the war. Micronesians were similar to many former colonial subjects of Japan in that they were not invited to be involved in decisions regarding postwar treaty relationships governing the old Co-Prosperity Sphere. In the ongoing postwar historical moment, the U.S. still directs what Dower called Japan's "subordinate independence"<sup>551</sup> in the world via a separate Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan. Neither the Treaty of Peace nor the Security Treaty formally incorporated the opinions of colonized peoples in Micronesia.

The liberation paradigm for histories of U.S. activities in the Mariana Islands rejects thinking about the islands and islanders within transnational histories of the Asia-Pacific region and instead focuses on explicating islands and islanders' affiliations with the United States. Rather than thinking about subjectivity strictly in national terms, however, people in the Asia-Pacific region ought to think regionally in order to arrive at new insights and forms of consciousness about shared experiences that can productively challenge outmoded colonial systems that remain relevant in the present day. Commonalities between Okinawan and Northern Mariana islanders' experiences have hardly been explored, yet these two places have been inextricably connected by decades of colonialism, war, and postwar memory activities. Insights about history and everyday life emerging in Okinawa might be helpful especially for Northern Mariana Islanders who may be seeking direction in the struggle to mitigate current U.S. military buildup of these islands.

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<sup>551</sup> Ibid.

### **The *Man'amko* as Indigenous Agents of History**

Though they have not usually held positions of social power in historical colonial periods, indigenous islanders have influenced the course of history by performing various roles. This final section summarizes some of the ways in which my interviewees—the *man'amko* or indigenous senior citizens in the NMI—have been active participants in NMI history. I assess some of the roles they have played as well as characteristics that help to define this group as a distinctive generation with a unique set of shared experiences.

One of the most obvious roles the eldest living generation of islanders have played has been to act as intermediaries between the rapidly shifting regimes to which they were subject. People told me stories about how they were forced or inspired to act as interpreters for their parents or others who did not speak Japanese well.<sup>552</sup> This role of interpreter could also be used to describe the place of *man'amko* in contemporary society wherein they interpret the Japanese days for local youth who often do not know much about what life was like before the war.

Although the liberation paradigm focuses on the narrow three-week battle, indigenous senior citizens suggested that they have their own periodization scheme for the events of the 1930s through the 1950s. Their stories suggest that the transition from relative peace during the Japanese period through repatriation as the final act of war was gradual and involved the transition toward Japanese military rule before the coming of the war. Their stories based in everyday experiences of historical shifts position them as

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<sup>552</sup> Some examples from this dissertation include Escolastica's use of Japanese to sell her father's leather shoes in Garapan, and the Chamorros who helped the U.S. military by speaking into megaphones to coax war refugees out of the jungle towards surrendering to the Americans.

historians with the ability to reorient transnational events beneath local perspectives.

This periodization starts with the economically robust Japanese time period corresponding to the mid 1920s through the late 1930s when the sugar industry grew rapidly and spawned various secondary and tertiary industries and brought tens of thousands of settlers to the area. This was the era of their childhoods when they were going to school, when relative peace and order reigned on the islands, and when people were active everyday performing jobs for wages or salaries. In Chamorro, this was *tiempon Japones* (the Japanese time), or the time before the war.

The second period was the time when it became clear that war was coming because the military began to take over local affairs. This was when the Imperial Japanese Navy arrived on the islands (1939), started teaching boys military skills, and soon began to restrict what food people could buy and sell. The military also restricted the freedom to engage in Catholic activities, which Chapter 5 explained was something that islanders deeply resented. Near the end of the militarizing period, Army units arrived on the island and seized school buildings to use as barracks while forcing children and adults to work building airports and other military fortifications. Never referring to them simply as the “military,” this generation remembers clear differences between the navy and army personnel as well as other sub-units such as the military police.

Next came the period of Japan-U.S. fighting, or the wartime. For Chamorros who served in the invasion of Guam or elsewhere, this began in December 1941. But for most people, the wartime refers to the time when fighting broke out in the NMI in June 1944. Islanders fled into the jungle and hid in caves or air-raid shelters while fearing both belligerent forces as enemies. The all-out battle lasted for three weeks but fighting in

different pockets of the island persisted for many more months. The wartime also involved living in internment camps separated by race where the U.S. housed civilians away from the battle lines. The wartime ended for most islanders when they were released from these camps on July 4, 1946. For islanders who were members of multiracial families, the removal of settler Japanese and Okinawan residents was antagonistic to the bonds that had formed between these populations. Therefore the repatriations should also be understood within this localized definition of war.

Nowadays, the elders I interviewed for this study are the patriarchs and matriarchs of contemporary indigenous populations. Many of the individuals I spoke with had upwards of ten children each—having this many children was more common in the past than it is nowadays. This means that they are related to almost every indigenous Northern Mariana Islander alive today: they are among several hundred survivors who helped to repopulate the islands after the war and produced the current generations. Because these individuals are the parents and grandparents of just about everyone on the island, they are precious individuals. I have been delighted to see that younger relatives can be very protective of their elders' time.

The eldest indigenous generation tended to engage in self-education throughout their lives, and have demonstrated the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. After the war cut short many people's childhoods and Japanese education experiences, they had to learn an entirely new language and a new colonial culture as teenagers or young adults—well after they had passed the age of most schoolchildren. John Heine who attended postwar American schools as a teenager in Ebon, Marshall Islands remembers being too old to attend fifth grade. He and his friends sat at the “back table” or at the back



of the classroom, behind the younger pupils.<sup>553</sup> Facing the difficult prospect of starting over as teenagers in new foreign elementary schools, or of teaching themselves English if they could not afford to go to school, this generation was tenuous and often self-educated.

Many from this generation died because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. The silenced voices of the people who were once part of this cohort and then suddenly vanished I think occupy a kind of present-absence in the psyche of members of this generation as they share memories from those days. I sense that stories about well-loved and respected people who never made it off the battlefields are part of what has motivated these elders to live meaningful lives: they persist sometimes on behalf of the friends and family who did not. Elsewhere, this has been called survivor's guilt. In a few cases, I suspect that individuals might have felt motivated to work hard as a way to deal with the guilt of having themselves murdered people during the war, although no one ever admitted as much to me.

Having emerged scarred from war and moreover having learned from Japanese colonial schools followed by Japanese military occupation, this generation is truly resilient. They express high expectations of self-governance for themselves but they lament that they do not see this ethos reflected in younger generations, some of whom I fear look back toward this generation only to see their relative Japaneseness as a symbol of treasonous tendencies or bad intent (per the liberation narrative paradigm).

These people often remember themselves and their relatives living on multiple islands in Micronesia, as the Japanese colonial geographic boundaries around the area

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<sup>553</sup> John Heine, "Marshall Islanders Experiences in World War II," in *Remembering the Pacific War*, edited by Geoffrey M. White (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Occasional Papers of the Center for Pacific Islands Studies, 1991): 115.

meant that islanders often migrated within the territory for work. Many seniors especially on Tinian island were born on Yap and moved to Tinian after the war, and Tinian Chamorros are known to be a community with origins in the postwar migration of people facilitated by the U.S. repatriation orders. Experiences living on multiple islands within Micronesia and even in Japan are not uncommon in their memories. It would seem that the generation of NMI Chamorros and Carolinians who lived in the first half of the twentieth century could often speak several colonial and indigenous Micronesian languages, perhaps owing in part to these regional migratory experiences.

Many from this generation have had family members in Guam, although these stories can be bittersweet because these ties have been complicated by negative memories of NMI wartime “collaboration” with the Japanese military. But as I have argued, it is more accurate to say that some elite male NM islanders were conscripted into service in the invasion and occupation of Guam, whereas most civilians were subject to military rule and brutal, deadly fighting. This fighting concluded with coerced suicides, which happened when fleeing civilians huddled around hand grenades and jumped off cliffs because the Japanese military urged them to do so rather than surrender. Some indigenous people who were members multiracial households may have participated in these suicides, but this possibility has not been entertained by mainstream histories. Instead, indigenous islanders’ experiences of brutality during the war have been marginalized in the past by accusatory discourses portraying Northern Mariana Islanders as bad Americans because of their association with Imperial Japan. People who see indigenous islanders’ relative Japaneseness as treasonous do so at the risk of inflicting more violence upon survivors with war memories that have been too excruciating to

share in public. Traumatized, I think many of this generation have chosen to suffer in silence or have consciously or unconsciously labored to forget these memories in the interest of moving past them.

This generation is also devoutly Catholic, and many *man'amko* showed me that they turn to prayer as a way to deal with some of the profound violence they have experienced both individually and collectively as Chamorros and Carolinians. I do not mean to suggest that faith is only a method of finding meaning in life after experiencing pain and loss, because it is clear that this Catholic faith is also a philosophy and practice for expressing life's greatest joys and possibilities for eternal life in God.

Sometimes words do not do justice to the gravity of meanings bundled in memories of past experiences, and quiet reflection is all that is possible or appropriate. I did not live through what they witnessed, and many times I felt so humbled by their stories that the only appropriate way for me to pursue research was to sit quietly and consider the enormity of the plight of the islands' longest-term residents. I knelt alongside people in prayer and spent time reflecting on the overlapping absences that (silently) help to define contemporary indigenous NMI identities. For a long time all I could feel was overwhelmed and devastated by what the *man'amko* were teaching me about how much they had lost over the course of decades and centuries during which time their families had struggled just to exist.

I heard some stories "off the record" that I will never be able to repeat, and many of the stories I heard were deeply troubling and took time for me to emotionally process. These senior citizens helped me to focus on the clear, detailed visions emerging in their memories while I also caught glimpses of shadows that flickered at the periphery, just out

of view, but that were nevertheless present in the room with us. I made notes about these specters of history that, along with common memory threads, attest to the impossible number of people who were wiped out and whose stories will never be known.

I still feel tormented and self-effacing when it comes to speaking openly about the lessons of NMI history as told by grandparents who are not my own, and who my own grandfathers may have killed in battle. I hope this treatment has done justice to some of the many lessons they wanted me to pass along to you

## APPENDIX: List of Interviewees

### Man'amko (Elders)

- Ada, Antonieta. Interviews with the author at the House of Maturana, Navy Hill, Saipan, July 7, 10, and 14, 2008.
- Aldan, Susana Palacios. Interview with the author at Susana's residence in San Jose, Tinian, November 26, 2012.
- Augon, Maria Sablan. Interview with the author at Maria's residence in Agana Heights, Guam, Feb. 7, 2013.
- Barto, Julia Quichay. Interview with the author at Julia's residence in Dan Dan, Saipan, February 20, 2013.
- Basa, Felisa Chargalof. Interview with the author at the Center for Aging, Garapan, Saipan, October 4, 2011.
- Benavente, Soledad (Delos Reyes) Aldan. Interview with the author at the Center for Aging, Garapan, Saipan, September 14, 2011.
- Borja, Elias Manibusan. Interview with the author at Fleming Restaurant, San Jose, Tinian, November 28, 2012.
- Cabrera, Escolastica Tudela. Interviews with the author at the Cabrera residence in Capitol Hill, Saipan, July 8 and 9, 2008, September 22 and October 5, 2011, and June 27, 2012.
- Interview with the author at the Jordan residence in Chalan Galaide, Saipan, September 7, 2011.
- Camacho, Luis T. Interview with the author at the Marianas Printing office in Oleai, Saipan, November 2, 2012.
- Castro, Estefania Lizama. Interview with the author and Rlene Santos Steffy at Estefania's residence in Dededo, Guam on February 4, 2013.
- Concepcion, Gregorio Quitugua. Interview with the author at Concepcion residence in Piti, Guam, February 5, 2013.
- Diaz, Juan Camacho. Interview with the author at the Diaz residence in Chalan Kiya, Saipan, December 1, 2012.
- Imamura, Rose Sablan. Interview with the author at King's Restaurant in Tamuning,

Guam, February 8, 2013.

Olopai, Lino Mettao. Interview with the author at the Jordan residence in Chalan Galaide, Saipan, October 17, 2012.

Palacios, Rosa “Chilang” Tudela and Manuel Tudela Palacios. Interview with the author at the Palacios residence in San Roque, Saipan, January 10, 2013.

Pangelinan, Jose Pangelinan. Interview with the author at the Fleming Restaurant in San Jose, Tinian, November 28, 2012.

Reyes, Donicio San Nicolas. Interview with the author at the Reyes residence in San Jose, Tinian, November 27, 2012.

Reyes, Marcelino “Max” Charfauros. Interview with the author at the Reyes residence in Chalan Laulau, Saipan, March 20, 2013.

Sablan, David Mangarero. Interview with the author at his office in Garapan, Saipan, October 11, 2012.

Sablan, Manuel Tenorio. Interview with the author at the Sablan residence in San Roque, Saipan, November 12, 2012.

Santos, Antonia. Interview with the author at the Center for Aging, Garapan, Saipan, October 4, 2011.

Taitague, Jose Quinene. Interview with the author at Jose’s home in Barrigada Heights, Guam, February 7, 2013.

#### Historians and History Professionals

Farrell, Don Allen. Interview with the author at the Jordan residence in Chalan Galaide, Saipan, July 5, 2012.

Marciano, Gordon Ichihara. Interview with author in the Hafa Adai Beach Hotel lobby, Garapan, Saipan, September 6, 2013.

McPhetres, Samuel F. Interview with the author at his office in Garapan, Saipan, October 25, 2012.

Rosario, Herbert Del. Interview with the author at the CNMI Archives at the Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje, Saipan, July 2, 2012.

Petty, Bruce Michael. Interview with the author at the Petty residence in New Plymouth, New Zealand, December 11, 2012.

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