**Who Was John Manjiro?**

In the year 1841, a 14-year-old boy named Manjiro and four of his friends were fishing off the coast of their home village of Nakanohama (in present-day Tosashimizu) when they were caught in a storm and lost control of their boat. The Kuroshio (Japan Current) carried them far away from the coast and out onto the vast Pacific Ocean. The current occasionally flows east toward the central Pacific instead of following its usual route north, and this was its direction at the time. The five men eventually ended up on Torishima, a small island about 750 kilometers from where they had started out. They remained stranded on the island for 143 days before being rescued by an American whaling ship. Manjiro, whom the whalers nicknamed John, chose to remain on board all the way to the United States, where he learned English and eventually made enough money to return to Japan. John Manjiro, also known as John Mung, later became a translator and expert shipbuilder, helping the Japanese government in its efforts to modernize the country and expand international trade in the 1860s and 1870s. Visitors interested in learning more about Manjiro’s adventure-filled life may want to visit the John Mung Museum and Manjiro’s birthplace, both of which are in Tosashimizu.