

# When and from Where did the Japonic Language Enter the Ryukyus? — A Critical Comparison of Language, Archaeology, and History

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From time to time historical linguists slip from their linguistic moorings and attempt to link their work in reconstruction to larger human history. I have been no exception. I have long specialized in the dialects of the Ryukyus, and my conjectures have focused on southern Japan. I would like to start with a short discussion of what I had claimed previously, and what those claims were based on.

In my 1994 paper (Serafim 1994) I supported Uemura Yukio's idea (1977) that Ryukyuan was part of a dialect spoken by the Hayato. I suggested that either some of them fled south at the time of the extension of Yamato power into southern Kyushu, or else some were already farther south than Yamato power reached, that is, in islands south of Kyushu, and they were cut off from their fellows to the north.

Further, I assumed that the dialects of Kyushu, now under Yamato control, gradually adopted Yamato dialect features, thus becoming more Yamato-like and less like the dialects of their fellows to the south. Meanwhile the dialects that were to become Ryukyuan also underwent their own changes, thus becoming even more different from the Hayato dialects to the north.

I relied at the time on Pearson's 1969 book on Ryukyuan archeology. I have since made the acquaintance of Asato Susumu, an archeologist working in Okinawa today, and I have been reading his writings and considering his hypotheses for the last several years. I return to Asato and his co-author Doi's hypotheses below.

I tried to set reasonable dates for the movement of Ryukyuan into the Ryukyus in part by considering when Japonic itself must have entered the Japanese archipelago. What I was reading in, for example, Hanihara (1990b), Nelson (1993), and Koyama (1990) persuaded me that a huge influx of so-called *toraijin* from the Korean peninsula had started at the inception of the Yayoi period, and that these people brought not only themselves and their paddy-rice agriculture, but their language, Japonic, as well.

Unbeknownst to me, Hudson (1994) was arguing much the same thing at the same time. Of course, others had different versions of the same idea much earlier.

It appeared that there was a cline of physical anthropological features from north to south Kyushu, suggesting that there had been less and less *toraijin* penetration the further south one looked. However, we know that all Kyushu and Ryukyu inhabitants today speak Japonic. Thus I felt that there had to have been cultural and linguistic diffusion to people who were not originally *toraijin*, that is, to the indigenous inhabitants of the archipelago. A similar diffusion outrunning the population movement should be the case in the eastern part of Honshu as well.

At the time I felt that the latest date for the formation of a separate Ryukyuan beyond the pale of Yamato was likely to have been just before or during the Nara period, about the time of the final subjugation of the Hayato. Pearson (1969: 119) had suggested a date of about 200 CE, citing glottochronological studies, though Hokama (1971) citing the same studies by Hattori, opted for the later part of Hattori's range of dates, namely about 500 CE. If Pearson's dating was right, I speculated that the movement south might have been under pressure from encroaching *toraijin* agriculturists occupying more choice locations. At the time it seemed right to assume that any movement southward was masked by the presumed fact that the indigenous inhabitants of both southern Kyushu and the Ryukyus shared the same Jo-mon-like physical morphology.

As for any movement into Sakishima, I assumed none, and that the adoption of Ryukyuan there was purely through diffusion. I noted that Pearson (1969: 119) considered that this changeover probably happened at the time of the takeover of the Sakishima islands by the Ryukyuan kingdom, but that this seemed far too late for the degree of differentiation of the dialects only 500 years later. Nonetheless, I entertained a speculation about how such a rapid dialect adoption and differentiation might have happened.

I suggested that groups would have adopted the language piecemeal from island to island and from village to village, and that each time a new group adopted the language from their neighbors, it would have undergone a further set of changes due to substratal influence. The result would be very rapid change, leading to the great differentiation among the present-day dialects there. They would also have undergone ordinary sound change, just like any other language, adding even more to the thick layer of changes. I suggested further that this would explain why the languages seemed decreasingly "Japanese" as one moved to the west. A prediction suggested itself, namely that the farther west one went, the thicker the layering of sound changes would turn out to be. I do not think that anyone has attempted to test this hypothesis so far. However, the fact that Yonaguni, the westernmost dialect, has undergone a double set of vowel raisings is suggestive. Such a hypothesis also necessitated a constant leftward branching in the dialect subgrouping.

I was interested in the possibility that, in terms of linguistic subgrouping, Sakishima was just a sister of South Okinawan, and not a sister of Northern Ryukyuan as a whole. Similarly I was interested in whether the same possibility could be

entertained for Ryukyuan as a whole vis-à-vis the dialects of Kyushu, namely that Ryukyuan might just be a sister of some single dialect of Kyushu. Since I followed the position of Thorpe (1983) that Central Japanese was the first dialect to split off from Proto-Japonic, I necessarily viewed Ryukyuan as, in terms of its origin, just another Western Japanese dialect. I further assumed that the reason that Kyushu dialects and Ryukyuan are so different today is politics — the Kyushu dialects underwent a period of change under the influence of Yamato that made them more similar to it, and the Ryukyuan dialects went their own way.

Now I would like to introduce some recent work by Asato & Doi, by Hudson, and by Unger.

Asato Susumu has argued that the Ryukyus became part of the Japonic world from around 900 CE (Asato and Doi 1999). Here I will try to lay down the basic claims that Asato (mostly) and Doi are making.

Asato, an archeologist, and Doi, a physical anthropologist (1999), pool their resources in order to bring the strongest evidence to bear in favor of a hypothesis that the Ryukyuan and their language and culture came from Kyushu in what Asato has come to call the Proto-Gusuku period, starting around 900 CE. In effect, they are claiming that the entire package came all at once: people, culture, language. Asato stresses the role of trade in the events that led to the establishment of the Ryukyuan cultural sphere.

Given this, it is not clear to me what role the discussion of Nagasaki merchants plays, unless it is to suggest that the people who populated the new Ryukyuan homeland came from this region. In any case, they are claiming that the movement of soon-to-be-Ryukyuan into the Ryukyus was driven by the Song Chinese need for medical and luxury products. This differs markedly from the claim that I had supported in 1994, originated perhaps by Uemura Yukio, that it was the Hayato fleeing from the Yamato advance that had brought the soon-to-be-Ryukyuan into the Ryukyus.

According to Asato and Doi, before the Proto-Gusuku period was the Shell-Midden period, considered by most archeologists, and by both Asato and Doi, to be a highly variant local form of Jōmon culture. The Shell-Midden people were foragers. The Proto-Gusuku people knew agriculture. The Shell-Midden people had no metal implements, while the Proto-Gusuku people apparently produced their own iron implements. The living sites of the Shell-Midden people in some cases are the same as the sites of later Gusuku-period habitations, but some differ. Asato and Doi infer that the newcomers assimilated the Shell-Midden people. The population during the Proto-Gusuku period “exploded,” so that by the beginning of the Gusuku period, it had grown by a factor of ten. One reason that Asato and Doi believe that these Gusuku people are the ancestors of modern Ryukyuan is that their habitation sites are the same as modern habitation sites, suggesting a direct continuity from that time until the present.

In Sakishima, earlier cultures had pottery, but the culture immediately preceding the Proto-Gusuku culture did not. Pottery of a different variety returned with the Proto-Gusuku culture.

There is a dearth of physical anthropological evidence for what Asato calls the Proto-Gusuku period, but the populations before and after this period are clearly morphologically different — with the post-Proto-Gusuku group being morphologically like medieval Japanese mainlanders. Asato and Doi assume that that difference is due to population movement, not to evolutionary or environmental factors. In short, they believe that a group of people moved to the Ryukyus from Kyushu, absorbing those who were already there. They also believe that the newcomers brought the Japanese language with them.

I still do not have a satisfactory answer from reading Asato and Doi about where in Kyushu those people would have come from. Most of the time their statements do not distinguish among the various parts of Kyushu, but Asato appears to believe that they came from Nagasaki, not southern Kyushu.

Asato talks about either overt or assumed Kyushu connections: Throughout the Ryukyus in the Proto-Gusuku strata are found soapstone pots originating on the West Sonoki peninsula in Nagasaki prefecture. They had excellent heat retention properties, and were worth a quarter of an ox in trade. Asato believes Nagasaki merchants traded them throughout the Ryukyus. The driving force is the Song-dynasty-established trade network. The Japanese got Chinese ceramics in exchange for Japanese sulfur (used in medicines) and lacquer ware (i.e., luxury goods). The sulfur was obtained on Yuôjima in the Tokara Islands, while the mother-of-pearl for the lacquerware was obtained from shells originating from the Amami islands and south. Thus Nagasaki merchants could trade their pots, and later the Tokunoshima *kamui-yaki*, for the coveted sulfur and shells from which mother-of-pearl originated. Thus the engine of Song trade reached in waves all the way to the Ryukyus, even before the Ryukyuans themselves traded directly with China.

Sue-ware-like *kamui-yaki* originated from kilns on Tokunoshima, in Amami. Asato speculates that Koreans from Kyushu may have set up these kilns. He assumes that the same merchants traded the *kamui-yaki* jars and the Nagasaki *ishinabe* (soapstone pots) together, since they frequently appear in the same archeological strata.

Can we really say that Nagasaki merchants moved the goods around once the Tokunoshima kilns were established? Why should outside merchants do the trading as opposed to merchants from Tokunoshima? Is Tokunoshima the original Ryukyuan cultural and linguistic dispersion point, then?

Asato notes that iron implements also made their appearance about the same time, and assumes that blacksmiths moved from Kyushu into the Ryukyus, settling there, even as far south as the Sakishima group, though later. In any case, his discussion of blacksmiths does not mention where in Kyushu they might have come from.

Asato goes so far as to speculate that a new leadership class also entered the Ryukyus from Kyushu, though the reasons for those speculations are not clear.

Importantly, Asato and Doi also point out that agriculture appears to have entered the Ryukyus probably no earlier than 900, about 100 years into the Heian period. They

also point out, however, that there were specialized modes of agriculture in the Ryukyus, and the unspoken assumption here has to be that these all can have resulted from adaptations of Kyushu agricultural modes. These include the mixed raising of rice and millet, and the breeding of oxen.

While it is only a secondary claim, they also assume that the language entered from the Japanese mainland in this period.

If the language came from Nagasaki prefecture, then in 900 the influence of Yamato had not yet obliterated there the features Ryukyuan retains from proto-Japonic, since the only way those features could have entered Ryukyuan was presumably through the Nagasaki-area dialect of early Heian. Since present-day Nagasaki dialect has lost most of those structural features, it would be necessary to argue that they have been lost in the intervening 1100 years from there, and that the main engine for that change is contact-induced, from the Kinki politico-cultural center. Specifically, it would be necessary to claim that the proto-Japonic middle bigrade (or *naka-nidan*) verbal category, which in at least the eastern part of Kyushu had merged with the lower bigrade (or *shimo-nidan*) category, had shifted to an upper bigrade (or *kami-nidan*) category, mimicking the events of the Kinki area. Thus the infinitive (or *ren'yookei*) of Kinki *oki* 'arise' is *oke* in many northern and eastern Kyushu dialects, while it is *oki* in Nagasaki, the same as in Kinki Japanese. The replacement of the lower bigrade form *oke* with an upper bigrade form *oki* (and so on) for verbs of this type would be required if we claim that a Nagasaki-area dialect is the mother-dialect of Ryukyuan. This is because Proto-Ryukyuan had \**oke*, in a class that constituted a merger between the middle and lower bigrade classes, as in the northern and eastern Kyushu dialects. I treat this question below in greater detail.

If we suppose, instead, that the language came from the Kagoshima area, since Kagoshima is the closest to the Ryukyus, surprisingly the middle bigrade problem does not go away. The forms still have the high vowel *i* in the infinitive, and this fact fits just as badly with the Ryukyuan data, compounding the problem concerning the relation to Kyushu.

Note that we are not claiming that Kyushu Japanese simply became more and more like Kinki Japanese up to the present day. We assume that the situation was more complex than that. Probably the influence of Kinki was relatively early, until, say, 1200, after which the influence of the local feudal centers became more important. This allows 300 years for Nagasaki to acquire Yamato features. In addition, every region must have undergone spontaneous sound change in addition to contact-induced changes. This 300-year period appears to be too brief for the region to undergo such heavy influence from Kinki, in which case it must have started earlier.

A date before 900 places the Asato-Doi hypothesis in question, since that is presumably the date of the movement south to the Ryukyus. Further, if southern and western Kyushu dialects spontaneously underwent the fusion of upper and middle bigrades into a new upper bigrade category, without Kinki influence, then they must have done so from

Proto-Japonic upper, middle, and lower bigrade starting points. This means that those changes must have begun quite a bit earlier than 900, probably no later than the Tumulus period. Such an early date effectively blocks the south and west of Kyushu as starting points for movement into the Ryukyus.

Asato and Doi point out that at least the Sakishima (the Western) group of the Ryukyus was culturally very different from the north up to the Proto-Gusuku period. By the *Gusuku* period proper, the two cultures fused together into the Ryukyuan culture. They believe that that new culture is the result of the mixing of the Kyushu culture with the cultures that had been in the Ryukyus previously.

In Sakishima, Miyako and Taketomi appear to have been the earliest places to enter the Proto-Gusuku period. Of the places that Asato mentions, Hateruma (the southernmost dialect) appears to be the latest. This suggests that we can set up a sequence of language adoptions where Taketomi is first (because, e.g., Thorpe claims that it is the most Okinawa-like dialect); Miyako is next (though the idea that Taketomi, further west than Miyako, preceding it in Japonicization seems outlandish);<sup>1</sup> and then a sequence of adoptions in Yaeyama culminates in Hateruma. As mentioned above, Yonaguni, the westernmost dialect, has undergone vowel raising twice, suggesting that indeed it was the last place to adopt Japonic.

There appear to be dueling hypotheses here: on the one hand, an agricultural-dispersal model of the spread into the Ryukyus, and on the other, a mercantile model, which is the one that Asato has stressed when he and I have talked. Are they really just two sides of the same coin, or are they incommensurate with each other?

Mark Hudson has recently (2001) looked at the movement of Japonic into Japan proper and of Ryukyuan into the Ryukyus from the point of view of Colin Renfrew's hypothesis of the spread of language groups through agricultural dispersal. Hudson also supports the idea of movement of large numbers of Yayoi agriculturists from the Korean peninsula into the Japanese islands, and their subsequent spread. He also sees the inception of the Yayoi period as the time of the entry of Proto-Japonic into the Japanese archipelago. His intent is of course to support the farming dispersal hypothesis for language spread, at least for Japonic, and perhaps also for Ryukyuan.

Hudson in his 1994 paper (cited in Hudson 2001) had already made the suggestion that the later Ryukyuan were a different group from earlier, presumably Jomon-like, Ryukyuan, and cites a number of studies, including one by Doi, that have since supported that view, essentially identical to that of Asato and Doi mentioned earlier. He and Asato & Doi both point out that skeletal evidence for the Proto-Gusuku period is scarce, so that hypotheses on how the changes came about are tentative. Hudson is less sanguine about making a clear link between agriculture and the new population than Asato and Doi are, but they all agree that there was a major transition at about the same

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1 It is worth investigating whether Taketomi has Okinawan-like features because of its being early in the adoption of Okinawan, or because of relatively late contact.

time.

Next I would like to consider a recent paper by J. Marshall Unger (2001), in particular because the ideas contained in it work out only if Japonic changes very quickly.

Basically Unger suggests that Japanese, or Wa, should be considered a branch of proto-Samhan-Wa, a language originating from the area between the Yangzi River and the Shandong peninsula of China, and more specifically being the protolanguage of a group of people living on both sides of the Korean straits by the beginning of the Yayoi period. He assumes that they were pushed south or east by Chinese expansion in late Warring-States period by the Qin state.

According to Unger, the reason that there are so few Koreo-Japonic correspondences among basic vocabulary items is that: (1) there was an influx of Tungusic-speaking peoples, the Puye and Kokwulye, into the area in and north of Korea, with only one Han group remaining independent, namely Silla. (2) groups to whom the Yamato confederacy was inimical — other Wa — blocked the passage at the western end of the inland sea to the Korean peninsula and hence to China. (3) The Yamato were friendly to the new Tungusic rulers, and unfriendly to Silla, even though a fellow Wa-speaking power, because the former allowed them access to China. (4) The Yamato borrowed a tremendous number of Tungusic words, not necessarily related to their own language, as adstratal borrowings, that is, as “prestige borrowings.” (5) Silla eventually obliterated the Tungusic intruders and their languages.

The result was that, while Japanese (= Yamato Wa) and Korean (= SE Korean Wa) are closely related languages, they have relatively little vocabulary in common, because of the heavy adstratal Yamato borrowing from Tungusic.

If this hypothesis is true, it turns upside down some of my working assumptions of recent years. I have assumed that words that are only spottily attested in the dialects, but attested in the central-language written records, especially those that are only attested in older manuscripts, are borrowings from either Kaya or Paykcey, since the Yamato state was friendly to them. Unger assumes that these words were already so attenuated that they appeared only in secondary semantic pairings (cf. *deer* > *beast* > *animal*), and that the borrowings themselves are what are attested throughout the Japanese dialects.

Unger doesn't wrestle in his paper with the question of why Japonic and Korean should be so startlingly different from each other (e.g., in morphology), even though only a mere 2300 or 2400 years have gone by since the existence of the protolanguage. This is the most troubling aspect of his hypothesis. Indeed, he actually places the crucial time of divergence at the point of the entry of the Tungusic ruling groups into the picture, i.e. around 400 CE. The languages of Silla and Yamato then must have started their main divergence only 1600 years ago, a rate of change that is difficult to accept. Further, there remain only 300 years to get the quite clearly Japonic-internal differentiation between Ryukyuan and Japanese, since the Nara-period language of Kinki cannot be the ancestor of Ryukyuan. Unger ends up approaching a position very similar to that taken by Roy Andrew Miller (1971) — though perhaps unwittingly — in which he puts Ryukyuan in

a Stammbaum on a level essentially the same as Japanese and Korean, as if there had been a three-way split in Proto-Koreo-Japonic. The rate of change between the two languages in the intervening two and a half millennia would have to have been truly remarkable - all the more so for one and a half millennia. While it seems plausible that the languages diverged relatively quickly from each other, especially because of Chinese influence on Silla, nevertheless it is difficult to accept such a brief period of time.

Let us put Unger's proposals into the context of other recent views of rapid shift. (1) As mentioned earlier, in Serafim (1994) I proposed the possibility of very rapid phonological change within southern Ryukyuan as the reason for why such unusually different dialects should exist in such a small area, and in particular if the date of entry of the presumed Hayato speech was in the protohistoric period. (I made a working assumption that the language would add a layer of phonological change every time a new group adopted it, if that adoption should occur in a chain.)<sup>2</sup> (2) Asato Susumu's recent suggestions of entry of Japanese language into the archipelago as late as the 900s force a consideration of ever more extreme hypotheses for language shift. (3) Hudson also sees the splitting of Proto-Japonic as being relatively shallow, similar to Asato.

It appears that at every point the solution to the dilemma is to blame the rapid changes on contact phenomena:

—For Silla: (1) Contact with Chinese, either in the commanderies or otherwise, may have been the engine causing a major shift in word structure. (2) The great differences in the morphology of Japanese and Korean may be hard to explain if the time-depth is very shallow. However, we may profitably look at morphological change within Japonic, where we have both good records and a rich theory of verbal prehistory, to see how rapidly it can indeed occur.

—For Japanese: Contact with Tungusic resulted in widespread replacements of even basic vocabulary. The driving force was prestige. I remain to be convinced of this view, however.

—For Ryukyuan: (1) As for the Sakishima phenomenon: Rapid adoption of Japonic by groups not originally speaking it resulted in an accretion of a great number of sound changes. (2) Vis-à-vis Kyushu: Yamato-ization of the Kyushu dialects in the historical period—again, a contact phenomenon—resulted in obliteration of many of the features heretofore shared with Ryukyuan, which was originally some sort of Kyushu dialect. I return to a closer examination of the relation of Ryukyuan to Kyushu dialects below.

Had language contact not influenced events, then we might expect that the languages in question would all look little more different from each other than the Romance

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2 Otherwise it would be necessary to accept the default hypothesis, namely that the place of maximal dialect differentiation was the homeland of Ryukyuan, and, indeed, of Japonic as a whole. This view would make the extreme western Ryukyus, or northern Taiwan, the ultimate Japonic homeland—a conclusion that almost no one consider supportable.

languages are from each other, or the Germanic languages.

Finally, let us consider two linguistic arguments about the difficulties involved in accepting the late introduction from Kyushu, and the question of where Ryukyuan came from, or to what it is related.

Actually, it will be difficult to argue that the ancestor of *any* Southwestern Kyushu dialect is the starting point for Ryukyuan. Two points speak to this issue: nominalizers and vowel (i.e., *nidan*) verb classification.

First, nominalizers: The distribution in Kyushu of nominalizing particles is as follows. Of the 170 dialects studied in KHKK (p. 100; p. 16), only two, Moji<sup>3</sup> and Kokura,<sup>4</sup> have the nominalizer *su*. (Of these, at least one part of Kokura<sup>5</sup> appears in HBZC, maps 16, 17, and 18, as having *so*.) This nominalizer is identical to the Proto-Ryukyuan *\*su* (for this, cf. Nohara 1998: 487-9), and similar to the *so* found in Yamaguchi, according to OGJ (1963: 463a). Indeed, according to maps 16, 17, 18, and 40 of HBZC, this Yamaguchi *so* (in some cases softened to *ho*) is widespread along the north coast of Yamaguchi prefecture, along the western portion of its Inland-Sea coast, and to some extent in its westernmost interior.<sup>6</sup> The remaining Yamaguchi dialects use *no* or *N*. Most Kyushu dialects, however, use either *to* or *tsu* (with some using *t* or *Q* < *\*tsu*). Kagoshima prefecture dialects use mostly *to*. Again, cf. KHKK (p. 100) and HBZC (maps 16, 17, and 18).

While there are a few lexical forms in Japonic with correspondences between *t* and *s*, such as *otoro-si-* :: *osoro-si-* ‘frightening’, both Kyushu and the Ryukyus seem to share *\*otoro* (< *\*otoro*, with B-type *\*o*), while they differ in the case of the nominalizer *to/tu* :: *\*su*.

Oddly enough, the evidence from nominalizing particles alone suggests that, if any specific Kyushu dialect is a later form of the dialect from which Ryukyuan descends, it is the dialect in the northeastern part of Kyushu adjacent to the strait opposite from Yamaguchi prefecture.

I will make the simplifying assumption that the two nominalizers, Kyushu *\*to/tu* and Ryukyuan / Northeast-Kyushu / Yamaguchi *\*so/\*su*, come from the same source. In almost all of Kyushu they became one form and in Ryukyuan / Northeast-Kyushu / Yamaguchi the other. I reconstruct PJ *\*two*, with a vowel that is a source of Old Japanese Central dialect *u* and A-type *wo* (in word final position only). The consonant *\*t* must have assibilated sporadically before the vowel *\*wo*, as it apparently did to create the al-

3 7303.89 = Fukuoka-ken, Kita-Kyuushuu-shi, Mojiku, Koken, Tōjō.

4 7313.33 = Fukuoka-ken, Kita-Kyuushuu-shi, Kokura-ku, Michihara.

5 7313.07 = Fukuoka-ken, Kita-Kyuushuu-shi, Kokura, Minamiku, Ooaza Sone.

6 Locales include : 6393.86 = Shimonoseki-shi, Yasuoka, Shinmachi, 7305.22 = Ubeshi, Nishi Kiwaku, Sumiyoshi; 6366.25 = Abu-gun, Susa-choo, Shimo-Miharajoo; 6383.28 = Toyoura-gun, Toyokitamachi, Ooaza Takjbe, Aza Hisamori, 6374.58 = Nagato-shi, Senzaki, Oohibu-ku; 6375.28 = Hagi-shi, Ooii-ku, Hongoo; 6384.87 = Mine-shi, Oomine-choo, Ooaza Hokubu, Maki; 6396.62 = Hoofu-shi, Hachiooji 2-choome

lomorphic for 'ten' in OJ: *towo* and *-swo*. The latter presumably resulted from an underarticulated *o* being lost in compounds (*\*-towo* > *\*-t[o]wo* > *\*-two*), followed by assibilation of the resulting *\*-two* to *\*-swo*. Similarly, different dialects of PJ in the west would have had, for the nominalizer, either *\*two* (unassibilated) or *\*swo* (assibilated). Specifically, in this view, Ryukyuan, Northeast Kyushu, and Yamaguchi had the latter, and Kyushuan, the former. Since it is simpler to assume that the assibilation of the nominalizer happened only once, it follows that Ryukyuan, by this logic, must have come from the area around the Kanmon Straits between northern Kyushu and Yamaguchi.

Ultimate protoform:	<i>*two</i>		
Assibilation:	<i>*two</i>	~	<i>*swo</i>
Raising:	<i>*tu</i> ~ <i>*two</i>	~	<i>*su</i> ~ <i>*swo</i>
Loss of <i>*<u>o</u></i> :: <i>*wo</i> distinction:	<i>tu</i> ~ <i>to</i>	~	<i>su</i> ~ <i>so</i>

All four forms can be accounted for. The forms with the letter *t* occur in Kyushu and its surrounding islands. The protoform *\*su* occurs in Ryukyuan and in two dialects opposite the straits from Yamaguchi. The fourth form, *so*, occurs in Yamaguchi (OGJ 1963:463a; HBZC, maps 16, 17, 18, and 40), and in part of Kokura across the strait in Kyushu. While Old Japanese has a *kakari* particle *so*, with B-type *o*, its usage is as *kakari* for an adnominal (i.e., *rentaiki*) *musubi* on the verb. I believe that this particle is unrelated to the nominalizer. Indeed, it appears that the nominalizer is instead related to the Old Ryukyuan *kakari* particle *si* (written ㄱ), and to the OJ *kakari* particle *koso* (< *\*k<sub>o</sub>swo* 'this one'; Shinzato and Serafim, in preparation).

One may ask: Is Ryukyuan ultimately more closely related to a dialect such as Yamaguchi that has *so*? Certainly it would be simpler to have all dialects with *\*s* come from a single source. If they do, then there is a further implication, namely that the raising of *\*wo* to *\*u* occurred after the assibilation. Ryukyuan and Northeast Kyushu presumably underwent the raising, but Yamaguchi did not. The raising *\*wo* > *u* was widespread, and in Ryukyuan it appears to have affected at least the particles. While it affected the tense vowels *\*wo* and *\*ye*, it appears to have been influenced by morphology at least sometimes, as in the case of the particle here.

Note especially that it has been widely assumed that Ryukyuan comes from southern Kyushu (e.g., by Uemura 1977) or western Kyushu (e.g., by Asato and Doi 1999). Yet the Kagoshima dialects — and indeed virtually all Kyushu dialects — have a nominalizer that developed differently, apparently from a very early time. Either Ryukyuan is more closely related to the dialects with *s* in far north Kyushu and Honshu (the simpler solution), or it independently developed an assibilated form (the more complex solution). If Ryukyuan really comes from southern or western Kyushu, why is there no *s* in the nominalizer to be seen anywhere in the dialects of those regions? Naturally, more detailed work on the linguistic relation of Ryukyuan and Kyushuan must be done to answer this question. However, the posited relation of the nominalizers pours cold

water on the idea that the Southwest Kyushu dialects and Ryukyuan are North and South Hayato, respectively, or the notion that a dialect once spoken in the Nagasaki area constitutes the basis for Proto-Ryukyuan.

I return now to the question of the middle bigrade or *naka nidan* verb category of Proto-Japonic. Ryukyuan has retained a formerly widespread phenomenon, that is, a non-Central-Japanese-style merger of a subset of verbs that are upper bigrade (*kami-nidan*) in Old Japanese, but which are the equivalent of lower bigrade (*shimo-nidan*) throughout Ryukyuan (Hattori 1976, Serafim 1977, Thorpe 1983). (The examples below highlight the two merged categories of the proto-language in each daughter language.)

	Proto-Ryukyuan		Proto-Japonic		Old Japanese
PJ Upper Bigrade	* <i>sugi-</i>	<	* <i>suguy-</i>	*‘exceed’	> <i>sugiy-</i>
PJ Middle Bigrade	* <i>oke-</i>	<	* <i>okoy-</i>	*‘arise’	> <i>okiy-</i>
PJ Lower Bigrade	* <i>uke-</i>	<	* <i>ukay-</i>	*‘float it’	> <i>ukey-</i>

Proto-Ryukyuan merged the Middle- and Lower-Bigrade categories. Old Japanese merged the Upper- and Middle-Bigrade categories.

The three putatively most likely dialect areas for the starting point of Ryukyuan, namely Kagoshima, Kumamoto, and Nagasaki, have *i* instead of *e* for the vowel of proto-Japonic middle bigrades = *naka-nidans*, with just one or two exceptions - though this is not so problematic if they are viewed as having changed to their current forms under contact influence from Kinki forms. However, many eastern-Kyushu dialects have *overt* mid-vowel *e*, suggesting that the *east* is a better place to look for the ultimate relations of Ryukyuan. This goes against Asato’s obvious preference for the west. One might argue that the South and West Kyushu dialects retain their forms as a direct development from Proto-Japonic, just as Old Japanese does. But these dialects also tend to have other more modern features: (1) monograde (i.e. *ichidan*) conjugation where nearly all dialects preserving the mid vowel *e* also preserve bigrade (i.e. *nidan*) conjugation, a more conservative trait. Further, (2) the dialects that have switched to the vowel *i* of Kinki also have strong tendencies to quinquegrade (i.e. *godan*) conjugation, suggesting that their verbs of this category are a relatively recent innovation, and that the vowel adjustment itself is the result of pressure from Kinki forms.

I argued earlier that Ryukyuan has retained evidence for the mid-vowel height of the Proto-Japonic middle bigrade class. The verbs that were referred to by the Kyushu dialectologists in KHKK as having undergone vowel lowering to mid vowel position are precisely those that I argued had mid vowels to begin with. KHKK used the central Japanese dialects as an anchor point in viewing the Kyushu phenomena, assuming that any differences between the two were due to changes on the part of the Kyushu dialects. The researchers took it for granted that the “wrong” lower bigrade or *shimo nidan* forms were recent innovations. I hope I have dispelled that misunderstanding.

Let me sum up, then.

1. The hypothesis of Hayato moving south or having their dialect group split apart by political forces appears to be untenable.
2. Increasing evidence for a relatively late movement into the Ryukyus by a new group, those who would eventually merge with the previous inhabitants of the Ryukyus to become what we now call Ryukyuan, forces us to consider ways in which the dialects and languages of Ryukyu might have become ramified more quickly. Further, it suggests that Kyushu dialects themselves underwent a period of contact influence from the Kinki region. A movement into the Ryukyus even as late as 900 CE, however, in no way removes the necessity for that dialect to have split from the dialect of Nara before the beginning of history. However, the Unger view of a split between Korean and Japonic as late as the Kofun period seems to be unworkable.
3. Concerning verb classes: while the dialects of south and west Kyushu are favored by some researchers for other reasons as the best candidates for close relation to Ryukyuan, they must be chosen over dialects in North and East Kyushu that have at least *some* rather old features that are overtly more like Ryukyuan. The relative lack of similarity of the southern and western dialects to Ryukyuan puts the Asato hypothesis of movement because of economic pressures in relative jeopardy.
4. Ryukyuan shares assibilation in its nominalizing particle with only the northeasternmost dialects of Kyushu, and with the dialects of Yamaguchi, the neighboring prefecture on Honshu. The simplest solution for just this problem relates Ryukyuan more closely to dialects around the western inlet to the Inland Sea than to the dialects of south Kyushu. While such a hypothesis fits well with the distribution of the dialects with verb categories like those of Ryukyuan, it seems to fly in the face of geographic common sense. An alternative would be to have Ryukyuan assibilating on its own, though still very early. Such a change may still turn out to argue for a relatively distinct Ryukyuan branch, perhaps the earliest branch from Proto-Japonic. If the branch is early and if Ryukyuan was originally situated in south Kyushu, then the Asato hypothesis once more is in question.

In short, the dating for the movement of Ryukyuan into the Ryukyus appears to have been narrowed down to a relatively late date. However, the place of origin of Ryukyuan and the reasons of the Ryukyuan's movement southward are still open to further analysis.

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# 日琉祖語はいつどこから琉球列島に到達したのか ——言語・考古学・歴史の比較考察——

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キーワード：二段動詞、隼人、日本語、鹿児島、関門方言、九州、言語接触、琉球語

本論文においては日琉祖語が弥生時代の初めに日本列島に入ったとするハドソン氏などの見解を支持する。言語が比較的短い期間に変化したという魅力的議論があるにしても、日琉祖語と朝鮮語が古墳時代に分岐したとするアンガー氏の見解は、支持しがたい。

本論文では南九州よりの琉球語起源を主張した南北隼人仮説を論駁する。安里・土肥の議論によると、日琉語の一方言が琉球へ比較的遅い時期に移動したという。ところが、その方言の由来としては、九州自体が、特に南・西地方において日本語の中央方言による言語接触の影響を受けたという説からすれば九州の北東端か本州の西端である関門地方から来たという可能性が有力である。この諸見解は、言語接触が速度の速い言語変化を引き起こしたという諸仮説の考慮を促す。

それにしても、紀元後900年であるという琉球への移動時期を支持できるとは言え、琉球語と少なくとも関門地方の方言が日本語の中央方言から有史前の時代に既に分岐していたという論理は動かない。琉球語と南・西九州の方言が、より保守的な言語特徴において比較的類似性を欠くということは、西九州からの、経済的必要性による移動という安里の仮説を危うい立場に置く。そして、一方では琉球語が関門地方の方言の準体助詞と共有の歯擦音化が、他方では東九州との二段動詞の形の一致が、琉球語が関門地方とより近い関係にあったという可能性を示唆する。つまるところ、琉球語が比較的遅く琉球入りしたとしても、起源地点・南下の理由はまだ更なる研究を必要とする。