

Chinese and Sino-Japanese lexical items in the Hachijō language of Japan

Étienne Baudel – 34th Paris Meeting on East Asian Linguistics

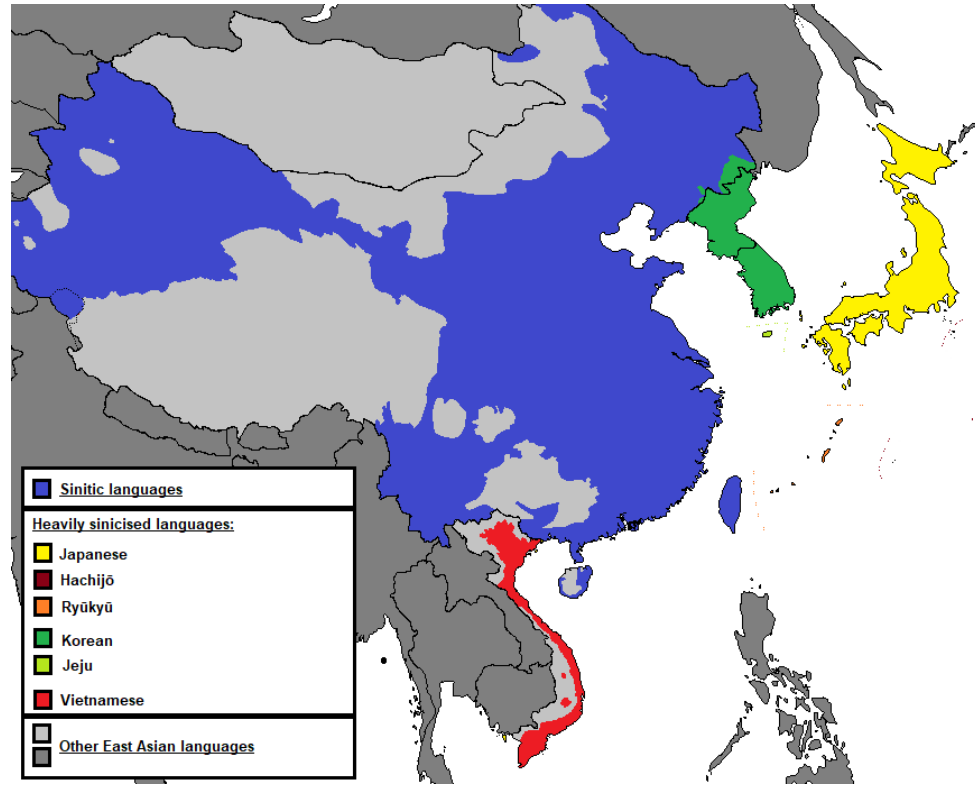
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Introduction

Introduction (1) – ‘Sino-Xenisms’ in East Asia

- Chinese civilisations have had a **strong influence** on neighbouring states for centuries.
- Various East Asian languages borrowed a lot of Chinese lexical items over time.
- These **‘Sinicised’ East Asian languages** include almost all the languages of Japan, with the exception of Ainu.

Introduction (1) – ‘Sino-Xenisms’ in East Asia



Map of the ‘Sinicised’ languages of East Asia

Introduction (1) – ‘Sino-Xenisms’ in East Asia

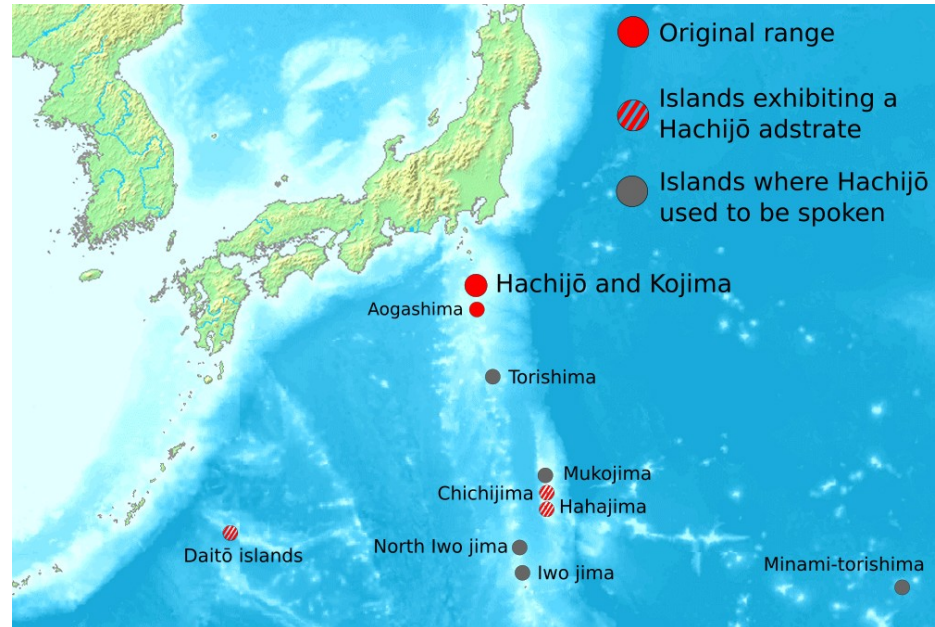
- Those Sinitic lexemes now form an **important part of the lexicon** of several East Asian languages.
- They underwent **many evolutions**.
- Many of them did not originate in China but were created abroad.

Introduction (1) – ‘Sino-Xenisms’ in East Asia

- Thus, they are **not considered to be mere loanwords**, but are considered **hybrids**.
- Following Samuel MARTIN (1953: 4), they are now often called **‘Sino-Xenic’**.
- In Japanese, they are called 漢語 *kango* ‘Hàn words’.

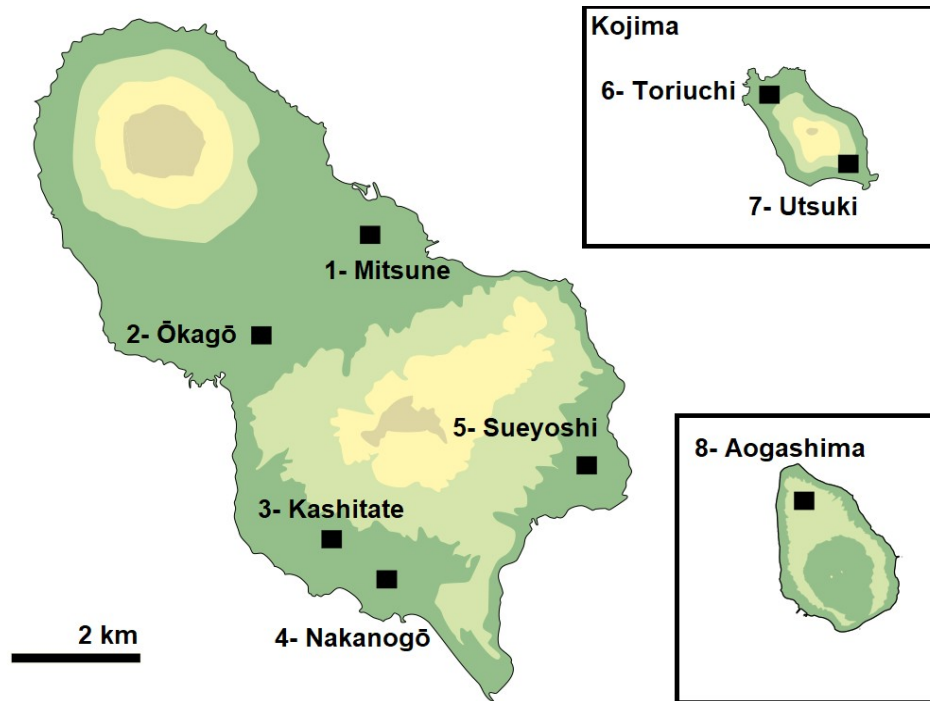
Introduction (2) – What is Hachijō?

- The Hachijō language is a now-endangered **minority language of Japan**, spoken on volcanic islands in the south east of Tōkyō:



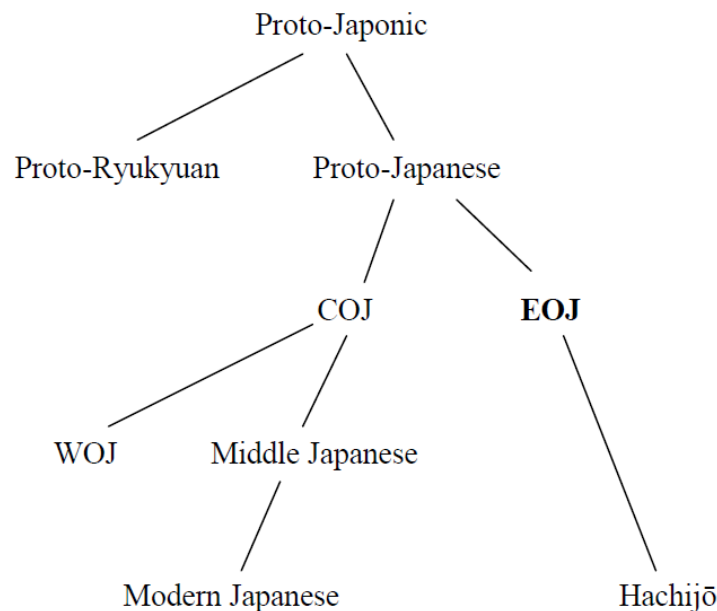
Introduction (2) – What is Hachijō?

- There are **eight recorded varieties** of Hachijō:



Introduction (2) – What is Hachijō?

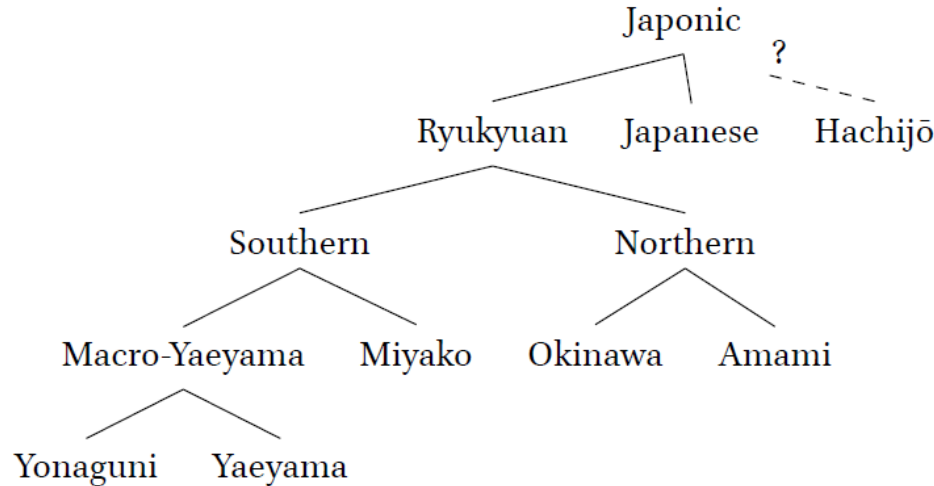
- The classification of Hachijō within Japonic is still a matter of debate.
- However, it is often theorised to be the **descendant of Eastern Old Japanese** (KUPCHIK, 2011:7):



Japonic language tree
proposed by KUPCHIK

Introduction (2) – What is Hachijō?

- However, other scholars consider that **Hachijō is yet to be classified** (PELLARD, 2018: 2)



Japonic language tree proposed by PELLARD

Introduction (2) – What is Hachijō?

- Hachijō's lexicon has been intensively studied, especially due to its supposed **archaisms**.
- However, because of a focus on native words, Sino-Japanese lexemes of Hachijō have **never been studied**.

Introduction (3) – Aims of this presentation

- In Japanese, ***kango*** is an important lexical category which “continues to form a separate lexical stratum with unique morpheme-structural, prosodic, and segmental characteristics” (ITO and MESTER, 2015: 289).
- **Thus, our presentation aims at questioning the category of *kango* in Hachijō compared to Japanese.**

Introduction (3) – Aims of this presentation

- For this, we will focus on two aspects of the question:
 - their **frequency** and **productivity** in various semantic fields
 - the **history** of their borrowing and of their **evolutions**

(1) Frequency and Productivity

(1) – Frequency and productivity

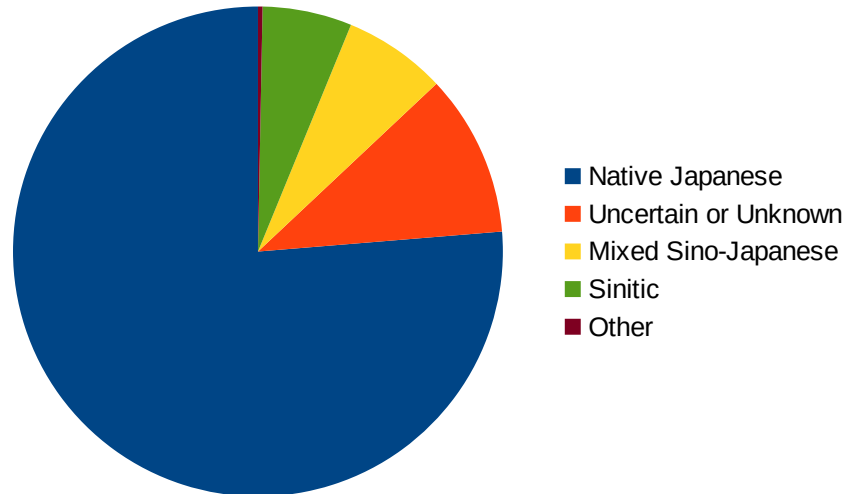
- In standard Japanese, *kango* make up **around 60% of all lexemes** (SHIBATANI, 1990:142)
- They make up **around 18% of the lexemes in spoken speech** (NINJAL, 2005).
- They are **very frequent and highly productive**, especially in some semantic fields, such as religion, law, sciences, etc. (SCHMIDT, 2009: 562).

(1) – Frequency and productivity

- **In Hachijō, the frequency of *kango* seems to be lower:**
 - Counting mixed-origin compounds, **only around 13% of roughly 2000 lexemes** are of Sino-Japanese origin in Hachijō's standard dictionary (ASANUMA, 1999)
 - In conversations, it seems that only **between 7 and 10%** of used lexemes are of Sino-Japanese origin
 - This number is even lower for folk tales and folk songs (4-5%)

(1) – Frequency and productivity

- It is possible that, due to several bias, our data slightly underestimates the frequency of Sino-Japanese words.
- But we can estimate that the **composition of Hachijō lexicon** is roughly as follows:



(1) – Frequency and productivity

- **Hachijō seems, in a way, 'less sinicised' than standard Japanese.**
- The frequency of Sino-Japanese words in Hachijō seems to be **close to what LAWRENCE (2015: 168) estimates for Shuri Okinawan**, another minority language of Japan belonging to the Ryūkyū branch.

(1) – Frequency and productivity

- However, *kango* are found in **various semantic fields**, such as:
 - **daily-life objects:** *hacchi* `bowl', *rousoku* `candle', *yunrou* `ashtray', etc.
 - **natural species:** *deazu* `soybean', *renge* `pink wood-sorrel', etc.
 - **social concepts:** *bimbou* `poverty', *shoubea* `trade', etc.
 - **family sphere:** *kyoudea* `siblings', *kazoku* `family', etc.
 - **abstract concepts:** *ea* `love', *riki* `strength', etc.
 - **religion:** *nembutsu* `prayer to Buddha', *yuhea* `mortuary tablet', etc.
 - **counting and dating:** *ippo* `one long object', *reanen* `next year', etc.

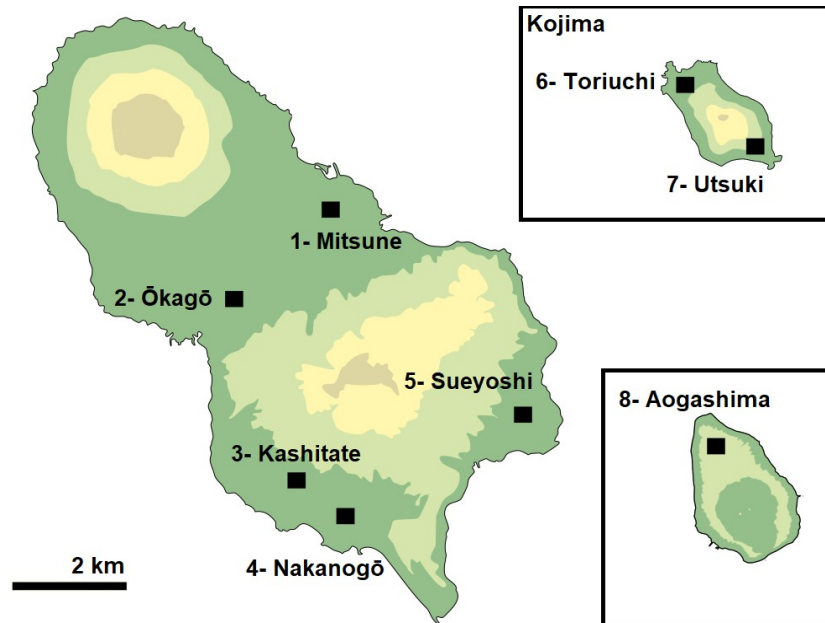
(1) – Frequency and productivity

- They are also common in anthroponyms, for instance **in numeral given names:**

Character	Standard Japanese	Hachijō
太郎	Tarou	Tarou
次郎	Jirou	Jou
三郎	Saburou	Sabou
四郎	Shirou	Shou
五郎	Gorou	Gorou
六郎	Rokurou	Rokurou
七郎	Shichirou	Shicchou
八郎	Hachirou	Hacchou
九郎	Kyuurou	Kucchou
十郎	Juurou	Jicchou

(1) – Frequency and productivity

- They are also **frequent in toponyms**, including the very name of the largest island, *Hachijō-jima*.



(1) – Frequency and productivity

- Finally, **a few Sino-Japanese words are productive**, like the prefix *hon* (本) 'real':
 - *hon* + *ko* → *hon-ko* 本子 'real child' (i.e. 'biological child', in opposition to 'adopted child')
- Some were also **grammaticalised** in similar ways as SJ, like *chuu* (中) 'middle' → 'while' or *hou* (方) 'side' → comparative particle

(1) – Frequency and productivity

- **A few hybrids** were also created by suffixation, for instance:
 - *ryouri* ~ *jouri* 料理 'food making' (SJ *ryōri*) gave the verb ***jōru*** 'to cook'
 - *deaji* 大事 'important' (SJ *daiji*) gave the adjective ***deaji-kyā*** 'pretty'
 - *chouchou* 'butterfly' (SJ *chou* 蝶) received the almost ubiquitous animal suffix *-me* in ***chouchou-me***

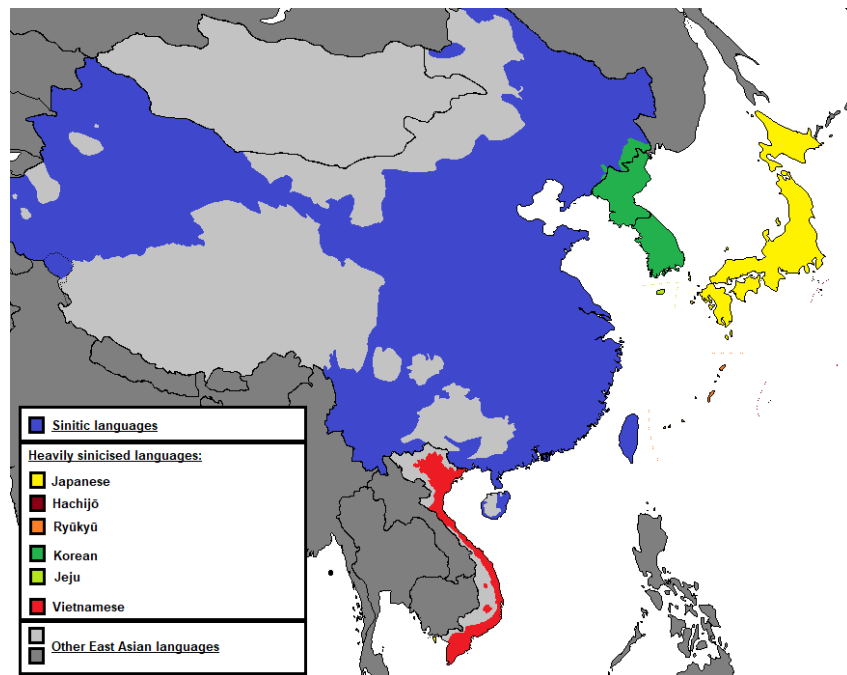
(1) – Frequency and productivity

Thus, though they are less frequent than in standard Japanese, Sino-Japanese items still form an important and iconic part of Hachijō's lexicon.

(2) History

(2) – History

- Being isolated from China, all Sino-Japanese words in Hachijō were obviously **borrowed through mainland Japanese**.



(2) – History

- In Japanese, intensive Chinese borrowings occurred several times throughout centuries, giving birth to several layers of Sino-Japanese words:
 - **Prehistoric loans** (like *fumi* 'letter' 文), now **considered to be native words**
 - **Old Sino-Japanese**, during the 5th and 6th centuries (like 仏教 *bukkyou* 'Buddhism')
 - **Classical Sino-Japanese**, from the 7th to the 9th century, by far **the most numerous category** (for instance, *annai* 案内 'information')
 - **Middle and Modern Sino-Japanese**, mostly from the 13th century onward (like 行灯 *andon* 'paper lantern')

(2) – History

- Even though many alterations occurred, these layers can still be observed through the various readings of some *kanji* :

Character	Go'on	Kan'on	Tōsō'on
行	ギョウ [gjo]	コウ [ko]	アン [ãN]
明	ミョウ [mjō]	メイ [me]	ミン [mjĩN]
団	ダン [dãN]	タン [tãN]	トン [tõN]

(2) – History

- We can also observe several layers of Sino-Japanese in Hachijō:
 - **Nativised prehistoric loans:** *zene* ~ *jene* 'coin' (SJ *zeni* 錢)
 - **Old Sino-Japanese:** *kyoudea* 'siblings' (SJ *kyoudai* 兄弟)
 - **Classical Sino-Japanese:** *kabutsu* 'orange' (SJ 果物 *kabutsu* 'fruit')
 - **Newer Sino-Japanese:** *chouchin* 'bell' 提灯 (identical to SJ)

(2) – History

- Occasionally, we can observe that Hachijō preserves archaic forms, that were lost through refection in standard Japanese:
 - *sechi-bu* 節分 'last day of winter', SJ ***setsubun*** (mixed *go-on* / *kan'on* reading)
 - *shintei* 心底 'sincerity', SJ ***shin-soko*** (mixed Chinese / Japanese reading)
 - *binchou* 鰯長 'albacore', SJ ***bin-naga*** (*id.*)

(2) – History

- On a semantic level, when an evolution occurred in Sino-Japanese, Hachijō usually features it as well, for instance:
 - 料理 (Mandarin *liàoliǐ*) means 'to arrange' in Chinese, but *ryouri* means 'cooking' in both SJ and Hachijō
 - 邪魔 (Mandarin *xiémó*) means 'demon' in Chinese, but *jama* means 'bothering' in both SJ and Hachijō
- **So far, I found no compelling example of a semantic archaism in Hachijō's Sino-Japanese lexemes.**

(2) – History

- On the other hand, **semantic innovations** frequently occurred in Hachijō, for instance:
 - *baku* 獺 means 'elephantiasis' in Hachijō, but 'tapir' in SJ
 - *hyoutan* 瓢箪 is 'pot-bellied' in Hachijō, but 'gourd' in SJ
 - *yunrou* 印籠 is 'ashtray' in Hachijō, *inrou* is 'seal box' in SJ

(2) – History

- Finally, regarding when those words were borrowed from mainland Japanese to Hachijō, we can also distinguish two layers. As a matter of fact:
 - some Sino-Japanese words underwent typical Hachijoan phonetic alterations and constitute an **old layer of Sino-Japanese words**
 - other have a phonology that does not conform to Hachijō's phonetic history and are therefore likely **recent loans from mainland Japanese**

(2) – History

- For instance, the phoneme /r/ is highly unstable in intervocalic position in Hachijō, leading to several syncope, visible in numeral given names:

Character	Standard Japanese	Hachijō
太郎	Tarou	Tarou
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(2) – History

- Older texts and remote varieties usually concord on this syncopated form.
- However, some syncopated forms also have a non-syncopated variant, such as:
 - *Shou ~ Shirou*
- This, in my opinion, shows a **tendency of the contemporary language to adopt more 'standard' forms**, borrowed from Tokyo Japanese.

(2) – History

- In other cases, we can also observe variants, but it is difficult to assess whether they are due to synchronic free variation or to diachronic re-borrowing, such as:
 - initial r~d: *Rokurou* ~ *Dokurou* '6th son' (SJ *Rokurō* 六郎)
 - initial i~yu: *inrou* ~ *yunrou* 'ashtray' (SJ *inrō* 印籠)
 - ubiquitous z~j: *kazoku* ~ *kajoku* 'family' (SJ *kazoku* 家族)
- **The second forms are perceived as more 'local' and tend to disappear in the modern language.**

(2) – History

- Thus, in a lot of cases it is impossible to know whether a Sino-Japanese word in Hachijō is an old or a recent loan from mainland Japanese.
- **Further research is needed to establish a more precise relative chronology of the borrowing of Sino-Japanese lexemes in Hachijō.**

Conclusion

Conclusion

- While Hachijō's lexicon has been investigated many times, Sino-Japanese lexemes were **never studied**.
- They are **less frequent than in standard Japanese**.
- However, they make up an **important part of the language** and of the culture it conveys.

Conclusion

- Furthermore, the study of Sino-Japanese lexical in Hachijō is important in several aspects:
 - they occasionally keep **archaisms** lost in the mainland
 - they are useful to illustrate Hachijō's inner and outer **isoglosses**
 - they can help investigate the relationship between Hachijō and standard Japanese, and particularly the strong influence of the latter

おかげさまで！

/ Thank you very much!

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