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3 A Sketch History of Pre-Chamberlainian Western Studies of Ryukyuan

1 Introduction

> A short vocabulary appended to Captain Basil Hall's "Voyage of Discovery to the West Coast of Corea and the Great Loo-choo Island" gave to the outer world the first sample of Luchuan speech. This was in 1818. But the seed thus sown fell on stony ground, and nothing further has been published on the subject in any European language during the seventy-seven years that have since elapsed. (...) No grammar of Luchuan has ever been published in any language; neither have the natives – highly civilised though they be – any notion of the existence of such a science as grammar. The present writer was therefore obliged to pursue a somewhat arduous course of study to reach the results here offered, with considerable diffidence, to students of Far-Eastern philology. (Chamberlain 1895: 1–2)

Thus runs the opening paragraph to Basil Hall Chamberlain's (1850–1935) *Essay in Aid of a Grammar and Dictionary of the Luchuan Language* published in 1895, whose significance for the linguistic study of Ryukyuan needs not be dwelled upon in detail. Yet he was – luckily, one might add – mistaken in several respects: First of all, the account of Okinawan found in his grandfather's *Account of a Voyage of Discovery* was not the first specimen of Ryukyuan made known, neither in general and not even if only the West is considered – and likewise the alleged void separating this "first sample" of 1818 and Chamberlain's own work saw an abundance of studies concerning Ryukyuan, comprising even a grammar, albeit one left unpublished until recently. Also, Chamberlain's view is an utterly Eurocentric one, for Ryukyuan had been known in East-Asia – undoubtedly as much part of "the outer world" as Great Britain for instance – for centuries already in 1818. In fact, there are a number of early written sources from China, Japan and Korea, at least part of which had even already long become the objects of Westerners' studies in Chamberlain's time.

Now the aim of the present chapter does not, of course, lie in diminishing the achievements of Chamberlain and his *Essay* by pointing out its deficiencies. Quite on the contrary it should be to demonstrate that we are in fact in a much luckier position than Chamberlain was aware of. As space constraints forbid dwelling upon the various East Asian sources on Ryukyuan dating from the 15th to the 19th century in any detail here, we will limit ourselves to provide a sketch history of Western studies into Ryukyuan up until Chamberlain's time below. In doing so we will not focus on actual specimens of the language alone, which have naturally long attracted attention from the perspective of historical linguistics, but also include writings indicative of linguistic thinking concerning and the reception of Ryukyuan.

2 The Western "discovery" of Ryukyuan and early notices

There is regrettably little to tell about Western knowledge of Ryukyuan before the turn of the 18th to the 19th century. While Japanese is blessed with the rich fruits of late 16th to early 17th century missionary linguistics, nothing to this extent can be said concerning Ryukyuan for times predating the middle of the 19th century. This is not to say however that there were no early European visitors to the Ryukyus, or knowledge of them in more general terms for that matter[1].

William Adams (1564–1620) is hardly in need of an introduction, which is also true of his involuntary stay in the Ryukyus from late 1614 to 1615. On its way to Siam the junk Sea Adventure met with a storm, so that first Amami Ōshima and subsequently Naha was chosen for repairs. Also on board of the junk was Richard Wickham of the East India Company. Briefly after their arrival at Amami Ōshima, on 23 December 1614, Wickham addressed a letter to Richard Cocks (1566–1624), head of the English factory at Hirado, containing the following observation of interest: "These people do much resemble the Chinese yet [speak?] the Japan tongue, although with difficulty to be understood of the Japans" (India Office 1897: 235). Adams on the other hand recorded a few (Japanese and) Okinawan words and phrases in his log-book (see Purnell 1916: 220), which however are few in number and difficult to decipher – in any case even more difficult than the English main text already turns out to be at times[2].

About the only other obvious source of some interest dating from the 17th century is Orientalist Andreas Müller's (1630–1694) little known "Syllabarium Japanicum" originally dating from the early 1680s and published at least twice, in 1694 and 1703[3]. As its title suggests, this work is not actually concerned with Ryukyuan but rather with Japanese – yet its author ended up including some specimens of the former language. How did that happen? Being a scholar heavily engaged in Chinese studies, it was only natural that Müller was aware of the relatively large group of popular character dictionaries usually referred to as the *Haipian*-type, owing to the element *Haipian* reoccurring in the titles of the majority of them. These massive works – indeed as vast as the sea alluded to in their title – were not only the undisputed epitome of Chinese character dictionaries in the West, but also contained both a glossary of some variety of Ryukyuan and a glossed *iroha* poem[4]. When

1 See Beillevaire (2000, 2002) for a valuable and comprehensive collection of early Western writings on Ryukyu, including many of the works mentioned in the following, or portions thereof.

2 For a brief introduction and a detailed study see Yoshimachi (1941) and Iha (1998) respectively.

3 See Osterkamp (2010) for details on this and other works relating to Japanese by Müller.

4 The first of these late Ming dictionaries to contain both the glossary and the *iroha* appears to be the 1596 edition of *Haipian xinjing*. From here it spread to several other related works, notably what may be referred to as the *Zihai* ('The Sea of Characters') group, comprising the quasi-identical dictionaries *Yinyun zihai*, *Wuhouzheng zihai* (both undated) and *Haipian tonghui* (1621).

a copy of one of these, entitled *Yinyun zihai* ('The Sea of Characters by Initials and Rimes'), made it to Berlin in early 1683, it was thus only a matter of time until it was put into use. Both its *iroha* and glossary served as sources of Müller's "Syllabarium" – and in view of the fact that there was neither any awareness yet of Ryukyuan as a language (family) in Europe nor any difficulty in interpreting various of the glossary's entries as Japanese due to the proximity of the languages he is hardly to blame for confounding the two.

Apart from Müller there were also several other Western scholars with access to one or another *Haipian*-type dictionary containing the Ryukyuan glossary – for instance, a copy of *Haipian tonghui* became available to Theophil Siegfried Bayer (1694–1738) in St. Petersburg in the early 1730s, while an exemplar of *Haipian chaozong* had been in Paris from at least about the same time (see Fourmont 1742, 6: 356–357, also see Fourmont 1737: 125 where the glossary is described) –, but no use appears to have been made of these in terms of Ryukyuan studies up until Klaproth in the early 19th century to whom we will come back below.

The 18th century saw the influential works of both Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1715) and Carl Peter Thunberg (1743–1828), but with their focus on Japan they had only little to tell about the Ryukyus. Concerning the language virtually no information at all is provided, apart from Kaempfer's (1727: 62) unsubstantiated claim[5] that "[t]hey appear by their language to be of Chinese extraction."

3 Gaubil and the first standard reference work on the Ryukyus

If travelers to Japan were little informative, the missionaries to China were different, as their massive efforts devoted to the translation of Chinese sources also covered adjacent countries. One of these sources was Xu Baoguang's (d. 1723) *Zhongshan chuanxin lu* ('Truthful Records on Chūzan', 1721)[6], so that only a few decades after its original publication a translation, or rather adaptation, into a Western language became available in form of Antoine Gaubil's (1689–1757) "Memoire Sur les Isles que les Chinois appellent, Isles de Lieou-Kieou" (1758). For our purpose the adaptation's

5 Note that this claim is even stronger in the German edition, as here it is not mere *appearance* but rather their language is even said to *prove* them "to be of Chinese extraction". "Ihre Sprache beweiset, (...)" (Kaempfer 1777, 1: 76).

6 Xu had been to Ryukyu in the years 1719–1720 in his capacity as vice-envoy. His *Zhongshan chuanxin lu* is easily one of the most influential pre-modern works treating on the Ryukyus ever to be written. It was also widely received in Japan and even saw several reprints by Kyoto publishers. Apart from a substantial glossary of about 650 entries, it contains various noteworthy claims as to the relationship of the language(s) spoken on the main island and the surrounding ones (see especially IV/4a, 5a, 6a).

significance chiefly lies in the fact that it constitutes the earliest Western publication to speak of what may be interpreted as Northern, Central and Southern Ryukyuan:

> Three different languages are spoken on these islands, none of which is either the Chinese or Japanese one. The language of the great island is the same as that of the neighboring islands, but it is different from that of the islands to the North-East as well as from that of the islands of *Pat-chong-chan* [sic; = Yaeyama] and *Tay-ping-chan* [= Miyako]. There are however many persons in the thirty-six islands who speak the language of the great island and who serve as interpreters. (Gaubil 1758: 405–406)

In another passage Gaubil mentions that *shima* is the word for 'island' both in the Ryukyus and in Japanese, therefore it is somewhat unclear whether the first statement here is meant to exclude the possibility of a relationship between one of the "three different languages" and Japanese (or Chinese, for that matter) entirely or not. For some authors, such as Hervás treated below, it was also of interest to learn here that the Japanese syllabary is in use on the islands (Gaubil 1758: 360, 406), for instance. In any case, it is probably not exaggerated to say that it is the merit of Gaubil to have raised an awareness of the existence of Ryukyuan languages among European scholars so as to render further studies into this direction possible. It is deplorable however that the glossary of *Zhongshan chuanxin lu* did not find its way into the French adaptation, thereby depriving later scholars of a valuable resource in terms of actual linguistic data. For decades to come Gaubil's account nevertheless remained to be the standard reference for knowledge pertaining to the Ryukyus, its influence also being apparent at first glance in major works on China dating from the second half of the century, such as Jean-Baptiste Grosier's (1743–1823) *Description générale de la Chine* (1785: 247–259), to name but one.

If the words of Benyovszky Móric (1746–1786) are to be trusted he would qualify not only as the first in a number of late 18th century European travelers to have visited some island or another of the Ryukyus, he would also be the originator of a Russian–Ryukyuan dictionary, or rather glossary. In a passage in his *Memoirs and travels* (1790) recounting the occurrences on the island of "Usmay Ligon, one of Lequeio" in 1771 we read:

> The inconvenience we suffered in not being able to make ourselves understood by the islanders, induced me to give orders to all the company who could write, to make a kind of Dictionary of Russian words, and enquire their signification from the natives in their own language. (...) After their departure I collected the different notes of the names of things which had been made in the language of the country, according my orders, and I had the satisfaction to find, that their number amounted to above a hundred, which could not fail of proving highly useful. (Benyovszky 1790, Volume 2: 5–7)

If we further trust Benyovszky, Japanese proved to be unintelligible to the inhabitants of the named island (Benyovszky 1790, 2: 2) – but in any case there is no way to tell what language Benyovszky and the remainder of the crew might have recorded, unless the above-mentioned manuscript glossary is actually discovered,

just as it is uncertain in how far the account is reliable at all, regardless of whether "Usmay" is to be equated with (Amami) Ōshima or not.

4 The great collections of languages around 1800

With the above in mind it is hardly unexpected that Ryukyuan is absent from all of the earlier collections or catalogues of the world's languages up until the end of the 18th century. These include even relatively late ones such as Johann Christian Christoph Rüdiger's (1751–1822) *Grundriß einer Geschichte der menschlichen Sprache* (1782) and Lorenzo Hervás's (1739–1809) *Catalogo delle lingue conosciute* (1784) for instance, which both list Japanese and Korean among others, but do not mention Ryukyuan at all. It is likewise true for the polyglot dictionary initiated by Catherine the Great and edited by Peter Simon Pallas (1741–1811), *Linguarum totius orbis vocabularia comparativa* (1786/87–1789) – see already Hager (1789: 28) who admonishes the fact that Ryukyuan is not taken into account here.

While Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752–1827) is still silent on Ryukyuan in his *Geschichte der neuern Sprachenkunde* (1807), two major works in the field of language sciences had already been published by then, at least in part, that were different in this respect: Hervás' *Catálogo de las lenguas de las naciones conocidas* (6 Volumes, 1800–1805), an entirely reworked and vastly expanded Spanish edition of his 1784 *Catalogo*, and Johann Christoph Adelung's (1732–1806) influential *Mithridates* (4 Parts in 6 Volumes, 1806–1817).

The former comprises a discussion of the "languages that are spoken on the islands called Formosa and Lieu-kieu (or Lequeo)" (Hervás 1801: 53–60) in its second volume, which heavily draws upon Gaubil. At the same time as he admits that Gaubil's account is the best available as of yet, Hervás deems it insufficient in order to shed light on the languages spoken on each of the Ryukyuan Islands. Needless to say then there was ample room left for speculation: "One must assume that one of the these [three] languages [mentioned by Gaubil] is the same as that spoken on Formosa, and the other two are maybe corrupted dialects of Japanese." He further considers the possibility that "dialects of Chinese and Japanese" are spoken on some of the islands, as their inhabitants are acquainted with both Chinese and Japanese writing.

The latter features an entry treating the language(s) of "Lieu-Keu, Liquejo-Inseln" (Adelung 1806: 577–578). Unlike most other languages, however, an actual specimen of Ryukyuan is unsurprisingly missing. The reader therefore had to content himself with a paragraph summarizing bits and pieces found in the writings of Kaempfer and Benyovszky, according to whom the inhabitants are said to speak Chinese – which Adelung assumes to hold true only for Chinese immigrants –, as well as Gaubil's statement that three languages different from Chinese and Japanese are in

use instead. Although referring to the Macartney embassy in other respects, Adelung passes over the following note concerning two Ryukyuan ambassadors as found in Staunton's (1797, 2: 290) account of that embassy: "They understood Chinese; but had also a proper language of their own."

5 Eastern views on Ryukyuan made available to the West

It was roughly around this time that two significant additions were made to the body of Western knowledge pertaining to Ryukyuan: For one, several accounts of voyages of discovery including valuable data retrieved from, as it were, field studies; for another, the corpus of Chinese (and later, Japanese) sources that had hitherto been secluded from scholarship. As we have seen above, Müller had already put an exemplar of *Yinyun zihai* into use in the 1680s, but he and other early users of the various *Haipian* apparently lacked any awareness of the true identity of the language recorded in their glossaries. This was different for Julius Klaproth (1783–1835), who published his "Sprachproben von Lieu-Kieu" in 1810[7]. As his source he names a glossary entitled "*Ŷ-yù-ȳn-schĕ*", i.e. "Yiyu yinshi" ('Pronunciations and Explanations of Barbarian Words'), he found in a Chinese work printed, as he says, towards the end of the 16th century. A comparison of Klaproth's transcriptions with the glossaries in the various *Haipian* leaves no doubt that he was drawing upon one of the dictionaries belonging to the *Zihai* group. *Yinyun zihai*, as the best-known one among the three, has hitherto been assumed to having been Klaproth's source, but in fact only *Haipian tonghui* can be demonstrated to have been part of his library at the time of writing. Be that as it may, from Klaproth's *Archiv* this glossary found its way into other publications, for instance into *The Asiatic Journal* (Volume 5.1, January 1818: 30–31) under the heading "A specimen of the language of Lieu Kieu" – however without any reference to Klaproth. In 1810 Klaproth does not provide Japanese comparanda, but he must already have had compared his "Sprachproben" with their Japanese counterparts, as he states: "It proves that this language is a dialect of Japanese, which has adopted much Chinese."

Even several years later, Johann Severin Vater (1771–1826), who had taken over the task to continue Adelung's *Mithridates*, which the latter left unfinished at his death in 1806, is unaware of any other source than Klaproth (1810) in his *Litteratur der Grammatiken, Lexika und Wörtersammlungen aller Sprachen der Erde* (see Vater 1815: 131)[8]. Friedrich Adelung (1768–1843), Johann Christoph's nephew, however

7 See Ishizaki (2000) for the most detailed study up to date.

8 Incidentally Vater does not give any indication at all as to the status of Ryukyuan or its relationship to other languages here, be it Klaproth's view or any other for that matter.

now takes notice of one of the above-mentioned accounts of a voyage of discovery in addition to Klaproth's to conclude that they both provide "new proof (...) that this language is a dialect of Japanese, which has adopted much Chinese", thereby echoing Klaproth's own words (Adelung/Vater 1817: 257). Publications in the following years and decades frequently refer to Klaproth's view, not necessarily agreeing with it however – as will be demonstrated further below.

6 Voyages of discoveries to the Ryukyus

It is now the wave of publications stemming from such voyages of discovery setting in at the turn of the century that is to be credited with a significant change in the situation. The first important publication – and in fact the first glossary of Ryukyuan to appear in print in the West, if the somewhat special case of Müller's "Syllabarium" is taken out of consideration – was William Robert Broughton's (1762–1821) account of *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean* (1804), carried out on the British sloop Providence during the years 1795–1798. In the appendix on page 391 we find a "Specimen of the Language of the Natives of the Lieuchieux Islands", in fact a brief glossary comprising 21 words, while the following pages also give the numerals up to ten in a comparative Japanese-Okinawan-Ainu word list[9]. What little in terms of commentary is found here is of utmost importance, for we read, in premonition of Klaproth's statement: "It is a Dialect of the Japanese, with some few Chinese words" (Broughton 1804: 391). In a passage in Broughton's account pertaining to the main island of Okinawa – which is probably where the glossary was compiled, especially in view of the fact that Broughton is rather silent on linguistic matters in the passages set in the Sakishima Islands – we similarly read (Broughton 1804: 241): "The inhabitants (...) resemble more the Japanese than the Chinese: speaking with very little variation the language of the former, and writing after their manner." Even if at the same time he (Broughton 1804: 240) "lament[s] our ignorance of their language, which prevented our acquiring any knowledge of their government", Broughton is to be credited as being the first to state as well as to demonstrate the relatedness of Ryukyuan and Japanese to Western readers (recall that Wickham's observations quoted above, which at least hint at a close relationship, had not yet been published at the time).

The most significant step forward for Western studies on Ryukyuan had meanwhile already been taken and was ready for publication in 1818: lieutenant Herbert John Clifford's "Vocabulary of the Language Spoken at the Great Loo-Choo Island, in

9 See e.g. Shinmura ([1912] 1971: 68) and Yoshimachi ([1946] 1977).

the Japan Sea", appended to captain Basil Hall's (1788–1844) *Account of a Voyage of Discovery*[10]. The significance of the appendix was already recognized and pointed out by Friedrich Rühs in his preface to the German translation published the following year and both in terms of quantity and especially availability it remained the single most important source on Ryukyuan in the West for decades. After some brief but significant "Observations on the Loo-Choo language" and its grammatical structure, touching upon the attributive particle *nu* and some terminations of verbs for instance, Clifford provides the reader with a massive 33-page (English-)Okinawan glossary. This is followed by examples sentences – presented in (often somewhat clumsy) Okinawan as well as in two English versions, a phrasal and a literal one – as well as some more materials such as several wordlists comprising in the maximum case English, Japanese, Okinawan and Ainu comparanda.

Paling in the face of Clifford's efforts, yet nevertheless worth mentioning is another glossary deriving from the same voyage, this time however compiled by a certain Mr. Fisher, who served as assistant surgeon on board the Alceste, i.e. the ship Captain Hall and his Lyra were accompanying. It is found in the *Narrative of a Voyage* of John M'Leod (?1777–1820) (see M'Leod 1817: 280–283, numerals: 284), surgeon on the Alceste, and introduced by the words: "Mr. Fisher collected a few of the Lewchewan words, which may tend to give some idea of the sound of their language"[11]. With 108 words in total it is about five times as long as Broughton's list and thus a valuable resource for this "language, which is a dialect of the Japanese, and is rather soft and harmonious" (M'Leod 1817: 111).

While the list of Western visitors to the Ryukyus does not end here, later voyages of discovery have not led to a further increase in materials on the language. Frederick William Beechey's (1796–1856) voyage in 1825–1828 as captain on the Blossom, for instance, includes a few Okinawan words and names scattered throughout his *Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Strait* (1831), but no new glossary for instance. Instead, communication was carried out in Chinese with the help of a manuscript collection of sentences necessary for basic communication that had been prepared by missionary Robert Morrison (1782–1834) as well as in English to some extent, whereas with reference to Ryukyuan only views of others are quoted:

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10 Clifford's vocabulary has attracted considerable attention. See among others Tōjō (1930), Kamei (1979), Tawata (1985), Iha (1990a, 1990b). In need of further study are the manuscripts of Clifford's "Vocabulary" preserved at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London as well as the Naval Library, Ministry of Defense. Another manuscript mentioned by Brown (1996: 150), besides these two, is a Okinawan glossary compiled by William Marsden (1754–1836) in late 1816, probably on the basis of Clifford's manuscript (which is already mentioned as part of his private collection in Marsden 1827: 303).

11 See e.g. Shinmura ([1912] 1971: 68) and Iha (1990b).

> Their language throughout is very different from that of the Chinese, and much more nearly allied to the Japanese. The observation of M. Klaproth, (...), that the Loo Choo language is a dialect of the Japanese with a good deal of Chinese introduced into it, appears to be perfectly correct, from the information of some gentlemen who have compared the two, and are familiar with both languages. The vocabulary of Lieutenant Clifford, which we found very correct, will at any time afford the means of making this comparison. (Beechey 1831: 482)

Peter Parker's (1804–1888) *Journal of an Expedition from Sincapore to Japan, with a Visit to Loo-Choo* (1838) contains a notable reference to fellow missionary Karl Gützlaff (1803–1851) who is said to have "remarked, that the difference in the two dialects of Loo-Choo and Japan, is similar to that between high and low Dutch" (Parker 1838: 30). In view of the fact that Gützlaff had had the opportunity both to acquire a knowledge of Japanese from several native speakers and to visit the Ryukyus, few other Westerners would have been more qualified for such a judgment than he was.

Edward Belcher (1799–1877), captain on the Samarang, included a comparative vocabulary of various languages in his *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Samarang* (Belcher 1848, 2: 540–571), but regrettably Ryukyuan is not part of it. Again, "the vernacular tongue of the islands" is deemed to be "a dialect of Japanese", just as "singular hieroglyphic, Japanese characters" are said to be used in writing (Belcher 1848, 1: 93). The latter is also addressed in the following curious passage illustrating the effects of cursive writing (Belcher 1848, 2: 64): "The characters in use by the people of the Meia-co-shimas and Loo-Choo, could not be comprehended by our interpreter, although upon a very close scrutiny, by others at Hong-Kong, it was pronounced to be a species of Chinese running hand, sometimes practiced by the merchants. It bears no resemblance whatever to the Japanese character."

The last glossary to be mentioned here is the (English-)Okinawan-Japanese one compiled by assistant surgeon Charles F. Fahs on occasion of the expedition led by commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry (1794–1858) in the early 1850s. From a comparison of the two and a half dozen items contained in the list the conclusion is reached "that no doubt can be entertained of the words being the same, with the difference only which may be reasonably attributed to peculiarity of dialect" (Hawks 1856: 366).

7 European studies of Ryukyuan after Clifford

With Clifford's epoch-making account of the language being now available, Western scholarship received a significant new impetus. The above-mentioned Klaproth abandons his earlier Chinese source and compiles an entirely new (German-)Japanese-Okinawan glossary on its basis for his rather influential *Asia Polyglotta* (Klaproth 1823: 330–333). Even if Clifford is nowhere mentioned explicitly, the entries are all taken straight from his work, albeit they are transcribed according to Klaproth's own scheme here – a kind of forerunner to today's IPA, detached from the ortho-

graphy of any single language and making use of Latin and Cyrillic letters as well as a few newly introduced ligatures to reduce sounds to writing. Roughly contemporary publications by Klaproth (e.g. 1824: 308) echo his earlier classification of Ryukyuan as a dialect of Japanese.

We have already mentioned above that dissenting positions are likewise to be found among contemporary scholars. It is probably the view of Adriano Balbi (1782–1848), as put forward in his *Introduction à l'atlas ethnographique du globe* (1826b), that deserves our greatest attention, as we meet with a level of linguistic thinking here that is rarely seen in contemporary publications. With the earlier views of Gaubil and Klaproth in mind Balbi writes:

> As we know from experience how often the denomination of 'language' is employed in a vague manner by the most erudite authors and the most educated travelers, and often even in a meaning entirely contrary to the one it should have, we have considered the three allegedly different languages of that missionary [= Gaubil] to be as many principal or very different dialects. From what we have said, we believe that one will not disagree with us if we, putting aside the opinion expressed by the learned Orientalist and profound philologist Julius Klaproth, have turned the alleged Japanese dialect spoken in that archipelago into the Ryukyuan language, which we have classified under the Japanese family to which it undisputedly belongs. (Balbi 1826b: 143–144)

The comparative wordlists in Balbi's *Atlas ethnographique* (1826a) also take Okinawan into account (see language no. 118 on plate XXXVII).

In the years to come it is chiefly Clifford's and others' glossaries that form the basis for any engagement with Ryukyuan in Europe. It goes without saying then that Broughton and Clifford are mentioned together with Klaproth and Balbi in the new edition of Vater's *Litteratur*, published by Bernhard Jülg (1825–1886) in 1847 (see pages 227–228, where Ryukyuan is now also said to be a language closely related to Japanese). Probably somewhat more of a surprise is the fact that there is still little change in the set of sources to be observed in the work of Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866) despite the latter's extended stay in Japan and the massive Japanese library available to him.

Siebold's monumental *Nippon* has an overly complex history of publication spanning more than two decades from 1832 onwards and as it seems his account of the Ryukyu Islands (Section 7: 279–328) belongs to the final installment ever to be published. The latter consists of fascicles 21 and 22 treating the Ainu and the Ryukyuan Islands and must have been finished in late 1857[12]. As is apparent from

12 See the minutes of the 7 January 1858 meeting of Niederrheinische Gesellschaft für Natur- und Heilkunde zu Bonn, where Siebold introduced the final two fascicles (Weber 1858, especially XXXII–XXXVIII). Almost the entire chapter on Ryukyu is also found in the posthumous "Zweite Auflage" of *Nippon*, published by his sons (Siebold 1897, 2: 270–305). The original edition is to be preferred however, as the 1897 one does not only exhibit quite some carelessness, with "Clifford" becoming "Glieford" and "Glifford" for instance (Volume 2: 297, 300), but also lacks some passage of the original entirely.

the title of the account, Siebold heavily relied on Japanese sources in translation, first and foremost *Ryūkyū-banashi* ('An Account of the Ryukyus', 1790), but also *Sangoku tsūran zusetu* ('An Illustrated Survey of Three Countries' [Korea, Ryukyu and Ezo], 1786) for instance. Additionally, Western sources are not ignored either, but were put into use or are at least referred to especially during sub-chapter eleven (Section 7: 314–320), treating language and script issues. While Hawks (1856) merely receives harsh criticism (Section 7: 314, n. 1) Siebold relied on Broughton (1804), Klaproth (1810, 1823) and Clifford in Hall (1818) for the Ryukyuan portions of his comparative (German-)Japanese-Okinawan glossary. Drawing upon this glossary Siebold (Section 7: 317) concludes that in view of his observation that of the Ryukyuan comparanda "almost all are of purely Japanese origin, while few belong to the Sino-Japanese idiom and only single ones appear to be alien" Ryukyuan must be "an idiom of Japanese, which is likely to be closest to that of Satsuma, the southernmost province of Japan".

What sets this glossary apart from most earlier ones in Europe is the fact that it is subdivided into several subsections, much like the various Chinese glossaries of Ryukyuan. Such subsections are however not defined by semantic criteria only, but also by grammatical ones (e.g. verbs, pronouns, numerals etc. are grouped together). This interest for grammatical issues becomes even more obvious in the following comparative sketch grammar of Japanese and Okinawan (Section 7: 317–318). Admittedly this is rudimentary at the very best and of little practical use for sure. Similar to Clifford's "Observations" they nevertheless represent a noteworthy attempt at analyzing the structure of the language and brings up a couple of grammatical topics. Thus noun cases are claimed to be less commonly indicated by particles (with the example sentences showing zero-marked nominatives and accusatives), or modifiers are correctly observed to precede what they modify in both languages.

8 Mid-19th century missionary linguistics

By the middle of the 19th century the time had come for a new era in Ryukyuan studies, one characterized by the efforts of missionaries rendering obsolete – at least in the retrospective – the little knowledge that had been accumulated on the language up to then. Let us however remain in Europe for a while and consider the work of Orientalist Léon de Rosny (1837–1914) who was one of the first to enjoy direct access to new and first-hand information of one such missionary.

In his countless publications de Rosny touched upon more or less all East-Asian languages known in his time, so that it is unsurprising to find Ryukyuan among these. Two sources demand special attention: First, the chapter on the "Origin of the Japanese language" in his *Introduction a l'étude de la langue japonaise* (1856). Here de Rosny states that Japanese does not belong to any of the hitherto known

language families but rather establishes a new family together with Ryukyuan. In order to illustrate the proximity of the two he then provides his readers with a comparative vocabulary of the languages, based for the Okinawan portions on Clifford and the Japanese encyclopedia *Wakan sansai zue* (pages 6–7)[13]. The distance between Japanese and Ryukyuan being greater than ordinarily observed between dialects – among other things as far as verbal morphology is concerned –, de Rosny considered the two to be sister languages, in a fashion similar to that of Balbi before him and again close to modern linguistic thinking. Regrettably Bettelheim's grammar and dictionary – on which see immediately below – were not yet available to de Rosny so that the latter felt that scholars' grasp of Ryukyuan was still too imperfect to allow definite answers.

Second, there are several interesting pieces from his correspondence with missionary Louis Furet (1816–1900), who arrived in Ryukyu in 1855[14]. In a letter dated 12 October 1855 Furet (1856: 25–26) writes: "The language of Ryukyu is a dialect of the Japanese language, characterized by different terminations and a different pronunciation", whereupon a couple of examples are provided. Furet thus clearly considers Ryukyuan as a dialect of Japanese and does not subscribe to de Rosny's view – and interestingly this clash of opinions became the issue of another letter published a couple of years later. Furet repeats his view that Ryukyuan is a close dialect of Japanese, and continues:

> If you do not accept this, you must admit three or four sister languages as distinct as Japanese and Ryukyuan even in this single small kingdom of Ryukyu – for the islanders of Miyako are barely understood by those of Naha and Shuri. The same is true of those inhabiting the islands further to the North. Even on Great Ryukyu [i.e. the main island] the inhabitants of a large village at three or four leagues in the south of the island are hardly understood by the inhabitants of Naha. (Furet 1860b: 234–235)

In effect the most curious part of their correspondence as far as published in 1860 is however the translation of the Lord's Prayer into Okinawan, running as follows (Furet 1860a: 118). While the text as published presents some difficulties, in part at least due to misprints, it counts among the first texts in Okinawan ever to be published in Europe.

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13 *Wakan sansai zue* (Japano-Chinese *Sancai tuhui*; prefaces dated 1712/13), an encyclopedia by TERAJIMA Ryōan modeled after the late Ming *Sancai tuhui* (Assembled Illustrations of Heaven, Earth and Man), contains a brief glossary of Okinawan in book XIII and side by side with others for Ainu, Korean and Mongolian. While not exactly substantial with its mere 16 entries in total (the number increases slightly if the words and names found in the reading aids to the preceding Chinese main text are included as well), it is significant in that it became widely known both in Japan and in 19th century Europe. To name but a few examples for the latter: Abel-Rémusat (1827: 166, n. 1 – the extract announced here [and again, for one of the following volumes, on p. 310] appears to have remained unpublished however), de Rosny (1856: 6–7), Gabelentz (1862: 534–535), Hoffmann (1866: 397) etc.

14 For details on Furet see Beillevaire (1999).

[1] Ouatta ouia tin nakaï mainchairere mono[,] oundgiounou ou na aguitaï imixaie;
[2] oundgiounou kougnaié iouti mainxaié; oundgiounie iiisaie tinnou goutouchi djaini mamutaié inuchaïtaié ndi nigatoiabing;
[3] tkiouga figuinou hammaié ouattagni outabi michaiébiri[;]
[4] outtâia ouattagni tsimi itarou mounoukiagni iourouchabirou goutié, ouatta tsimaïé iourouki kiiï michai[-]biré;
[5] ouatta yâna ouâzankoï chimiti kiiï michonna; agnaïé sangxi ouazaiiaieiaié ndaié ouatta soukouti kiiï michaiébiri.
[6] Ang naï iabitaïé. Amen.

Another French missionary, Théodore-Augustin Forcade (1816–1885), likewise stresses the proximity of the two languages, stating in a letter dated 12 August 1845 that Ryukyuans and Japanese make use of "the same idiom, or almost so." With the help of a cooperative native he even managed to compile a dictionary of no less than 6,000 words[15], enabling him to hold conversations in Ryukyuan and serve as interpreter for others, he continues (Forcade 1846: 370–371) – regrettably however the whereabouts of Forcade's dictionary are unknown.

9 Bettelheim and the climax of pre-Chamberlainian Ryukyuan studies

In 1843 the Loochoo Naval Mission was founded by no one else but Clifford, compiler of the vocabulary referred to above on several occasions. Judging from its consequences this was easily one of the most important events in the history of western knowledge of Ryukyuan, as the Mission took Bernard Jean Bettelheim (1811–1870)[16] into its services. During his missionary activities in the Ryukyus between the years 1846 and 1854 – and therefore decades before Chamberlain – he became engaged in the compilation of both a Okinawan grammar and dictionary. This as well as the fact that he had prepared translations of portions of the New Testament into Okinawan can already be gathered from various missionary magazines from the early 1850s onwards. Unlike his *Elements or Contributions towards a Loochooan & Japanese Grammar* (1849) – which was finally edited and translated only as late as the early 1980s[17] – or his *English–Loochooan Dictionary* (1851)[18] these translations

15 As already pointed out by Beillevaire (1996: 122, n. 47), the number increases from "six mille mots" (thus in Forcade 1846: 371; also see *Revue de l'Orient* 10, 1846: 262) to "dix mille mots" in a later edition of Forcade's letters (see Forcade 1885: 36; based on *Les missions catholiques* 17, 1885, see page 247). In all likeliness we are however dealing with a mere misprint here.

16 On the life and work of Bettelheim, see especially Teruya (1969).

17 See Iha et al. (1981–1985) and Kina et al. (1980–1984) respectively.

18 See Doi (1934) for an early introduction of both the grammar and dictionary to scholarship and Griesenhofer (this volume) for a detailed treatment of the grammar.

were actually printed in 1854/55 in Hong Kong under George Smith (1815–1871), Anglican bishop of Victoria, and subsequently sent to George Harman Moreton, Bettelheim's successor as missionary to the Ryukyus[19]. As far as the study of Ryukyuan is concerned their impact does not appear to have been all too great – and not even Chamberlain appears to have had seen them at the time of his *Essay*[20]. Noteworthy however apart from a brief appearance in a demonstration of *katakana* printing types (de Rosny 1858) is Hoffmann (1866: 397–401), who compares some parallel passages from Bettelheim's translations into Okinawan and Japanese – and likely not by coincidence, as according to Bettelheim himself "Professor Hoffman [sic!] of Holland, is the only man besides himself on this side of the world who is capable of estimating its value" (*Vermont Chronicle*, 2 October 1855: 158) –, unfortunately without any detailed comment. A translation of the Lord's Prayer by Bettelheim, published earlier in Bagster (1851: plate X; see also page 297), does not seem to have attracted much attention either.

While Bettelheim's achievements in the field of Ryukyuan studies are of utmost importance, one must not lose sight of the role the Ryukyus actually played for missionary endeavors, be it for himself or others. For instance bishop Smith (1853: 94) clearly regarded them "as a door by which to enter Japan", and accordingly he entertained visions such as the following concerning the Ryukyus' role in attaining the ultimate aim of Christianizing Japan:

> At the present time Lewchew is the only avenue to Japan, (...). A mission to the former is in effect a mission prospectively to the latter country also. Present appearances indicate a probability that an unwonted effort will be made ere long by the United States to open Japan to foreign commerce. In such an event, a mission establishment at Lewchew would at once supply a body of linguists, already prepared and ready to enter upon this last remaining of the countries of the East at present debarred from intercourse with Christendom. (Smith 1853: vi)

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19 These translations lack any indication whatsoever as to who acted as translator, and no place of publication is given. The date is merely indicated as *yi-mao* ('Wood Rabbit') on the title pages, i.e. 1855 here.

The circumstances of their publication are clarified however in a report by the bishop of Victoria dated February 1855 (quoted in: *Missionary Register*, November 1855: 460): "We have been busily engaged during the last three months in printing in the Loochooan Language, Luke, John, Acts, and Romans, which we hope to send (...) direct to Loochoo at the end of the present month, to the Rev. G. H. Moreton, (...). The Loochooan and Japanese versions are the work of Dr. Bettelheim, (...)."

20 See Chamberlain (1896: 2): "A curious negative item in Luchuan bibliography, which may as well be noticed here, is the disappearance of Bettelheim's translation of the Scriptures. He mentions this translation frequently in his letters, stating different stages of its progress. Yet nowhere in China or Japan, or even in the British Museum, which was specially ransacked for the purpose, can any trace be discovered of aught but the Gospel of St. John; and this, on examination, turns out to be, not in vernacular Luchuan, but in ordinary Japanese." For some reason it seems that Bettelheim's other manuscripts in the British Museum likewise escaped the ransacking.

Bettelheim himself is no less clear on various occasions, stating for instance that "If we could go to Japan, there would be no need of grammatical botching at Loochoo" (1849 [Iha et al. 1981–1985, Part 1: 136]). The language he and other contemporary missionaries sought to acquire was then not Ryukyuan, but Japanese – which might well explain why they all regularly insisted on the proximity if not identity of the two, even if their knowledge of the latter was based on limited resources and was thus rather restricted[21]. Accordingly Bettelheim's work had also been given the name of *Elements or Contributions towards a Japanese Grammar* at the outset, with the words "*Loochooan &*" being inserted only later on[22]. Be that as it may, Smith's (1853: 79, 80–81) remarks on Ryukyuan – which, undoubtedly to the pleasure of the bishop, "is represented as not very difficult of attainment to a European of ordinary diligence" (Smith 1853: 81) –, comprising not few words of praise, are unsurprisingly under the influence of Bettelheim's views.

10 The decades up to Chamberlain's *Essay*

With Bettelheim the climax in pre-Chamberlainian studies of Ryukyuan had been reached and little progress is to be observed in the following decades up to the *Essay*. What is more: Bettelheim's achievements had passed almost unnoticed and the climax with it. Thus, Antoine-Paulin Pihan (1810–1879) is only in a position to quote the numbers up to ten for Okinawan from an unspecified source in his work on numerals (Pihan 1860: 18–19). In a notice concerning some Japanese books in the library of his father, Hans Conon (1807–1874), Hans Georg Conon von der Gabelentz (1840–1893) refrains from quoting the glossaries of Korean and Mongolian in *Wakan Sansai zue*, "as much better resources are already available for both languages" (1862: 534–535) – but still considers those of Ryukyuan and Ainu worthy of reproducing.

Ernest Mason Satow's (1843–1929) "Notes on Loochoo" also briefly touch upon the "language spoken by the Loochooans" which to him "appears to differ very little from Japanese." In a vein similar to Siebold's earlier assumption he concludes:

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21 In the preface to his grammar Bettelheim merely refers to "a translation of the Gospel of St. John", i.e. Gützlaff's 1837 translation published in Singapore, and "Dr. Medhurst's Japanese Vocabulary", i.e. Walter Henry Medhurst's (1796–1857) *English and Japanese and Japanese and English Vocabulary* published in Batavia in 1830. The latter's influence is apparent in several instances, such as the syllabary chart in the chapter "On the Japanese Letters". Further studies are needed however to determine the exact role of these sources, as well as that of "P. Rodriguez *Japanese Grammar*" mentioned in Bettelheim's journal (entry dated 24 July 1846; see Jenkins 2005: 128), most likely referring to the French adaptation of João Rodriguez' *Arte breve da lingoa Iapoa* (Macao 1620) published as *Élémens de la grammaire japonais* (Paris 1825).

22 Probably in 1867 when Bettelheim added a note concerning his donation of the work to the British Museum (thus Doi 1934: 212).

"It would not be a hazardous conjecture to suppose that the Satsuma dialect of Japanese, which contains several words unknown in other parts of this country, is closely allied to the Loochooan tongue" (1874: 9)[23]. A further echo is added to these words by John Harington Gubbins (1852–1929)[24], who also appends a few other remarks of interest. To name but one example: Japanese "Kikimasenu (present tense negative form of verb 'to hear')" is equated with "Chichabrian [sic!; read: Chichabiran]", regarding the latter of which Gubbins (1881: 604) provides a noteworthy etymological note: "The connection between the terminal used here and the old Japanese terminal Habern [sic!; read: Haberu] is clear".

11 Conclusion and outlook

In the above we have for the most part limited ourselves to printed sources. These alone already demonstrate that the alleged void in between Clifford's and Chamberlain's works is to be taken with a grain of salt. Yet it is a chief desideratum of future research to take the mostly unstudied manuscript sources into due account as well – such as those by Clifford, Marsden and Satow mentioned only in passing here. Bettelheim's significant contributions to the study of Okinawan likewise deserve scholars' attention to a much greater extent than has hitherto been the case, especially in view of the fact that his dictionary still remains unpublished and that even his grammar has not yet been treated exhaustively. In general, the context of Christian missions to Ryukyu might well open up another area for future research. It is hoped that inquiries into this direction will eventually help shedding light on the whereabouts of further hitherto unnoticed materials compiled by other missionaries roughly contemporary to Bettelheim.

Now even if we limit ourselves to printed sources however, their interpretation is often problematic. Thus the various glossaries for instance usually comprise at least a few entries each that have not yet been deciphered in any satisfactory manner, and similar things can be said concerning Furet's Lord's Prayer for instance. In other words: Both the quest for new sources and the thorough study of what is already available nowadays leaves ample room for future research – research the present chapter will hopefully help fostering.

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23 In order to do justice to Satow's work on Ryukyuan his unpublished manuscripts now kept at the University of Cambridge would have to be taken into account however (see e.g. Brown 1996: 152).

24 Gubbins' middle name is variously given as "H.", "A." (thus in his 1881 article) or "W." in late 19th century literature. Whenever it is spelled out only "Harington" is found however, so that the latter two abbreviations appear to be erroneous.

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