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В сборник вошли статьи отечественных и зарубежных ученых, основанные на докладах, представленных в рамках «Невских чтений» — международного симпозиума в честь 120-летия со дня рождения выдающегося российского востоковеда Николая Александровича Невского (1892–1937). Проблематика статей определена разносторонним характером исследований, которым посвятил себя ученый: мифология, синто, айноведение, язык и культура Рюкю, тангутоведение и др.

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**RYUKYUAN LANGUAGES AND N. NEVSKY'S RESEARCH
ON THE MIYAKO LANGUAGE**

The placement of Ryukyuan languages

“Ryukyuan languages” is a general term referring to the languages spoken at the Ryukyu Archipelago, which stretches as an arch between Japan and Taiwan upon the eastern seas of the Asian continent. As sister languages to the mainland Japanese, Ryukyuan languages have split from the Proto-Japonic language, being the only languages with a proven genetic relationship with the mainland Japanese. The Ryukyu Archipelago, which is the area where Ryukyuan languages are spoken, covers the historically largest area of the Ryukyu Kingdom, which lasted from 1406 to 1879. Ryukyu Islands, including the Amami Islands, possess common qualities not only linguistically, but also in all the other cultural areas, such as folklore and art.

In 1607, Ryukyu Kingdom was invaded by the Satsuma clan, and since then the Amamis had been placed directly under Satsuma's control. Nowadays the Amami Islands belong administratively to the Kagoshima Prefecture, while the islands of Okinawa, Miyako and Yaeyama form the Okinawa Prefecture.

In 1879, the Ryukyu Kingdom was annexed by Japan and became a part of Japan as the Okinawa Prefecture. In the process of modernization, the usage of Japanese language became indispensable, and so it was imposed upon the inhabitants of the islands. Speaking Ryukyuan was uncalled for and avoided. Many of the inhabitants are either bilingual or Japanese monolingual. Therefore the number of Ryukyuan native speakers keeps on diminishing.

With its roughly 1 million 460 thousand people, the population of the Ryukyus stands for only a little more than one percent of the total Japanese population. However, the population of fluent Ryukyuan speakers is even

more scarce, and it is limited to the people over 50, 60 years of age. Ryukyuan languages are minority languages in Japan, and at the same time they are endangered languages whose further existence is threatened. The differences between Ryukyuan languages and Japanese are significant, and the Japanese from outside the Ryukyus cannot understand these languages at all.

The area of the Ryukyus does not even exceed one percent of the total area of Japan. However, the distance from the Ryukyus' northernmost extreme, the Kikai Island, to their southernmost extreme, the Yonaguni Island, amounts for as many as 900 kilometers. If we placed the northernmost Kikai Island around the city of Sendai in the Miyagi Prefecture, then the city of Naha in Okinawa would be found around the Matsumoto city in the Nagano Prefecture, the Miyako Island would be somewhere between the cities of Kyoto and Osaka, and the westernmost Yonaguni Island would be placed on the borderline of Okayama and Hiroshima Prefectures. Hence, linguistic differences among the sub-varieties of Ryukyuan languages, the languages spoken on forty-seven inhabited islands spread all across a marine area whose length rivals the total length of the Honshu Island, are large. Not only the inhabitants of Kikai and Yonaguni, but also inhabitants of Miyako and Okinawa, Yonaguni and Ishigaki, Amami Ōshima and Okinawa find it impossible to communicate unless they use standard Japanese in their conversations. Ryukyuan languages are divided into six groups which can hardly be thought of as mutually intelligible.

Sub-classification of Ryukyuan languages

Ryukyuan languages can be classified into two groups in accordance with their phonemic and morphosyntactic characteristics, namely into the Northern Ryukyuan and Southern Ryukyuan group. As the Northern Ryukyuan and Southern Ryukyuan-speaking areas are separated by a 350-kilometer long marine area with no islands whatsoever, differences between the languages of these groups are remarkable.

Northern Ryukyuan group can further be divided into three following subgroups: Northern Amami, Southern Amami-Northern Okinawa, and Southern Okinawa. Southern Ryukyuan group can also be divided into three subgroups: Miyako, Yaeyama and Yonaguni. The Miyako language is spoken at the islands of Miyako, Irabu, Ikema, Kurima and Ōgami. Regarding the world's endangered languages, within the area of Japan UNESCO recognizes — apart from the Ainu language — Yaeyama and Yonaguni languages as “seriously endangered”, and Northern Amami, Southern Amami-Northern Okinawa, Southern Okinawa and Miyako

languages as well as the Hachijō language of the Tokyo Metropolitan Prefecture as “definitely endangered”.

Vowels of the Ryukyuan languages

The Ryukyuan language whose system consists of the fewest vowels is the Yonaguni language of the westernmost outskirt of the Ryukyus. This language basically does not discriminate between short and long vowels, and so it has a three-vowel system of /a/,¹ /i/ and /u/. On the other hand, the richest in vowels is the eleven-vowel Sani dialect of the Northern Amami language, a dialect spoken at the Ryukyus’ northernmost Amami Ōshima island. Northern Amami dialects other than Sani have 7 vowels, Southern Amami-Northern Okinawa and Southern Okinawa languages have 5 vowels, Miyako language has 6 of them and Yaeyama language has 7. All of these, ranging from the Yonaguni three-vowel to the Sani eleven-vowel system, had settled upon various Ryukyuan islands after having split from Proto-Japonic, where they underwent changes peculiar to every separate subgroup variation of Ryukyuan.

Vowels in the Miyako language

In the Miyako language, due to the strong airflow which caused vowel raising, while producing the vowel /i/ the highest part of the tongue is pushed even further forward, which creates constriction between the blade of the tongue and the alveoli. When this happens, after voiced plosives /b/ and /g/ the vowel /i/ changes into syllabic /z/, and after voiceless plosives /p/ and /k/ into syllabic /s/. In the Shimozato dialect one may find such examples as *pstu* ‘a man’ (<**pito*), *ksmu* ‘liver’ (< *kimo*), *tabz* ‘journey’ (< *tabi*), or *mugz* ‘wheat’ (< *mugi*).

Syllabic /s/ and /z/, which have been transformed from /i/, in turn alter the sounds which they precede: the liquid /r/ and half-vowel /w/ into fricative /s/ and /z/, and /j/ into /ɛ/. It can be seen in examples from the Shimozato dialect: *pssuma* ‘daytime’ (<**piruma*), *tskɛu* ‘a moonlit night’ (<**tsukijo*), *zzu* ‘fish’ (<**iwo*), *tabzza* ‘journey (+ topic marker)’ (<**tabiwa*).

In the dialect of the Ōgami Island there are six vowels: /i/, /a/, /o/, /u/, /u/ and /ɛ/. The vowel /u/ corresponds to the syllabic /z/ in other dialects — it is a sound that occurred as a consequence of the weakening of

¹ Translator’s note: Separate sound symbols have been marked with a slash // to distinguish them from the rest of the text. It does not necessarily mean that the given symbol refers to a phoneme, although usually that is actually the case.

the airflow, due to which the place of articulation was moved backwards and thus the friction disappeared. Also, in other Miyako dialects there occur syllables consisting of a palatalized consonant followed by the vowel /a/, as in *pjaku* ‘a hundred’ or *mjaku* ‘Miyako’, whereas in Ōgami dialects such syllables are pronounced as in *peku* or *mε:ku*.

Consonants in the Ryukyuan languages

There are regular correspondences between Ryukyuan and Japanese consonants. The consonant /p/, which had existed in Proto-Japonic, in Japanese changed into /h/, having undergone fricativization and delabialization. On the other hand, the Northern Okinawa, Miyako and Yaeyama languages have kept some archaic features, such as maintaining the /p/ consonant. Examples are as in the Onna dialect of the northern part of the Okinawa island: *pa:* ‘blade’ [< *ha*], *pasami:* ‘scissors’ [< *hasami*], *p'idzai* ‘left’ [< *hidari*], *p'uk'ui* ‘dust’ [< *hokori*], *puēi:* ‘star’ [< *hoēi*], as in the Shimozato dialect of the Miyako language: *pama* ‘beach’ [< *hama*], *pstu* ‘a man’ [< *hito*], *puni* ‘bone’ [< *hone*], or as in the Ishigaki dialect of the Yaeyama language: *patsika* ‘the twentieth day (of the month)’ [< *hatsuka*], *pin* ‘garlic’ [< *hiru*] or *po:gr* ‘broom’ [< *ho:ki*].

As for the characteristics common to the entire Southern Ryukyuan language group, the alternation of approximant /w/ into plosive /b/ is one of them, compare **wara* > *bara* ‘straw’, **wono* > *bunu* ‘axe’.

Consonants of the Miyako language

In the Miyako language, plosives /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/ and approximants /j/, /w/ may only appear as a syllable onset, whereas nasals /m/, /n/ and fricatives /f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, being moraic consonants which can constitute a mora by themselves, do not share this limitation. Instead, they may appear at any position of the word: word-initially, word-medially or word-finally, as in the following Shimozato dialect examples: *mta* ‘ground’, *mim* ‘ear’, *nnama* ‘now’, *kan* ‘crab’, *fta* ‘lid’, *ifsa* ‘war’, *jaf* ‘disaster’, *vda* ‘fat’, *janavts* ‘foul-mouthed’, *kuv* ‘seaweed’, *sta* ‘below’, *sas* ‘to pierce’, *mus* ‘insect’, *zzu* ‘a fish’, *maz* ‘rice’. As it can be seen below, the sounds /s/ and /z/ may appear after /p/, /b/, /k/ or /g/ and take on the function of a syllabic nucleus just like a vowel would: *pstu* ‘a man’, *saks* ‘front, before’, *mugz* ‘wheat’, *tabz* ‘journey’.

Moraic /m/, /n/ and /s/ emerged after the /i/ and /u/ vowels of syllables -mi, -ni, -mu, -nu were lost, as in Shimozato **kami* > *kam* ‘god’, **kani* > *kan* ‘crab’, **inu* > *in* ‘dog’, **muc-i* > *mus* ‘insect’, **usu* > *us* ‘mortar’. Moraic /f/ appeared when /u/ following /p/ or /k/ first turned into a labio-dental

approximant and then assimilated with the preceding consonant, following the development path of $ku > kv > f$ and $pu > pv > f$. Shimozato dialect provides examples such as **kumo > fmu* ‘a cloud’, **pune > fni* ‘a boat’. Moraic /v/ came into existence due to a similar process involving voiced /b/ and /g/ consonants: $gu > gv > g$ and $bu > bv > v$, as in Shimozato dialect lexemes **janagutei > janavts* ‘foul-mouthed’, **pabu > pav* ‘snake’.

Moraic /f/, /v/, /s/ make the following /r/ and /j/ sounds undergo fricativization, as in **makura > maffa* ‘pillow’, **abura > avva* ‘oil’, or **tsukijo > tskseu* ‘moonlit night’. Moreover, when the word-final nasals /m/ or /n/ is followed by the topic-marker clitic *wa*, the clitic’s initial /w/ undergoes complete assimilation and becomes accordingly /m/ or /n/, like in expressions *mimma* ‘as for ears’ or *kanna* ‘as for crabs’. Similarly, if the clitic follows a noun with a final fricative /f/, /v/, /s/ or /z/, /w/ assimilates with the word-final consonant, as in *jaffa* ‘as for disasters’, *kuvva* ‘as for seaweed’, *mussa* ‘as for insects’ or *tuzza* ‘as for birds’.

In the Miyako language there exist the following long consonants: /m:/, /n:/, /f:/, /v:/, /s:/, /z:/. Since they construct a two-moraic syllable on their own, they already can constitute a lexeme, such as *m:* ‘sweet potato’, *n:* ‘yeah, right (an informal reply)’, *v:* ‘to sell’, *f:* ‘a comb’, *s:* ‘nest’, *z:* ‘to scold’. Also, /f:/, /s:/ and /z:/ may follow after plosives /k/, /g/, /p/ or /b/ and function as a consonantal syllabic nucleus for the plosive onset, compare *ps:* ‘day’, *bz:* ‘to sit’, *kf:* ‘to produce, to create’.

The Ōgami dialect has only ten consonants: /p/, /t/, /k/, /s/, /f/, /v/, /m/, /n/, /r/ and /j/, which makes it the dialect with the smallest number of consonants out of all Ryukyuan language varieties. From the comparison with adjacent dialects, one can infer that all of the Ōgami /b/, /d/, /g/ and /dz/ sounds underwent autonomic devoicing, resulting in the loss of the voicing opposition in case of the plosives. The only pair of phonemes which has retained the voiced — voiceless opposition are the labio-dental fricatives /f/ and /v/.

Grammar of Ryukyuan languages

Being genetically related to mainland Japanese, Ryukyuan languages share with it a lot of common features also regarding their grammar. In Ryukyuan languages there exist lexical categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, as well as functional categories such as the copula, conjunctions, interjections etc., both identical with Japanese. Nouns in the subject function are placed in the sentence-initial position, while predicative verbs and adjectives are sentence-final. Adverbs are placed

before verbs or adjectives that they modify. Sentences with a noun predicate put the noun together with the copula. The word order of phrases which constitute a sentence as well as inflection categories are also the same as in case of Japanese.

Verbs

Like in mainland Japanese, verbs in Ryukyuan languages inflect for grammatical categories such as time, mood, aspect, affirmation/negation, voice etc. In order to express their function and position in the sentence, verbs inflect in accordance with the system of the following inflectional forms: finite, attributive, connective and conditional. Languages of the Northern Ryukyuan group, especially the Southern Okinawa language, possess a separate morphological category of politeness, which puts plain expressions in grammatical opposition against polite expressions. However, in the Miyako language no such verbal category exists.

Non-past verbal form in the Miyako language is homophonic for the finite, attributive and connective function. Let us see examples with a verbal equivalent to the mainland Japanese connective form *kaki* ‘to write’.

karja: *tigamju:mai kaks.* ‘He writes a letter.’ [finite]
tigamju: *kaks psto: uran.* ‘Nobody writes a letter.’ [attributive]
tigamju: *kaksgatsna nakju:ta:.* ‘He was crying while writing the letter.’

[connective]

Verbal euphony

In the Japanese language of the Heian period, euphonic changes known as the *ombin* took place in the verbal stems. This sort of euphony was also observed in Ryukyuan languages. *Ombin* is defined as the kind of circumstances when the stem-final consonant of a strong inflection verb (strong inflection verbs have a consonantal stem ending) along with the suffix undergo phonemic changes, which result in an alternation of the stem.

If the stem-final consonant is /b/ or /m/, the consonant is dropped along with the head /i/ vowel of the connective -iti suffix, and the /t/ from the suffix becomes voiced, resulting in a -di form. Examples include *nu-di* < *noNde* < *nom-ite* ‘drinking’, or *ira-di* < *eraNde* < *erab-ite* ‘choosing’.

If the stem-final consonant is /r/, the stem-final consonant and the suffix head vowel are dropped, as in the example: *tu-ti* < *toQte* < *tor-ite* ‘taking’.

In case the stem-final consonant is /w/, it merges with the suffix vowel to create an u-*ombin* kind of euphony, and only then disappear. Compare *wara-ti* < *waraute* < *wara-ite* ‘laughing’.

If the stem-final consonant is /k/, /s/ or /g/, apart from the the consonant and the suffix-initial vowel being dropped, the suffix-initial consonant /t/ undergoes palatalization, changing into /te/. Compare: *da-tei* < *da-itee* < *dak-ite* ‘embracing’, *wata-tei* < *wata-itee* < *watae-ite* ‘passing’, *ku-dzi* < *ko-idze* < *kog-ite* ‘rowing’, etc.

However, in case of the Miyako language things look different. For example, the past form of the verbs is constructed as in *numtaz* ‘drank’, *jubztaz* ‘called’, *kakstaz* ‘wrote’, *kugztaz* ‘rowed’, *ukustaz* ‘woke’, *mats-tas* ‘waited’, i.e. the connective verbal stem is followed by the past tense suffix -taz. In other words, for the past tense of the Miyako verbs there occurred no *ombin* euphony, retaining the archaic Japanese features.

Also, no such euphony took place for the Yaeyama and Yonaguni languages. Considering all of the Japonic languages and dialects, *ombin* probably did not occur only in the Southern Ryukyuan languages.

Nikolai A. Nevsky (1892–1937) was the first person ever to have properly recorded the Miyako language using phonetic symbols.

The work accomplished by Nevsky can be in general divided into three genres. The first genre comprises Nevsky’s research and papers related to the folklore and oral literature of the Miyako islands, which were collected in the work titled *Tsuki to fushi* (“The moon and immortality”, published in 1971 by Tōyō Bunko). The second genre includes oral literature in the Miyako language, such as songs, stories, proverbs, riddles etc., collected and recorded by Nevsky. Many of them had been arranged and edited, and published in Russia in 1978 under the title of “Oral literature of the Miyako islands”² with Lydia Gromkovskaya as the editor-in-chief. This work’s Japanese translation was published in 1998 by Sunagoya Shobō under the title of *Miyako no fōkuroa* (“Folklore of the Miyakos”) as a result of the team translation by Shigehisa Karimata, Yukiko Tokuyama, Yoriko Takaesu, Masami Tamaki, Masa Hamakawa and Takako Hasekura.³ The third genre are the handwritten notes left by Nevsky with an attached title of the “Materials for studying the lexicon of the Miyako islands”. The 1192-page thick contents are arranged alphabetically, with entries from various Miyako language variations transcribed with “Russian-style” phonetic symbols (ロシア式の音声記号).⁴ As for the meaning descriptions, for some entries they were written in Russian

² Translator’s note: original title *Фольклор островов Мияко*.

³ Editor’s note: see Nevsky 1998.

⁴ Editor’s note: in the abstract of this paper the author wrote: “He (Nevsky) accurately transcribed pronunciation of the Miyako vocabulary into International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) ...”.

only, for others it is a Japanese text with a mixed kanji-kana script, and for yet other entries both Russian and Japanese meaning explanations have been provided. It is a combined Ryukyuan-Japanese and Ryukyuan-Russian dictionary.

These handwritten notes were photocopied and published in 2005 in a two-volume edition by the Hirara City Educational Committee under the title of *Nikorai A. Nefusukii Miyako hōgen nōto fukushabon* (“Nikolai A. Nevsky, notes on the Miyako dialects, photocopy”, below referred to as *Miyako hōgen nōto*). There are some parts within this edition that have been poorly copied or are missing, perhaps due to the fact that the photocopy was made from a microfilm once presented to the Waseda University Library. Still, owing to this publication Nevsky’s materials have become easily accessible, and so its meaning for the Miyako-related research is significant.

Miyako hōgen nōto provides as entries 5482 lexemes from various variations of the Miyako language. Furthermore, it might also be that some lexemes not featured separately as entries could be found in the example sentences. Also, entries with no meaning explication or containing just the toponyms have not been included in the aforementioned number, which means that the total sum of Miyako lexemes collected by Nevsky is larger. Besides, as I will explain in more detail below, lexemes from Ryukyuan languages other than Miyako are also featured in this dictionary, which makes it easy to imagine that the actual number of Ryukyuan lexemes recorded in this source is about two times bigger.

a — 419 entries	b — 240 entries	d — 73 entries
з — 115 entries	f — 183 entries	g — 84 entries
h — 12 entries	i — 211 entries	j — 316 entries
k — 565 entries	l — 6 entries	m — 616 entries
n — 418 entries	η — 39 entries	o — 21 entries
p — 456 entries	r — 23 entries	s — 568 entries
t — 415 entries	c — 24 entries	u — 96 entries
c — 159 entries	u — 340 entries	v — 19 entries
w — 31 entries	z — 33 entries	

A noteworthy characteristic of the Miyako language materials compiled by Nevsky is that they were endorsed with the author’s knowledge of the linguistics. One manifestation of such endorsement is the phonetic symbol notation applied in the dictionary. Phonetic and phonemic characteristics of the Miyako language exceed the framework of Japanese, and more than that, they display some interesting phenomena even in the worldwide

scale. For example, in the Miyako language exist moraic fricatives /f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, moraic nasals /m/, /n/ and moraic liquid /r/.⁵

In the Miyako language there are not only moraic consonants, but also consonants which combine with different consonants to function as syllabic nucleus in the same way that vowels do.

Nevsky transcribed syllabic /s/ either as -s-, like in the word *psu* ‘a man’, or as -^si-, with an upper-indexed -s- noted to the left of -i-. Likewise, syllabic /z/ was transcribed by Nevsky as -^zi-.

Words which contain such moraic or syllabic consonants cannot be expressed with the syllabic characters of the *kana* syllabaries. It is only nowadays, when the Miyako phonemics have been explained and its characteristics have become well known, that the written Miyako words can hardly be deciphered incorrectly even if they are put down in *kana*. However, thanks to the fact that Nevsky recorded Miyako language back in the Taishō-era using “Russian-style” phonetic symbols, we can thoroughly examine the phonemic features of the Miyako language varieties of that time and compare it in a detailed way with the current, 90-years later sub-units of the Miyako language.

Another characteristic of Nevsky’s Miyako language materials is that they take note of what region exactly the given lexeme was collected at. This is especially clear in case of the *Miyako hōgen nōto*. There are a lot of lexemes marked with an annotation of Ps (Hirara), Ta (Tarama), or Sarah (Sarahama). Annotations which also appear in the dictionary, albeit less frequently, include Ik (Ikema), Nisib (Nishihara), Kaz (Karimata), Simazī (Shimajiri), Nubari (Nobaru), Upura (Ōura), Ui (Uechi), Min (Minna), Irav (Irabu), Fumn (Kuninaka), and other. Lexemes common throughout all of the Miyako islands are marked with a “Com” annotation, and lexemes recorded as examples of the Miyako traditional song language are marked as “Poet”.

In Nevsky’s dictionary there also appear lexemes from non-Miyako Ryukyuan varieties: sub-units of the Yaeyama language, annotated for example as Ya (Yaeyama), Ishi/イシ (Ishigaki), Hate/ハテ (Hateruma), Iri/イリ (Iriomote), Kuro/クロ (Kuro), sub-units of the Okinawa languages, such as Rk (Ryukyu, perhaps Naha?), Nago/ナゴ (Nago), Ito/イト (Itoman), Kade/カデ (Kadena), Wnna (Onna), Na:ćizij (Nakijin), Mwtubu (Motobu), Kusi (Kushi), Ie (Ie), and sub-units of the Amami languages, such as Naze/ナゼ (Naze), Koni/コニ (Koniya), Yoro/ヨロ

⁵ Detailed information on Miyako phonemics can be found in Karimata 2002, Karimata 2007. Moreover, on the subject of transcribing the Miyako language from the point of view of intergenerational transmission, see Karimata 2011.

(Yoron), Oki/オキ (Okinoerabu), Toku/トク (Tokuno), Kika/キカ (Kikai), Sumi/スミ (Sumiyō). It can be inferred that Nevsky had gathered this data back in Tokyo or on the board of a ship while on his way to the Miyakos and back. Annotations like Jap (Japanese) or Ainu (Ainu language) can also be observed, as well as examples from some mainland dialects, such as 佐賀 (Saga), 肥後 (Higo).

para (Com) 柱。 [(Ja) para:, (na:cizin) (mutubu) p'aja. (Rk) ha:ija. (Jap) hasira.

(ainu) **para**. 天井の横木。 (キカ) (エラ) faja. (ヨナ) Faja. (ナゴ) (ヤラ) fa:ja:.

(ヨナ) fira:. (ヤラ)(S)(n)(イト) ha:ja (ナセ) ハラ. (トク) har'a. (イス)(コニ)(スミ)(サネ) har'a:. (ナゴ)(イエ) paja:. (クロ) para. (イシ) para:. (コハ)(ハテ) pāra.

Nevsky's "Notes on the Miyako dialects" contain basic vocabulary such as words for body parts or natural phenomena, but also lexemes from traditional Miyako songs. Information on contemporary customs or lexemes related to public functions, names of official posts etc., are also included.

kina (Ps)(Ta) 杓子。匙。汁ヲ吸ミ取ルニ用フ。多クハ古マカリ (makaz/makal) ヲ用ヒタリ [(國仲)].

fulla: (Sa) 番所ノ中ノ便所。本家(uikaja:)ノ東角ノ後ニアル。一間角の萱葺ニテ與人、目差ノミ使用シタリ。筆者以下ハコレニ接続セル豚ヲ入レタル雪隠ヲ使用セシ也。

sidu (Sa) 勢頭。sidugama トモ称シ、織女(pataimur'a)ノ手傳ヲナス女。

If an entry is accompanied only by its lexical Japanese equivalent, this does not amount for a detailed meaning description. However, there are also lexemes with a detailed meaning description in Russian, as well as words whose meaning is explained in Russian only. Therefore, a translation from Russian would be something called for.

Traditional songs collected in *Miyako fōkuroa* have been published along with their Russian translation. Likewise, in the *Miyako hōgen nōto* Miyako lexemes are explained in Russian as in a Miyako-Russian dictionary. Owing to the Russian translation, the meaning features otherwise invisible in, say, Ryukyuan-Japanese or Ryukyuan-English dictionaries, become revealed. Or perhaps this is the merit of the fact that to Nevsky Russian was his mother tongue.

Nouns in Russians are differentiated according to the category of the number, just like nouns in English, and so they can take on either singular or plural form. Unlike English, however, Russian nouns are also equipped with the category of gender, which means that all nouns are categorized as masculine, feminine or neutral. Proper names of people, or names of official posts are always either masculine or feminine, as well as either singular or plural. Therefore, a proper name or a profession name in the Miyako language cannot be translated into Russian unless one knows if the name refers to a man or a woman. It may be assumed that Nevsky wanted to know if the names or official posts mentioned in traditional songs were masculine or feminine, and if they were singular and plural, and so he asked his informants about such details. This means that it would be worthwhile to focus on a more careful analysis of Nevsky's Russian translations of the Miyako language materials.

Miyako hōgen nōto contain likewise the meaning descriptions in Russian. Thus, it can be expected that such discrimination for gender and number of nouns such as the aforementioned proper names or official posts names is also included in there. However, unfortunately, *Miyako hōgen nōto* have not been transcribed and processed for printing yet. And for the transcription to be made possible, Nevsky's handwritten Russian notation needs to be deciphered. Proceeding with the transcription and translation of the *Miyako hōgen nōto* into Japanese would be desirable.

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(Translated from Japanese by A. Jarosz)

Сигэхиса Каримата

**РЮКЮСКИЕ ЯЗЫКИ И РАБОТЫ Н. НЕВСКОГО
ПО ЯЗЫКУ МИЯКО**

Термином «рюкюские языки» обозначается целое множество языков и диалектов, которые используются на территории архипелага Рюкю, вытянувшегося на 900 км, и непонятны не только жителям «основной» Японии, но зачастую и друг другу. Шесть признанных ЮНЕСКО рюкюских языков имеют значительно различающиеся фонемные, морфосинтаксические и лексические особенности. В то же время эти языки находятся под серьезной угрозой исчезновения, а их изучение и запись являются неотложными задачами. В этом смысле труды Н. А. Невского по языку Мияко, в особенности его мияко-японско-русский словарь, обладают особой ценностью.