

## **Advances in Ryukyuan Historical Linguistics**

Japanese historical linguistics has until recently mostly relied on the study of the Old Japanese texts of the 8th century and the method of internal reconstruction. Few studies have undertaken a systematic comparison of Japanese with the Ryukyuan languages, though it has been shown (Hattori 1978–1979, Thorpe 1983) that the Ryukyuan data can clarify some problems and also lead to new advances in the reconstruction of Proto-Japonic, the common ancestor of Japanese and Ryukyuan.

Recent years have seen more and more works that both assess the importance of Ryukyuan and make new contributions to the field on the basis of Ryukyuan data. These have concerned the reconstruction of the prosodic system (Matsumori 2000, Shimabukuro 2008) and of the vowel system (Serafim 2008), as well as the question of the external genetic relationship of Japanese (Vovin 2010).

However, many issues remain to be solved concerning Ryukyuan, and the historical developments of most of the different varieties have not been fully worked out yet. Moreover, some of these developments are of a particular interest, not only for Japonologists and Ryukyuanists, but also for general linguists and typologists. As more and more new descriptive data have been made available in recent years, the possibilities of new advances in Ryukyuan historical linguistics have greatly increased. ICHL20 is thus a timely opportunity to gather scholars working on Ryukyuan in order to present and discuss their recent research.

This workshop aims at accommodating contributions including, but not limited to, the following:

- reconstruction of Proto-Ryukyuan and its subbranches as well as its subgrouping
- comparative reconstruction of Proto-Japonic
- presentation of new descriptive data that have an important historical significance
- individual case studies of historical developments that bear a typological or theoretical interest
- Ryukyuan philology