

# Exploring Language Diversity

**in Japan**

***How Philological and Linguistic  
Analysis Can Work Together***

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IN MEMORY OF ALEXANDER VOVIN

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Japan's ecological variety, with no less than six different climatic zones, seems to parallel the panoply of different languages and dialects that have been attested in the Japanese archipelago. In addition to standard Japanese and its dialects, there exist other Japonic languages such as Ryūkyūan and Hachijō, as well as non-Japonic varieties represented by Ainu, Oroch, and Nivkh.

Information on such linguistic diversity was recorded in a number of written sources, such as the Man'yōshū and Omoro sōshi, among others. In addition, foreign observers also provided insightful evidence on languages spoken within present-day Japanese territory. Identifying with precision what languages were represented in the written sources is not an easy task, but in most cases the combination of a philological approach and the tools of historical linguistics might shed some light on the nature of the languages in question. Analyzing specific cases by researchers who focus on different sources will help to reveal how the careful coupling of these two approaches might prove rewarding, without denying the importance of fieldwork and synchronic studies.

Centered on the seminal work of Alexander Vovin (1961–2022), the workshop intends to show how this combination could be possible in practice. Professor Vovin had been involved in its planning from the start, and intended to contribute with a keynote speech. His untimely passing prevented us from including his contribution. This initiative will also be an homage to the memory of Alexander Vovin and his legacy by a number of scholars who had been working in close contact with him or with his style of scholarship as a source of inspiration.

**Online Workshop from Kyoto**

**October 22, 2022**

**16:00–19:30 JST**



ITALIAN SCHOOL OF  
EAST ASIAN STUDIES



EFEO

École française d'Extrême-Orient

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IN MEMORY OF ALEXANDER VOVIN

Online Workshop from Kyoto

October 22, 2022 16:00–19:30 JST

## PROGRAM

16:00	<b>OPENING</b> Silvio Vita (Scuola italiana di studi sull'Asia orientale) Christophe Marquet (École française d'Extrême-Orient)
16:10	<b>Remembering Alexander Vovin</b>
16:30	<b>Introduction</b> Paolo Calvetti (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)
16:40	<b>A New Look at Old Okinawan Phonetics and Phonology through the Prism of <i>Haedong chegukki</i></b> Marc Miyake (Independent scholar)
17:10	<b>Lexical and Phonological Information on Okinawan in Chinese Sources from the Early 15th to the Mid-18th Century</b> Georg Orlandi (Osaka University)
17:40	<b>Conservative Features of Miyako-Ryukyuan Attested in its Oral Traditions –With a Focus on Nikolay Nevskiy's Research of the 1920s</b> Aleksandra Jarosz (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń)
18:10	<b>The Phonetics, Phonology, and Morphosyntax of East Sakhalin Ainu in Bronislaw Pilsudski's <i>Materials for the Study of the Ainu Language and Folklore</i></b> Elia Dal Corso (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)
18:40	<b>A Few Phonological and Lexical Insights on Early Hachijō (1781–1858)</b> Étienne Baudel (École des hautes études en sciences sociales)
19:10	<b>CONCLUDING REMARKS</b>

\* 5–10 minutes of discussion time will follow each presentation

Zoom meeting ID

879 7711 4958

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