Indigenous languages, traditional culture and the introduction of Christianity in Taiwan
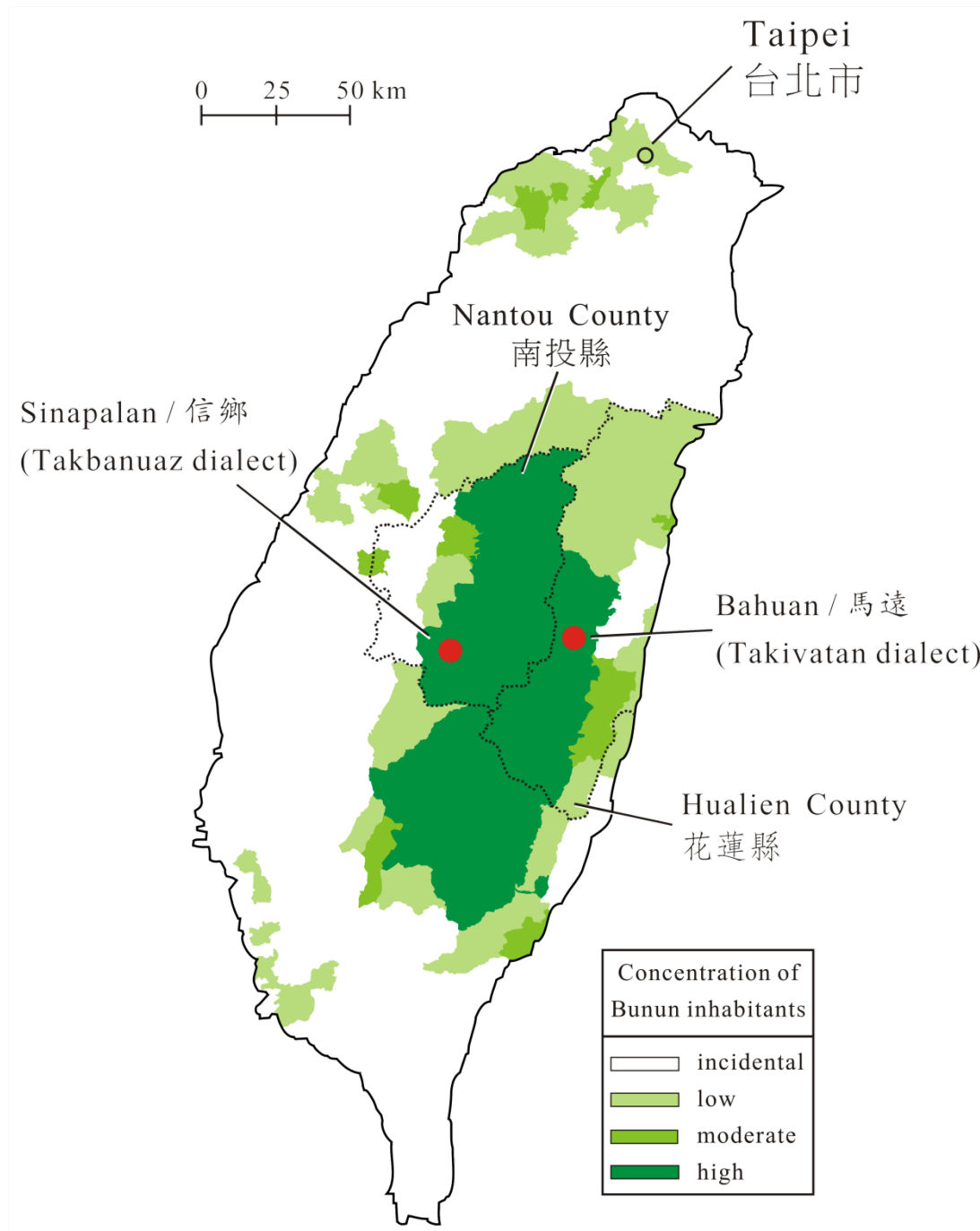
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Overview

- How Christianity came to Taiwan

- How it affected aboriginal languages
  - Language rights
  - Language use in a religious context

- The future

- Case study: Bunun

Missionaries in Taiwan

"… the day to day contact of the missionary or the local preacher or clergy with the men, women and children within a missionary territory is rarely recorded.'

(Richardson 1972: 125)

The first arrival of Christianity

- Dutch protestant missionaries:
  – 1624-1662

- Spanish Catholic mission:
  – 1626-1642

- 1662: Koxinga (鄭成功)

Jan van Baden
Surrender of Fort Zeelandia in Formosa, 1662

Source:

The second arrival of Christianity

- 2nd half 19th century till now
- Catholic Church
  - 1859: Two Spanish Dominicans arrive at Kaohsiung
- English Presbyterian Church
  - 1867: James Maxwell arrives in Kaohsiung
- Canadian Presbyterian Church
  - 1872: George L. Mackay arrives in Tamsui
- …

The second arrival of Christianity

- 1895-1945: Japanese occupation
  - Initially high hopes
  - 1930s: Increasingly hostile towards Christianity and Western missionaries

Christianity in aboriginal Taiwan

- Systematic evangelization of the Aboriginal areas
  - only started after WWII
  - Presbyterians lead the way, Catholics followed
  - E.g. Ma-yuan (Bunun): First Presbyterian minister in 1949

Christianity in aboriginal Taiwan

"After over one hundred years of effort, only three percent of the immigrant Chinese community […] has converted to Christianity. In contrast the indigenous people, who currently form only a very small percentage of the total population, are 85% baptised (Catholic and Protestant)."

Lardinois & al. (2004:114)

Christianity in aboriginal Taiwan

- Japanese occupation:
  - Small family groups ⇨ villages
  - Non-stratified society ⇨ centralized leadership (*tumuq*)
- Christianity
  - ✖ Headhunting
  - ✖ Ancestor worship
  - ✖ Drinking (Presbyterians)
  - ✓ Other expressions of traditional culture

Christianity and language rights

- Involvement in aboriginal rights movements from 1980s onwards
  - Mainly Presbyterian Church (see Stainton 2002)
- Religious and cultural education
  - E.g. Yushan Theological College had indigenous arts classes from 1948 (Kao 1965:464)

Christianity and language rights

- Policy of indigenization:
  - Local independence for religious communities
    - Presbyterians > Catholics
  - Integration of indigenous cultures
    - Presbyterians < Catholics
  - Use of indigenous languages

Domains of use

- Literary production: Bible translations, mass books, …

- Religious praxis: Liturgy, hymns, …

- Social activities: Communal meals, sports, excursions, …

Bible translations

- Primarily by Protestants, the majority Presbyterians

- Always involves translation teams:
  - Sinitic clergy
  - Foreign missionaries
  - Indigenous clergy or believers
  - Theologians

1949	Bunun	The Story of Noah's Flood	?
1951	Bunun	Matthew	Zhuyin Fuhao
1955	Bunun	Luke	Zhuyin Fuhao
1957	Amis	James	Zhuyin Fuhao
1957	Truku	Acts	Zhuyin Fuhao
1958	Amis	Marc	Zhuyin Fuhao
1959	Bunun	Acts	Zhuyin Fuhao
1960	Truku	Corinthians 1	Roman
1961	Paiwan	Acts	Zhuyin Fuhao
1962	Bunun	Timothy 1-2	Zhuyin Fuhao
1963	Amis	Acts, Galatians	Roman
1963	Truku	**New Testament**	Zhuyin Fuhao
1964	Atayal	Marc	Zhuyin Fuhao
1964	Paiwan	Acts	Zhuyin Fuhao
1965	Amis	Four Gospels	Roman
1965	Paiwan	John	Zhuyin Fuhao
1966	Amis	Romans	Roman
1967	Paiwan	Ephesians,Romans	Zhuyin Fuhao
1969	Paiwan	Sermon on the Mount	Zhuyin Fuhao
1970	Amis	Matthew	Roman

1970	Atayal	Acts, Corinthians 1	Zhuyin Fuhao
1970	Yami	Marc	Zhuyin Fuhao
1973	Paiwan	**New Testament**	Zhuyin Fuhao
1974	Atayal	**New Testament**	Zhuyin Fuhao
1979	Amis	Psalms	Roman
1980	Yami	Mark, Acts, James	Zhuyin Fuhao
1983	Bunun	**Abbreviated New Testament**	Roman
1985	Truku	Amos	Roman
1988	Truku	**Partial OT, Complete NT**	Roman
1989	Amis	**Short Bible**	Roman
1993	Atayal	Amos, Jonah, Micah	Roman
1993	Bunun	Jonah, Micah	Roman
1993	Paiwan	**Short OT, full NT**	Roman
1994	Yami	**New Testament**	Roman
1997	Amis	**The Bible**	Roman
2000	Bunun	**"Tama Dihanin tu Halinga"**	Roman
2001	Rukai	**New Testament**	Roman
2003	Atayal	**Short OT, full NT**	Roman
2005	Truku	**Truku Bible**	Roman
2014	Tsou	**Tsou New Testament**	Roman

Indigenizing Christian concepts

"… the reliance on indigenous categories to translate Christian concepts during the proselytizing process has significant bearings on how Christianity is adopted."

Yang (2008:70)

Indigenizing Christian concepts

Mat 4:1:

Then **Jesus** was led by the **Spirit** up into the wilderness, to be tempted by the **Devil**.

Aipinchin, **Iesu** hai adasun mas **Sele** kusia ispus, tanamun mas **hanitu** mapinsanamaz.

Indigenizing Christian concepts

- *Iesu* 'Jesus'
  - prob. from Jap. イエス*Iesu* or Chin. 耶穌 *Yē sū*
  - Phonological loan; introduces a loan phoneme /e/
- *Sele* 'Holy Spirit'
  - prob. from Jap.聖霊 *Seirei*
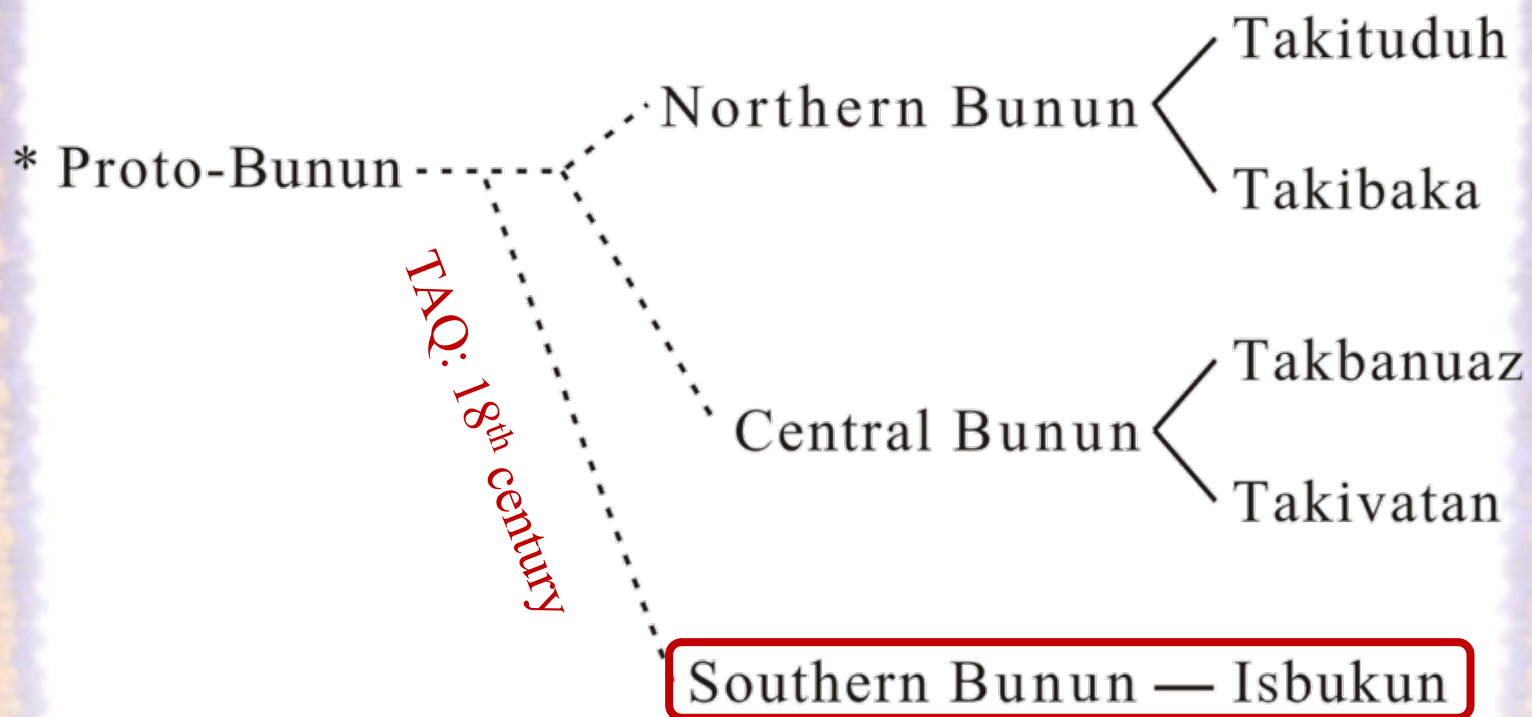 - Phonological loan; integration in native phonology + use of loan phoneme /e/

Indigenizing Christian concepts

- *hanitu*   'Devil'
  - from Bun. *hanitu* 'spirit, ghost'
  - Adaptation of traditional religious concept

Dialect bias

- Strongly based on Isbukun
- Effects on other dialects:
  - structural development: new vocabulary is introduced through Isbukun
  - social prestige

* Proto-Bunun

Northern Bunun
- Takituduh
- Takibaka

Central Bunun
- Takbanuaz
- Takivatan

Southern Bunun — Isbukun

TAQ: 18th century

Dialect bias

And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

(Mar 6:46)

Biblical Bunun:

Masa mudanin naia hai kudadaza saia sia ludun masumsum.

Dialect bias

Discrepancy with Takivatan Bunun

Masa mudanin naia hai kudadaza saia sia ludun masumsum. (Mar 6:46)

Takivatan Bunun:

Musan munbaʔav, ai, sadu sia mabunbun masihal.

'I went into the mountains and, I saw that there were very nice bananas there.'

Dialect bias

- Result: a dialectal dichotomy
  - Bible: Isbukun-based
  - Liturgy, other activities: local dialect
- Additional factor: dialect mixing due to movement to the cities

An example

– Sinapalan village, 24 July 2011
– Takbanuaz dialect

Sermon
(Native dialect)

Reading NT
(Isbukun Bible)

Conclusion

- Future development:
  - Dialect leveling?
  - Dialect discrimination?
  - Creating of a Bunun language standard?
- Question for language preservation:
  - Will this process exterminate dialects?
  - Will it help the Bunun language survive?

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Uninang miqumisang!

Extra info

Influence on the lexicon

- Borrowing:
  - Biblical names
  - From Mandarin, English, Japanese or Latin
  - Partial integration in native phonology
    - Exceptions: /e/ and word-initial /j/

	Mandarin	**English**	**Latin**	**Japanese**
Matai	馬太 mǎ tài	Matthew	Matthæus	Matai
Maluku	馬可 mǎ kě	Mark	Marcus	Mako
Luka	路加 lù jiā	Luke	Lucas	Ruka
Iuhani	約翰 yué hàn	John	Joannes (Iohanni)	Yohane
Luma	羅馬 luó mǎ	Romans	ad Romanos	Roma
Kalatia	加拉太 jiā lā tài	Galatians	ad Galatas	Garatea
Ipisu	以佛所 yǐ fó suǒ	Ephesians	ad Ephesios	Epeso
Hebulai	希伯來 xī bó lái	Hebrews	ad Hebræos	Heburu
Iakubu	雅各 yǎ gè	James	Jacobi	Yakobu

Influence on the lexicon

- Adaptation of traditional vocabulary
  - semantic extension of existing religious concepts to a Christian context

Bible	Takivatan	Christian meaning	Traditional meaning
dihanin	diqanin	Heaven	sky
hanitu	qanitu	devil, demon	ghost
sasbinað	sasbinʔað	Lord (God / Jesus)	person of authority

Influence on the lexicon

- Meaning extension
  - General meaning > religious domain

Takivatan	Generic meanings		Religious meaning
isʔaŋ	*breath > feeling > belief	>	Christian faith
liskaʔuni	worship	>	Christian worship, belief
kaʔuni	create, make, construct	>	creation, Genesis
tamasað	strength	>	spirit of God

Influence on the lexicon

- Word creation
  - Creation of neologisms through the use of native morphosyntactic processes

  is-ka-kaupa   derivation
  TRANSFER-CV-all
  'universe, creation'

  tama dihanin   compounding
  father heaven
  'God'