

# ETYMOLOGY THROUGH MAPS

A dialect geographical study of the names of the sty in  
Itoigawa (Niigata Prefecture)

By

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## 1. Significance.

In linguistic science, as elsewhere, a new methodological approach is rewarded by the opening of unexpected vistas on old problems. When at the end of the last century Swiss, German and French scholars started to analyze the geographical distribution of dialectal words or sounds, they caused a reappraisal of all the linguistic problems.

In Japan now, the theoretical conclusions of the dialect geographical method have often been introduced to the scholars, but the painstaking dialect surveys which made possible the broader theories, are practically unknown. Although bibliographical lists contain numerous „dialectal vocabularies“ *hógen shû* 方言集, one has never tried in this country to make a linguistic survey and at the same time to interpret the linguistic material in its geographical context.

A three men team, T. Shibata 柴田武, M. Tokugawa 徳川宗賢 and the present writer conducted a new type of dialectal survey in the fall of 1957, thanks to a grant of the Ministry of Education of Japan. A great number of linguistic maps were brought back and their interpretation will be presented in a volume next year. In the meantime, this new type of dialect interpretation may profit from the opinions and the criticism of the specialists in related fields. The three writers have decided to publish as quickly as possible some of the results. Although the individual studies are signed by one of us, it must be understood that not only the survey itself, but also the linguistic interpretation of the maps has been done as a common enterprise.<sup>1)</sup>

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1) The following have already been published: T. Shibata: *Hógen no furui só to atarashii só* 方言の古い層と新しい層 [old and new strata in dialects]. In: *Hógo seikatsu* 方語生活, August, 1958, p. 28-37. T. Shibata: *Hógen henka no yóin to katei* 方言變化の要因と過程 [causes and process of linguistic changes]. In: *Gendai Kokugogaku* 現代國語學 III, 1958, pp. 214, 225. In the press are the following: T. Shibata: Eastern Dialect and Western Dialect in Japan. In: *Mitzyka Festschrift*, Marburg 1959. M. Tokugawa: *Kamakiri no hógen bumpu wo kaishaku suru* かまきりの方

## 2. Survey.

The surveyed region: the southwestern extremity of Niigata 新潟 Prefecture (230 km. NW of Tōkyō), covering the whole of Itoigawa City 糸魚川市 and of Oomi Town 青海町, with a few neighboring localities belonging to Toyama 富山 and Nagano 長野 Prefectures.

Time: October–November 1957; the survey proper took 21 days, the three field workers working independently in a zigzag pattern, for a total of 63 man-days.

Informants: male, 60 years or more, native of the locality and of native parents.

Localities: as a new feature in Japanese dialectology, every single hamlet or human settlement, 190 in all were visited; because of the lack of informants, we had to abandon the survey in 13 cases, leaving a total of 177 surveyed spots.

Questionnaire: 55 items about the vocabulary, phonetics, accent and grammar; 8 items about the social and religious life of the village.

Geography: this region lies along the Japan Sea into which 5 rivers flow from the lower reaches of the Japanese Alps. Both in the east and in the west of our map, at only 10 kms. of the coast altitudes of 1500 m. are reached. The names of the main valleys are indicated on map 2. Only the central one, that of the Himegawa river with its estuary near Itoigawa, comes from far enough south to constitute some kind of a link with the Nagano prefecture.

## 3. Etymology of the names of the sty.

The names used for the sty on the eyelid (see map 1) present the advantage that only a slight possibility exists that the standard language could exercise its influence. The subject matter is not touched upon in the schools; it belongs to the intimacy of the family. In addition, some traditional remedies to cure the sty are half jokingly transmitted from generation to generation (see map 2). The two first names to be examined here present a somewhat peculiar case, bearing no direct relationship to the rest of the names.

A. *Monomorai*

The Tōkyō or standard name is *monomorai* „the beggar“ represented by small rectangles on the map. The name was given 18 times, but one must note: 1) that it was hardly ever given alone, but more as the “translation” of the local name, partly no doubt because the field workers spoke the Tōkyō language during the survey.

言分布を解釋する [how to explain the geographical distribution of the names for the grasshopper]. In: *Kokuritsu kokugo kenkyūsho sōritsu jūshūnen kinen kan* 國立國語研究所創立十週年記念刊, 1959. W. A. Grootaers: *Hōgen chizu no kakigata to yomigata* 方言地圖の書き方と読み方 [how to draw linguistic maps and how to explain them]. In: *Nihon no hōgen* 日本の方言, Tōkyō, 1959. W. A. Grootaers: The Nature and the Origin of Subjective Dialect Boundaries. In: *Orbis*, June, 1959.

2) that the standard language is not clearly understood; local phonetic corruptions *monomurai* and *monongurai* were given a distinctive sign on the map.

The haphazard distribution of the *monomorai* names shows how the standard language is introduced from above (education, radio, newspapers) and not by geographical contact.

#### B. *Medambe*

See the black ellipses on the map. This word means literally: testicle on the eye. *Dambe* for testicle covers a large territory in Niigata Prefecture and at least in two westernly prefectures, Toyama and Ishikawa. In our Itoigawa region, the word has been applied to other round objects. The fir-cone (in Tôkyô: *matsukasa*) is here *matsudambe*; see the area limited by a dotted line on the west bank of the Himegawa river.

The distribution of the *medambe* names reflects faithfully the road communication system west of the river. Southwards *medambe* follows the left bank upstream along one of the old mountain roads leading to Matsumoto 松本, Nagano Prefecture (the other branch of that road follows the Nechi valley and will be described later). The Himegawa 姫川, an unruly mountain river, was not spanned by a single bridge till forty years ago when modern technique made possible the construction of a road along its embankments.

If one follows now the line of the coast westwards, the *medambe* names reach not further than the formidable rock formation Oyashirazu that juts into the sea exactly at the *a* point under the words “. . . sty on the . . .” of the title of map 1. A small mountain village Agero 上路 lies exactly behind that natural obstacle and until very recently it relied for its contacts with the outer world on a small mountain path to the east (reaching the case with the figure 10). This path was the penetration road followed by the *medambe* name found at Agero.

In the last few years, another bridge over the Himegawa was built on the coast itself paralleling the railroad there; still another recent bridge, not far from the sea either, was built approximately where the horizontal line marked 90) crosses the river. The new direction given to the traffic between the two banks of the river is responsible for two *medambe* answers found east of the river. The informants noted there that “*medambe* was a recently introduced word” coexisting with the *meppari* names. The linguistic origin of the *medambe* appellation will be given under paragraph F.

#### C. *Meppa* — *meppari*

We come now to the 13 remaining names for the sty, and these names represent various lines of evolution of a single original form. We chose therefore angular signs for all these names; and especially the triangles with

their six varieties represent names directly evolved from each other.<sup>2)</sup>

The panel at the lower right hand corner of map 1 is the prolongation of the main map (see the squares 74, 75, 76 repeated on both); we start on the southern edge of that panel.

The river Himegawa enters the map in the right hand square and flows then in a northwesternly direction. Following the river, the names of the sty are: *meppa* (white triangles). In the square numbered 86 four *mek-kojiki* (black and white lozenges) cluster in a lateral valley; they will be explained later. For the moment we proceed to square 75 from where the white triangles veer to the right between 800 m. high hills. This was the course of the main highway between Matsumoto (Nagano Prefecture) and the northern coast during the whole feudal period till 1882.<sup>3)</sup>

The road leads into the Nechi 根知 valley (see the valley names on map 2) where the *meppa* names are found in all hamlets without exception, until the very entrance of the valley. We can stop here a moment and notice how the mountain paths leading out of the Nechi valley have furnished outlets for the expansion of *meppa*. First the square 34 (crossing point of 30 horizontally and 74 vertically) has a *meppa* on the banks of the Himegawa river; it was brought there by a path lying straight east of that hamlet and crossing the 500 m. high pass from the Nechi valley. This hamlet 大前 Oomae actually is a recent settlement started there when the railroad was laid along the valley and when the Taishô 大正 bridge was built over the river (Taishô is the period 1911–1925). Secondly, there is a path climbing the hills between the Nechi valley and the next one to the east, the Umigawa 海川 valley; that path too crosses a 500 m. elevation and where it reaches the hamlet which is at the very top, we find two names, *meppa* and *meppari* (black and white triangles).

If we look once more at the general picture presented by the map, we see that *meppari* is the name along the right bank of the main river, the Himegawa, right up to the coast and the city of Itoigawa; it also covers the whole Umigawa valley, and has then spilled along the coast towards the east. A group of three *meppari* names were even found in the middle of the next valley, the populated Hayakawa 早川 valley. These three are not there because of a freak accident; the farmers of the deep Umigawa villages have always crossed the hills to the east, following a rather easy mountain road

2) The lone black triangle in the south representing the name *mebo* had to be left out of consideration because the village there, Kijiyu 木地屋, according to a detailed oral tradition is inhabited by families from west Japan. Actually several of the verbal forms in use in that village seem to support this tradition. On the other hand, after reading through the present paper, the reader will find that the form *mebo* fits neatly in the linguistic reconstruction of the sty names; actually it could represent one of the very oldest stages.

3) "Highway" is a misleading word; it consisted of a narrow path used by fish bearers from the north and salt bearers from the south, and an occasional litter bearer.

(highest elevation 319 m.) to the market place Aramachi 新町. Two of the *meppari* names in the Hayakawa valley are situated at the exit of that road, the third and most northern one was found in Aramachi itself.

Linguistically speaking *meppari* is a younger evolution from *meppa*; the element *-pari* is the verb *haru*, to swell, and has been added to clarify, to elucidate the meaning of a *meppa* that had become obscure. Although the field workers collected only the standard language name *monomorai* from the city people of Itoigawa in three cases out of four, a glance at the map shows that *meppari* was propagated by and still continues to lean on the influence of that city.

How to explain the name *meppa* now? If we go back to the mountain district in the south, we find a couple of remnants of older forms by which *meppa*'s origin becomes clear. First, in the hamlet situated just above the 76 square two answers were given: a 48 years old man said *meppa*, but the oldest inhabitant, 77 years, gave *meba* (on the map an inverted triangle). This hamlet Yokogawa 横川 with only 4 farms, was situated along the old highway which ran here till 1882, but is of very difficult access, being built at the deepest end of a lonely valley. Could not *meba* with a voiced labial *-b-* represent an older stage of the sty names? This question seems to receive an affirmative answer when another relict name is taken into consideration. The black triangles with a white spot represent the name *mebasu*; one instance only was found in the east on the very boundary line between the Niigata and Nagano prefectures; six more *mebasu* localities were noted in the hills west (left bank) of the Himegawa river. There ran the secondary branch of the Matsumoto highway (see above under B. the *medambe* names). There two groups of three hamlets each are separated by the high Oomine 大峰峠 pass (651 m.). It is clear that these six *mebasu* must have been connected geographically with the solitary form in the east till the time when *meppa*, surging northwards, cut this *mebasu* area in two fragments. Before drawing further conclusions another important sty name has to be introduced here.

#### D. *Meboito*

The Hayakawa valley in the northeast of our map has not less than 47 hamlets; it has no southern outlet, being blocked by the extinct volcano Yakizan 焼山 (2400 m.) Linguistically this valley has a strongly conservative tendency; the population is shifting towards the coast and no immigration from outside occurs.

Except for the three younger *meppari* forms described above, Hayakawa has a solid block of *meboito* names (black lozenges). The name means *now* "eye beggar" and represents one of the oldest types of names in the language for the sty.<sup>4)</sup> Now *hoito*=beggar will be explained in the last part. Here

4) The standard language "*monomorai*" has the same meaning and seems derivated from a large *meboito* area which is found fragmentarily west as far as Okayama prefecture and north to Akita prefecture.

we must first draw the attention of the reader to the fact that besides the Hayakawa *meboito*, we met earlier in this paper the name *mekkojiki* in a side valley (southeastern corner of the side panel of map 1, square 86). *Kojiki* is a common word for beggar and we are justified in thinking that the four *mekkojiki* hamlets had formerly *meboito* too; but *boito*=beggar being at present a less used name in this part (although better known further north) was "translated" into *kojiki*.

If that is right, we see how the current of *meppa-meppari* covering the broad streak from south to north has left on its right bank *mekkojiki* and *meboito* in the same process of bypassing less frequently used roads.

E. *Mebatsbi—mebatsuri*

Where the Japan Sea coast towards the east reaches the upper margin of our map, three hamlets occupy a peculiar place in the Itoigawa region. They had been formerly grouped under one village administration by name of Uramoto 浦本; they are cut off from communities further east by a huge hill dropping in the sea. They live exclusively from fishing, whereas the whole region is mainly an agricultural and forestry one. The harsh tone and the peculiarities of their language is well known because they come daily almost in every village to peddle fresh fish.

As name for the sty, two of the Uramoto hamlets gave *mebatsuri* and one *mebatsbi*; this last form, but voiceless, *mepatsbi* was also given in one more locality a little further to the west along the coast. The Uramoto area too represents a relict area pushed against the hill at its back by the progress of *meppari*.<sup>5)</sup>

F. *Meboro—miborei*

If we list now all the relict names found till now:

*meboito* (and its replacement form: *mekkojiki*)

*meba*

*mebasu*

*mebatsuri*

*mebatsbi*

we cannot be very wrong in reconstructing a common ancestor *mebat\*?* or *mebot\*?* in which *me* means eye, then voiced *b*, deep vowel *a* or *o*, a dental, and an undetermined vowel. This was without doubt the linguistic form existing in this whole region before the *meppa-meppari* invasion flooded the central area, and through the ensuing confusion, brought reinterpretations of the names in various directions.

If we now look at the extreme western hamlets we find there two *meboro* and two *mibo:rei* names. These localities being at the further side of the

5) *Meppari* starts to enter the Hayakawa valley; however the *meboito* names are still strong there; only one village gave *mebbari* (triangle with black and white squares) in which the change from *-pp-* to *-bb-* is clearly due to a contamination of the *-b-* of *meboito*.

Oyashirazu promontory (see above under B), belong economically and linguistically to the neighboring Toyama prefecture. These four names will have to be explained when the Toyama dialects are better known.<sup>6)</sup> But one is rather tempted to discover in *meboro* the formula: *me* for eye, a voiced *b*, a deep vowel and dental (*r* is strongly dental in Japanese). If this is true, the whole coast on our map, was covered by the same type of sty name. The wedge thrown in the middle by the strongly divergent *medambe* (black ellipses) would have to be explained as a local expedient born at the time of the linguistic confusion caused by the irruption in the coastal communities by *meppari*.

But isn't there any internal linguistic reason why *medambe* should have arisen here? or is it only a haphazardly chosen substitute?

Let us think back and remember that the whole coast had some *mebot*\*? word for the sty. Such a phonetic structure does not suggest *dambe*=testicle. But we must turn our attention to the three following facts:

- 1) another local name for round objects, especially the testicles is *bobo*.
- 2) *bobo* is only found now in the conservative Hayakawa valley.
- 3) and it is used there for the fir-cone, exactly like *matsudambe* on the coast.

On map 1, we have surrounded by a dotted line the hamlets where *matsubobo* is a fir-cone.

One can easily imagine that *matsubobo* in earlier times was not confined to its present valley refuge, but covered also the coastal stretch where *matsudambe* is met now. In such a situation, a sty name like *mebot*\*? would be inclined then to be attracted or to be explained into *mebobo*=eye testicle. From there on, this name would follow the fate of the *bobo*-names; when *matsubobo* was superseded by *matsudambe* along the coast, *mebobo* followed suit and became *medambe* as on our present map.

We followed cautiously one by one the scattered clues given us by the geographical distribution of the sty names and of the fir-cone names and we found that we could not attribute to chance that two words from different mental realms should have semantic and phonetic lines of evolution crossing each other twice, to form such neatly fitting pattern.

In short, *medambe* as a direct psychological or semantic heir of *mebobo* is established by the evolution *matsubobo*→*matsudambe*; but its real basis is a phonetic ancestor *mebot*? which is widely attested in this region by the geographical distribution of half a dozen words.

- 4) Folklore of the sty

The sty on the eyelid as an ailment is more of a nuisance than a danger.

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6) From preliminary soundings done by T. Shibata and another member of the linguistic team of the National Language Research Institute, we know that for more than 180 kms. to the west, the prevailing names are varieties of the *meboro*|*memorai*|*emorai* family.

But its apparition (due mostly, I am told, to overtiredness) shows an element of mysterious suddenness. This has given birth to many religious or semi-religious explanations of its origin and to magic formulas for its cure.<sup>7)</sup>

In Japan a medico-folkloristic study has been published by Dr. Nagaoaka Hiroo 長岡博男<sup>8)</sup> and a folkloristic study by Yanagida Kunio 柳田國男.<sup>9)</sup> For the present study, we intend to limit ourselves to a short sketch of our Itoigawa survey only, especially in relation with the name *meboito* not yet explained in our paragraph D above.

Map 2 shows the main cures for a sty as noted in 72 localities (out of 177). It is well known that folklore material has not always the same geographical cohesion as language. In the case of the sty, we often met informants who had heard of 2 or 3 different traditions, and it would have been too much to ask which traditional cure would be "the real cure" in that particular locality.

Looking at the map, a few words of explanations will be given for each cure:

1° the black rectangles: the back of a wooden comb is heated and applied to the sty; it must be a women's comb, made of boxwood *tsuge* 黄楊. Two slight variations were noted: in one locality at the mouth of the Umi-gawa valley, Kamihanyu 上羽生, the comb has to be made of bamboo; in another village at the bottom of the same valley, Kurikura 栗倉, the comb is made of pear wood.

As for the geographical distribution, the heated comb as a cure for the sty was found in all parts of the explored region; this pattern of distribution points to a rather recent but strong new fashion<sup>10)</sup> and remembers one of some of our linguistic maps where the standard Tōkyō word would have a similar general distribution when becoming fashionable.

2° the knotted thread or rope: this cure consists mainly in having somebody knot a straw stalk, a thread or even a spider's strand in front of the sick eye; the knot thus made has to be thrown away (once in the Hayakawa

7) In the Dutch speaking part of Belgium, the same phenomenon occurs. The sty is said to be a punishment for making water facing the moon (old Roman origin?) or on the Church path. For its cure, one has to touch it or make a cross on it with a wedding ring. Like in Japan, sexual or religious taboos seem to be related to the sty.

8) We could not consult this work for the present study. It was published in the magazine *Tabi to densetsu* 旅と傳説 [travel and tradition]. It will be of great service when the sty names are studied over the whole of Japan by means of the future Linguistic Atlas of Japan (National Language Research Institute).

9) *Monomorai no hanashi* ものもらいの話. About the Sty, 1935 in the magazine *Tabi to densetsu* 旅と傳説 [travel and tradition], reissued in the book *Shokumotsu to shinjō* 食物と心臓, Tōkyō, Sogensha, 1940, p. 101-129.

10) The dictionary *Nihon shakai minzoku jiten* 日本社會民俗辭典, I, 309 (s.v.), Tōkyō, 1952, mentions the frequent use of a comb to cast a spell, or to make and unmake a marriage. The use, however, of a comb by commoners seems to have started only in the Edo period (after 1600).

valley) or has to be passed under a kettle (once in Umigawa).

The distribution on the map shows a primary and older type noted in two localities of the Hayakawa valley, in one place at the deepest end of Umigawa, at the southern margin of the map in one Alpine village, at the western margin, behind the Oyashirazu rock, in places (where horizontal 00 crosses vertical 74) on the abandoned Matsumoto road, and in the same neighborhood one on the east bank of the Himegawa. All these instances form a peripheric distribution.

In the middle of that large circle, a secondary and more recent type (its symbol is a knot with a black dot in the center) introduces an important variation: the knot must be made by the last born child, a male child in the case of a female patient and a female child for a male patient. This type occupies the Nechi valley, the left bank of the upper Himegawa and one Alpine village in the south.

From the map only, it seems that the knotted rope type is the oldest in our region. But a much larger geographical survey is needed to reach conclusions as to its origin.

3° the black mushroom represents the localities where the sty is said to be cured if a sieve *furui* 篩 (in a couple of instances it was a winnow *mi* 箕, or a bamboo basket *zaru* 笊) is shown to the God of the Well by pushing it partly over the opening of the well, promising to show it completely when the sty is cured.

This type of cure covers the east bank of the lower Himekawa up to the very mouth of the Nechi valley, then the whole of Umigawa and the entrance of Hayakawa. It is clearly propagated by the influence of the city of Itoigawa, at least under its present version. After presenting the last type, we shall explain further.

4° the black and white circle found only in the upper Hayakawa valley represents the following cure: one visits three neighboring houses, one begs there a little rice; by eating the gruel made from it, the sty is cured. The distribution of this type of cure evidently shows that the name *meboito* (see black lozenges on map 1) has a strong relationship with this cure.<sup>11)</sup> Our contention is that the usage of borrowing rice was suggested by the name, and not vice versa.

We must first mention the important literary sources quoted by the late Kobayashi Yoshiharu 小林好日.<sup>12)</sup> Explaining the words *boito*, *hoido*, *hoido*-

11) Yanagida's explanation is that the names *meboito*, *mekkojiki* and *monomorai* were given because of the usage of borrowing rice to cure the sty. This way of thinking was perhaps natural in his time when the material at hand was fragmentary and as long as the geographical element was disregarded.

12) First in his *Tôboku no hōgen* 東北の方言 [dialects of the northeast], Tōkyō, Sanseidō, 1944, p. 185-86; a revised version by the same in his *Hōgen goi gakuteki kenkyū* 方言語彙學的研究 [lexical study of the dialects], Tōkyō, Iwanami, 1950, p. 159.

*kojiki* and *shirahoido*, all meaning beggar, Kobayashi gives quotations which I arrange here in chronological order:

— 飯米を司る僧を木イタウ陪堂

The word *boitô* designated the monk in charge of the rice granary (according to the book *Matsuya bikki* 松屋筆記)

— 木キタウ禪家飯米

*boitô* is the Zen Buddhist word for rice (*Môkyûsbô* 蒙求抄)

— 四國遍路陪堂して

the pilgrims of Shikoku are going begging (*boitô*) along (*Nankai jiran ki* 南海治亂記)

As far as we could check, these works represent the change of meaning of the word *boitô* from around 1200 to 1400: monk in charge of the rice → the rice itself → to beg for rice.

But when it comes to apply this knowledge to the explanation of the cures for the sty, it seems to me that Yanagida and Kobayashi overlooked a valuable clue in the history of the word; as the dialect word quoted by Kobayashi "*hoidokojiki*" = beggar of *hoido* proves that the meaning "rice" represents an important stage of the semantic evolution, a stage on which the dialects have stopped in many cases.

If we remember that the sty names in the Itoigawa region were at one period represented by a name that could be written approximately *mebot*\*?, would the presence in the dialects of a *boito* = rice not easily give birth to a word *meboito*, meaning grain of rice on the eye?<sup>13</sup> It is exactly in the same way that in other valleys, the elucidation of a no longer understood *mebot*\*? gave rise to *mebasu* or to *meborô* (and even our supposed *mebobo*).

In the type of cure where one goes begging for rice, let us ask ourselves: "Why must it be rice"? And then our attention is drawn to the other cure where some agricultural implement, mostly a sieve, is half shown to the God of the Well. Here again the instrument used is a rice sieve, a rice winnow, a rice basket. These two cures cover neighboring areas on our map 2.

There is a still more important fact that was not explained. In the very last village of the Hayakawa valley, a smaller "mushroom" is drawn near the black and white circle. In that most remote locality, the cure for the sty was described as follows: "One must beg rice in three neighboring houses, without crossing the river in doing so." Therefore a taboo forbids the wearer of a sty to bring his sick eye above the God of the Water. This after all constitutes the same kind of motivation which makes one show only half the sieve to the well. And our reasoning gets a last confirmation from the fact that the most remote village of the neighboring Umigawa valley (crossing

13) A parallel which proves nothing, but has its value as a psychological hint, is found in Latin where the sty was called *bordeolus* (grain of rye on the eye) from which the French made *orgelet* (for *grain d'orge*, with the same meaning).

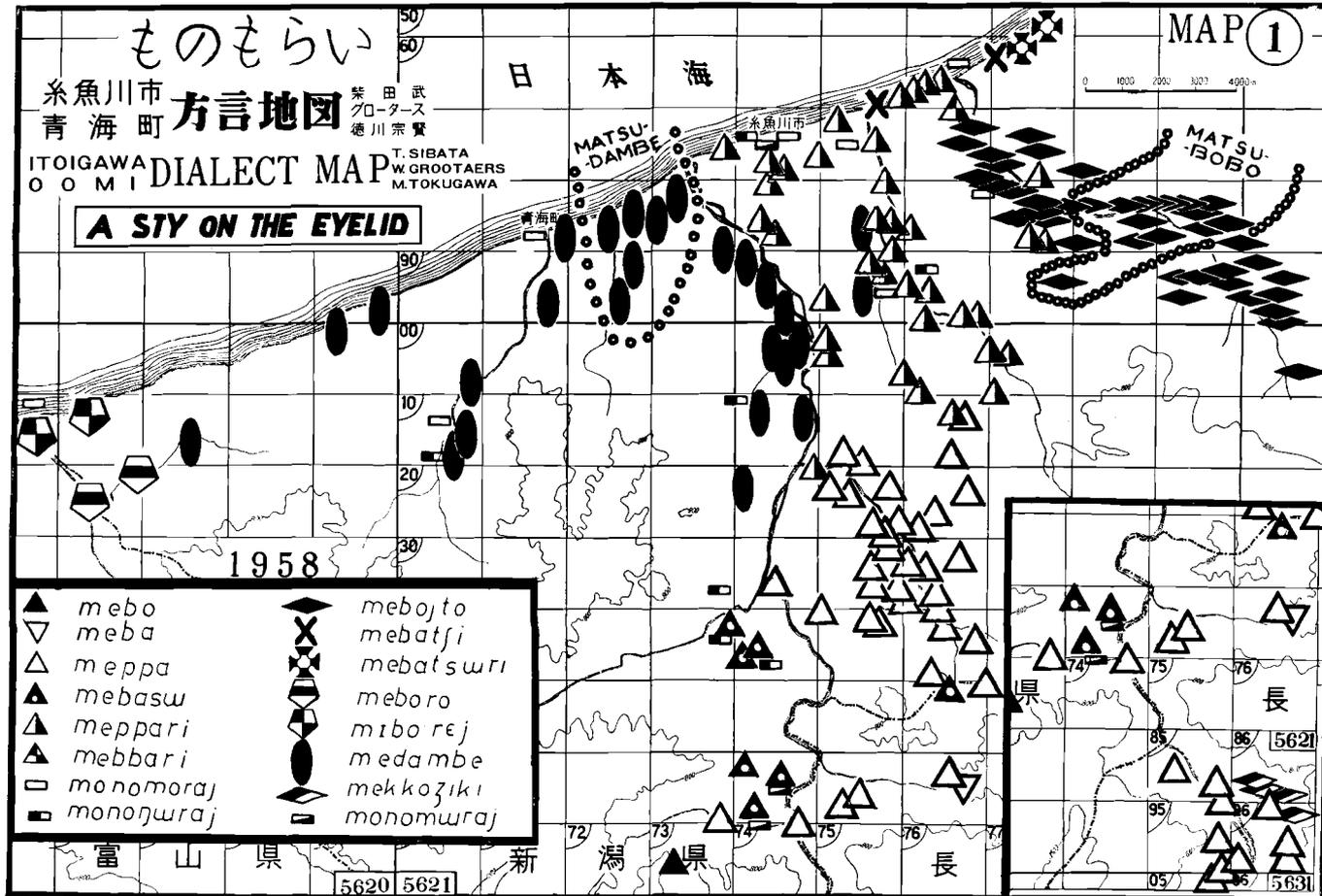
of horizontal 00 with vertical 77) gives as the formula for the cure: "One must show half a sieve to a running water, the God of the River . . .".

We may conclude that the Umigawa and Hayakawa valleys had once a similar tradition: the sty, grain of rice on the eye, made its sufferer unable to face the God of the Water; the latter had to be propitiated by the promise of a rice offering. When the word *boito*=rice changed gradually its significance, and became *boito*=beggar, the Umigawa valley had already accepted the name *meppa* or *meppari* (see map 1), but the conservative Hayakawa valley with its *meboito*=rice on the eye, could pass to the next semantic stage and interpret this word anew: *meboito*=eye beggar. Hence the type of cure followed suit, and the stress was put on the begging part, no longer on the rice.

This of course leaves open a further question: what relationship existed between the God of the Water and the rice? This of course cannot be answered with the materials of the sole Itoigawa survey.

#### *Conclusion*

We have tried for the first time to unravel the history of dialect words making full use of the whole geographical and cultural background of the local language. The results show the complexity of the factors involved, both linguistic and extra-linguistic, in a dialect change. It was made possible only because our survey covered every single human settlement in the area; in this way most of the transitory stages were found to be still in existence in some of the more remote communities, and our reconstruction found there enough corroboration for almost every stage of the evolution.



W. A. Grootaers : Etymology through maps

