

# The Subjunctive Suffix *-amasi* in Japonic

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## Abstract

In texts of Old Japanese (ca. 600 ~ 850 AD) and Early Middle Japanese (ca. 850 ~ 1200), there exists a verb suffix *-amasi* indicating approximately a subjunctive mood, with a broad range of uses. As a standalone predicate, its meanings are often described as optative and conjectural; it is also frequently used in counterfactual conditionals both in the antecedent consequent to emphasize the hypotheticality of the sentence.

In the course of this paper, I illustrate and explain the various uses of *-amasi* and its cognates throughout history, from the earliest records to the modern day. Attention will be given to the gradual shifts and specifications in meaning in the daughter varieties, as well as on the phonological & morphological changes that have resulted in the daughter suffixes having the forms that they do.

More specifically, in the major varieties of spoken Japanese, this suffix *-amasi* died out during the mid- to late Heian Period (Frellesvig 2010: p 330). However, in a small minority of other Japonic varieties, relatives of *-amasi* have remained up through more recent memory—the primary examples being in the Ryukyu islands, namely in Old and Classical Okinawan and in the Amami dialect of Kikai-jima in Kagoshima Prefecture. In addition, I aim to demonstrate that several suffixes in the Hachijō language of the southern Izu Islands are in fact ultimately derived from Old Japanese *-amasi*.

## 要旨

奈良時代の上代日本語と平安時代の中古日本語には、主に仮定法のような使い方をされる「未然形+まし」という助動詞が存在する。独立述語に付くとき、その意味は「願望」「推量」として説明されることがあり、仮想した現実を強調するために仮定条件文の前件（先行）や後件（結果）にもよく使われている。

この論文の目的は、上代から現代まで「未然形+まし」とその子孫語・同根語の意味と使用を考察して、歴史的に追跡することである。娘言語・方言の漸進的な定義上の変化や、その音韻・形態・構文にも特に重点を置いて論じる。

具体的に言えば、この「未然形+まし」は平安時代の後半に共通口語から消滅したが、少数の日琉語族の中には、この助動詞の子孫語・同根語が現代まで継承されているものもある。主な例として、『おもろさうし』の琉球古語と『琉歌』の中期沖繩語と鹿児島県にある喜界島の琉球方言がある。また、東京都伊豆諸島の八丈島方言の四つの助動詞も元々「未然形+まし」から派生したものであることも証明する。

## Abbreviations

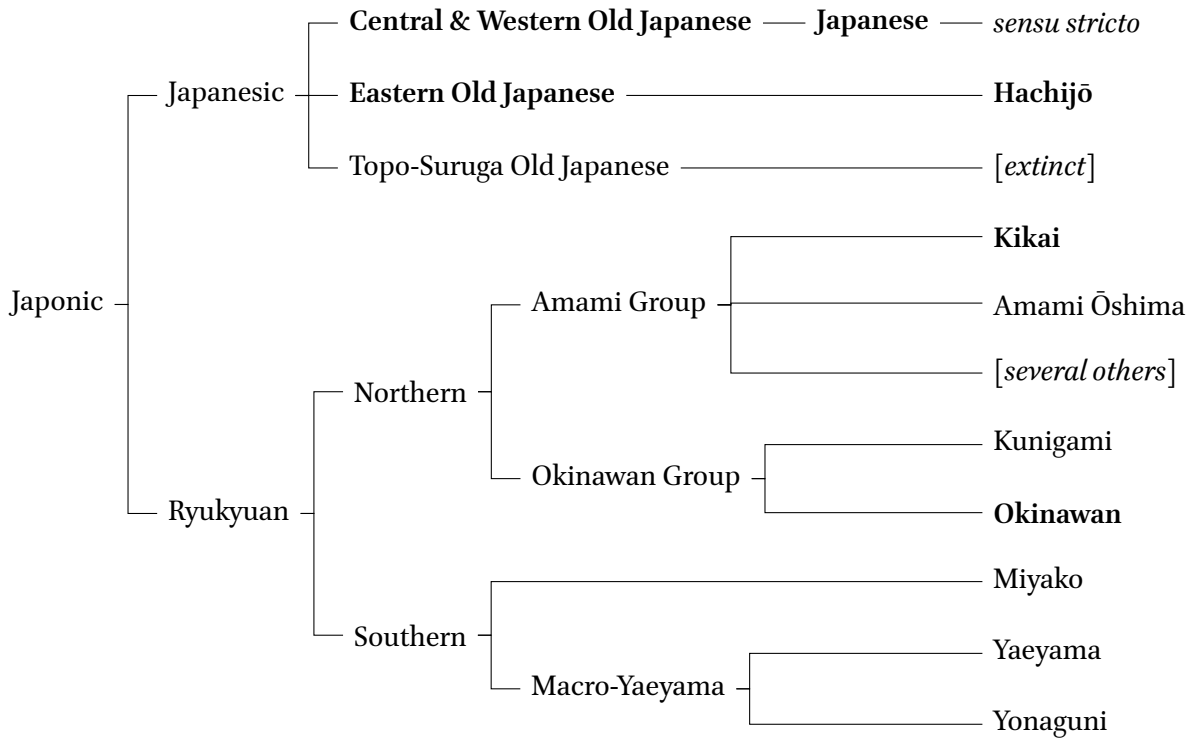
1	first person	INF	infinitive
2	second person	INTEN	intentional
3	third person	INTERJ	interjection
ACC	accusative case	ITER	iterative-frequentative
ADJ	adjective ( <i>keiyōshi</i> )	JP	Japanese-influenced form
ALL	allative case	KKMB	<i>kakari-musubi</i> (focus concord)
ATTR	attributive form ( <i>rentaikai</i> )	LOC	locative-instrumental case
CAUS	causative	MIR	mirative
COM	comitative case	NEG	negative
COND	conditional	NMLZ	nominalizer
COP	copula	NOM	nominative case
COUNT	counter word	OPT	optative
CVB	conjunctive converb	PASS	passive-spontaneous
DAT	dative-locative case	PERF	perfect
DEB	debitive-inferential	PL	plural
DECL	declarative particle	POL	polite ( <i>teineigo</i> )
DESID	desiderative	POT	potential
DIM	diminutive	PRFV	perfective
DNG	denegative (see §2.2.1)	PROG	progressive
EMPH	emphatic	PROV	provisional
EXPCT	expectational	PST	past
FILL	filler word	Q	question particle
FIN	sentence-final form ( <i>shūshikei</i> )	QUOT	quotation particle
FOC	focus marker	RETR	retrospective
FOCLZ	focalized ( <i>izenkei</i> )	SG	singular
FPT	sentence-final particle	STAT	stative extension
GEN	genitive case	SUBJ	subjunctive
HON	honorific ( <i>sonkeigo</i> )	TENT	tentative-presumptive
IMP	imperative	TOP	topic marker

# Contents

Introduction	4
Transliterations & Translations	5
<b>1 Old &amp; Classical Japanese <i>-amasi</i></b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Usage of Subjunctive <i>-amasi</i> in OJ and CJ	8
1.1.1 Counterfactual Conditional	9
1.1.2 Optative	15
1.1.3 Indecision (Debitive Question)	17
1.1.4 Tentative/Presumptive	18
1.2 Etymology	20
1.3 Extinction	21
<b>2 Hachijō <i>-ʼʼsi</i> and Derivatives</b>	<b>22</b>
2.1 Hachijō Vowel Coalescence & Dialectal Pronunciation	23
2.2 Usage of <i>-ʼʼsi</i> and Derivatives	24
2.2.1 Optative → Denegative: <i>-ʼʼsi</i>	24
2.2.2 Optative: <i>-ʼʼsunou</i>	30
2.2.3 Perfect Subjunctive: <i>-ʼʼsitar-</i>	32
2.2.4 Intentional: <i>-ʼʼsyate</i>	34
2.3 Etymology	38
2.3.1 Where did <i>-ʼʼsi</i> come from?	38
2.3.2 Etymological Conclusions	48
<b>3 Northern Ryukyuan Languages</b>	<b>48</b>
3.1 Usage of <i>-amasyi/-amaši</i> in Old/Classical Okinawan	49
3.1.1 Optative	49
3.1.2 Counterfactual Conditional	52
3.2 Usage in Kikai	52
3.2.1 Deontic (Debitive)	53
3.2.2 Epistemic (Expectational)	54
3.2.3 Counterfactual Conditional	54
3.3 Etymology: Inherited or Borrowing?	55
<b>4 Shizuoka Japanese: One More Potential Relative of <i>-amasi</i></b>	<b>55</b>
Final Comments	57
References	58

# Introduction

The objective of this paper is to describe the meaning and usage of the Old & Classical Japanese morpheme *-amasi* and its relatives across different members of the Japonic language family, including Hachijō *-ɔɔsi* and its derivatives, which I also believe to be cognates. **Japonic** is a relatively small language family spoken primarily in the Japanese Archipelago; although the exact count depends on the author and criteria, it has roughly a dozen or so languages, the largest being Japanese. A simplified tree of Japonic is given below:



*Adapted from Pellard (2016b: p 15) and Kupchik (2023: p 95). Varieties in **bold** are those described in this paper.*

In Section 1, I discuss the ‘prototypical’ *-amasi* suffix as encountered in Old & Classical Japanese, introducing its different usages, its etymology, and its gradual evolution in meaning up until its untimely demise.

Next, in Section 2, I introduce the Hachijō language of the southern Izu Islands and four suffixes found in it: *-ɔɔsi*, *-ɔɔsunou*, *-ɔɔsitar-*, and *-ɔɔsyaate*. This forms the main “core” of my objective: **I aim to demonstrate sufficient evidence that these suffixes are ultimately derived from Old Japanese *-amasi*** (in contrast to some previous hypotheses that derive them from elsewhere). Their meanings, usages, and etymologies are discussed at length.

In Section 3, I venture outside of the Japanesic branch to the Ryukyuan languages, namely the Northern Ryukyuan varieties of Old Okinawan, Classical Okinawan, and **Kikai Amami**, which also have attestations of a relative of Old Japanese *-amasi*. Following that, Section 4 contains a brief discussion of one final suffix that appears to be another relative, found in a 1910 dictionary of the Shizuoka dialect.

Lastly, my discussion ends with some final thoughts and a summary of my research on these topics, followed by my cited sources.

## Transliterations & Translations

Before beginning my discussion, I would first like to emphasize some key points regarding the romanization schemes utilized in this paper:

- Parts of words written logographically are transcribed in SMALL CAPS.
- Transliteration of excerpts written in prose may have commas, quotation marks, or other punctuation added for clarity; excerpts written in poetic form have slashes / inserted between the metric feet (typically the *tanka* feet of 5-7-5-7-7).
- Spacing or hyphens may be added between nouns & their particles for ease of reading.
- For Modern Japanese, I use Hepburn romanization for non-linguistic examples, but Kunrei-shiki romanization for linguistic examples.
- For Hachijō dialects, I use Kunrei-shiki romanization modified with ⟨ɔɔ⟩ and ⟨εε⟩ for representing /ɔ:/ and /ε:/, ⟨c⟩ for /ts/, and a circumflex ⟨ô⟩ over vowels to indicate prosodic lengthening.
- For pre-modern (Old, Middle, Classical) Japanese, I use modified Nihon-shiki romanization:
  - ⟨h⟩ is replaced with ⟨p⟩ for Old Japanese, ⟨f⟩ for Middle & Classical Japanese.<sup>1</sup>
  - Tildes are included on ⟨-ũ, -ĩ⟩ to mark historically nasal /-ũ, -ĩ/.
  - In Middle & Classical Japanese, ゑ and お (and similar) are transliterated as ⟨ye⟩ and ⟨wo⟩, rather than ⟨e⟩ and ⟨o⟩, to reflect historical pronunciation.
  - For Old Japanese *kō-ru* vs. *otsu-ru* vowels, I use subscript notation: ⟨a<sub>i</sub> i<sub>2</sub> u e<sub>1</sub> e<sub>2</sub> o<sub>1</sub> o<sub>2</sub>⟩. In addition, *mo<sub>1</sub>* and *mo<sub>2</sub>* are distinguished only in Kojiki poems, following ONCOJ (2023).
- For Old Okinawan, I use the orthography laid out Serafim and Shinzato (2021). Notably, the original text of the *Omorō Sōshi* is also replete with what appear to be commas (読点 *tōten*)—albeit of unclear meaning, as they occur far too often to represent ordinary pauses, sometimes even appearing mid-word.<sup>2</sup> These “commas” are ignored in romanization.
- For other Ryukyuan varieties, I use the orthography given in NINJAL (2001) for Classical Okinawan, but slightly modified:
  - For consonants with a plain /C/ vs. aspirated /C<sup>h</sup>/ distinction, I write ⟨C<sup>o</sup>⟩ vs. ⟨C<sup>h</sup>⟩, respectively. When there is no such distinction, I write simply ⟨C⟩.
  - I write ⟨yi, ye, wu, wo⟩ in place of ⟨i, e, u, o⟩ to better illustrate pronunciation.
  - I write all [s, ts, dz] as ⟨s, ç, z̄⟩, and [ç, tç, dz̄] as ⟨š, č, ž̄⟩.
  - I write Amami dialects’ non-front/non-palatal [i ~ ɪ ~ i] as ⟨i⟩.

Finally, the translations given for linguistic examples are my own unless otherwise noted, but frequently rephrased from or based on translations given in the cited sources.

<sup>1</sup>Regardless of the actual pronunciation in certain time periods.

<sup>2</sup>One debated hypothesis is that they may be breathing-rhythm markers for chanting (Serafim and Shinzato 2021: pp 17).

# 1 Old & Classical Japanese *-amasi*

## About Old Japanese

The term “Old Japanese” (OJ) refers to the stage of Japanese from the Asuka and Nara Periods which is ancestral to all of the modern non-Ryukyuan varieties of Japonic, i.e., the various dialects of Japanese and Hachijō. Some representative features of Old Japanese are:

- Up to eight distinct vowels ( $a\ i_1\ i_2\ u\ e_1\ e_2\ o_1\ o_2$ ) depending on the dialect, in contrast to later stages’ five-vowel system ( $a\ i\ u\ e\ o$ ). However, even in the earliest records, the eight-vowel system was already starting to collapse, with  $V_1\sim V_2$  distinctions being neutralized after many consonants (Frellesvig 2010: pp 26-35).
- The *onbin* (音便) sound changes had not yet occurred, and so there were no moraic consonants or long vowels characteristic of later stages of the language (Frellesvig 2010: 35, 191-199).
- Occasional use of very early variant suffixes such as *-ani* for the negative infinitive instead of *-azu*, *-ke<sub>1</sub>ba* for the past conditional instead of *-seba*, and (importantly for this paper) *-amaseba* for the subjunctive conditional instead of Middle Japanese’s *-amasikaba* (Frellesvig 2010: pp 69-72).
- Paradigms such as *ko-so-a-do* demonstratives and the adjective (形容詞 *keiyōshi*) inflections were still relatively new or only just coming into being (Frellesvig 2010: pp 80-93, 245-247).
- Sino-Japanese loanwords made up a comparatively small portion of the lexicon, though unsurprisingly with a higher usage in prose than in poetry (Frellesvig 2010: pp 278-282).
- Words are written entirely in Chinese characters (kanji), either logographically for their meaning, phonetically for their sound, or some mish-mash of the two; the phonetic usage is today referred to as *man’yōgana*<sup>3</sup> (Frellesvig 2010: pp 11-25).

Mainland Japanese dialects—from Hokkaidō to Kagoshima—are descended from the **Central Old Japanese** dialect group (originally from around the modern Kansai region). Somewhat confusingly, the main Central OJ variety represented in the OJ corpus—the dialect of the Imperial court around the old Yamato Province—is called **Western Old Japanese**; for nearly all intents and purposes, Western OJ can be considered the direct ancestor of both Classical and Modern Japanese.

Other OJ varieties that can be identified as distinct are **Eastern Old Japanese** around what is now the Kantō and Tōhoku regions, and **Topo-Suruga Old Japanese** around the old Tōtōmi, Suruga, and Kai Provinces; these are found largely in Books 14 and 20 of the poetry compilation *Man’yōshū*. The former of these is commonly thought to be the ancestor of the Hachijō language, as well as a substrate layer in modern Eastern Japanese (Kupchik 2011: p 9). To my knowledge, the lineage of Topo-Suruga Old Japanese is last attested in Poem #1097 of the compilation *Kokin Wakashū*, dating to the early 10th century at the latest, cf. Vovin and Ishisaki-Vovin (2022: pp 17, 281, 294, 426-427).

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<sup>3</sup>Named after the *Man’yōshū*, the largest single body of OJ literature.

Both of the non-Central/Western OJ varieties are believed to have gone extinct on mainland Japan<sup>4</sup> during the Heian period and later as Central OJ spread with the Yamato Kingdom's expansion. However, in the Izu Islands, the lineage of Eastern Old Japanese survived for far longer, developing into the ancestor of—or else a very pervasive substrate of—the Hachijō language of the southern Izu Islands, and also having major influences on the dialects of the northern Izu Islands.

## About Classical Japanese

In the Heian Period (AD 792-1185), Central/Western OJ developed into the **Early Middle Japanese** (EMJ) dialects, which in later periods developed into Late Middle, Early Modern, and Modern Japanese. Although *Late Middle Japanese* involved a major reorganization of the language's tense/aspect/mood system (Frellesvig 2010: p 326), putting it apart from other Japonic languages, *Early Middle Japanese* still kept the OJ systems essentially intact, most importantly in **Classical Japanese** (CJ), the de facto literary standard (Frellesvig 2010: p 179, 227).

Originating in the high-class writing of Heian-period writers, CJ remained the standard for written Japanese for nearly a millennium despite the divergence of the spoken word (Frellesvig 2010: pp 181, 297). Despite being replaced by a formalized Modern Standard Japanese in the late 19th/early 20th century, it is still taught as a mandatory subject in Japanese schools, and certain words, phrases, and even inflections from CJ remain in the public consciousness.

Major differences going from OJ to EMJ/CJ include:

- Collapsing of Old Japanese's eight-vowel system into five short vowels /a i u e o/.
- The *onbin* sound changes, producing the moraic “codas” /-Q -N -U -Ũ -I -Ī/; these changes also affected several verb & adjective inflections, though often optionally in the written language, with the non-*onbin*'d forms still remaining valid (Frellesvig 2010: 191-199).
  - As a phonetic side-effect, the codas /-N -Ũ -Ī/ originally caused automatic voicing of any immediately following /p t k s/ into /b d g z/,<sup>5</sup> though this automatic change stopped being effective around the Late Middle & Early Modern periods (Frellesvig 2010: pp 308-309).
- Simultaneous regularization and proliferation of various verb & adjective inflections (Frellesvig 2010: pp 232-234), often leading to many identical forms of the exact same meaning, such as a negative conditional (“if not”) being representable by *-azufa*, *-azuba*, *-azunba*, *-azu araba*<sup>6</sup>, and *-azaraba*.
- Subtle changes in the uses of certain tense/aspect markers, such as perfect/progressive *-itar-* vs. *-er-*, perfective *-in-* vs. *-ite-*, and past *-iki/-isi/-isika* vs. *-iker-*, as well as how they related to and combined with each other (Frellesvig 2010: pp 236-242).

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<sup>4</sup>With the possible exception of tiny isolated pockets such as Akiyama Hamlet (秋山郷 *Akiyama-gō*) on the Nagano-Niigata border, which as late as 1982 still preserved some peculiarities considered characteristic of Eastern OJ (Mase 1982).

<sup>5</sup>By the 16th century, this rule was known as うむの下濁る *u-mu no shita nigoru* “voice after う [or] む”, referring to the kana う and む/ん used to write /-ŭ/ and /-n/, respectively (Frellesvig 2010: pp 308-309).

<sup>6</sup>With *ar-* “to be” also being replaceable by its many honorific/humble synonyms such as *faber-* and *saūraf-*.

- With the development of kana, Japanese works written exclusively in kanji become increasingly rare over the centuries, eventually settling into more or less the modern system using kanji for content words and kana for particles and verb inflections (Frellesvig 2010: pp 157-178).

## 1.1 Usage of Subjunctive *-amasi* in OJ and CJ

In the *Ōbunsha* dictionary by Matsumura et al. (2015: pp 1182-1183), four shades of meaning are listed for *-amasi* in Old, Middle, and Classical Japanese (translations mine, boldface in the original):

1. 事実に反することを**仮に想像**する意を表す。また、その仮定の上に立った推量・意向を表す。不満や希望などの意をこめて使われる。  
 …するだろう。…したろう。もし…だったら…だっただろうに。  
 “Expresses a meaning of **supposing imaginatively** something contrary to reality. Also expresses a conjecture or intention based on that supposition. Used for meanings that entail dissatisfaction, wishing, etc.”  
 “... would do”, “... would have done”, “if ... had been ... would have been ...”
2. (「いかに」「なに」「や」などの疑問の意を表す語とともに用いて) **決断しかねる**意を表す。  
 …したものだろうか。  
 “(Used together with interrogative-denoting words like *ika ni, nani, ya*, etc.) expresses a meaning of **finding difficulty in making a decision.**”  
 “... should [I] do?”
3. **適当**の意を表す。  
 …すればよい。…だろう (か)。  
 “Expresses a **non-committal** meaning.”  
 “should be fine to do”, “maybe [it] is”
4. 単なる**推量**の意を表す。中世以後、擬古文などに多く、「む」とほとんど同じである。  
 …であるようだ。…だろう。  
 “Expresses a simple **conjecture**. Appears frequently in pseudo-classical writing from the Middle Ages [Kamakura & Muromachi periods] onwards, having largely the same meaning as *-[a]mu.*”  
 “it seems that”, “perhaps [it] is”

This is an excellent introduction into the broad range of uses for *-amasi*. However, for my own explanations, I will be enumerating the usages slightly differently:

1. counterfactual conditional (part of #1 of *Ōbunsha*):
  - (a) in antecedent
  - (b) in consequent
2. optative (part of #1 of *Ōbunsha*)



3. indecision (#2 of *Ōbunsha*)
4. tentative/presumptive (#3~4 of *Ōbunsha*)

Despite this variation, all uses of *-amasi* boil down to “hypothetical” and “subjunctive”: in conditionals, it denotes a counterfactual, i.e., that both the cause and effect are purely hypothetical; in statements of wishing, it denotes a desire for an action or state that is not actualized/actualizable at the time of speaking; in questions of indecision, it denotes a hypothetical course of action that the speaker is wondering about; and so on. For this reason, Vovin (2003: p 221) mentions other authors’ separation of the suffix’s uses into various cases, but concludes by saying “I do not see the necessity of such detailed classification, since all these meanings are secondary and are easily derived from the general meaning of subjunctive.” Similarly, in Vovin (2020a: pp 606-610), he describes Western Old Japanese *-amasi* again as merely subjunctive without further comment. While surely accurate etymologically, this terse description is decidedly unhelpful when attempting, as I am, to trace the more minute details of the uses of *-amasi* throughout time.

### 1.1.1 Counterfactual Conditional

Regardless of the language, a **conditional** is any statement that expresses that one fact’s truth or event’s actualization depends upon another’s. They are traditionally said to be made up of two parts: an **antecedent** (“if”-clause) and a **consequent** (“then”-clause). In English and Japanese, one distinguishes between various types of conditionals; the important type to consider here is a **counterfactual conditional**, where the antecedent is a condition that the speaker deems impossible, unrealizable, unrealistic—in general, opposed to reality (hence “counter-factual”). Such statements therefore state what the speaker believes would happen if the given condition were met in some hypothetical world.

In Old & Classical Japanese, one major usage of the subjunctive *-amasi* is to express this very meaning of counterfactuality in conditionals, appearing in the antecedent, consequent, or both. In my personal experience—and supported by the words of Vovin (2003: p 221)—this is by far the most common usage of the suffix *-amasi*, particularly in the consequent.

However, *-amasi* is not critically necessary for expressing a counterfactual conditional: the conditional-marking suffix *-aba* is agnostic to whether it represents a real or counterfactual condition, and a consequent’s hypotheticality can be denoted by instead using suffixes like the tentative/presumptive *-am-* (negative *-azi*) or debitive/inferential *-ube-* (negative *-umazi-*, or *-umasizi-* in OJ).

Below, I discuss the usage of *-amasi* in both antecedent & consequent separately, then cases where it appears in both.

#### Antecedent Only

To introduce a counterfactual antecedent, *-amasi* is combined with the conditional suffix *-aba*, the result of which is dependent on the time period:

- From Old Japanese up through around 1000 AD, one finds the form *-amaseba*, formed through the OJ crisis of  $*/i_1 + a/ \rightarrow /e_{(1)}/$  in  $*-amasi-aba \rightarrow -amaseba$ . Searching through the Corpus of Historical Japanese (NINJAL 2023), its latest attestation of *-amaseba* that is not from a poetry compilation is from

*Genji Monogatari* (ca. 1010), and all attestations in poetry compilations published after *Genji* are from poets born in the 10th century AD.

- Starting around the year 900 AD, one also starts to find the form *-amasikaba*. Specifically, the earliest attestations that I can find—again in NINJAL (2023)—of *-amasikaba* are from *Taketori Monogatari* (ca. 900 AD) and *Kokin Wakashū* (ca. 905-920). This means that for at least a century, both the older *-amaseba* and the newer *-amasikaba* coexisted before the latter won out.

The form *-amasika* was created by analogy with the past-tense suffix *-iki*, namely in its variation between the morphs *-isi* (ATTR) ~ *-isika* (FOCLZ), particularly in the conjugated form *-isikaba* for the provisional gerund. This pattern then spread analogously to *-amasi*, creating the new focalized form *-amasika* and conditional<sup>7</sup> *-amasikaba*.

As mentioned above, here where the consequent does not use *-amasi*, a suffix of similar tentative or inferential meaning, such as *-ube-* (ex. 1) or *-am-* (ex. 2), is used instead. Examples:

- (1) 可久婆可里 / 古非牟等可祢弓 / 之良末世婆 /  
 伊毛乎婆美受曾 / 安流倍久安里家留  
*kaku-bakari / ko<sub>1</sub>pi<sub>2</sub>mu to<sub>2</sub> kanete / siramaseba /*  
*i<sub>1</sub>mo woba mi<sub>1</sub>zu so<sub>2</sub> / arube<sub>2</sub>ku arike<sub>1</sub>ru<sup>8</sup>*  
 (Man'yōshū Book 15, Poem #3739)

*kaku-bakari / ko<sub>1</sub>pi<sub>2</sub>-m-u =to<sub>2</sub> kane-te / sir-amasi-aba / i<sub>1</sub>mo*  
 this.way-extent / love-TENT-FIN =QUOT foresee-CVB / know-SUBJ-COND / beloved.girl  
 =wo=ba mi<sub>1</sub>-zu =so<sub>2</sub> / ar-ube<sub>2</sub>-ku ar-ike<sub>1</sub>-u  
 =ACC=TOP see-NEG-INF =FOC<sub>KKMB</sub> / be-DEB-ADJ-INF be-RETR-ATTR<sub>KKMB</sub>

“If [I] had known beforehand that [I] would<sup>9</sup> love [her] this much,  
 [I] would surely never have looked at [my] beloved.” – (ONCOJ 2023: MYS.15.3739)

- (2) さる物を我も知らず。若あらしましかば、その僧の顔に似てんとぞ言ひける  
 “Saru MONO wo WARE mo SIRAZU. MOSI aramasikaba, sono SOŪ no KAFO ni NITEN,” to zo ifikeru.  
 (Tsurezuregusa Ch. 11)

*sar-u mono =wo ware =mo sir-azu / mosi ar-amasika-ba sono*  
 such.a-ATTR thing =ACC 1SG =also know-NEG.FIN / hypothetically be-SUBJ-COND that  
 soŭ =no kafo =ni ni-te-m-(u) =to =zo if-iker-u  
 monk =COP.ATTR face =DAT resemble-PRFV-TENT-FIN =QUOT =FOC<sub>KKMB</sub> say-RETR-ATTR<sub>KKMB</sub>

“[He] said, ‘Nor do I know of such a thing. If [it] were to exist, [it] would [probably] resemble that monk’s face.’” – (Wixted 2006: p 133)

Alternatively: “... If [it] exists, [it] [probably] resembles that monk’s face.”

Example 2 above shows an ambiguous case where the counterfactual nuance is irrelevant, as the speaker explicitly says that he has no knowledge of the existence or nonexistence of such a “thing.”

As a special case, ex. 3 is an instance where the consequent is entirely omitted:

<sup>7</sup>Despite looking like a provisional form, this is conditional in meaning: bare *-amasika* is always the focalized form, and *-amasikaba* is always a conditional and never a provisional (Matsumura et al. 2015: *Tebiki* p 9).

<sup>8</sup>Likely read as the contracted form *arube<sub>2</sub>karike<sub>1</sub>ru* due to the poetic meter requiring 7 syllables here.

<sup>9</sup>In the English translation, this specific ‘would’ indicates future-in-the-past tense, not subjunctive like the other ‘would’s here.

- (3) [...こそ...] この木なからましかばと覚えしか  
 [... koso ...] “kono KI nakaramasikaba” to WOBOyesika.  
 (Tsurezuregusa Ch. 11)

... =koso ... kono ki na-kar-amasika-ba =to woboye-sika  
 ... =FOC<sub>KKMB</sub> ... this tree not-ADJ-SUBJ-COND =QUOT think(PASS)-PST.FOCLZ<sub>KKMB</sub>

“... [and] I [found myself] thinking ‘If only this tree weren’t here!’” – (Wixted 2006: p 143)

The translation would make it appear that this is an optative usage of *-amasi* (cf. §1.1.2), but grammatically, it is a conditional with *-(a)ba*, and the consequent—something like “it would be better”—is understood implicitly. Still, this example is illustrative to show how these two usages of *-amasi* are very closely related.

### Consequent Only

In a consequent, *-amasi* appears as a word-final suffix, often followed by one of the particles *wo*, *mono*, or *monowo* (Vovin 2020a: pp 606-610). These are technically conjunctions with a meaning like “although”, “and yet”, “but despite that”, and so on, but in these cases they are used sentence-finally; one can imagine them implying a following clause that complements the counterfactual conditional: “if only X, then Y, [but alas, not X, and therefore not Y].” For this reason, I often gloss these particles as “alas” instead of the more literal “although.”

In these cases shown here, where only the consequent is marked with the subjunctive, the antecedent often takes the conditional suffix *-aba*; to expound, if it is a past conditional (“if I had done it”), then it often takes the combined form *-iseba* (-PST.COND) ← *\*-isi-aba* (-PST-COND), whereas a nonpast conditional (“if I were to do it”) often takes just plain *-aba*. However, *-iseba* can also be used as a ‘false past’ in nonpast conditionals, nicely parallel to English counterfactual conditionals: “If I had a car, I would go.” A false past *-iseba* can be seen in exs. 4 and 5 below, whereas in ex. 6 it denotes a true past conditional.

- (4) 家布毛可母 / 美也故奈里世婆 / 見麻久保里 /  
 尔之能御馬屋乃 / 刀尔多豆良麻之

*ke<sub>1</sub>pu mo kamo<sup>10</sup> / mi<sub>1</sub>yako<sub>1</sub> nariseba / MI<sub>1</sub>maku pori /*  
*nisi no<sub>2</sub> MI<sub>1</sub>MAYA no<sub>2</sub> / to<sub>1</sub> ni tateramasi*

(Man’yōshū Book 15, Poem #3776)

*ke<sub>1</sub>pu =mo kamo / mi<sub>1</sub>yako<sub>1</sub> =n(i)-ar-isi-aba / mi<sub>1</sub>-m-aku por-i / nisi =no<sub>2</sub>*  
 today =also EMPH / capital =DAT-be-PST-COND / see-TENT-NMLZ want-INF / west =GEN  
*mi<sub>1</sub>-(u)maya =no<sub>2</sub> / to<sub>1</sub> =ni tat-er-amasi*  
 HON-horse.stable =GEN / outside =LOC stand-PROG-SUBJ

“If [I] were in the capital today too, [I] would be standing  
 outside the Western Imperial Stables wanting to see [you].”  
 – translation verbatim from Vovin (2020a: p 609)

Example 4 above has an example of coordination of two predicates into one consequent: “I would be wanting to see you” & “I would be standing there”; the first of these, *por-i*, is marked by the infinitive *-i* to link it to the second, *tat-er-amasi*, which takes all of the tense-aspect-mood suffixes.

<sup>10</sup>Normally the particle *kamo* would trigger *kakari-musubi*, but it is suppressed on the predicate verb *=n(i)-ar-* “to be at” due to being conjugated into the conditional form.

When found in the sequence *-amasi=ya* (-SUBJ=Q), the consequent gains a shade of verbal irony or a rhetorical question (反語 *hangō*):

- (5) 山桜 / たづねざりせば / 散るを見ましや  
*YAMAZAKURA / tadunazariseba / TIRU wo MIMASI ya*  
 (Goshūi Wakashū Book 2, Poem #141)

*yama-zakura* / *tadune-zar-isi-aba* / *tir-u* =*wo* *mi-masi* =*ya*  
 mountain-cherry.blossom / visit-NEG-PST-COND / scatter-ATTR =ACC see-SUBJ =Q

“If [I] did not go to see (*lit.* did not visit) the wild cherry blossoms,  
 would [I] see [them] fall? [Of course not!]” – (Sugahara 2004: pp 59-62)

Example 6 below happens to have a syntactic inversion where the consequent is stated before the antecedent:

- (6) 多都碁母母 / 母知弓許麻志母能 / 泥牟登斯理勢婆  
*tatugo<sub>2</sub>mo<sub>2</sub> mo<sub>2</sub> / mo<sub>2</sub>tite ko<sub>2</sub>masi mo<sub>2</sub>no<sub>2</sub> / nemu to<sub>2</sub> siriseba*  
 (Kojiki Poem #75)

*tat-u* =*n(o<sub>2</sub>)-ko<sub>2</sub>mo<sub>2</sub>* =*mo<sub>2</sub>* / *mo<sub>2</sub>t-ite ko<sub>2</sub>-masi mo<sub>2</sub>no<sub>2</sub>* / *ne-m-u* =*to<sub>2</sub>*  
 stand-ATTR =GEN=rush.mat =also / hold-CVB come-SUBJ alas / sleep-TENT-FIN =QUOT  
*sir-isi-aba*  
know-PST-COND

“[I] would have brought a standing rush mat too  
 had [I] known that [I] would be sleeping [here].” – (Vovin 2020a: p 1042)

In addition to the constructions with the conditional suffix *-aba* used above, other conditional-marking expressions are also entirely valid, such as by appending the topic marker (OJ =*pa*, MJ =*fa*<sup>11</sup>) to the infinitive of an adjective (in *-ku*, ex. 7) or the negative (in *-azu*, ex. 8) or to a converb (in *-te*, ex. 9):

- (7) 鶯の / 谷よりいづる / 声なくは / 春くることを / 誰か知らまし  
*UGUFISU no / TANI yori iduru / KOWE naku fa / FARU kuru koto wo / TARE ka siramasi*  
 (Kokin Wakashū, Poem #14)

*ugufisu* =*no* / *tani* =*yori id(e)-uru* / *kowe na-ku=fa* / *faru*  
 bush.warbler =GEN / valley =from go.out-ATTR / voice not-ADJ.INF=TOP(if) / spring  
*k-uru koto* =*wo* / *tare =ka sir-amasi*  
 come-ATTR thing =ACC / who =Q know-SUBJ

“If there were no [bird-]calls coming from the valley of bush warblers,  
 who would realize that spring was coming?” – (Konishi 2010: p 263)

- (8) 人跡不在者 / 桑子尔毛 / 成益物乎  
*PI<sub>1</sub>TO<sub>2</sub> to<sub>2</sub> ARAZU pa / KUWAKO<sub>1</sub> ni mo / NARAMASI MONO<sub>2</sub>WO*  
 (Man'yōshū Book 12, Poem #3086)

<sup>11</sup>Also sometimes undergoing secondary voicing+prenasalization in Middle Japanese to become =*ba* or =*nba*.

*pi<sub>1</sub>to<sub>2</sub> =to<sub>2</sub> ar-azu=pa / kuwako<sub>1</sub> =ni =mo / nar-amasi mono<sub>2</sub>wo*  
 person =COP.INF be-NEG=TOP(if) / silkworm =DAT =even / become-SUBJ alas

“If [I] were not a person, [I] would [prefer to] become even a silkworm.” – (Vovin 2020a: p 609)

- (9) 里にては、今は寝なましものを

*SATO nite fa, IMA fa NENamasi monowo*

(Murasaki Shikibu Nikki: Kankō 5, 12th Month, 29th Day)

*sato =n-ite=fa ima =fa ne-n-amasi monowo*  
 hometown =COP-CVB=TOP(if) now =TOP sleep-PRFV-SUBJ alas

“If [this] were [my] home, [I] would certainly have fallen asleep now, but alas.”

– (Konishi 2015: p 263)

Example 9 above<sup>12</sup> shows an instance of consequent *-amasi* being preceded by a perfective *-in-* or *-ite-* (making *-inamasi* or *-itemasi*), which adds more confidence in the hypothetical conclusion, even though the whole conditional remains counterfactual: “if X were/had been the case, then certainly Y would happen/would have happened” (Vovin 2003: p 223).

Lastly, one less-understood example also occurs in Kojiki Poem #93 with an uncertain line 和加久閑爾 *wakakupe<sub>2</sub>ni*. Vovin (2020a: p 607) considers this to mark a conditional “if she were young”<sup>13</sup> and translates it as such, whilst Donald Philippi’s translation treats it as introducing a temporal subordinate clause “when [she] was young” (Philippi 1980: p 354). If Philippi’s translation is correct, then this *-amasi* marks not a conditional consequent, but rather an optative (see §1.1.2). A third option is given by ONCOJ (2023), which instead glosses it as *waka-kupe<sub>2</sub>=ni* “young-(unknown noun)=DAT”, but with no English translation. In any case, the lines in question are:

- (10) 和加久閑爾 / 韋泥弓麻斯母能 / 淤伊爾祁流加母

*wakakupe<sub>2</sub>ni / wi netemasi mo<sub>2</sub>no<sub>2</sub> / o<sub>2</sub>yinike<sub>1</sub>ru kamo<sub>2</sub>*

(Kojiki Poem #93)

*waka-kupe<sub>2</sub>ni / wi ne-te-masi mo<sub>2</sub>no<sub>2</sub> / o<sub>2</sub>yi-n-ike<sub>1</sub>r-u kamo<sub>2</sub>*  
 young-(???) / lead.INF sleep-PERF-SUBJ but.alas / get.old-PERF-RETR-ATTR<sub>KKMB</sub> EMPH<sub>KKMB</sub>

*Alexander Vovin’s translation* (Vovin 2020a: p 607):

“[I] would have brought [her with me] and have slept [with her] if [she] were young, but it turned out that [she] has become old, alas!”

*Donald Philippi’s translation* (Philippi 1980: p 354):

“When she was young / Would that [I] had slept with her– / But now she is old.”

(Bold and underlines added by me.)

## Both Antecedent & Consequent

In a good number of cases, both the antecedent and consequent utilize *-amasi*, following the usage patterns described in their respective sections above. Examples:

<sup>12</sup>And also perhaps example 10, if the conditional interpretation is correct.

<sup>13</sup>Compare/contrast the more common adjective conditional *-ku=pa* (see ex. 7), also Middle Japanese *-kuba ~ -kunba*.

- (11) 吾背兒与／二有見麻世波／幾許香／此零雪之／ 權有麻思

*WAGA seko<sub>1</sub> TO<sub>2</sub> / PUTari MI<sub>1</sub>maseba / I<sub>1</sub>KUBAKU ka / KO<sub>2</sub>NO<sub>2</sub> PURU YUKI<sub>1</sub> NO<sub>2</sub> / URESIKARAMasi*  
(Man'yōshū Book 8, Poem #1658)

*wa=ga seko<sub>1</sub> =to<sub>2</sub> / puta-ri mi<sub>1</sub>-masi-aba / i<sub>1</sub>kubaku =ka /*  
LSG=GEN beloved.boy =COM / two-COUNT see-SUBJ-COND / what.extent =Q /  
*ko<sub>2</sub>=no<sub>2</sub> pur-u yuki<sub>1</sub> =no<sub>2</sub> / uresi-k(u)-ar-amasi*  
this=COP.ATTR fall-ATTR snow =NOM / lovely-ADJ.INF-be-SUBJ

“If [I] were [able] to watch [it] together with my beloved,  
how lovely this falling snow would be!” – (Wixted 2006: p 144)

- (12) 欲和多流月尔／安良麻世婆／伊敞奈流伊毛爾／安比豆許麻之乎

*yo<sub>1</sub> wataru TUKI<sub>2</sub> ni / aramaseba / i<sub>1</sub>pe<sub>2</sub>naru i<sub>1</sub>mo ni / api<sub>1</sub>te ko<sub>2</sub>masi wo*  
(Man'yōshū Book 15, Poem #3671)

*yo<sub>1</sub> watar-u tuki<sub>2</sub> =ni / ar-amasi-aba / i<sub>1</sub>pe<sub>2</sub> =n(i)-ar-u i<sub>1</sub>mo =ni*  
night cross-ATTR moon =COP.INF / be-SUBJ-COND / home =DAT-be-ATTR beloved.girl =DAT  
/ *ap-i-te ko<sub>2</sub>-masi wo*  
/ meet-CVB come-SUBJ alas

“If [I] were the moon crossing through the night,  
[I] would come and meet [my] beloved lady at home, but alas.” – (Vovin 2020a: p 609)

- (13) 鏡に色・形あらましかば、うつらざらまし。 [...]

心にぬしあらましかば、胸のうちに若干のことは入きたらざらまし。

*KAGAMI ni IRO, KATATI aramasikaba, uturazaramasi. [...]*

*KOKORO ni nusi aramasikaba, MUNE no uti ni ZYAKKAN no koto fa IRikitarazaramasi.*

(Tsurezuregusa Ch. 235)

*kagami =ni iro katati ar-amasika-ba utur-azar-amasi / ... kokoro =ni nusi*  
mirror =DAT color shape be-SUBJ-COND reflect-NEG-SUBJ / ... heart =DAT master  
*ar-amasika-ba mune =no uti =ni zyakkan =no koto =fa*  
be-SUBJ-COND breast =GEN inside =DAT various =COP.ATTR thing =TOP  
*ir-i-k-itar-azar-amasi*  
enter-INF-come-PROG-NEG-SUBJ

“If a mirror were to have [its own] color and shape, it would not reflect. [...] If the mind were to have a master, then various [distracting] things would not be entering into the heart.”

– (Wixted 2006: p 142-143)

As example 14 below demonstrates, the antecedent and consequent need not even be in the same utterance by the same speaker:

- (14) 「さきこえたらましかばいかゞあるべかりける」とものすれば「たがへこそはせましか」とあり。

“*Sa kikoyetaramasikaba, ikaga arubekarikeru,*” to monosureba, “*Tagafe koso fa semasika,*” to ari.

(Kagerō Nikki, Part 3)

*sa kikoye-tar-amasika-ba ikaga ar-ube-kar-iker-u =to*  
 that.way hear(PASS)-PERF-SUBJ-COND how<sub>KKMB</sub> be-DEB-ADJ-RETR-ATTR<sub>KKMB</sub> =QUOT  
*mono-s-ureba tagafe =koso =fa se-masi-ka =to ar-i*  
 thing-do-PROV elsewhere =FOC =TOP do-SUBJ-FOCLZ<sub>KKMB</sub> =QUOT be-FIN

“When [I] said [to him], ‘If [you] had heard as such, what could there have been [that you could do]?’ [he] said, ‘[I] would have gone (*lit. done*) elsewhere.’” – (Wixted 2006: p 145)

...Or rather, the answerer has the antecedent *sa kikoyetaramasikaba* “If [I] had heard as such” implicitly entailed in his response, echoing the asker. In addition, note that in the asker’s sentence, the consequent’s hypotheticality is marked by *-ube-*, whereas the answerer’s sentence uses *-(a)masi*.

### 1.1.2 Optative

The linguistic term “optative” is used to describe a sentence in which the speaker expresses a wish,<sup>14</sup> and in the case of Old & Classical Japanese, the optative use of *-masi* specifically indicates an **unfulfilled** or **unfulfillable wish**. The development of this subjunctive affix to indicate such a wish—if it can be considered a “development” at all and not just a fundamental meaning—can be compared very easily to sentences like exs. 3 and 8 indicating the speaker’s preference. Compare English uses of the subjunctive to indicate a wish:

1. “Would that he could do it!”
2. “If only he could do it!”
3. “I would’ve liked for him to do it.”

Some of these can be imagined as half of a conditional—either the antecedent (1 & 2) or consequent (3)—with an implicit other half:

1. “Would that he could do it, (I would be happy).”
2. “If only he could do it, (things would be better).”
3. “I would’ve liked for him to do it (if he had been able to).”

...And the same can be imagined of these Japanese examples. However, just like in English, this is an illusion, as these sentences are really and truly independent clauses in their own right. This is in contrast to examples 3 and 14 above, which truly do have an implicit other half given by context.

Like consequents of counterfactual conditionals, these optative *-masi* can easily be imagined as implying a following clause sentence such as “but in reality, I couldn’t” and so on, which is hinted at by the usage of *mono*, *wo*, and *monowo* all meaning “but alas”, “and yet”, “however”, etc.; I suspect that in poetry, that the choice of which to use was largely determined by metrical requirements.

Examples of optative *-masi*:

<sup>14</sup>Contrast a desiderative, where the speaker merely states the existence of a wish; cf. §2.2.1 on Hachijō *-josi*, which is also an optative and not a desiderative.

- (15) 君我牟多 / 由可麻之毛能乎

*KI<sub>1</sub>MI<sub>1</sub> ga muta / yukamasi mono<sub>2</sub>wo*

(Man'yōshū Book 15, Poem #3773)

*ki<sub>1</sub>mi<sub>1</sub> =ga muta / yuk-amasi mono<sub>2</sub>wo*  
lord =GEN together / go-SUBJ(OPT) alas

“If only [I could] go together with [my] lord!” – (Vovin 2020a: p 609)

- (16) 保里江尔波 / 多麻之可麻之乎

*PoriYE ni pa / tama sikamasi wo*

(Man'yōshū Book 18, Poem #4056)

*Pori-ye =ni =pa / tama sik-amasi wo*  
Hori-bay =LOC =TOP / jewel lay.out-SUBJ(OPT) alas

“Would [that I could] cover Hori Bay with jewels!” – (Vovin 2020a: p 609)

- (17) 伊呂夫可久 / 世奈我許呂母波 / 曾米麻之乎

*i<sub>1</sub>ro<sub>2</sub>bukaku / sena ga ko<sub>2</sub>ro<sub>2</sub>mo pa / so<sub>2</sub>me<sub>2</sub>masi wo*

(Man'yōshū Book 20, Poem #4424)

*i<sub>1</sub>ro<sub>2</sub>-buka-ku / se-na =ga ko<sub>2</sub>ro<sub>2</sub>mo =pa / so<sub>2</sub>me<sub>2</sub>masi wo*  
color-deep-ADJ.INF / beloved-DIM =GEN garment =TOP / dye-SUBJ(OPT) alas

“[I] wish that [I could] dye my beloved's garment with deep colors.” – (Vovin 2020a: p 610)

- (18) その聞きつらん所にて、きとこそはよまましか

*Sono kikituran TOKORO nite, kito koso fa yomamasika.*

(Makura no Sōshi, Chapter 95)

*sono kik-it(e)-uram-(u) tokoro =nite kito =koso =fa*  
that listen-PERF-TENT-ATTR place =LOC suddenly =FOC<sub>KKMB</sub> =TOP  
*yom-amasi-ka*  
compose-SUBJ(OPT)-FOCLZ<sub>KKMB</sub>

“[I] wish [you] [had] composed [a poem] right then,

at that point when [you] seemed to be listening [to the cuckoo].” – (Wixted 2006: p 144)

- (19) 高光 / 我日皇子乃 /

萬代尔 / 國所知麻之 / 嶋宮波母

*TAKA PI<sub>1</sub>KARU / WA GA PI<sub>1</sub> NO<sub>2</sub> MI<sub>1</sub>KO<sub>1</sub> NO<sub>2</sub> /*

*YO<sub>2</sub>RO<sub>2</sub>DU YO<sub>2</sub> ni / KUNI SIRASAmasi / SIMA NO<sub>2</sub> MI<sub>1</sub>YA pa mo*

(Man'yōshū Book 2, Poem #171)

*taka pi<sub>1</sub>kar-u / wa =ga pi<sub>1</sub> =no<sub>2</sub> mi<sub>1</sub>-ko<sub>1</sub> =no<sub>2</sub> / yo<sub>2</sub>ro<sub>2</sub>du yo<sub>2</sub> =ni /*  
high shine-ATTR / 1PL =GEN sun =GEN HON-child =NOM / myriad generation =DAT /  
*kuni sir-as-amasi / Sima =no<sub>2</sub> mi<sub>1</sub>-ya =pa mo*  
land know/rule-CAUS(HON)-SUBJ(OPT) / Shima =GEN HON-house =TOP EMPH



“Ah, Shima Palace–**Would that** our Sun Prince shining on high  
**could have ruled** the land [from there] for ten thousand generations!” – (Vovin 2020b: p 171)

Serafim and Shinzato (2021: p 303) cite example 19 above, stating that the meaning of *-amasi* here is “should” or “ought to,” but due to historical context, I believe this is not quite correct: The “Sun Prince” mentioned in the poem is Crown Prince Kusakabe (AD 662-689), also known posthumously as Hinamishi<sup>15</sup>; he was the son and heir of Emperor Tenmu and Empress Jitō, but he died at age 27 before he was able to assume the throne, and this section of *Man'yōshū* Book 2 (poems 171-193) is specifically themed around the grief of his retainers (Vovin 2017: p 127-128) (Vovin 2020b: p 171). Because the idea that Prince Kusakabe would rule at all, let alone for 10,000 generations, was of course unattainable after his death, *-amasi* here is very appropriately an optative “If only!”

### 1.1.3 Indecision (Debitive Question)

At least as early as the 10th century AD (during Early Middle Japanese), a new usage of the subjunctive developed in interrogatives to denote indecision, asking the listener what should or could be done, both in direct and rhetorical questions. This can be construed as a development into a debitive meaning, albeit one only used in questions.

Examples exist both for WH-questions (nonpolar questions):

- (20) 雪降れば／木毎に花ぞ／咲きにける／いづれを梅と／分きて折らまし。

*YUKI FUREba / KI-GOTO ni FANA zo / SAKinikeru / idure wo UME to / wakite woramasi*

(Kokin Wakashū, Poem #337) – NINJAL (2023)

*yuki fur-eba / ki-goto =ni fana =zo / sak-in-iker-u / idure*  
 snow fall-PROV / tree-each =DAT flower =FOG<sub>KKMB</sub> / bloom-PRFV-RETR-ATTR<sub>KKMB</sub> / which  
 =wo ume =to / wak-ite wor-amasi  
 =ACC plum =COM / divide-CVB break-SUBJ(DEB)

“Because the snow has fallen, [white] flowers have [suddenly] bloomed on every tree<sup>16</sup>.

Which [branches] **should** [I] distinguish from plum<sup>16</sup> [branches] and **break** [off]?”

- (21) これに何を書かまし。

*Kore ni NANI wo kakamasi?*

(Makura no Sōshi, Chapter #319)

*kore =ni nani =wo kak-amasi*  
 this.thing =DAT what =ACC write-SUBJ(DEB)

“What **should** [I] write on this?” – (Konishi 2016: p 340)

- (22) 心うきものは世なりけり。いかにせまし。

*KOKORO uki mono fa yo narikeri. Ika ni semasi?*

(Tsutsumi Chūnagon Monogatari: Haizumi 13:420)

<sup>15</sup>OJ *pi namisi* “[he who] was alongside the sun.”

<sup>16</sup>There is visual wordplay here between 木毎 *ki-goto* “every tree” and 梅 *ume* “plum.”

*kokoro u-ki mono =fa yo =nar-iker-i / ika=ni se-masi*  
 heart gloomy-ADJ.ATTR thing =TOP relation =COP-RETR-FIN / how=COP-INF do-SUBJ(DEB)

“What is painful [to] [my] heart are matters of marriage.

What (*lit.* how) **should/can [I] do?**” – (Shirane 2005: p 111)

...and yes/no (polar) questions:

(23) いらへやせまし。

*Irafe ya semasi?*

(Tsutsumi Chūnagon Monogatari: Hanada no Nyōgo)

*irafe =ya se-masi*  
 answer =Q do-SUBJ(DEB)

“Should [I] give (*lit.* do) an answer [or not]?” – (Shirane 2005: p 111)

#### 1.1.4 Tentative/Presumptive

From around the Kamakura and Muromachi Periods (Late Middle Japanese) onwards, *-amasi* had disappeared from the spoken language (Frellesvig 2010: p 330), remaining only in the “pseudo-EMJ” of Classical Japanese. There, it underwent a substantial shift in meaning, being usable as if it were identical to the tentative/presumptive suffix *-am-*. The clearest examples that I have of this shift are:

(24) 水鳥の／をさきの池の／あつ氷／つひには解くる／をりもあらまし

*MIDUTORI no / Wosaki no IKE no / atugOFORI / tufi ni fa TOKURU / wori mo aramasi*

(琴後集 Kotojiri-shū – pub. 1813)

*midu-tori =no / Wosaki =no ike =no / atu-gofori / tufi =ni =fa tok(e)-uru /*  
 water-bird =GEN / Osaki =GEN pond =GEN / thick-ice / at.last =DAT =TOP melt-ATTR /  
*wori =mo ar-amasi*  
 occasion =also be-SUBJ(TENT)

“[Surely] there will be a time when at last

the thick ice in the waterfowl-pond of Osaki will melt.” – (Matsumura et al. 2015: p 1182)

(25) 行き暮れて／木の下蔭を／宿とせば／花や今夜の／あるじならまし

*YUKI-KURETE / KI no SITAKAGE wo / YADO to seba / FANA ya KOYOFI no / aruzi naramasi?*

(Heike Monogatari Book 9, Chapter “The Death of Tadanori” – circa 13th-14th c.)

*yuk-i-kure-te / ki =no sita-kage =wo / yado =to se-ba / fana*  
 go-INF-darken-CVB / tree =GEN under-shadow =ACC / lodging =COP-INF do-COND / flower  
*=ya ko-yofi =no / aruzi =nar-amasi*  
 =Q this-night =GEN / lord =COP-SUBJ(TENT)

“If [I] make the shadow of a tree [my] shelter when darkness falls,

might [its] flowers be [my] hosts (*lit.* lords) for the night, [I wonder]?”

– (Konishi 2015: p 263)

Despite this meaning being a later development, precedents can be seen in older works where *-amasi* is used in a conditional consequent that is also a (non-rhetorical) question, like ex. 7 from page 12:

- (7) 鶯の／谷よりいづる／声なくは／春くることを／誰か知らまし

UGUFISU no / TANI yori iduru / KOWE naku fa / FARU kuru koto wo / TARE ka siramasi

(Kokin Wakashū, Poem #14)

ugufisu =no / tani =yori id(e)-uru / kowe na-ku=fa / faru  
 bush.warbler =GEN / valley =from go.out-ATTR / voice not-ADJ.INF=TOP(if) / spring  
 k-uru koto =wo / tare =ka sir-amasi  
 come-ATTR thing =ACC / who =Q know-SUBJ

“If there were no [bird-]calls coming from the valley of bush warblers,  
 who would realize that spring was coming?” – (Konishi 2010: p 263)

Recall also that even in counterfactual conditionals, the use of *-amasi* was never mandatory, and other suffixes like *-am-* and *-ube-* could fill its role just fine. In other words, at the same time that these latter suffixes had taken over the role of *-amasi* in speech, the written *-amasi* was bleeding a bit back into their roles as well.

There may even be an early precedent for a similar usage in one of the Azuma Poems of *Man'yōshū* Book 14, though its interpretation is up for debate:

- (26) 等保都安布美／伊奈佐保曾江乃／  
 水乎都久思／安礼乎多能米弓／安佐麻之物能乎

*To<sub>2</sub>potuapumi<sub>1</sub><sup>17</sup> / I<sub>1</sub>nasa poso<sub>2</sub>YE no<sub>2</sub> / MI<sub>1</sub>wo tu kusi /*  
*are wo tanome<sub>2</sub>te / asamasi Mono<sub>2</sub>wo*

(Man'yōshū Book 14, Poem #3429)

*To<sub>2</sub>potuapumi<sub>1</sub> / I<sub>1</sub>nasa poso<sub>2</sub>-ye =no<sub>2</sub> / mi<sub>1</sub>wo =tu kusi / are =wo*  
 Tōtōmi / Inasa narrow-inlet =GEN / channel =COP.ATTR stick / ISG =ACC  
*tanome<sub>2</sub>-te / as-amasi monowo*  
 make.trust-CVB / shallow(?) -SUBJ alas

Vovin (2012: pp 119-120) glosses this as:

“[You] made me trust [you] [like] buoys in the channel of Inasa narrow inlet  
 [in] Tōpotuapumî, but would [you] make [your feelings] shallow?” –

Kupchik (2023: pp 164, 350) glosses this as:

“[You] made me trust [you], as [I trust] the buoys in the channel of the narrow estuary  
 of Inasa in Tōpotuapumi, even though [your feelings for me] may be shallow.”

The authors agree on the general meaning up until the last line, where they differ in their interpretation of *asamasi*. Both treat it as the subjunctive of a *hapax legomenon* verb *as-* cognate to 浅 *asa-* “shallow”, but Vovin glosses it as transitive “to make shallow,” whereas Kupchik glosses it as intransitive “to be shallow.” Their interpretations of the subjunctive in this case also differ: Vovin treats it as an isolated conditional consequent and a question (“would you do ~?”), whereas Kupchik treats it as a tentative statement (“may do ~”). In light of these difficulties, I am hesitant to make any definitive statement on the exact usage of *-amasi* employed here—and that’s assuming that the morphemic breakdown is indeed correct and the text is uncorrupted.

<sup>17</sup>Since this line is hypermetrical, it is likely that it was contracted as \**To<sub>2</sub>potapumi<sub>1</sub>* → M] *Towotaumi* → Mod] *Tōtōmi*.

## 1.2 Etymology

I believe it is likely that *-amasi* derives from the Proto-Japonic tentative *\*-am-* combined with either the Japonic adjective-forming ending *\*-asi-* or a relative of the Old Japanese suppositional *-asi ~ -urasi*. The former option is given by Serafim and Shinzato (2021: p 303), who cite linguist Yoshio Yamada as the source of the idea. As for the latter option, I have not encountered the writings of any linguist who has proposed it heretofore,<sup>18</sup> though I would be very surprised if I were the first.

### Tentative *\*-am-*

The tentative *-am-* is used in Old Japanese to represent: (1) “a general intention or inclination”, (2) a “mild or indirect imperative or suggestion”, or (3) a “supposition” or “presumption” (Vovin 2020a: pp 715-723). As far as usage goes, this third meaning of *-am-* can be used as a subjunctive consequent in a hypothetical/counterfactual conditional, just like OJ *-amasi*:

- (27) 珠爾奴久／安布知乎宅爾／宇惠多良婆／夜麻霍公鳥／可礼受許武可聞  
*TAMA ni nuku / aputi wo I<sub>1</sub>PE<sub>2</sub> ni / uwetaraba / yama POTO<sub>2</sub>TO<sub>2</sub>GI<sub>1</sub>SU / karezu ko<sub>2</sub>mu kamo*  
 (Man'yōshū Book 17, Poem #3910)

*tama =ni nuk-u / aputi =wo i<sub>1</sub>pe<sub>2</sub> =ni / uwe-tar-aba /*  
 ball =DAT pierce-ATTR / chinaberry.tree =ACC house =DAT / plant-PERF-COND /  
*yama poto<sub>2</sub>to<sub>2</sub>gi<sub>1</sub>su / kare-zu ko<sub>2</sub>-m-u kamo*  
 mountain cuckoo / be.separate-NEG-INF come-TENT-ATTR<sub>KKMB</sub> EMPH<sub>KKMB</sub>

“If [I] were to plant a chinaberry tree strung with [ornamental] balls at [my] house, the mountain cuckoos would not stay away, but come [all the time]!” – (ONCOJ 2023: MYS.17.3910)

...but *-am-* can also freely be used in non-hypothetical usage like a quasi-future tense:

- (28) 阿里佐利底／能知毛相牟等／於母倍許曾  
*arisarite / no<sub>2</sub>ti mo APAmu to<sub>2</sub> / o<sub>2</sub>mope<sub>2</sub> ko<sub>2</sub>so<sub>2</sub>*  
 (Man'yōshū Book 17, Poem #3933)

*ari-sar-ite / no<sub>2</sub>ti =mo ap-am-u =to<sub>2</sub> / o<sub>2</sub>mop-e<sub>2</sub> =ko<sub>2</sub>so<sub>2</sub>*  
 ITER-leave-CVB / afterwards =also meet-TENT-FIN =QUOT / think-FOCLZ<sub>KKMB</sub> =FOC<sub>KKMB</sub>

“[Time] passes and passes, and [I] believe that [we] will meet [again] later, too.”  
 – (ONCOJ 2023: MYS.17.3933)

...giving *-am-* a wider flexibility than the subjunctive *-amasi*.

In addition, cognates of *\*-am-* are found widely across the Ryukyus, having contracted from *\*-amu* (FIN form) to *-av* to just *-a* in modern languages; in Old Okinawan, it is used for both future/intentional, hortative, and inferential/presumptive meanings (Serafim and Shinzato 2021: pp 244-248, 303-309). These meanings are all exactly the same as the 3 listed for Old Japanese *-am-* listed above, just with slightly different phrasing.

<sup>18</sup>Vovin (2020a: pp 617-618) does use suppositional *-asi* for a different etymology, namely of OJ *-azi* (-NEG.TENT) from earlier *\*-an-asi* (-NEG-SUPP), which is what inspired my proposal here.

## Possibilities for \*-asi

According to Serafim and Shinzato (2021: pp 159-161) and their sources, the **adjective formant** *-asi-* is said to form “affective adjectives” that “express impressions and effects that things in the world have on people,” and it may have come from a verbal causative derivation, for example, *\*natuk-* “grow fond of” → *\*natuk-as-i* “causing [me] to grow fond of [it]” → *natukasi-* “fondly known, dear.” However, Frellesvig (2010: pp 90-91) says explicitly: “There is no consensus about the origin or morphological status of the formant *-[a]si-*.” He mentions the opinion (held by Serafim & Shinzato) that it is a marker of “psych adjectives,” conceding that the majority of OJ *siku*-adjectives are related to “subjective emotional states,” but he also casts doubt on whether the *-asi* is the origin of this psychological-related meaning.

According to Vovin (2020a: p 611) the function of the **suppositional** *-asi* ~ *-urasi* is to make a “conjecture, often associated with visual or other sensual perception.” He hypothesizes the more common form *-urasi* to be derived from *-asi* by incorporating an old stative-marking extension *\*-ur-* (compare the two tentatives *-am-* vs. *-uram-*). Thus, he expects the Proto-Japanese form to have been merely *\*-asi* (Vovin 2020a: p 614). Alternatively, Frellesvig (2010: pp 123-124) refers to it as “presumptive,” and he considers the form *-asi* to be a contraction of *-urasi*. (I personally am more convinced by Vovin’s argument.) However, both of these discussions stop at the Pre-OJ level, and I have found no linguistic works discussing any etymology further back in Proto-Japonic.

Nevertheless, both options for the *\*-asi* of *\*-am-asi* have difficulties due to the fact that OJ *-amasi* is an uninflected suffix. In Old Japanese, the adjective-forming *-asi-* is, of course, further conjugated as an adjective, taking endings like *-ki*, *-sa*, and *-mi*; still, when conjugated into the final form (FIN), it takes a zero suffix to become just *-asi*, so this would need to have been “frozen” as-is to become the *\*-asi* of *\*-am-asi*,<sup>19</sup> or otherwise *\*-asi*’s inflection as an adjective would need to have been a later development.<sup>20</sup> As for the suppositional *-asi* ~ *-urasi*, it is uninflected in Middle Japanese, and nearly always so in Old Japanese as well (188 occurrences out of 190)<sup>21</sup>; however, it is also used twice with the adjective ending *-ki* (ONCOJ 2023: MYS.1.13 and NSK.103), and whether this usage is conservative or a fleeting innovation is not immediately apparent. If it is conservative, then just like adjectival *-asi-*, the fact that it inflects is contrary to the non-inflecting status of *-amasi*, whereas if it is innovative, then it would boost the credibility of suppositional *-asi* contributing to *-amasi*.<sup>22</sup>

### 1.3 Extinction

The exact time period for the extinction of *-amasi* is difficult to date due to its continued post-mortem usage in Classical Japanese. However, Frellesvig (2010: p 330) estimates it to have occurred during the latter half of the Heian Period, approximately the 11th-12th centuries AD. In the Chūnagon Corpus of Historical Japanese (NINJAL 2023), the last attestations in utterances labeled as “conversation” (会話 *kaiwa*) are:

<sup>19</sup>Such “freezing” isn’t without precedent—the literary negative debitive/negative presumptive suffix *-mai* is derived from the suffix *-umazi-i* being contracted and fixed into one uninflected form.

<sup>20</sup>This seems unlikely to me, given that *\*-asi-* adjectives are present in Ryukyuan as well, showing that this adjectival derivation is likely quite old.

<sup>21</sup>Save for the suffixing of the exclamatory particle *-mo*, itself extracted from the verbal suffix *-umo*<sub>2</sub> (Vovin 2020a: pp 626-627).

<sup>22</sup>One piece of circumstantial evidence that may swing the argument in favor of suppositional *-asi* over adjectival *-asi-* is the former’s likely relationship to another non-inflecting suffix, *-azi*, discussed in footnote 18.

- two quotations from *Tsurezuregusa* – 1336 AD
- one quotation from *Amakusa Heike Monogatari* – pub. 1592 AD
- three quotations from Kyōgen plays – 1642 AD

However, *Amakusa Heike Monogatari* is an edition of the older *Heike Monogatari* (13th-14th century), and the Kyōgen plays are also quoting older works—two of the three being ex. 25, and the third quoting some old text (that I sadly cannot identify), as it is preceded by こか古歌を御ぞんじなひか *Koka wo go-zonzi-nai*<sup>23</sup> *ka?* “Do you not know the old song?” Therefore, at least based on this evidence, we can peg 1336 AD as a point in time after which *-amasi* was out of use in written conversation.

Although the loss of *-amasi* from the language was surely not purposeful, it can be at least partly explained by a loss of usefulness or relevance: *-amasi* was already not mandatory for counterfactual-conditional clauses, with other tentative/presumptive or debitive/inferential suffixes filling its role just fine (cf. §1.1.1), and *-amasi* was also not needed to express wishes, as they could be expressed by plenty of other means (Konishi 2016: pp 347-361). As such, there was at the very least no pressing “need” to keep *-amasi* around.

## 2 Hachijō *-assi* and Derivatives

### About the Hachijō Language

Hachijō is a Japonic language spoken on several distant islands in the Japanese archipelago: Hachijō-jima, Aogashima, and formerly Hachijō-kojima in the southern Izu Islands, as well as two of the Daitō Islands in Okinawa Prefecture (which were originally populated by settlers from Okinawa and Hachijō-jima). Hachijō can be subdivided into at least eight dialects based on the various villages where it has historically been spoken: Mitsune (三根), Ōkagō (大賀郷), Kashitate (檜立), Nakanogō (中之郷), and Sueyoshi (末吉) on Hachijō-jima; Utsuki (宇津木) and Toriuchi (鳥打) on Hachijō-kojima; Aogashima (青ヶ島); and the Daitō Islands (大東諸島).

Like mainland Japanese, Hachijō descends from the Old Japanese language of the Nara Period, and it is commonly hypothesized to be a surviving descendant of an Eastern Old Japanese dialect in—contrast to mainland Japanese, which is derived from Central Old Japanese (Kupchik 2011: p 7). But regardless of its exact origins, Hachijō preserves a number of grammatical features that have been otherwise entirely lost in the Japonic branch of Japanese. One of these is a family of suffixes which I argue are derived from Old Japanese *-amasi*, with various related meanings:

1. *-assi* – originally optative, later strong denial
2. *-assunou* – optative
3. *-assitar-* – perfect subjunctive
4. *-assyaate* – intentional

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<sup>23</sup>Spelled unetymologically as なひ *-nafi* here.

Each of these suffixes is described in detail in the following sections, followed by a section discussing my hypothesis deriving them from OJ *-amasi*.

The vast majority of Hachijō examples are taken from Kaneda (2001), where they are given in a mixed phonemic & broad-phonetic romanization scheme; for such examples, Kaneda’s original orthography is given in a monospace font on the first line, followed by my italicized phonemic orthography on the subsequent line. In addition, all examples are taken from the Mitsune dialect unless otherwise marked.

Before discussing the affixes in question, however, a short description of Hachijō vowels is in order:

## 2.1 Hachijō Vowel Coalescence & Dialectal Pronunciation

*This section is adapted from Kaneda (2001: pp 17-28), NLRI (1950: pp 129-136, 191-201), and Hirayama (1965: pp 178-181, 188-189). The orthography and phonemic labels of the long vowels are my own.*

With all cross-dialectal correspondences taken into account, Hachijō can be said to have five short vowels<sup>24</sup> and ten “long vowels” (long vowels and diphthongs):

- pure short /a i u e o/
- pure long /a: i: u:/
- pure diphthongs /aᵛ iᵛ oᵛ/
- variable /eᵛ ε: oᵛ ɔ:/

The ones labeled “pure” above are pronounced generally the same in all dialects, and largely as their phonemic representation implies, with only some minor additional details, e.g., /i:/ and /u:/ are usually [ji:] and [u:]. In contrast, the “variable” ones can differ dramatically between dialects:

	Kashitate	Nakanogō	Mitsune	Sueyoshi	Aogashima	Utsuki	other <sup>25</sup>
<i>ei /eᵛ/</i>	[ji:]	[ji: ~ e:]	[eᵛ]	[ji:]	[eᵛ]	[eᵛ]	[e:]
<i>εε /ε:/</i>	[ja:]	[ja: ~ ĩaʰ]	[eᵛ ~ e:]	[e:]	[e:]	[e:]	[e:]
<i>ou /oᵛ/</i>	[ɔ:]	[ɔ: ~ o:]	[oᵛ]	[o:]	[ɔᵛ]	[eᵛ]	[o:]
<i>ɔɔ /ɔ:/</i>	[ðeʰ]	[ðeʰ]	[oᵛ ~ o:]	[a:]	[o:]	[o:]	[o:]

In addition to this variety of vowels, Hachijō also has a robust system of what I call “vowel coalescence,” wherein two short vowels made to be adjacent by compounding, inflection, or suffixation frequently combine into either one long vowel or a sequence of /j/ + vowel. The typical outcomes synchronically and diachronically are:

<sup>24</sup>The long vowels can also be specially shortened in rare phonemic environments, such as in *dɔ̃nte* “because it is” being pronounced [d̃wante] in the Kashitate dialect—the typical [ðeʰ] being shortened to [wa].

<sup>25</sup>Namely the Ōkagō, Toriuchi, and Daitō Islands dialects.

	/...wa/	/...o/	/...u/	/...e/	/...i/
/a.../	/ɔ:/	/ɔ: ~ ou̯/	/ɔ: ~ ou̯/	/ɛ:/	/ɛ:/
/o.../	/ɔ:/	/ou̯/	/ou̯/	/eᵛ/	/eᵛ/
/u.../	/u:/	/u:/	/u:/	/i: ~ eᵛ/	/i: ~ eᵛ/
/e.../	/ja/	/eᵛ/	/eᵛ/	/eᵛ/	/eᵛ/
/i.../	/ja/	/jo ~ i:/ <sup>26</sup>	/ju/	/je/	/i:/

## 2.2 Usage of *-ɔɔsi* and Derivatives

Although the meanings of each of the derivatives vary, each of them attaches to verbs in the exact same way as *-ɔɔsi*: simply replace the final *...si* with *...sunou*, *...syaate*, etc. Therefore, the following table—derived from Kaneda (2001: pp 128-131)—should suffice as a summary of how these suffixes attach:

Conjugation Class	Example Word	With <i>-ɔɔsi</i>
Strong Quadrigrade	<i>kak-</i> “write”	<i>kak-ɔɔsi</i> *
Weak AW-stem Quadrigrade	<i>utaw-</i> “sing”	<i>utaw-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>utou·r-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>utɔɔsi</i>
Weak OW-stem Quadrigrade	<i>omow-</i> “think”	<i>omow-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>omou·r-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>omɔɔsi</i>
Weak UW-stem Quadrigrade	<i>sukuw-</i> “scoop”	<i>sukuw-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>sukuu·r-ɔɔsi</i>
<i>e-/i-</i> stem Monograde	<i>ke-</i> “give (me)”	<i>ke-isi</i> ~ <i>ke·r-ɔɔsi</i>
<i>εε-/ei-</i> stem Monograde	<i>kεε-</i> “change”	<i>kεε-si</i> ~ <i>kεε·r-ɔɔsi</i>
R-irregular	<i>ar-</i> “be”	<i>ar-ɔɔsi</i>
S-irregular	<i>sy-/se-</i> “do”	<i>seisi</i> ~ <i>sy-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>s-iisi</i>
K-irregular	<i>ko-</i> “come”	<i>kousi</i> ~ <i>k·ur-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>k-iisi</i>
Negative	<i>-azu/-izu</i> “(NEG.INF)”	<i>-aziisi</i> ~ <i>-iziisi</i> **
Negative	<i>-nnak(ar)-, -nzyar-</i> “(NEG)”	<i>-nnakar-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>-nzyar-ɔɔsi</i> **
Adjective	<i>waka-</i> “young”	<i>waka-kar-ɔɔsi</i>

\* Specifically for the intentional form (§2.2.4), there is also a variant *kak-iisyaate* in addition to *kak-ɔɔsyaate*.

\*\* Denegative (§2.2.1) usage only (Kaneda 2001: p 173).

Each of the four suffixes (*-ɔɔsi*, *-ɔɔsunou*, *-ɔɔsitar-*, *-ɔɔsyaate*) is discussed in its own section below, followed by a discussion on their etymologies.

### 2.2.1 Optative → Denegative: *-ɔɔsi*

Kaneda (2001: pp 198-201) lists two usages of the suffix *-ɔɔsi*, one older and one more modern: optative (願望 *ganbō*) and “ironic” (反語 *hango*). The optative usage indicates something that the speaker wishes were true or hopes will be true, whereas the “ironic” usage—for which I have decided to coin the term “denegative” (abbreviated DNG)—indicates a statement or question whose implication is strong denial, akin to English “As if I would ever do that!” Both of these usages are described in the following subsections.

<sup>26</sup>The outcome /i:/ occurs only in the Sueyoshi and Aogashima dialects.



## Optative

Kaneda (2001: pp 197-198) makes a number of key observations about this first usage of *-oosi*:

- Both *-oosi* and *-oosunou* are categorized (with denegative *-oosi*) under the broad modal category of “eagerly-awaiting-mood” (まちのぞみ法 *machinozomi-hō*), i.e., optative-like moods.
- Both *-oosi* and *-oosunou* are referred to as “optative forms” (願望形 *ganbōkei*), as opposed to the suffix *-ta-kya*<sup>27</sup>, which is referred to as a “desiderative form” (希望形 *kibōkei*).
- Both *-oosi* and *-oosunou* have both fallen out of use in favor of other expressions such as *-ta-kya*.
- The suffix *-ta-kya* is “relatively objective” (相対的に客観的な), whereas *-oosi* expresses a “stronger feeling” (より強い気持ち).
- The optatives *-oosi* and *-oosunou* always express a first-person wish (i.e. of the speaker), but the actor/subject of the action can be of any person, and the action can be either a voluntary or a non-voluntary verb.

A key distinction must be made here between an **optative**—a linguistic mood that expresses one’s desire in and of itself—and a **desiderative**—a linguistic modality that declares the *fact* that one desires something. To illustrate, English expresses the former morphosyntactically through the subjunctive mood (“If only she would love me!”), and the latter through verb + infinitive constructions (“I want her to love me”) in the indicative mood by default. From the descriptions above of Hachijō *-oosi* and *-oosunou*, it is quite clear that they are optatives and not desideratives.

Meanwhile, modern Standard Japanese expresses desideratives using the auxiliaries *〜たい -ta-i* and *〜てほしい -te hosi-i*, but lacks a dedicated morphological optative or subjunctive, so instead sentence-final particles like *なあ naa* are used to add an “emotional” character to desideratives to approximate an optative. It is for this reason that Kaneda (2001: p 198-200) translates nearly all instances of the Hachijō optatives *-oosi* and *-oosunou* into Japanese with such emotionally-marked desideratives, most often with *〜たいなあ (~tai naa* “how I want to ~!”) or sometimes with explanatory parentheticals: *〜のが楽しみだなあ (~no ga tanosimi da naa* “how I look forward to ~!”) or *〜てほしいなあ (~te hosii naa* “how I want [him/her/it] to ~!”). This again is evidence evidence clearly pointing to *-oosi* (and *-oosunou*) marking an optative, not a mere desiderative.

As for the usage of optative *-oosi*: as mentioned above, it is used to express the speaker’s (first-person) desire for an action—generally in the near future—performed by any grammatical person, and the action can be voluntary or non-voluntary without distinction. One additional restriction is that it must be used with reference to a specific time, place, or circumstance for the desired action to occur, or else with an expression of indeterminate time like *icuka* (“sometime”) in which case “sometime soon” is meant (Kaneda 2001: p 198).

Optative *-oosi* is also frequently followed by the conjunctive particle *=ga* “but”, and Kaneda (2001: p 198) states that it is more common to find it with *=ga* than without it. In examples 29 through 31 below, this *=ga* is actually used sentence-finally, which I believe hints to these sentences historically being followed by

<sup>27</sup>Borrowed and adapted from the Japanese desiderative *-ta-i*.

clauses like “but it hasn’t/isn’t/(etc.)”, though such a clause is evidently no longer syntactically necessary. Supporting this idea is example 33, which uses =*ga* as a coordinating conjunction proper.

Example 29 refers to a desire about oneself:

(29) *boŋga kureba uito dousiN nomo:siɡa:.*

*Boŋga kureba, uito dousin nomɔɔsi ɡâ.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 198)

*boN=ga kur-eba ui=to dousi=N nom-ɔɔsi =ga*  
*obon=NOM come-PROV him=COM together=DAT drink-OPT =but(FPT)*

“How [I]’d like to drink with him when Obon comes!”

...example 30, to a desire about a second-person referent:

(30) *N:ga icuka kousiɡa.*

*Nŋga icuka kousi ɡa.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 198)

*nn(u)=ga icu-ka ko-usi =ga*  
*2SG=NOM when-some come-OPT =but(FPT)*

“[I] hope you come [again] sometime soon.”

*Or:*

“May you come again sometime soon!”

...and example 31, to a third-person referent, as well as having the optative meaning be linked across two predicates using the converb *-te* (cf. example 4 on page 11):

(31) *icuka teŋkiN naqte kono kusaga meisiga:.*

*Icuka tenkin natte, kono kusaga meisi ɡâ.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 198)

*icu-ka tenki=N nar-te kono kusa=ga mei-(i)si =ga*  
*when-some good.weather=DAT become-CVB this grass=NOM burn-OPT =but(FPT)*

“[I] hope the weather gets better sometime soon [so] this grass will burn [well].”

Aside from referring to wholly future events, the optative *-ɔɔsi* can also be used to wish for the continuation of events into the future (ex. 32) or even past wishes that have just now ended up not being realized (ex. 33):

(32) *uito dousiN aro:si.*

*Uito dousin arɔɔsi.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 198)

*ui=to dousi=N ar-ɔɔsi*  
*3SG=COM together=COP.INF be-OPT*

“[I] hope [I] will [continue to] be with him/her.”

(33) *cukito dousini kusahiri: deisiga cukiwa haja dete macuno kage.*

*Cukito dousini kusahirii deisi ga, cukiwa haya dete, macuno kage.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 198)

*cuki=to dousi=ni kusu-hir-i=i de-isi =ga / cuki=wa haya*  
moon=COM together=COP.INF feces-excrete-INF=ALL **go.out-OPT** =but / moon=TOP already  
*de-te macu=no kage*  
go.out-CVB pine=GEN shadow

“How [I] wish [I] could’ve gone to defecate in the moonlight (*lit.* with the moon) [as planned], but the moon has risen [and gone] behind (*lit.* in the shade of) the pines, [so it is dark and I cannot].”

Lastly, Kaneda (2001: p 200) notes a secondary—and for me quite unexpected—usage of *-cassi*: instead of indicating a wish or desire, it is said to indicate a spontaneity of action for some strongly non-voluntary verbs like *omouwa* “think of”:

(34) N: unohitou **omo:siga**.

*NN, uno hitou omocassi ga.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 200)

*NN uno hito=o om(ow)-cassi =ga*  
ah that person=ACC **think-OPT** =but(FPT)

“Ah, [it] makes [me] think of that person.”

Or:

“Ah, [I]’m suddenly reminded of that person.”

Ex. 34 above is the only clear example of this ‘spontaneity’ meaning that Kaneda provides, though based on a certain gloss he gives in Kaneda (2004), there may be a second example:

(35) わりゃナ うとーしが でて はるやまで  
わがナ こころの はれろほど

*Warya na, utocassi ga, dete, Haruyamade. / Waga na, kokorono harero hodo.*

(Kaneda 2004: p 207, #643)

*ware=(w)a na ut(aw)-cassi =ga de-te Haruyama=de / wa=ga na*  
1SG=TOP FILL **sing-OPT** =but(FPT) go.out-CVB Haruyama=LOC / 1SG=GEN FILL  
*kokoro=no hare-ro hodo*  
heart=NOM become.clear-ATTR extent

*Kaneda (2004: p 207) translates this into Standard Japanese as:*

私は、歌わずにはいられない、春山へ行って。私の心が晴れるほどに。

*Which I translate as:*

“I can’t help but go to Haruyama and sing—to the extent that my heart becomes clear.”

Despite translating this *utocassi* as 歌わずにはいられない *utawazu ni wa irarenai* “cannot help but sing,” “have got to sing,” Kaneda then goes on to note:

|| 「うとーし (が)」 = 歌いたいなあ、という願望をあらわす形  
 || *utɔɔsi(ga)* = “how I want to sing!” – a form indicating a wish

...So it is unclear whether this should be taken as the usual optative meaning or as a ‘spontaneous compulsion’ like 歌わずにはいられない. Perhaps it is precisely usages like example 35 that have bridged the semantic gap between desiderative and spontaneous. For a similar development in meaning, compare the intentional and “imminent” meanings of the cognate *-ɔɔsyaaate* in §2.2.4.

### Denegative

Born from the usage of *-ɔɔsi* as an optative has come a second, more modern usage of this affix in sentences originally containing what is called 反語 *hango*—i.e., an expression that means the opposite of what is literally said, akin to verbal irony or a rhetorical question. In the context of Hachijō, this has been used to the effect that the wish-expression of *-ɔɔsi* has now been inverted into expression of a strong *denial* (Kaneda 2001: p 200). To succinctly refer to this newer meaning, I have chosen to coin the term **denegative**<sup>28</sup>.

When used in the first person, denegative *-ɔɔsi* expresses that the speaker cannot do or refuses to do something; given the first-person-wish limitation of optative *-ɔɔsi*, I presume this to be closest to the original *hango* usage of the optative *-ɔɔsi*. However, now that the denegative meaning has become primary, it seems to have evolved further, with the “denial of wish” meaning sometimes broadening to simply a “denial of expectation”—namely, it can be used for non-first person subjects to express the speaker’s belief that an action (past, present, or future) is unrealistic or simply not possible. It may also be the case that the latent ‘spontaneity’ meaning of optative *-ɔɔsi* (see ex. 34 above) has come to the forefront in such cases, with a meaning along the lines of “As if ~ would spontaneously occur!” originally intended.

An example of first-person reference:

(36) *ureN tanomarerja:tei aworo:si.*

*Uren tanomareryaaatei, aworɔɔsi.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 200)

*ure=N tanom-are-ryaaatei awor-ɔɔsi*  
 3SG=DAT request-PASS-even.if fan-DNG

“[I] would never fan [him] even if he asked [me] to.”

Or:

“As if [I] would fan [him] even if he asked [me] to!”

An example of third-person reference:

(37) *kono nukusani jukiga huro:si.*

*Kono nukusani yukiga hurɔɔsi.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 201)

*kono nuku-sa=ni yuki=ga hur-ɔɔsi*  
 this warm-ness=DAT snow=NOM fall-DNG

<sup>28</sup>From Latin *dēnegātus* “denied, rejected, refused.”

“Snow could never fall in this heat.”

Or:

“As if snow would [ever] fall in this heat!”

When used with an interrogative, the sentence becomes a rhetorical question whose answer is assumed to be negative:

(38) *hjaqkokute adaN koide abi:si/abiro:si.*

*Hyakkokute, adaN koide abiisi/abirōsi?*

(Kaneda 2001: p 200)

*hyakko-kute adaN koi=de abi-isi/rōsi*  
chilly-ADJ.CVB in.what.way this=LOC bathe-DNG

“[This water] is [so] cold, [I] how would [I] ever [stand to] bathe with it?!”

(→ *Implication*: “There’s no way I would ever bathe with it.”)

(39) *mate-to oshyaraba, ninenwa matoga, adani mateisi, sannenmo?*

*Mate-to oshyaraba, ninenwa matoga, adani mateisi, sannenmo?*

(Kaneda 2004: p 149)

*mat-e =to oshyar-aba ni-nen=wa mat-o =ga adani mat-e-isi*  
wait-IMP =QUOT say.HON-cond two-years=TOP wait-ATTR =but how wait-POT-DNG  
*sann-nen=mo*  
three-years=even

“If [you] told me to wait, [I] would wait for two years,

but how could [I] wait for as many as three years?”

(→ *Implication*: “I can’t wait that long.”)

Lastly, when the denegative is used on a *negative* verb, the negative and denegative “cancel out” to express a strong belief that something *is* the case. This sentiment can be expressed in English with phrasing like “Why wouldn’t X be the case?” to imply “There’s no reason why X wouldn’t be the case.” All examples that I have of this are used in rhetorical questions implying a positive answer, and all of them with the question word *ande* “why”:

(40) *aNde uiga mizi:si. mito:do:zja.*

*ANde uiga miziisi? Mitōdōzya.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 200)

*ande ui=ga mi-zu-isi / mi-ta(r)-o =da(r)-o =zya*  
why 3SG=NOM see-NEG-DNG / see-PERF-ATTR =COP-ATTR =DECL

“Why would he not look? [He] has [already] seen [it]!”

(→ *Implication*: “There’s no reason why he wouldn’t.”)

(41) *unaNse: dekiro monou aNde wareN dekizi:si.*

*UnaNseE dekiro monou ande wareN dekiziisi?*

(Kaneda 2001: p 200)

*un(u-r)a=N=sεε deki-ro mono=o ande ware=N deki-zu-isi*  
 2-PL=DAT=even can.do-ATTR thing=ATTR why 1SG=DAT can.do-NEG-DNG

“Why wouldn’t I be able to do something that even the likes of you (PL) can do?”  
 (→ *Implication*: “There’s no reason why I couldn’t.”)

- (42) アンデ カトーサンワ イカジーシ  
*Ande Katousanwa ikaziisi?*  
 (Kigawa 1980: p 86)

*ande Katou-san=wa ik-azu-isi*  
 why Katō-POL=TOP go-NEG-DNG

“Why wouldn’t Mr./Ms. Katō go?”  
 (→ *Implication*: ‘He/She has no reason not to.’)

Despite the existence of the specialized form *-aziisi/-iziisi* used in the three examples above, the denegative *-ɔɔsi* can also be attached to the regular negative auxiliary verbs *-nzyar-* and *-nnak(ar)-* with no apparent difference in meaning from *-aziisi/-iziisi* except that—at least in this single example—it used with the interrogative *adan* “how, in what way” instead of *ande* “why”:

- (43) *adaN ikiNzjaro:si.*  
*Ande ikinzyarɔɔsi?*  
 (Kaneda 2001: p 201)

*adan ik-i-nzyar-ɔɔsi*  
 in.what.way go-INF-NEG-DNG

“How could [I] not go?”  
 (→ *Implication*: “There’s no way that I wouldn’t.”)

As illustrated in all of these examples, denegative *-ɔɔsi* is not accompanied by the conjunction *=ga* as optative *-ɔɔsi* is.

## 2.2.2 Optative: *-ɔɔsunou*

The optative suffix *-ɔɔsunou* has essentially the exact same meaning as the older optative usage of *-ɔɔsi* discussed above in §2.2.1 (Kaneda 2001: p 198-199). Furthermore, it has the same usage constraints regarding a reference to a specific circumstance, or otherwise an indeterminate “sometime soon”; the main distinction is that *-ɔɔsunou* is not followed by the conjunction *=ga* and is instead used by itself sentence-finally.

Semantically, Kaneda (2001: p 198) states that *-ɔɔsi* and *-ɔɔsunou* are largely the same in meaning and can be interchanged freely, but “it seems that their subtle nuances are different” (微妙なニュアンスがちがうようである). Unfortunately, he does not elaborate on what those subtleties might be, and the examples show that indeed, it appears to be used in the same way as optative *-ɔɔsi*:

- (44) *ukude haraiqpe: kamo:sunou.*  
*Ukude hara-ippεε kamɔɔsunou.*  
 (Kaneda 2001: p 199)

*uku=de hara-ippεε kam-ᄃᄃsunou*  
there=LOC belly-fully eat-OPT

“Would that [I] [could] eat there [until I had] a full belly!”

Or:

“How [I]’d like to eat there [until I have a] full belly!”

- (45) *icuka koiga bouku narō:sunou.*

*Icuka koiga bouku narᄃᄃsunou.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 199)

*icu-ka koi=ga bou-ku nar-ᄃᄃsunou*  
when-some this.one=NOM big-ADJ.INF become-OPT

“[I] hope this [kid] gets bigger sometime soon.”

- (46) *nizju:goNciga icuka kousunou.*

*Nizyuuگونciga icuka kousunou.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 199)

*ni-zyuu-go-n(i)ci=ga icu-ka ko-usunou*  
two-ten-five-day=NOM when-some come-OPT

“If only the 25th [could] come sometime soon[er]!”

Nevertheless, taking the small handful of examples given by Kaneda (2001: pp 198-199) as my whole corpus of *-ᄃᄃsunou* sentences (which it sadly is), one small detail of difference is that optative *-ᄃᄃsi* is not attested in interrogative sentences,<sup>29</sup> whereas *-ᄃᄃsunou* is. Specifically, I have two attestations of it being used to express wondering of how long a hoped-for action will occur:

- (47) *icumade te:kou hatako:sunou.*

*Icumade tεεkou hatakᄃᄃsunou?*

(Kaneda 2001: p 199)

*icu=made tεεko=o hatak-ᄃᄃsunou*  
when=until drum=ACC hit-OPT

“Until when might [I] [be able to] play (*lit.* hit) the drum, [which I love doing]?”

Or:

“Would that [I] could play the drum [forever], [but] until when [will I really]?”

- (48) *icumade kono sigotou sjo:sunou.*

*Icumade kono sigotou syᄃᄃsunou?*

(Kaneda 2001: p 199)

*icu=made kono sigoto=o sy-ᄃᄃsunou*  
when=until this work=ACC do-OPT

“Until when might [I] [be able to] do this work [that I love]?”

<sup>29</sup>In contrast to denegative *-ᄃᄃsi*, which is still well-attested in interrogatives.

### 2.2.3 Perfect Subjunctive: *-ɔɔsitar-*

Much like how Old Japanese *-amasi* can be used for both optatives and counterfactual conditionals, Hachijō also has a counterpart of its optative *-ɔɔsi* for use in counterfactual conditionals: the suffix *-ɔɔsitar-*. Specifically, *-ɔɔsitar-* is used in counterfactual conditionals referencing a past or completed action, i.e., that if some antecedent A had occurred, then action B would have occurred (but since A did not occur, B did not). Unlike the uninflected *-ɔɔsi* and *-ɔɔsunou* above, *-ɔɔsitar-* is a fully-inflected suffix conjugated as an R-irregular verb; the inflected forms that I have encountered in texts are:

- Attributive+Declarative: *-ɔɔsitar-(o=w)a* → *-ɔɔsitara*
- Attributive: *-ɔɔsita(r)-o* → *-ɔɔsitɔ*
- Tentative+Attributive+Declarative: *-ɔɔsitar-(u)naw-o=wa* → *-ɔɔsitannouwa*
- Tentative+Provisional: *-ɔɔsitar-(u)naw-eya* → *-ɔɔsitannɛya*

I have one example of *-ɔɔsitar-* being used in a counterfactual-conditional antecedent, referring to a past perfect hypothetical condition (cf. *-taramasikaba* in ex. 14 on page 14):

(49) **nomo:sitaNne:ja uiga cju:isitara.**

*Nomɔɔsitannɛya uiga cyuui sitara.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 373)

*nom-ɔɔsitar-(u)naw-eya ui=ga cyuui s-itar-(o=w)a*  
**drink-PERF.SUBJ-TENT-PROV 3SG=NOM warning do-PERF-ATTR=DECL**

“If [I] had tried to drink, he would’ve warned [me].”

All other examples that I have of *-ɔɔsitar-* are used in counterfactual-conditional consequents, referring to past hypothetical results.

(50) **maNda:towa terebiN mainici ho:so:sari:sitaNno:wa.**

*Mandɔɔtowa terebin housou sareisitannouwa.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 373) – Sueyoshi dialect

*man =da(r)-u=to=wa terebi=N housou s-are-itar-(u)naw-o=wa*  
**now =COP-FIN=if=TOP television=DAT broadcasting do-PASS-PERF.SUBJ-TENT-ATTR=DECL**

“If [it] were [still on the air] nowadays, [it] would likely have been broadcast on television [every day].”

(51) **hara: kiqtemo umasi:sita:ga.**

*Harɔɔ kitemo, umaseisitɔ ga.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 373) – Sueyoshi dialect

*hara=o kir-te =mo um-ase-isita(r)-o =ga*  
**belly=ACC cut-CVB =even give.birth-CAUS-PERF.SUBJ-ATTR =but(FPT)**



“Even if [we’d had to] cut [her] belly [open], [we] [still] would’ve made [her] give birth, but [we didn’t have to].” (I.e., “We would’ve even done a caesarean section if necessary.”)

- (52) *nomaba moqte kousito:ni. waga jeNmo aro:te moqte kousito:ni.*

*Nomaba, motte kousitōni. Waga yenmo arōte motte kousitōni.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 373)

*nom-aba mot-te ko-usita(r)-o =ni / wa=ga ye=N=mo*  
 drink-COND hold-CVB come-PERF.SUBJ-ATTR =COP.INF / 1SG=GEN house=DAT=also  
*ar-a(r)-o=(N)te mot-te ko-usita(r)-o =ni*  
 be-PERF-ATTR=because hold-CVB come-PERF-SUBJ-ATTR =COP.INF(FPT)

“If [I] were going to drink [it], [I] would’ve brought [it]. [I]’ve even got [some] at my house, so [I] would’ve brought [it].”

- (53) *ワレダラバ カオアシトアニ*

*Waredaraba kawōsitarani.*

(Nakata et al. 1980: p 51) – Nakanogō Dialect

*ware =dar-aba kaw-ōsita(r)-o =ni*  
 1SG =COP-COND buy-PERF.SUBJ-ATTR =COP.INF(FPT)

“If I were [you], [I] would have bought [it].”

Nakata et al. (1980: p 51) specifically state that for ex. 53 above, replacing the past/perfect subjunctive *kaw-ōsitar-* with the simple past/perfect *kaw-ar-* would not be grammatically acceptable for some speakers.

The example below uses *monou*, a descendant of Old Japanese *mo<sub>2</sub>no<sub>2</sub>wo* (cf. examples 15 and 8 from Old Japanese):

- (54) *ジヨーブダララバ イコーシトモノー*

*Zyoubudararaba ikōsitaro monou.*

(Nakata et al. 1980: p 15) – Dialect Unknown

*zyoubu =dar-ar-aba ik-ōsita(r)-o monou*  
 strong =COP-PERF-COND go-PERF.SUBJ-ATTR alas

“If [I] had been healthy, [I] would have gone out.”

The past subjunctive can also be used with adverbial expressions indicating imminent-ness (like *macittode* “a little bit more” or *hara sugu* “shortly”) to refer to an event that would have happened, but was avoided last-minute:

- (55) *aga ikiNna:ba ura maciqto<sup>d</sup>e nomaro:sitara.*

*Aga ikinnaaba, ura macittode nomarōsitarā.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 373)

*a=ga ik-i-naa(r)-aba ur(e=w)a macitto=de nom-ar-ōsitar-(o=w)a*  
 1SG=NOM go-INF-NEG-COND 3SG=TOP a.bit.more=LOC drink-PERF-PERF.SUBJ-ATTR=DECL

“If I hadn’t gone [there], then just a little bit longer (*lit.* more), and he would’ve drunk [it].”

Or:

“If I hadn’t gone [there], he would’ve been about to drink [it].”

In example 55 above, the antecedent is explicit as usual, but it is also possible to have an implicit antecedent in these cases (with an meaning along the lines of “if it hadn’t been prevented/avoided”):

(56) ハラ スグ ブツカロ<sup>へ</sup>アシト<sup>へ</sup>アジャ

*Hara sugu bucarar<sup>o</sup>sitar<sup>o</sup>zya.*

(Nakata et al. 1980: p 50) – Nakanogō Dialect

*hara sugu bucarar<sup>o</sup>sitar(r)-o=zya*

already soon run.into-PERF.SUBJ-ATTR=DECL

“Before long, [I] would’ve run into [him/her/it].”

Like for example 53, Nakata et al. (1980: p 50) also state that for ex. 56, some speakers would consider it ungrammatical to replace the past subjunctive *bucarar<sup>o</sup>sitar-* with the simple past/perfect *bucarar-ar-*.

#### 2.2.4 Intentional: *-<sup>o</sup>zyaate*

The last Hachijō morpheme related to *-<sup>o</sup>si* is the suffix *-<sup>o</sup>zyaate*, which in different contexts can indicate three different meanings: an intention, a voluntary attempt, or an imminent non-voluntary action. Intentions are expressed by *-<sup>o</sup>zyaate* alone or compounded with *itte* “say-CVB” in the form *-<sup>o</sup>zyaate-tte*, while attempts or imminent action are expressed by using *-<sup>o</sup>zyaate* followed by *sy-* “do.”

“in order to” – Plain *-<sup>o</sup>zyaate*: As a plain conjunctive form, *-<sup>o</sup>zyaate* indicates roughly an adverbial/ conjunctive clause like “trying to do ~” or “in order to do X~.” In this sense, it can readily overlap in meaning with using the infinitive *-i* plus the allative *=i/=ii* or dative *=N/=ni* to indicate “in order to” (Kaneda 2001: pp 299-301). Since it expresses an intention, naturally the only examples I have of this usage of *-<sup>o</sup>zyaate* are with voluntary verbs:

(57) ome:ni kono kaso: kaso:sja:te moqte kitara.

*Om<sup>e</sup>eni kono kas<sup>o</sup> kas<sup>o</sup>zyaate motte kitara.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 300)

*ome<sup>e</sup>=ni kono kasa=o kas-<sup>o</sup>zyaate mot-te k-itar-(o=w)a*  
2SG.HON=DAT this umbrella=ACC lend-INTEN hold-CVB come-PERF-ATTR=DECL

“[I] brought this umbrella in order to lend [it] to you.”

(58) areN keisja:te gamaNsite cukuqte.

*AreN keisyaate gamaN site cukutte [...]*

(Kaneda 2001: p 300)

*are=N ke-isyaate gamaN s-ite cukur-te*  
1SG=DAT give-INTEN endurance do-CVB make-CVB

“[They] put a lot of effort into making [it] so [they] could give [it] to me, and [...]”

- (59) *ki: siqkai njo! / o: unuN kamaseisja:te siqkai nito:zja. ziNzjou kame jou.*  
 “*Kii, sikkai nyo*<sup>30</sup>!” / “*Ou, unun kamaseisyaate sikkai nitōzya. Zinzyou*<sup>31</sup> *kame you.*”  
 (Kaneda 2001: p 300)

*kii sikkai ni=o // ou unu=N kam-ase-isyaaate sikkai*  
 INTERJ quite boil.INF=ACC(MIR) // yes 2SG=DAT eat-CAUS-INTEN quite  
*ni-ta(r)-o=zya / zinzyou kam-e you*  
 boil-PERF-ATTR=DECL / much eat-IMP FPT

“Oh, [you]’ve boiled quite a lot!” /

“Yeah, [I] boiled a lot so [I] could feed [it] to you. [Now then], eat a lot!”

- (60) *jomo:sja:te oko: hoNjo katacukete.*  
*Yomōsyaate, okō hoN’yo katacukete [...]*  
 (Kaneda 2001: p 300)

*yom-ōsyaate ok-a(r)-o hoN=yo katacuke-te*  
 read-INTEN put-PERF-ATTR book=ACC put.away-CVB

“Thinking to read [it] [later], [I] put away the book that [I]’d placed [down], and then [...]”

- (61) とんじんざるめが くものエい かけいしゃーて  
 あっちゃん こっちゃん はしりみく  
*Tonzinzarumega kumonoyei kakeisyaate accyan koccyan hasirimiku.*  
 (Kaneda 2004: pp 210-211)

*tonzinzaru-me=ga kumonoye=o kake-isyaate accya=N koccyaN hasir-i-mik-u*  
 spider-DIM=NOM spiderweb=ACC hang-INTEN thither=DAT hither=DAT run-INF-walk-JP.FIN

“The spider runs around hither and thither to build a web.”

It can also be followed by the topic marker =*wa*:

- (62) *takou haro:sja:tewa haja:kukara takei kiqte waqte amade karasite.*  
*Takou harōsyaatewa, hayākukara takei kitte, watte amade karasite [...]*  
 (Kaneda 2001: p 300)

*tako=o har-ōsyaate=wa haya-ku=kara take=o kir-te war-te ama=de*  
 kite=ACC put.up-INTEN=TOP early-ADJ.INF=from bamboo=ACC cut-CVB split-CVB ceiling=LOC  
*karas-ite*  
 dry-CVB

“[Because I was] planning to put up a kite, from the early [hours of the morning] [I] cut [some] bamboo, split [it], [hang it] from the ceiling to dry, and then [...]”

<sup>30</sup>Here, the accusative marker =*o* is used as a mirative: “My, what ~ing!” This usage is described in Kaneda (2001: pp 238-241).

<sup>31</sup>Despite resembling Japanese 尋常 *zinzyo* “ordinary,” this word means “much” in Hachijō.

“in order to” – Compounded *-ɔɔsyaate-tte*: According to Kaneda (2001: pp 299-301), combining *-ɔɔsyaate* with *itte* (the converb form of *yowa* “says”) creates a form similar in meaning to bare *-ɔɔsyaate* but with “slight differences in nuance” (若干のニュアンスのちがひ), although without explaining what those nuances are. He also emphasizes that although it comes from a verb meaning “say,” this compound does not actually implicate speaking, being used merely like an auxiliary.

As far as examples go, I see no meaningful difference between bare *-ɔɔsyaate* and the compounded *-ɔɔsyaate-tte*:

- (63) taNgou **oro:sja:teqte** tosjeijo somacuN suna.

*Tangou orɔɔsyaate-tte, tosyeyo somacUN suna.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 300)

*tango=o or-ɔɔsyaate-(i)w-te tosyeyi=yo sumacu=N s-una*  
*tango=ACC weave-INTEN-say-CVB work=ACC crude=COP.INF do-NEG.INF*

“[When] aiming to weave *tango*<sup>32</sup>, don’t do [your] work<sup>33</sup> crudely.”

- (64) sorei dousitemo waga jadagarou murijariN **nomaseisja:teqte** kikiNnaka.

*Sorei dou sitemo waga yadagarou, muriyarin nomaseisyaate-tte kikinaka.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 300)

*sore=o dou s-ite=mo wa=ga yadagar-o =o muriyari=N*  
*that=ACC how do-CVB=even 1SG=NOM show.hate-ATTR =ACC(but) forcibly=CVB.INF*  
*nom-ase-isyate-(i)w-te kik-i-nnak-(o=w)a*  
*drink-CAUS-INTEN-say-CVB listen-INF-NEG-ATTR=DECL*

“No matter how much I show [that I] hate it, [he]–

trying to make [me] drink [it] by force–does not listen.”

“to try to” – Compounded *-ɔɔsyaate sy-*: When used with a verb indicating a voluntary action, the construct *-ɔɔsyaate + sy-* “do” indicates that the subject is/was/will be attempting to perform the action. Similarly to Japanese *-ō to suru*, it frequently carries the implication that the attempt was unsuccessful:

- (65) ヤメー ノボローシャーテシヨ トキニ アメガ フッテキタラ

*Yameɛ noborɔɔsyaate*<sup>34</sup> *syo tokini amega hutte kitara.*

(Kigawa 1980: p 87) – Ōkagō Dialect

*yama=i nobor-ɔɔsyaate sy-o toki=ni ame=ga hur-te k-itar-(o=w)a*  
*mountain=ALL JP.climb-INTEN do-ATTR time=DAT rain=NOM fall-CVB come-PERF-ATTR=DECL*

“When [I] tried to climb the mountain, [it] started raining.”

<sup>32</sup>Fine silk cloth dyed yellow with *Arthraxon hispidus* (Hachijō *kariyasu*), typically with a striped or checkered pattern. The cloth is known in Standard Japanese as 黄八丈 *ki-hachijō* “Yellow Hachijō.”

<sup>33</sup>The word *tosyeyi* used here for “work” is from Sino-Japanese 渡世 *tosei* “livelihood.”

<sup>34</sup>This *nobor-* is a loan from Japanese; the native Hachijō cognate is *nubur-* (Iannucci 2019: pp 214-215).

(66) **tomaro:sja:te site aro** kurumaN.

*Tomarɔɔsyaate site aro kuruman*

(Kaneda 2001: p 372)

*tomar-ɔɔsyaate s-ite ar-o kuruma=N*  
stop-INTEN do-CVB be-ATTR car=DAT

“[I crashed] into a car that was trying to stop.”<sup>35</sup>

However, it need not always carry the implication of failure:

(67) kiribaNi nosete houcjoujo **ateisja:te suto** sono momowa soiga maqputacuN  
buqjakarete.

*Kiriban’ii nosete houcyouyo ateisyaate suto, sono momowa soiga mapputacun buccyakarete [...]*

(Kaneda 2001: p 372)

*kiribaN=ii nose-te houcyou=yo ate-isyaaate s-u-to sono momo=wa*  
cutting.board=ALL load-CVB kitchen.knife=ACC hit-INTEN do-FIN=if that peach=TOP  
*soi=ga maQ-huta-cu=N buccyak-are-te*  
that.one=NOM EMPH-two-COUNT=DAT split-PASS-CVB

“If [you] put [it] on a cutting board and try hitting it with a knife, that peach will split right in half by itself, [and...]”

“to be about to” – **Compounded -ɔɔsyaate sy-**: When used regarding non-voluntary actions, instead of “trying to”, the construction *-ɔɔsyaate sy-* instead means “about to.” Kaneda (2001: p 372) notes that this is the same meaning as the construction *-te kakatte arowa* (lit. “is hanging on doing”). In addition, unlike with voluntary verbs, using *-ɔɔsyaate sy-* on non-voluntary verbs does not carry any implication of failure.

All of the examples I have collected of this meaning are used in the phrasing *-ɔɔsyaate site arowa*, with *-ite arowa* indicating a progressive, perfect, or otherwise stative meaning, very much akin to Japanese *～ている ~te iru* (Kaneda 2001: pp 206-209, 218-222):

(68) kanokiga **kareisja:te site arowa**.

*Kanokiga kareisyaate site arowa.*

(Kaneda 2001: p 372)

*kanoki=ga kare-isyaaate s-ite ar-o=wa*  
mulberry.tree=NOM wither-INTEN do-CVB be-ATTR=DECL

“The mulberry tree is going to wither [soon].”

(69) 死又アーシャーテシテアロワ

*sinɔɔsyaate site arowa.*

(NLRI 1950: p 323) – Dialect Unknown<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Kaneda lists this example under the section of voluntary actions with *-ɔɔsyaate sy-*, implying that here the car is being used as a metonym for the driver, the one actually doing the “trying to stop.” However, if Kaneda is mistaken, one could also interpret this as an imminent action: “a car that was about to stop.” It even matches the pattern *-ɔɔsyaate site ar-* used for all of the imminent-action examples.

<sup>36</sup>Based on the transcription 又ア – <nwā> for /nɔ:/, it is likely the Nakanogō or Kashitate dialect.

*sin-ɔɔsyaate s-ite ar-o=wa*  
 die-INTEN do-CVB be-ATTR=DECL

“[He] is about to die.”

(70) マニ (マン) 起キーシヨアテシテアロワ

*Mani/Man okiisyaate<sup>37</sup> site arowa.*

(NLRI 1950: p 407) – Dialect Unknown

*man(i) oki-isyaate s-ite ar-o=wa*  
 now awaken-INTEN do-CVB be-ATTR=DECL

“[He] is about to wake up now.”

In example 70 above, the transcription of *okiisyaate* by 起キーシヨアテ is slightly odd, implying a pronunciation like [oki:ɕoate] instead of [oki:ɕate], as if it were *\*okiisyɔte* and pronounced in the Nakanogō or Kashitate dialect. Nevertheless, since the source of this utterance is early modern, from 1909 (NLRI 1950: p 407), this discrepancy can likely be chalked up to any number of reasons like a simple transcription error, mishearing, or speaker idiosyncrasy.

## 2.3 Etymology

### 2.3.1 Where did *-ɔɔsi* come from?

According to Kaneda (2001: pp 128-129, 198), the optative meaning of *-ɔɔsi* is the older one, and he says it is “quite possible” (ほぼ可能である) that it comes from the *mizenkei* (“irrealis stem”) form of the verb followed by *hosi-* “wanted”; he hypothesizes that it may be related to the OJ construction of infinitive *-i + posi-* “wanted” and/or the periphrastic construction *-am-aku posi-* (“-TENT-NMLZ wanted-,” the source of the Early Middle Japanese desiderative *-amafosi-*<sup>38</sup>). However, both of these have a litany of etymological issues (discussed below), and in an endnote, he himself concedes that the latter proposed etymology has problems:

ただし、古代語ではホシは連用接続、否定は未然接続であって、否定が連用接続であるこの方言がちょうど逆転していることになってしまい、整合性がとれない。

–Kaneda (2001: p 404, note 6)

“However, in the ancient language, [*posi*] follows the infinitive (*ren'yōkei*), and negatives the irrealis stem (*mizenkei*), so this would be quite the opposite to this dialect [Hachijō] wherein negatives follow the infinitive, so one cannot get consistency.”

That is, since even negatives have switched from the “irrealis stem” to the infinitive, it would be inconsistent for *-posi-* to switch from the infinitive to the “irrealis stem.”

<sup>37</sup>The initial /o/ is spelled logographically with 起, but it's hard to make out that this *o* is indeed small-caps.

<sup>38</sup>This won out in EMJ over other similar constructions: OJ *-am-aku por-i-s-* (-TENT-NMLZ want-INF-do-), and EMJ *-am-u=to foss-* (-TENT-FIN=QUOT want.do-).

In addition, the so-called *mizenkei* or irrealis stem is not a true “stem” or morpheme at all, a fact stated outright by Frellesvig (2010: pp 111-112, 117)–who always segments it as part of the verbs itself, but acknowledges that it comes from the suffixes–and implicitly by Vovin (2020a)–who always segments it as part of the suffixes (as I do). Therefore, I see no compelling reason why one should expect *-posi-* to have suddenly become attached to this “stem.”

And so, while I put my full faith in Kaneda on the meaning and usages of *-ㇿㇿし*, I believe that his hypotheses relating it to constructions like OJ *-amaku posi-* (or MJ *-amafosi-*), or even 欲し *posi-* “wanted” at all, are mistaken. Meanwhile, according to Kupchik (2024: p 2), the late Alexander Vovin had noted in a personal communication that he thought *-ㇿㇿし* came (or might have come) from the OJ suppositional *-asi* (~ *-urasi*), though I believe this is also incorrect. Instead, I argue here that **the Old Japanese subjunctive *-amasi* is a better fit both phonologically and semantically for the etymon of Hachijō *-ㇿㇿし* and its derivatives.**

The issues to address for deriving Hachijō *-ㇿㇿし* from any etymon are as follows:

1. How did the etymon find its way into Proto-Hachijō?
2. What sound changes led to the etymon becoming *-ㇿㇿし* (and allomorphs)?
3. What morphosyntactic changes, if any, occurred between the etymon and *-ㇿㇿし*?
4. What semantic changes, if any, occurred between the etymon and *-ㇿㇿし*?
5. How were the other morphemes *-ㇿㇿsunou*, *-ㇿㇿsitar-*, and *-ㇿㇿsyaate* derived from *-ㇿㇿし*?

Note that Issues 1 to 4 are concerned with the origins of *-ㇿㇿし* itself, whereas Issue 5 concerns the derivation of the other related morphemes thence. All of these issues are discussed individually at length in the following pages.

### 2.3.1.1 How did the etymon find its way into Proto-Hachijō?

Considering first Vovin’s suggestion of OJ *-asi* ~ *-urasi* as a potential origin of *-ㇿㇿし*, the suffix does indeed exist in Eastern Old Japanese (Kupchik 2023: pp 351-352), so it is possible that it could have survived in the unattested period afterward into Hachijō. In addition, unlike in WOJ where *-asi* is only attested after R-irregular verbs and *nar-* “to become” (Kupchik 2023: p 351), in Azuma Old Japanese, the allomorph *-asi* appears 4 out of the 5 times that the suffix occurs after normal quadrigrade verbs (*-urasi* appearing only once). However, outside of this proposed connection to *-ㇿㇿし*, there is no evidence for the continued existence of the suffix *-asi* from EOJ to Hachijō.<sup>39</sup> Thus from an attestation standpoint, *-asi* fares about the same as my proposed *-amasi* (see below).

Next, if we consider the proposal of Kaneda (2001) relating Hachijō *-ㇿㇿし* to OJ *-am-aku posi-*, then I believe we must accept one of two possibilities:

- (A) Hachijō *-ㇿㇿし* is a direct descendant of EOJ *\*-am-aku posi-*.
- (B) Hachijō *-ㇿㇿし* is descended from a loan of EMJ *-amafosi-* into Post-EOJ/Proto-Hachijō.

<sup>39</sup>Modern Hachijō has no separate reflex of it, as the suffix *-rasi-kya* (Kaneda 2001: p 393) is doubtlessly borrowed from the mainland, as *-rasi-i* is a Modern Japanese innovation (Frellesvig 2010: pp 395-396) (Konishi 2015: p 255).

Both options would imply some eventual contraction/reduction to get to Hachijō *-ɔɔsi*, but they differ in when and where it happened: Option A would imply that all sound changes occurred within Post-EOJ/Proto-Hachijō, whereas Option B would already take care of the first sound change of WOJ *-am-aku posi-* into EMJ *-amafosi-* before being borrowed into Hachijō, and then some further reductions would have occurred to make modern *-ɔɔsi* from that (see §2.3.1.2 below for further discussion of sound changes). What’s more, if we take Option A, then we run into non-insignificant issue that this putative Eastern Old Japanese *\*-am-aku posi-* is not attested at all, being exclusive to Western Old Japanese (Vovin and Ishisaki-Vovin 2022) (ONCOJ 2023). Given the paucity of the EOJ corpus, this does not necessarily mean the construction did not exist, but it requires a leap of faith to assume that it did.

Of these two, Option B appears to be the more likely one... Yet a much simpler solution exists: deriving *-ɔɔsi* from OJ *-amasi*, which is attested four times<sup>40</sup> among the Azuma dialects of books 14 and 20 of the *Man’yōshū* (Kupchik 2023: pp 350-351), one of them being example 17 on page 16. Admittedly, this is a very low sample count, but it is at least higher than the 0 examples of *\*-am-aku posi-* in Azuma Old Japanese dialects.

### 2.3.1.2 What sound changes led to the morpheme becoming *-ɔɔsi* (and variants)?

Starting with Vovin’s OJ suggestion of suppositional *-asi* (~ *-urasi*), this clearly has the wrong vowel. Even if the /a/ were lengthened by an irregular change, we would expect Hachijō *\*\*-aasi* / *\*\*-uraasi* on quadrigrade verbs and *\*\*-si* / *\*\*-raasi* on all monograde verbs, yet the only one that actually exists is *-si* on long-vowel monograde verbs with stems in /ɛ:/ or /eɪ/, which only exists due to a shortening of the regular allomorph *-isi* to avoid a triphthong (Kaneda 2001: p 129). Granted, there are a handful of words where two /a/s across word boundaries have coalesced into /ɔ:/<sup>41</sup> (Kaneda 2001: p 21), but this is an exception, as contraction of /ara/ → *\*-aa/* in verbs regularly leads to /a:/, not *\*\*/ɔ:/*, e.g. *ar-a(r)-aba* → *araaba* (be-PERF-COND “if there were”). Furthermore, there is no evidence that the sound change *\*-aa/* → /ɔ:/ has ever occurred mid-morpheme (as would be the case here). Therefore, I believe there is sufficient reason to reject OJ *-asi* as the etymon of Hachijō *-ɔɔsi* on these grounds alone.

Considering next the potential etymon *\*-amafosi-*, its expected reflex in Modern Hachijō would be *\*\*-amɔɔsi-* via the regular sound change of *\*a{f;w}o* → /ɔ:/ . This is obviously distinct from *-ɔɔsi*, though my preferred *-amasi* fares no better: its expected reflex would be simply *\*\*-amasi*. The case is even worse for a hypothetical EOJ *\*-amaku posi-*, which—if not already contracted into *\*-amafosi-* like in EMJ—would need to elide its *\*-ku/* as well.<sup>42</sup> Once it did however, the end result would presumably be the same *\*-amafosi-*. Clearly, all options are in need of some way to be “rid” of their /m/ phonemes.

One option for a putative *\*-amafosi-* to lose its /m/ might have been to simply remove the tentative/presumptive affix *\*-am-* (which it etymologically contains) from it, leaving just *\*-afosi-* to become Hachijō

<sup>40</sup>Twice from Tōtōmi Province (Topo-Suruga OJ), once from Musashi Province (EOJ), and once from an unknown province.

<sup>41</sup>Namely in the three words *hadɔɔsi* (*\*hada-asi*) “barefoot”, *Masɔɔsei* (*Masa-asei*) “Big Brother Masa”, *Kumɔɔsei* (*Kuma-asei*) “Big Brother Kuma.” The latter two examples show that this is a productive change when adding *-asei* “big brother” to people’s names ending in /a/.

<sup>42</sup>Still, there is some evidence that may or may not be usable to argue in favor of such a shared contraction: Kupchik (2011: pp 644-645) formerly argued that such a contraction of this same *-aku* morpheme may have occurred in *Man’yōshū* 14.3461, namely of *\*ko<sub>2</sub>naku ni* to 許奈尔 *ko<sub>2</sub>na ni* “not coming.” However, he has since changed his opinion on the topic, instead explaining it as an example of the negative attributive *-(a)n-a* (Kupchik 2023: p 358). [My deepest apologies to Dr. Kupchik for mis-representing his position in an earlier version of this paper.]



-*ɔɔsi*. However, this does not seem promising because (A) there is no evidence to suggest that Japanese *-amafosi-* was ever<sup>43</sup> seen as a composite suffix, and (B) the removal of a tentative/presumptive-marking morpheme like *-am-* would surely be motivated by a removal of such a meaning from the suffix—yet in fact no such semantic change is seen in Hachijō *-ɔɔsi*. Rather, if anything, the opposite seems to be the case:

- As shown by the usage examples, Hachijō optative *-ɔɔsi* and *-ɔɔsunou* are generally used with wishes that are about tentative future events, and frequently with a hint of unattainability bolstered by their use with *=ga* “but.”
- Removal of a tentative/presumptive meaning is incongruous with the subjunctiveness of the perfect subjunctive *-ɔɔsitar-*.
- Removal of a tentative/presumptive meaning is incongruous with the intentional/predictive meaning of *-ɔɔsyaate*.

The idea of extracting *\*-am-* from *-amasi* (which may etymologically contain it, cf. §1.2) also runs into the same semantic issues, as well as the simple fact that the resulting *\*\*-asi* would not have become Hachijō *-ɔɔsi* by regular sound change (see my counterargument to the suppositional *-asi* above).

Discarding then the idea of removing *\*-am-* from the etymon, another possibility is the weakening of *\*/m/* → *\*/w/* in an intermediate stage. For the options we are considering, this would then result in:

- *\*-amafosi* → *\*-awawosi* → either *\*-ɔɔwosi* or *\*-awɔɔsi* → *-ɔɔsi*
- *-amasi* → *\*-awasi* → *-ɔɔsi*

...with the unclear result of *\*-awawosi* into *\*-ɔɔwosi* or *\*-awɔɔsi* being dependent on which vowel coalescence took precedence—though in either case, one could conceivably imagine the near-triphthong *\*/ɔ:wo/* or *\*/awɔ:/* reducing into the */ɔ:/* of *-ɔɔsi*. So, these hypothetical sound changes for *\*-amafosi* could explainably lead to Hachijō *\*-ɔɔsi*... yet the option *-amasi* → *\*-awasi* → *-ɔɔsi* is clearly more direct.

As for why one would even consider such a change of *\*/m/* → *\*/w/* —although it is not a regular sound change, it is already reconstructed for a handful of Hachijō morphemes, so it is already an option when considering etymologies:

- In the word *yɔɔmo* “wax myrtle”, cf. Japanese *yamamomo* (Kaneda 2001: pp 21, 404):  
*\*yamamomo* → *\*yawanmo* → *\*yɔɔnmo* →<sup>44</sup> Hachijō *yɔɔmo*
- In the concessive suffix *-edou* “although” (Kaneda 2001: pp 23, 114, 124):  
Old Japanese *-e<sub>2</sub>do<sub>2</sub>mo<sub>2</sub>* → *\*-edowo* → Hachijō *-edou*.
- In the futile-conditional suffix *-yaatei* “even if” (Kaneda 2001: p 111):  
Old Japanese *-i<sub>1</sub> ar-ite mo<sub>2</sub>* → *\*-i attewo* → *\*-yattei* →<sup>45</sup> *-yaatei*

<sup>43</sup>That is, after the contraction *-am-aku posi-* → *-amafosi-* was completed.

<sup>44</sup>The final step contracting *\*/ɔ:n/* → */ɔ:/* is to avoid a trimoraic (superheavy) syllable, cf. the exact same contraction that occurs in the Mitsune dialect: *doɔ=nte* (=COP=because) → *doɔte*.

<sup>45</sup>An irregular change of a long vowel /a:/ to a short vowel + geminate /aQ/.

- In the tentative suffix *-unaw-* (Kaneda 2001: pp 24, 114-115):  
Eastern Old Japanese *-unam-o=pa* → *\*-unawo=wa* → Hachijō *-unouwa*
- In the volitional suffix *-ou*, if not borrowed from the Japanese volitional *-ō*:  
Eastern Old Japanese *\*-amu* → *\*-a(w)u* / *\*-awo* → Hachijō *-ou*.
- In the provisional suffix *-ya*, there was a similar sound change of intervocalic /b/ to /j/:  
Old Japanese *-e<sub>2</sub>ba* → *-eya<sup>46</sup>* → *-ya*.

This explains the origin of the morph *-ɔɔsi*, and from the tendency of monograde verbs and K-irregular verbs to add /r/ and /ur/ to the end of their stems (respectively), this also explains the forms *-rɔɔsi* and *kurɔɔsi*. However, this still leaves monograde verbs' allomorph *-isi*, S-irregular *seisi*, and K-irregular *kousi* yet unexplained.

Fortunately, these allomorphs can all be explained by a combination of further regular sound changes and analogical/paradigmatic leveling from *-(a)masi* → *\*(a)wasi*:

### Inflectional Changes from *\*-awasi* to *-ɔɔsi* (and variations)

For quadrigrade (*yodan*) verbs and R-irregular verbs, the changes are fully regular:

1. *-amasi* → *\*-awasi*
2. *\*-awasi* → *\*-ausi* – regular rounding/backing in *\*/awa/* (Kaneda 2001: pp 21)
3. *\*-ausi* → *-ɔɔsi* – regular vowel coalescence (Kaneda 2001: pp 23-24)

For K-irregular verbs, there is some leveling:

1. *ko-masi* → *\*ko-wasi* – possible lost intermediate state
2. *\*ko-wasi* → *\*ko-usi* – by analogy from quadrigrade & R-irregular verbs' change of vowel
3. *\*ko-usi* → *kousi* – regular vowel coalescence (Kaneda 2001: p 23)

For lower bigrade (*shimo nidan*) verbs and S-irregular verbs, there is similar leveling:

1. *...e-masi* → *?\*...e-wasi* – possible lost intermediate state
2. *?\*...e-wasi* → *\*...e-usi* – by analogy from quadrigrade & R-irregular verbs' change of vowel
3. *\*...e-usi* → *...e-isi* – regular vowel coalescence (Kaneda 2001: p 22)

For upper bigrade (*kami nidan*) and monograde (*kami ichidan*) verbs, leveling must have happened at some later date, after the establishment of the morph *-isi* as above:

1. *...i-masi* → *?\*...i-wasi* – possible lost intermediate state
2. *?\*...i-wasi* → *?\*...i-usi* – possible lost intermediate state

<sup>46</sup>This intermediate form is attested directly in Kaneda (2004)–namely in *akereya* “when it brightens” (p. 79) and *okireya* “when [my baby] awakens” (p. 258). It is also present underlyingly in weak W-stem quadrigrade verbs: *\*omow-eya* → *omeiya*.

3. ?\*...*i-usi* → \*...*i-isi* – by analogy from lower bigrade verbs' leveling to *-isi*

For verbs of these types whose stems came to end in a long vowel /ε:/ or /eḷ/ due to vowel coalescence, such as OJ *kape<sub>2</sub>*- “change” → Hachijō *kεε*-, the *-isi* form is shortened to *-si* to avoid a triphthong: \**kεε-isi* → *kεε-si* (Kaneda 2001: p 129).

Next, S-irregular verbs undergo their known conjugation reshuffling to sy-irregular verbs, which are conjugated similarly to S-stem quadrigrades but with a stem consonant of /sj/ instead of /s/. This creates the new form *sy-ᵛᵛsi* in free variation with the older *seisi*. Furthermore, as mentioned above, across nearly non-quadrigrade conjugation classes (and after the bigrade-monograde mergers), there is a pattern of “R-conversion” where /r/ or /ur/ is added to the end of a verb stem, enabling it to take R-quadrigrade endings:

- weak AW-stem quadrigrades gain the variation ...*awᵛᵛsi* ~ ...*ou·r-ᵛᵛsi*
- weak OW-stem quadrigrades gain the variation ...*owᵛᵛsi* ~ ...*ou·r-ᵛᵛsi*
- weak UW-stem quadrigrades gain the variation ...*uwᵛᵛsi* ~ ...*uu·r-ᵛᵛsi*
- *e*-stem and *i*-stem verbs gain the variation *-isi* ~ *-·r-ᵛᵛsi*
- *εε*-stem and *ei*-stem verbs gain the variation *-si* ~ *-·r-ᵛᵛsi*
- K-irregular verbs gain the variation *kousi* ~ *k·ur-ᵛᵛsi*

As a special case, at least some weak AW-stem and OW-stem quadrigrades also gain a variant where the *-ᵛᵛsi* contracts with the stem itself, partially overwriting it: *omow-ᵛᵛsi* → *omᵛᵛsi* (“think” see ex. 34 on p. 27) and *utaw-ᵛᵛsi* → *utᵛᵛsi* (“sing”, see ex. 35 on p. 27).

As another special case, the negative infinitive *-azu* ~ *-izu* is combined with the allomorph *-isi* to create *-aziisi* ~ *-iziisi*. This form is in apparent free variation with the regularly-formed *-nzyar-ᵛᵛsi* from Hachijō’s negative auxiliary verb *-nzyar-* (see example 43 on page 30). In addition, based on the tables in Kaneda (2001: pp 128-131), there is also a form *-nnakar-ᵛᵛsi* for the other negative auxiliary *-nnak(ar)-*, although I have no usage examples for this form.

Lastly, specifically for the intentional suffix (INTEN, see §2.2.4), quadrigrade verbs that normally take *-ᵛᵛyaate* can also take the allomorph *-iisyaate* (Kaneda 2001: pp 130, 372), possibly from leveling of the monograde verb allomorph *-isyaate* and attaching it to the infinitive, cf. how *-isi* attaches to the negative infinitive *-azu* ~ *-izu* to make *-aziisi* ~ *-iziisi*. A similar change occurred in the Sueyoshi and Aogashima dialects<sup>47</sup> for K-irregular and S-irregular verbs for all *-ᵛᵛs\_*-type morphemes, creating the forms *kiisi* and *siisi* respectively, cf. Kaneda (2001: p 128-131).

As a result, these are all of the possible variations in modern Hachijō:

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<sup>47</sup>These dialects also show the idiosyncratic vowel coalescence of \*/io/ to /i:/ (when attaching the accusative =o) as opposed to the /jo/ of all other Hachijō dialects, cf. the table in §2.1.

Conjugation Class	Example Word	With <i>-ɔɔsi</i>
Strong Quadrigrade	<i>kak-</i> “write”	<i>kak-ɔɔsi</i> (~ INTEN <i>kak-iisyaate</i> )
Weak AW-stem Quadrigrade	<i>utaw-</i> “sing”	<i>utaw-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>utou·r-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>utɔɔsi</i>
Weak OW-stem Quadrigrade	<i>omow-</i> “think”	<i>omow-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>omou·r-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>omɔɔsi</i>
Weak UW-stem Quadrigrade	<i>sukuw-</i> “scoop”	<i>sukuw-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>sukuu·r-ɔɔsi</i>
<i>e-/i-</i> stem Monograde	<i>ke-</i> “give (me)”	<i>ke-isi</i> ~ <i>ke·r-ɔɔsi</i>
<i>εε-/ei-</i> stem Monograde	<i>kεε-</i> “change”	<i>kεε-si</i> ~ <i>kεε·r-ɔɔsi</i>
R-irregular	<i>ar-</i> “be”	<i>ar-ɔɔsi</i>
S-irregular	<i>sy-/se-</i> “do”	<i>seisi</i> ~ <i>sy-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>s-iisi</i>
K-irregular	<i>ko-</i> “come”	<i>kousi</i> ~ <i>k·ur-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>k-iisi</i>
Negative	<i>-azu/-izu</i> “(NEG.INF)”	<i>-aziisi</i> ~ <i>-iziisi</i>
Negative	<i>-nnak(ar)-, -nzyar-</i> “(NEG)”	<i>-nnakar-ɔɔsi</i> ~ <i>-nzyar-ɔɔsi</i>
Adjective	<i>waka-</i> “young”	<i>waka-kar-ɔɔsi</i>

Thus, *-ɔɔsi* and all its allomorphs can be explained directly from  $^{*}(a)masi \rightarrow ^{*}(a)wasi$ . Although similar arguments could be made for  $^{*}(a)mafosi \rightarrow ^{*}(a)wawosi$ , they would require additional steps even just to get to the morph *-ɔɔsi*, let alone the allomorphs *-isi* and the irregular *kousi* and *seisi*. For this reason, Occam’s Razor would prefer starting with  $^{*}(a)masi \rightarrow ^{*}(a)wasi$  instead.

### 2.3.1.3 What morphosyntactic changes, if any, occurred between the etymon and *-ɔɔsi*?

Synchronically, Hachijō *-ɔɔsi* is an uninflected verbal suffix that can conclude a sentence by itself without needing one of the declarative particles =*wa* or =*zya*, and without making use of the final-marking morpheme *-u/-ru* (FIN). It is not used in attributive or relative clauses, but it can be followed by the conjunctive/emphatic particle =*ga* “but” which otherwise follows the attributive forms of verbs & adjectives. It thus stands to reason that for any proposed etymon, there should be some explanation for how *-ɔɔsi* ended up with this morphosyntactic situation.

Starting first with EMJ *-amafosi-*, it is an extension that is further conjugated as a *siku*-type adjective, making its final form *-amafosi* (zero suffix) and its attributive form *-amafosi-ki* ~ *-amafosi-i*. However, in Hachijō, the adjectival attributive is *-ke* (inherited from EOJ), so we would expect it to be adapted into Hachijō with the attributive form  $^{**}amafosi-ke$  for the attributive; compare how the debitive *-ube-* was given the Hachijō adjectival form *-ube-kya* ( $^{*}ube-ke=wa$ ). Assuming contraction occurred as described in §2.3.1.2 above, this would have yielded a Hachijō attributive  $^{**}ɔɔsi-ke$  and declarative  $^{**}ɔɔsi-kya$ . Since these adjectival forms do not in fact exist for *-ɔɔsi*, we would have to assume that at some point  $^{*}amafosi-$  was “frozen” in its final (FIN) form  $^{*}amafosi$  prior to being attested in the modern era.<sup>48</sup> This is contrary to the entire pattern of verb & adjective development in Hachijō, where attributive forms have consistently won out over final forms, with the latter being replaced by the combination of the attributive + declarative particles (=wa, =zya).

(An equivalent argument as above can be repeated in full for the OJ construction *-amaku posi-*, so it has the exact same issues that need no repeating here.)

<sup>48</sup>Compare similar difficulties with postulating the adjective-deriving suffix *-asi-* as an etymological component of *-amasi*, discussed on page 21.

In contrast, OJ *-amasi* is already an uninflected suffix just like *-ɔɔsi*, only changing shape when compounded with the conditional *-aba* to make *-amaseba*. The later inflected forms *-amasika* (focalized) and *-amasikaba* (newer conditional) were only developed in EMJ (cf. §1.1.1), after the purported separation of Hachijō from mainland Japanese. Thus, the fact that Hachijō *-ɔɔsi* is also an uninflected suffix is in full agreement with OJ *-amasi*.

As discussed at length in §1.2, OJ *-asi* ~ *-urasi* was almost always uninflected, and it is always uninflected in the Azuma Old Japanese corpus, aside from being followed by the exclamatory *-mo*<sup>49</sup>. Therefore, it too agrees in its non-inflection-ness with Hachijō *-ɔɔsi*. However, its phonological problems (see §2.3.1.2 above) and semantic problems (see §2.3.1.4 below) make it an unlikely candidate for the etymon, in my eyes.

#### 2.3.1.4 What semantic changes, if any, occurred between the etymon and optative *-ɔɔsi*?

Firstly, let us lay out the meanings of the three etyma under consideration: *-asi*, *-amaku posi-* / *-amafosi-*, and *-amasi*. Naturally, whichever of these is the source of *-ɔɔsi* (and derivatives) must have some semantic path from its ancestral form to that of Hachijō *-ɔɔsi*.

Frellesvig (2010: pp 85, 123-124) describes OJ *-asi* ~ *-urasi* as “presumptive” and translates it as “presumably” or “seems” without further comment. Similarly, Kupchik (2023: p 351) translates it as “seems” or “must” (in epistemic meaning), and he quotes Vovin (2020a: pp 611-617), who describes it as denoting “a conjecture, often associated with visual or other sensual perception,” translating it variously as “probably”, “seems”, “looks like”, “is likely to”, and once as “should”; his examples also illustrate how it can be used regarding any person. For a differing wording of the same idea, Konishi (2015: pp 254-255) describes Early Middle Japanese *-urasi* as indicating a presumption (推量 *suiryō*) that the speaker is particularly strongly confident in, indicating that he/she has some grounds or reason to suspect such (and that for that reason, it is not used with question particles like *ya* or *ka*). This idea of confident conjecture does not connect very well to the Hachijō optative *-ɔɔsi*.

Next on the docket is *-amaku posi-* / *-amafosi-*, which—as I will illustrate—is a desiderative, not an optative. Konishi (2016: pp 347-361) discusses the various ways of expressing people’s wishes Classical Japanese, and he contrasts subjunctive-meaning expressions using the tentative suffix *-am-u* (which can have a subjunctive meaning) with *-(a)mafosi*, stating that the latter may cause friction in conversation due to its bluntness. Oda (2020: p 186) describes *-amafosi-* as being capable of indicating one’s desires about oneself or about another. Both writers consistently translate the morpheme with Modern Japanese *～たい* *-ta-i* and *～てほしい* *-te hosi-i*. In addition, Ono quotes a passage from *Ōkagami* where both the desire-er and desire-ee are second-person:

(71) もしまことに聞こしめしはてまほしくは、駄一疋を賜はせよ。

*Mosi makoto ni kikosi-mesi-fatemafosiku fa, da ippiki wo tamafaseyo.*

(Ōkagami) – Oda (2020: p 186)

*mosi makoto=ni kikos-i-mes-i-fate-mafosi-ku =fa da*  
 if truth=CVB.INF hear.HON-INF-HON-INF-finish-DESID-ADJ.INF =TOP(if) packhorse  
*iq-fiki =wo tamaf-ase-yo*  
 one-COUNT =ACC give.HON-CAUS(HON)-IMP

<sup>49</sup>See footnote 21 on page 21.

“If [you] truly want to hear [it] to completion (*lit.* want to finish hearing [it]), then please give [me] one packhorse.”

Here, both the desirer and the person who wants to hear the “it” are the same person—the addressee of this sentence. The speaker’s desire is not entered into the meaning whatsoever, and there is no quotation particle after it to indicate a direct quote of someone else enunciating their desire, but rather, it is directly made into a conditional with =*fa*. Thus, this is clearly a desiderative—indicating the idea of a person’s wish—because if it were optative, then not only would the speaker’s desire be included in it, but it would also be rather nonsensical with the imperative in the following clause: “If only you would want to hear it to completion! ...then give me one packhorse.”

An argument could likely be made that I am splitting hairs here, as both optatives and desideratives express desires. Still, my objectives in making this lengthy point are (1) to illustrate that *-amafosi-* is not identical in meaning or usage to Hachijō optative *-ᵛᵛsi*, and (2) to indirectly show how *-amafosi-* has no subjunctive-ness, making it a poor match for the purely subjunctive derivative *-ᵛᵛsitar-*.

Lastly, as laboriously explained in §1.1.2, the OJ subjunctive *-amasi-*—when not used in a counterfactual conditional—is used to indicate an optative, directly expressing the speaker’s wish. Thus, no semantic shift is required to go from OJ *-amasi* to Hachijō *-ᵛᵛsi*. The optative *-ᵛᵛsunou* is no different in meaning, so it is also taken care of semantically by OJ *-amasi*. Similarly, the perfect subjunctive *-ᵛᵛsitar-* is perfectly explainable as exactly the expected combination of a subjunctive *-ᵛᵛsi* (← *-amasi*) and a perfect *-itar-*. Nevertheless, the intentional *-ᵛᵛsyaate* is a rather different beast, and its connection to the others is more tenuous. I discuss its potential etymology in the following subsection.

To summarize, both *-asi* and *-amaku posi-* / *-amafosi-* would have to undergo semantic changes in order to gain the meaning of the Hachijō optative *-ᵛᵛsi*, whereas OJ *-amasi* would not. From optative *-ᵛᵛsi*, it would require only the well-attested shift to an ironic/rhetorical-question usage (cf. §2.2.1) to become the denegative *-ᵛᵛsi*, or the suffixing of one of Hachijō’s *-unaw-* morphemes to make *-ᵛᵛsunou*. As for *-ᵛᵛsitar-*, the fact that it is subjunctive is also a point for OJ *-amasi*.

### 2.3.1.5 How were the other morphemes *-ᵛᵛsunou*, *-ᵛᵛsitar-*, and *-ᵛᵛsyaate* derived from *-ᵛᵛsi*?

Regardless of how *-ᵛᵛsi* developed, we must also consider how it may have been that Hachijō derived from it the optative *-ᵛᵛsunou*, perfect subjunctive *-ᵛᵛsitar-*, and intentional *-ᵛᵛsyaate*. I consider the etymologies of each of these in the following paragraphs.

#### OPTATIVE *-ᵛᵛsunou*

The optative *-ᵛᵛsunou* can be transparently derived from a contraction of *-ᵛᵛsi* (in its older optative meaning) and one of Hachijō’s two *-unaw-* morphemes—one of which is tentative, and the other emphatic. As for which *-unaw-* morpheme is involved, Kaneda (2001: p 129) argues that it is the emphatic one, not the tentative one, on the basis of *-ᵛᵛsunou* not taking the declarative =*wa* or =*zya*. In any case, the two morphemes have identical conjugated forms, and here etymologically it would be conjugated into the old final (FIN) form *-unou*: *-ᵛᵛsi + -unaw-u → -ᵛᵛsunou*.

The only other sticking point is the unexplained disappearance of any segment corresponding to the /i/ in *-ᵛᵛsi*. Had its two components *\*-oosi-unou* been merely concatenated, one would have expected the /i+u/

to concatenate into /ju/ to yield *\*\*-ɔɔsyunou* instead of *-ɔɔsunou*, whereas if *\*-unou* had attached as it does to *i*-stem verbs, it would have become *\*\*-ɔɔsinou* or *\*\*-ɔɔsirunou*. Therefore, I believe that the lack of /i/ or /j/ is due to analogy with other verbs such as S-stem quadrigrades and S-irregular verbs, which append *-unou* to make *...sunou* and not *\*\*...syunou*.

#### PERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE -ɔɔsitar-

Assuming that *-ɔɔsi* does indeed descend from OJ *-amasi*, then *-ɔɔsitar-* is transparently a compound of a subjunctive and the perfect-marking suffix *-itar-*, forming a perfect subjunctive—precisely the sum of its parts. It is curious that the suffixes combined in this order; given that *-ɔɔsi* was historically a word-final suffix, I would have expected the order *\*\*-itar-ɔɔsi* instead. Nevertheless, recall that the non-inflecting OJ *-amasi* too could unexpectedly take a suffix, namely *-aba* to make *-amaseba*, so perhaps we should not be too surprised.

#### INTENTIONAL -ɔɔsyaate

The intentional *-ɔɔsyaate* seems to be of less clear origin than the above two derived forms, but it appears to also contain *-ɔɔsi* followed by one or more morphemes. Because it is readily followed by *iw-* “to say,” (or at least a relic thereof, cf. §2.2.4), it would appear that the final /te/ component of *-ɔɔsyaate* is the quotative particle *=te*, which would imply that the length of the preceding /a:/ could be the normal result of Hachijō’s common pre-quotative lengthening (Kaneda 2001: pp 391-392). This leaves *\*-ɔɔsya=te* as a promising candidate for a proto-form.

As for the morphemic breakdown of this *\*-ɔɔsya*, it might be contracted from *\*-ɔɔsi=wa* (-OPT=DECL), making *-ɔɔsyaate* originally a quoted declaration: “[thinking] that (=te) I would like to (*-ɔɔsi=wa*).” The major stumbling block here is that, to my knowledge, *-ɔɔsi* has never been attested with a following declarative *=wa*, so this proposed etymology of mine necessarily presumes that it was historically allowed (yet never attested). Nevertheless, the fact that *-ɔɔsi* can be followed by the conjunction *=ga* (which attaches in the same way as *=wa*) is circumstantial evidence that this hypothetical historical attaching of *=wa* is not an entirely unreasonable conjecture.

As for why the quotative *=te* would be included semantically in this suffix, it can easily be explained as a way to “de-personalize” the first-person-ness of the optative by quoting someone else’s thoughts. For example, optative *ik-ɔɔsi* by itself can only mean “Would that I could go!” but by quoting someone else’s thoughts, it can be made into that person’s putative desire: *ik-ɔɔsi-te, urya* [...] “[Thinking] ‘Would that I could go!, he [...]’” From there, it takes only a semantic weakening of the quotational nuance to get to an intentional meaning: *-ik-ɔɔsyaate, urya* [...] *\*\*“Wanting to go, he [...]”* → “In order to go, he [...]”

Nevertheless, it is also possible (albeit contrary to my opinion) that this suffix is derived not from *-ɔɔsi* at all but rather from some other construction. One potential option is the Middle Japanese intentional *-aũ* to *s-* ~ *-aũz*<sup>50</sup> “to be going to do, to make efforts to do,” which would at least align loosely with the /ɔ:s/ of *-ɔɔsyaate*.

<sup>50</sup>Also appearing as *-amu* to *s-*, or with *n*-onbin as *-an* to *s-* and *-anz-*.

### 2.3.2 Etymological Conclusions

Overall, it is curious that further suffixes would have attached to (a proto-form of) *-ɔɔsi* to make derivatives, since it is a non-inflecting suffix, but again, we do have historical counterexamples that occurred with *-amasi* in Old and Middle Japanese, creating the forms *-amaseba*, *-amasika*, and *-amasikaba*.

Be that as it may, I hope all of the evidence that I have gathered above serves as sufficient proof that Old Japanese *-amasi* is a worthy candidate for the original etymon of Hachijō *-ɔɔsi*, the most clear evidence being (1) that it is a non-inflecting suffix and (2) that it and its derivatives all preserve pieces of the original subjunctive & optative meanings of *-amasi*. Other supporting evidence includes that there is an explainable path from *-amasi* to an intermediate *\*-awasi* to the various allomorphs of *-ɔɔsi* like *-(i)si* and *-(u)ɾɔɔsi*.

## 3 Northern Ryukyuan Languages

### About the Northern Ryukyuan Languages

The broad group of Okinawan and Amami dialects comprise what are called the **Northern Ryukyuan** languages, part of the Ryukyuan branch of the Japonic language family. As such, although these languages descend from Proto-Japonic just like mainland Japanese, their more immediate ancestor Proto-Ryukyuan split apart from Proto-Japanese some time before the 7th or 8th century AD (Pellard 2016a: p 20); refer to the family tree on page 4 for a diagram of this split.

Pellard (2016b: pp 15-20) divides the Northern Ryukyuan languages into “Okinawan” and “Amami” clusters: the dialects termed “Okinawan” are those spoken on Okinawa’s main island Okinawa-hontō as well as the surrounding islands of Okinawa and Kagoshima Prefectures, whereas “Amami” dialects are those spoken on island of Amami Ōshima in Kagoshima Prefecture and the nearby islands. Three Northern Ryukyuan varieties are discussed in this section: **Old Okinawan**, **Classical Okinawan**, and **Kikai**:

- **Old Okinawan** is the stage of the Okinawan language attested in the *Omoro Sōshi*, a text compiling many ritualistic songs and chants from the 12th to early 17th centuries AD.
- **Classical Okinawan** is the former written standard of Okinawan used in *Ryūka* poetry, most of it written in the 17th to 19th centuries AD.
- **Kikai** is a part of the Amami group and refers to the modern dialects spoken on the island of Kikai-jima in Kagoshima Prefecture, located roughly 25 kilometers due east of Amami Ōshima.

Despite Old and Classical Okinawan both having a relative of OJ *-amasi*, the suffix has apparently not survived into Modern Okinawan (Vovin 2020a: p 610).

The orthographies of Ryukyuan languages in general are a messy hodgepodge of historical spelling, pseudo-Japanese spelling, and modern phonetic & phonemic spelling. In the Old Okinawan *Omoro Sōshi*, words are spelled in hiragana largely as they were pronounced before the shifting of Proto-Ryukyuan *\*e, o* → *i, u* and the monophthongization of sequences like *\*aje* → *e:*, most voiced syllables are not marked by *dakuten*, and there are what appear to be random commas (、) inserted inexplicably all over the text, sometimes even



mid-word. *Ryūka* poetry is similar: words are written largely as if they were their Japanese cognates—such as つれて <tsurete> for *çiriti* /*tsiriti*/ in example 77 on page 51—even though they are meant to be read aloud in Okinawan pronunciation. In these cases, I quote the commentaries in publications such as Nishioka (1998), Serafim and Shinzato (2021), and NINJAL (2001) for what these Okinawan pronunciations actually were.<sup>51</sup>

In contrast, the orthography employed by Nishioka (1998) for the Kikai language is nicely transparent, as there is no centuries-old literary tradition to interfere with writing things as-pronounced. However, because I find Nishioka’s romanization style visually displeasing—such as capital letters <TKC> for unaspirated consonants—as well as incongruous with the other transcriptions used here, I have converted his system to mine, using <*k*<sup>o</sup>> for unaspirated, <*k*<sup>h</sup>> for aspirated, etc., without any loss of phonemic detail.

### 3.1 Usage of *-amasyi/-amaši* in Old/Classical Okinawan

For the Old Okinawan *Omoro Sōshi*, Serafim and Shinzato (2021: pp 296-302) identify two patterns of usage for *-amasyi*: **optative** and **counterfactual conditional**.

#### 3.1.1 Optative

##### WITH *-t<sup>o</sup>i=ya*

In Old Okinawan, nearly all cases of *-amasyi* occur in collocations of the pattern *A-t<sup>o</sup>i=ya* [...] *B-amasyi* (*A*-CVB=TOP [...] *B*-OPT). Also notably, Serafim and Shinzato (2021: pp 298-299) have a brief discussion over this *-t<sup>o</sup>i=ya* as a special construction that should not be interpreted as conditional “if X,” “if one were to X” (which is the typical meaning, but would be inappropriate in these contexts), but rather as causal “because X,” and Serafim & Shinzato quote other agreeing authors to support their position.

The following are examples of this *A-t<sup>o</sup>i=ya* [...] *B-amasyi* structure:

- (72) うきおほちか、世、 やてや、  
 も > かめむ、 すへまし  
*ʔuuk<sup>o</sup>yi ʔuqp<sup>o</sup>udzyi-ga yU yat<sup>o</sup>i-ya*  
*mumu-gami-M siyimasyi*  
 (Omoro Sōshi Book 11, Omoro #559)

*ʔuu-k<sup>o</sup>yi ʔuqp<sup>o</sup>u-dzyi=ga yu =yar-t<sup>o</sup>i=ya mumu-gami=M siyi-masyi*  
 great-JP.ATTR big-father=GEN world =COP-CVB=TOP hundred-jar=even place-OPT

“Because [it] is the world of [our] great ancestors,  
 [we] let us place as many as a hundred jars [of wine] [there].”  
 – (Serafim and Shinzato 2021: pp 298-299)

- (73) てるよもひ、かなし、あか、おなご やてや、  
 うちちへ、 かか、 おらまし  
*t<sup>h</sup>iru’y-umii-ganasyi ʔa-ga wunagu yat<sup>o</sup>i-ya*  
*ʔuc<sup>o</sup>yic<sup>o</sup>yi kaagaa wuramasyi*  
 (Omoro Sōshi Book 17, Omoro #1211)

<sup>51</sup>For a brief explanation of the orthography I use to transcribe these sounds, please see the description on page 5.

*T<sup>h</sup>iru'y(i-ʔ)umii-ganasyi ʔa=ga wunagu =yar-t<sup>o</sup>i=ya ʔut-t<sup>o</sup>i kaagaa wur-amasyi*  
 Tirui-thought-dear 1PL=GEN lady =COP-CVB=TOP hit-CVB sparkle be-OPT

“Because the respected and beloved [Priestess] Tirui is our lady,  
 may [she] sparkle with the beat [of the drums].” – (Serafim and Shinzato 2021: pp 299-300)

- (74) おほつたけ、あつる、すてる、てうみつよ、  
 かみきや、きも やてや、  
 いつこ、しま、おろちへ、  
 かいなて、みつ、しめまし

*ʔubuc<sup>o</sup>i-dak<sup>h</sup>i ʔac<sup>o</sup>iru sidiru dzyoo-myidzi-yu,*  
*k<sup>h</sup>amyi-gya k<sup>o</sup>yimu yat<sup>o</sup>i-ya,*  
*ʔyidzi-k<sup>h</sup>uu-syima ʔuruc<sup>o</sup>yi*  
*k<sup>h</sup>eenadi-myidzi syimimasyi*

(Omoro Sōshi Book 11, Omoro #7.348)

*ʔubuc<sup>o</sup>i-dak<sup>h</sup>i ʔar-c<sup>o</sup>iru sidi-r-u dzyoo-myidzi=yu / k<sup>h</sup>amyi=gya k<sup>o</sup>yimu*  
 heaven-shrine be-PRFV.ATTR purify-ATTR pure-water=ACC / deity=GEN liver  
 =yar-t<sup>o</sup>i=ya / ʔyidzi-k<sup>h</sup>uu-syima ʔurus-t<sup>o</sup>i k<sup>h</sup>eenadi-myidzi syimi-masyi  
 COP-CVB=TOP / brave-one-island let.fall-CVB holy-water cause-OPT

“The purest of clean water in Heaven’s Shrine–  
 as [it] is the very hearts (*lit.* livers) of the gods,  
 may [they] send [it] down [to] the Land of the Brave Ones  
 [and] make [it] become [the King’s] holy water.” – (Serafim and Shinzato 2021: p 298)

Example 74 above shows converb-linking of two predicates for one compound optative:

*ʔuruc<sup>o</sup>yi... syimimasyi* “may [they] send [it] down ... [and] make [it] become”; compare similar constructions in ex. 4 (p. 11) from OJ and ex. 30 (p. 26) from Hachijō.

Finally, example 75 below is the only example of the *-t<sup>o</sup>i=ya* not being attached to the copula *=yar-*:

- (75) なかち、あやみやに、みれは、きも、はゑてや、  
 もゝかめも、すへまし

*Nak<sup>h</sup>ac<sup>o</sup>yi ʔaya-myaa-nyi myiiriba k<sup>o</sup>yimu p<sup>h</sup>ayit<sup>o</sup>i-ya,*  
*mumu-gami-m siyimasyi.*

(Omoro Sōshi Book 21, Omoro #1455)

*Nak<sup>h</sup>ac<sup>o</sup>yi ʔaya-myaa-nyi myii-r-iba k<sup>o</sup>yimu p<sup>h</sup>ayi-t<sup>o</sup>i=ya mumu-gami=M*  
 Nakachi design-courtyard=LOC see-PROV liver sprout-CVB=TOP hundred-jar=even  
*siyi-masyi*  
 place-OPT

“Since our hearts (*lit.* livers) bloom when looking at the lovely courtyard [of] Nakachi,  
 let us place as many as a hundred jars [of wine] [there].”  
 – (Serafim and Shinzato 2021: p 301)

OTHER CONTEXTS

There is one occurrence<sup>52</sup> in Old Okinawan of an optative usage of *-amasyi* that does not occur in conjunction with *-t<sup>o</sup>i=ya*, and instead with *yac<sup>h</sup>yoom*<sup>53</sup> “even if it is”:

- (76) くむさうすや、ちよむ、みちゑ、 いちへ、 いき、 のば、まし  
 くたるつちや、ちよむ、みちへ、 いちへ、 あよ、 のば、まし

*K<sup>o</sup>umu soozī yac<sup>h</sup>yoom, myic<sup>o</sup>yi ŷyidzyi ŷyik<sup>o</sup>yi nubamasyi.*

*K<sup>o</sup>udaru c<sup>o</sup>idzyi yac<sup>h</sup>yoom, myic<sup>o</sup>yi ŷyidzyi ŷayu nubamasyi.*

(Omorō Sōshi Book 21, Omorō #1409)

*k<sup>o</sup>um-u soozī =yar-c<sup>h</sup>yoom myi-t<sup>o</sup>i ŷyin-t<sup>o</sup>i ŷyik<sup>o</sup>yi nub-amasyi, k<sup>o</sup>um-t<sup>o</sup>ar-u*  
 draw-ATTR clear.water =COP-although see-CVB go-CVB breath extend-OPT, step-PERF-ATTR  
*c<sup>o</sup>idzyi =yar-c<sup>h</sup>yoom myi-t<sup>o</sup>i ŷyin-t<sup>o</sup>i ŷayu nub-amasyi*  
 summit =COP-even.though see-CVB go-CVB heart extend-OPT

“Even if [it] is [only] clear water to draw<sup>54</sup>,

may [you] go and see [it], and be at rest (*lit.* extend [your] breath).

Even if [it] is [only] the summit [you] have stepped [on],

may [you] go and see [it], and be at ease (*lit.* extend [your] heart).”

– (Serafim and Shinzato 2021: pp 300-301)

To my knowledge, all other instance of the suffix occur later, in Classical Okinawan (as *-amaši*). These instances are more aligned with Old and Classical Japanese usage, indicating a wish about something that is unlikely to come true:

- (77) 思がごとなゆる 浮世やたらまし  
 旅の行く先も つれて行きゆり

*ŷUMU-ga-gutu nayuru ŷUČIYU yataramaši*

*TABI-nu ŷIKUŠAČI-N čiriti ŷIČui*

(Ryūka Zenshū #2469)

*ŷumu=ga=gutu nar-ŷur-u ŷučiyu =yar-tar-amaši / tabi=nu*  
 thought=GEN=alike become-STAT-ATTR floating.world =COP-PERF-OPT / journey=GEN  
*ŷikušači=N čiri-ti ŷik-ŷur-ŷi*  
 destination=also bring-CVB go-STAT-FIN

“Would that [this world] could have been the floating world, becoming like [my] thoughts!

[If it could, I] would take [my lover] along to every destination.”

– (Nishioka 1998: p 46)

- (78) 屋慶名こはでさの 首里にあたらまし  
 おれが下なかへ 茶屋のたたなまし

<sup>52</sup>Actually two, but only because the verse is repeated verbatim in two places in the *Omorō Sōshi*—the other occurrence being in Book 11, Omorō #557.

<sup>53</sup>The word *yac<sup>h</sup>yoom* is glossed elsewhere as Japanese できえも “even if it is”; I hypothesize that it is contracted from *\*yar-i-tomo*—making it directly cognate to Old Japanese *ni arito<sub>2</sub>mo<sub>2</sub> ~ narito<sub>2</sub>mo<sub>2</sub>* found in *Man’yōshū* poems 5.811, 5.812, 6.972, and 17.3902. After hypothesizing this, I found that this exact same etymology was also proposed in Serafim and Shinzato (2021: pp 356-357, footnote 208), which is very reassuring.

<sup>54</sup>Or “cloud-clear water,” as some other commentators alternatively gloss this くむ as the homophone *k<sup>o</sup>umu* “cloud.”

*YAKINA-kuhwadiša-nu ŠUI-ni ʔataramaši*  
*ʔuri-ga šiČA-nakai ČAYA-nu tatanamaši*  
 (Ryūka Zenshū #747)

*Yakina-kuhwadiša=nu Šui=ni ʔar-tar-amaši / ʔuri=ga šiča=nakai*  
 Yakena-tropical.almond=NOM Shuri=DAT exist-PERF-OPT / it=GEN below=LOC  
*čaya=nu tat-ana-(a)maši*  
 teahouse=NOM stand-DESID-OPT

“Would that there were a Yakena tropical almond tree [here] in Shuri [too],  
 [and] how [I] wish that a teahouse would stand underneath it!” – (Nishioka 1998: pp 45-46)

Curiously, ex. 78 above has a combination of both desiderative *-ana* and optative *-(a)maši*. I have tentatively translated it as above, using “How I wish that ~!”

### 3.1.2 Counterfactual Conditional

Lastly, I am aware of exactly one instance in which Old Okinawan *-amasyi* is used to indicate a counterfactual conditional, just as *-amasi* is in Old & Classical Japanese. In particular, it is used in the consequent clause of a conditional (cf. §1.1.1):

(79) うきおほちか、おわにや、ゑん、げらへ、あらまし  
*ʔUuk<sup>o</sup>yi ʔuqp<sup>o</sup>u-dzyi-ga ʔuwaanya, win girayi ʔaramasyi.*  
 (Omoro Sōshi Book 21, Omoro #1409)

*ʔuu-k<sup>o</sup>yi ʔuqp<sup>o</sup>u-dzyi-ga ʔuwa(s)-an-(i)ya win girayi ʔar-amasyi*  
 great-JP.ATTR big-father=NOM be.HON-NEG-PROV house.HON construct.INF be-SUBJ

“If [your] great ancestors had not been [in Kumejima],  
 [your] house[’s] construction would be [here in Yaeyama].”  
 – (Serafim and Shinzato 2021: pp 301-302)

According to (Serafim and Shinzato 2021: p 301, footnote 98), the structure employed in *girayi ʔaramasyi* (“-INF be-”) is rare; they alternately translate it as “[you] could have built [your] house.”

## 3.2 Usage in Kikai

Aside from Old & Classical Okinawan, Kikai is another Northern Ryukyuan language in which a relative of OJ *-amasi* appears: it comes in the allomorphs *-amaši* and *-amašee*. Kikai-jima has a number of individual dialects with their own idiosyncrasies, though all mutually intelligible. The dialects of Kikai-jima discussed in Nishioka (1998) are Gamō (蒲生), Shidooke (志度桶), Takigawa (滝川), Kadon (嘉鈍), Keraji (花良治), and Wan (灣); when an utterance is used in an example, the dialect of origin is noted.

Only one broad usage of *-amaši* and *-amašee* seems to be attested in Kikai, to indicate an irrealis mood—namely of an action that is/was wanted or expected but does not/did not occur, akin to English “should but doesn’t” or “should’ve but didn’t”. This is clearly quite close to one of the OJ & CJ meanings of *-amasi* expressing an unfulfilled wish. It can be either deontic (indicating what the speaker believes ought to be

the case) or epistemic (indicating what the speaker expects to be the case). According to Nishioka (1998: pp 38-39, 42), there appears to be no distinction in meaning between *-amaši* and *-amašee*, and the latter is said to be derived from *-amaši* + the topic marker *=ya*.

Exact syntax varies from dialect to dialect, but in general, *-amaši* can appear by itself, followed by the conjunctive noun *mUN* “although”<sup>55</sup>, or followed by a copula like *=žar-* or *=nu* or a weak verb like *ʔar-* “to be” and then by *mUN*. According to Nishioka (1998: p 30), using these periphrastic constructions is to explicitly state the contrastive (“but doesn’t/didn’t”) meaning of these sentences. In addition, in all Kikai example sentences given in Nishioka (1998), *-amaši* and *-amašee* are used directly after the verb stem, or otherwise the verb stem + potential-voice marker *-rar-*, in either case without any tense/aspect information included.<sup>56</sup>

### 3.2.1 Deontic (Debitive)

When used with a human subject (including first and second person), *-amaši* and *-amašee* typically express a deontic debitive meaning, that is, the speaker’s belief something that ought to be done or ought’ve been done. In all given examples, it also includes the meaning that despite this belief, the action does not or did not occur:

(80) ドウー-ジ ホーワ-マシェー ちゅ タンディ ホーワち

*Duuži hoowamašee, č<sup>o</sup>u t<sup>h</sup>andi hoowač<sup>o</sup>i [...]*

(Nishioka 1998: p 31) – Keraji dialect

*duu=ži hoow-amašee / č<sup>o</sup>u t<sup>h</sup>anm-t<sup>o</sup>i hoow-as-t<sup>o</sup>i*  
oneself=LOC buy-DEB / person request-CVB buy-CAUS-CVB

“[He] **should have bought** [it] on [his] own [initiative], [but] [he] asked someone [and] had [them] buy it [for him] instead, and [...]

(81) アン ちょー ナカ-マシ-ジャン-ムン、ワラとうイ。

*ʔAN č<sup>oo</sup>o nak<sup>o</sup>amaši-žAN mUN, warat<sup>o</sup>ui.*

(Nishioka 1998: p 30) – Takigawa dialect

*ʔAN č<sup>o</sup>u=(y)a nak<sup>o</sup>-amaši =žar-N mUN / waraw-t<sup>o</sup>ur-i*  
that person=TOP cry-DEB =COP-FIN although / laugh-PROG-FIN

“That person laughs when [he/she] **ought to cry.**”

(*lit.* “Although that person **should cry**, [he/she] [habitually] laughs.”)

(82) アッシ シラ-マシ-アたん-ムン-ヤー

*ʔAšši širamaši ʔat<sup>o</sup>AN mUN yaa.*

(Nishioka 1998: p 31) – Takigawa dialect

<sup>55</sup>Cognate to Japanese *mono*, and historically used after *-amasi* in the same fashion (Vovin 2020a: pp 606-610), cf. §1.1.1-1.1.2.

<sup>56</sup>On page 30, Nishioka notes that his informants outright rejected placing *-amaši* after the past-tense marker *-t<sup>o</sup>ar-*, and that he did not get “favorable answers” (かんばしい回答) regarding placing it after the progressive-aspect marker *-t<sup>o</sup>ur-* either. However, he does note that an informant from the Shidooke dialect stated that the form *ʔut<sup>o</sup>uramaši*, composed of *ʔur-t<sup>o</sup>ur-amaši* “sell-PROG-DEB”, might be possible (Nishioka 1998: p 30).

*ʔašši ši-r-amaši ʔar-t°ar-N mun yaa*  
 that.way do-DEB be-PST-FIN although FPT

“[He] really should’ve done so, but [he didn’t].”

### 3.2.2 Epistemic (Expectational)

In at least the Wan and Dokan dialects, one is also permitted to use *-amaši* with non-human third-person subjects. Such sentences usually express an epistemic meaning—specifically, that the speaker expects or expected something to occur, but also implying that this expectation was not met (Nishioka 1998: pp 34-37):

- (83) ヒーサ ナリ-バー、ニシ-カ° **フカ-マシ-ヌ-ムン**、フカン-ソー-ヤー。  
*Hiiša naribaa, niši-ŋa ʔuk°amaši-nu mun, ʔuk°an šoo yaa.*

(Nishioka 1998: p 34) – Wan dialect

*hiiša nar-ibaa niši=ŋa ʔuk°-amaši =nu mun / ʔuk°-an =šoo*  
 cold become-PROV north.wind=NOM blow-EXPT =COP.ATTR although / blow-NEG =EMPH  
*yaa*  
 FPT

“Since it’s gotten colder, [one would expect] the north wind to blow, but [it]’s not blowing.  
 [How strange!]”

- (84) ちニュー フニ-カ° **クラ-マシ-ムン**、クラ-ランた  
*Č°inyuu ʔuni-ŋa kʰuramaši mun, kʰurarant°a.*

(Nishioka 1998: p 31) – Dokan dialect

*č°inyuu ʔuni=ŋa kʰu-r-amaši mun / kʰu-rar-an-t°a.*  
 yesterday ship=NOM come-EXPT thing / come-POT-NEG-PST.FIN

“The ship was supposed to come yesterday, but [it] couldn’t.”

In contrast, in the Shidooke dialect, one is generally prohibited from using *-amaši* with non-human third-person subjects (Nishioka 1998: p 39).

### 3.2.3 Counterfactual Conditional

Lastly, specifically in the Takigawa dialect, *-amaši* can be used in a counterfactual conditional just like in Classical Japanese:

- (85) シマ-カ° ニヤービ ウーシマ-とう ちかサリ-バー、  
 ハシ ケーラ-ラ-マシ-ヤー。

*Šima-ŋa nyaabi ʔUušima-t°u č°ik°ašaribaa, haši kʰeeraramaši yaa.*

(Nishioka 1998: p 38) – Takigawa dialect

*šima=ŋa nyaabi ʔUušima=t°u č°ik°a-šar-ibaa / haši kʰee-rar-amaši yaa*  
 island=NOM a.bit.more Ōshima=COM close-ADJ-PROV / bridge hang-POT-SUBJ FPT

“If only [this] island were a little closer to Ōshima, [we] would be able to build a bridge [to it].”

Curiously, according to Nishioka (1998: p 37), the equivalent to example 85 would be ungrammatical in the Wan dialect. Nishioka postulates that it may be because the antecedent in 85 is a counterfactual condition; compare & contrast example 83 in the Wan dialect, where it is a real/actualized condition and is grammatical. Another key difference between exs. 83 and 85 is that the former has an explicit “but”-clause following it, whereas the latter does not.

### 3.3 Etymology: Inherited or Borrowing?

Current scholarship appears rather decided that the Old & Classical Okinawan suffixes reflect borrowings from Japanese. Vovin (2020a: p 610) states outright of Old Okinawan *-amasyi*: “The absence of reflexes in the modern dialects strongly suggests that it is a loan from Middle Japanese.” This sentiment is reiterated by Serafim and Shinzato (2021: p 298): “Because there is no reflex in any modern Ryukyuan dialects [...], this [-*amasyi*] must be a loan from MJ.” However, given the existence of Kikai *-amaši/-amašee* as a counterexample—albeit from an Amami variety and not an Okinawan one—, these claims’ foundational argument that there isn’t any reflex in a modern language is apparently false. (I say “apparently” because there is always the possibility that the Kikai form is also a borrowing.)

Therefore, I would consider it debatable whether these suffixes were actually inherited from Proto-Japonic or if they (in whole or in part) reflect a borrowing from Middle/Classical Japanese. Still, the fact that these suffixes are apparently only attested in the Northern Ryukyus—the islands in closest proximity & and therefore with the strongest influence from the mainland—is circumstantial evidence in favor of them having been borrowed. Even if they are borrowings (perhaps even borrowed at multiple places and times), the slight semantic shift present in the Kikai Amami form suggests to me that the suffix may have been present there for a significant amount of time. Semantically, its meaning can be imagined as proceeding from “would that X could happen, but alas” → “X should happen, but alas”, and then a shift from the optative’s fixed deontic modality to an option of deontic or epistemic modality.

Regardless, on the off chance that these suffixes do represent a true cognate, then we can reconstruct a Proto-Northern Ryukyuan form *\*-amas<sup>y</sup>i*, from Proto-Ryukyuan *\*-amasi*, and together with the comparative evidence of Old Japanese *-amasi*, we can then reconstruct a Proto-Japonic form *\*-amas{*i,ui,oi*}*.

## 4 Shizuoka Japanese: One More Potential Relative of *-amasi*

Finally, there is one other potential relative of Old Japanese *-amasi* that I would like to briefly discuss, found in the Shizuoka dialect of Japanese. The suffix is of the form *-masi* or *-nmasi* (the morpheme boundary is unclear), mentioned in passing by Nishioka (1998: p 48), who cites Shizuoka Hōgen Jiten (1910) as listing a relative of *-amasi* surviving in the Shizuoka dialect of Japanese—at least until 1910 when the dictionary was published. Checking the primary source myself, I found the entry that he was likely referring to:

方言 (“Dialect”)	品詞 (“Part of Speech”)	普通語 (“Normal Word”)	意義用例 (“Meaning, Usage Example”)
まし ( <i>masi</i> )	句 (“phrase”)	デセウ ( <i>desyō</i> )	「行ったんまし」 ( <i>ittanmasi</i> )

Specifically, the part-of-speech label 句 is said in the book's introduction to indicate 「二語以上の単語の合成せるもの」 “composed of 2 or more words” (Shizuoka Hōgen Jiten 1910: intro & pp 1, 230).

The gloss as the presumptive/inferential *desyō* “probably, surely” is promising for a potential relationship to Classical Japanese *-amasi*, and if the form *ittanmasi* is contracted from an older *\*ittaramasi*, then that would agree very neatly with the Classical form *ikitaramasī*<sup>57</sup>. Such a contraction of an /rV/ syllable to /N/ certainly has precedent in the Shizuoka dialect; for instance, Standard Japanese *miruna* “don't look” and *toruna* “don't take [it]” correspond to Shizuoka *minna* and *tonna* (Nakajō 1983: p 163).

That being the case, if this *-(N)masi* is indeed from OJ *-amasi*, the only ‘out-of-the-ordinary’ change would be its shift in meaning from subjunctive to presumptive/inferential. However, recall that this exact change occurred in written Classical Japanese (as described in §1.1.4), so it is not unreasonable to imagine the same change occurring in a spoken dialect as well. Similar variation in meaning can be seen for the English modal verb *should*:

- “Had I gone into battle, I should not have returned alive.”<sup>58</sup> – subjunctive counterfactual
- “It's getting late; I should go.” – debitive/deontic modality
- “According to the schedule, he should be there by now.” – inferential/epistemic modality

However, there is also the null hypothesis that this Shizuoka *masi* and Classical *-amasi* are merely coincidental in shape—for example, it may be that Shizuoka *masi* is some kind of final particle occurring after a verb nominalized by *=N*, i.e., *itta=N masi*. Unfortunately, my further explorations into the Shizuoka dialect in search of explanations or other examples of this *masi* have yielded no results; for instance, it is not mentioned at all in Nakajō (1983). It may very well be that this *masi* has already gone extinct.

Furthermore, this *-masi* should not be confused with the hortative suffix *-amai* ~ *-omai* used across the Chūbu Region, which originates from a use of Late Middle/Early Modern Japanese *\*-aūmai*<sup>59</sup> (from *-aū* ← *-am-u* combined with *-umai* ← *-umazi-i*) in polite negative questions as an invitation; see Nakajō (1983: p 166) and Keshikawa (1983: pp 230, 234-236) for further details on that suffix.

<sup>57</sup> Attested in Chapter 31 (*Makibashira*) of *Genji Monogatari* (ONCOJ 2023).

<sup>58</sup> By my estimation, this phrasing sounds very archaic in contemporary English, but nevertheless it can be readily understood by readers of classic-style literature such as *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien.

<sup>59</sup> A variant form *-am-umai* is attested from 1925 in the work 太陽 *Taiyō* by Nagai Tooru (NINJAL 2023):

ロシアの轍を覆むまい *Rosia=no WADATI=wo oow-Am-umai* “shouldn't cover the wheel-tracks of Russia”



## Final Comments

Despite the demise of the verbal suffix *-amasi* in Japanese before the modern era, relics of its existence yet remain, or have remained until recent memory. Aside from the well-established existence of *-amasi* in pre-modern Japanese and Okinawan, it is also found in Kikai Amami, and also—I argue—in the Hachijō language in the form of the suffix *-ɔɔsi* and its brethren *-ɔɔsunou*, *-ɔɔsitar-*, and *-ɔɔsyaate*.

My arguments for connecting *-ɔɔsi* (&co.) to OJ *-amasi* rely on four key facts:

- The sound changes from *-amasi* to *-ɔɔsi* can be explained more easily than for other proposed candidates (*-amaku posi-*, *-amafosi-*, *-i<sub>l</sub> posi-*, *-asi*).
- No morphosyntactic changes are required to go from *-amasi* to *-ɔɔsi*.
- The optatives *-ɔɔsi* & *-ɔɔsunou* and the perfect subjunctive *-ɔɔsitar-* have both preserved the two halves of the key meanings of OJ *-amasi*, without any semantic shifting needed.
- The intentional *-ɔɔsyaate* can be reasonably derived (albeit still conjecturally) from a construction involving the optative *-ɔɔsi*.

Given these, I believe *-amasi* is a far likelier candidate for the etymon of *-ɔɔsi* than other possibilities, and my lofty hope is that the arguments laid out in this paper are sufficient to convince at least some others in the Japonic research community as well.

On the side of etymology, it is clear that the Japanese branch of the Japonic family has a Proto-Japanese/Pre-Old-Japanese *\*-amas{*l,ui,oi*}*, whence OJ/EMJ *-amasi* and the Hachijō suffixes that I argue for above. In the Ryukyuan branch, due to a dearth of Ryukyuan reflexes in modern dialects, it has been thought that the pre-modern Okinawan usage of *-amasyi/-amaši* was the result of borrowing from Middle/Classical Japanese; however, the existence of Kikai Amami *-amaši/-amašee* may throw that into confusion. If these affixes are indeed genuine Ryukyuan cognates of OJ *-amasi*, then we can reconstruct a subjunctive *\*-amas{*l,ui,oi*}* not just at the Proto-Japanese level, but for Proto-Japonic as a whole.

In the future, I hope to look more deeply into the obsolescence of *-amasi* during Middle Japanese and gather further examples of the meanings innovated for it post-OJ. Other potential topics include investigating the relative frequencies of the meanings with which *-amasi* is used in single-author works such as *Genji Monogatari*, *Makura no Sōshi*, and *Kagerō Nikki*. Lastly, it would be nice to resolve the uncertainty present in the interpretation of examples 10 and 26 (pages 13 and 19), though that might prove considerably difficult without further discoveries.

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