**LIN 881 Study Questions: Shibatani, Ch. 5. Genetic Affiliation (pp. 94-118)**

**NOTE:** (1) * means ‘unattested, reconstructed’ in historical linguistics  
(2) It is important to distinguish ‘genetic,’ ‘geographical’ and ‘typological’ relationships among languages, though they are not unrelated.  
(3) In general, borrowing of morphological patterns and grammatical structures is far less common than borrowing of words  
(4) ‘comparative method’: identifies systematic sound correspondences and postulate sound laws, reconstruct protoforms, and relate those forms to their descendant forms systematically

1. To what language group does Japanese belong?  
   → no conclusive answer yet, various hypotheses

2. What is the standard material used for comparison?  
   → Old Japanese (7-8c)

3. What is the most widely-debated hypothesis regarding the origin of Japanese?  
   → Altaic hypothesis; e.g., Miller, Murayama (earlier) (pp. 96, 102)

4. Is there any language to which Japanese is related?  
   → probably Korean; e.g., Martin

5. What are the main problems with the Altaic hypothesis?  
   → phonological discrepancy between J & Korean, and J & Altaic languages (e.g., syll str, V systems)  
   → scarcity of convincing sound correspondences

6. What are other major hypotheses?  
   → (1) Austronesian substratum + Altaic superstratum; e.g., Oono (earlier)  
       [word borrowing] [changed the grammatical str]  
   → (2) Austronesian-Altaic hybrid; e.g., Polivanov, Murayama (pp. 103-104)  
       [morphology affected, not just word borrowing; e.g., Altaic & Austronesian V roots + Altaic inflectional endings]  
   → (3) Altaic substratum + Austronesian *superstratum*; e.g., Kawamoto  
       [tends to impose vocab, but not many Altaic words in J]  
   → (4) Austronesian lang → proto-Tamil → Altaic lang (multi-layered formation; e.g., Oono 1980)  
   → (5) Japanese - Papuan relation; e.g., Goo  
   → (6) Tibeto-Burman hypothesis; e.g., Parker (unsuccessful), Nishida (unorthodox)

7. Why is there little agreement among scholars regarding the origin of Japanese?  
   → (1) hard to establish cognate sets (true even among Altaic languages)  
       -- no systematic sound correspondences  
   → (2) many of the phonetic and/or semantic correspondences questionable  
       e.g. Oono: compared contemporary dialect forms of J & Tamil words (attacked by Murayama)  
       Martin: compared forms of modern J & middle Korean  
       i.e. methodological problem

8. What are the main reasons why the comparative method has not been effective w/ Japanese?  
   → (1) time depth: OJ probably split from the affiliated language a very long time ago.  
   → (2) formation: J may have been a mixed language (cf. Polivanov, Murayama).  
       -- not well understood how different languages come into contact and form a new lang.  
       These facts require more than the comparative method.