

***Pandanus tectorius* ('adan') in southern Japan** (Oral Presentation)

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Introduction

Pandanus tectorius Sol. ex Parkinson (syn. *P. odoratissimus*) is a highly variable species that is abundant in many coastal regions bordering the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The common Japanese vernacular name for this plant is 'adan', which appears to be related to 'pandan', a name shared by many Austronesian languages in Asia and the Pacific. Austronesian languages have had influence in Japanese linguistic history, as sources for borrowed words, or as unrecorded languages that were spoken long ago in the archipelago, or in both ways. Botanical and ethnographic records of *P. tectorius* in Japan are introduced and discussed in relation to early and later Austronesian movements in the vicinity of southern China, northern Philippines and southern Japan.

Objectives

These are to (1) introduce the biogeography of *P. tectorius* in southern Japan and monsoonal Asia, and (2) consider the historical context of Pandanus-related artefacts stored at the National Museum of Ethnology, Japan

Methods

Limited field observations are integrated with a brief survey of related literature and museum artefacts.

Results

Although the plant is common and widely used throughout island or coastal regions in monsoonal Asia, local information on the history and use of *P. tectorius* is scarce. This is also the case in southern Japan. Ethnographic collectors in the past have often not recorded the plant origins of artefacts made using Pandanus. In the absence of archaeological data, it is difficult to reconstruct the historical roles of *P. tectorius* in the distant past.

Conclusion

Circumstances suggest that *P. tectorius* could have been important in southern Japan in the past, as a source of fibres and leaves for making rope, mats, boats and sails. It is not known to what extent human dispersal of the plant is responsible for its present distribution in Japan, if at all. Among early Austronesian speakers and their neighbours, the basic techniques of rope and mat making might have been shared by boat and sail makers throughout the region of southern China to Taiwan, southern Japan, and the northern Philippines.

Keywords: monsoon, Asia, Austronesian, rope, mats, boats, sails

Selected References

1. None

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