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On the accent of the Shiramine dialect

This paper analyzes the accent of the Shiramine dialect with main focus on its synchronic features and the direction of diachronic change. This dialect is spoken in a small village, Shiramine, at the foot of Hakusan Mountain, which is about 150 km north-northeast of Kyoto. This paper discusses the accent of nouns, verbs and adjectives of this dialect and compares it with that of other dialects such as the Kyoto and Kanazawa dialects.

The Shiramine dialect has several features that make it distinct from other dialects in the adjacent areas. Specifically, it is supposed to have an accent pattern known as *kakoo-siki* (下降式), by which pitch gradually descends from the second mora to the end of the domain of word accent. It is argued in this paper that a prosodic system with this pitch pattern may historically change into a system with a level pitch pattern as well as a system with a falling kernel where, as in the accent system of Tokyo Japanese, pitch abruptly falls at a certain point within the accent domain.