

Proto-Asian Archaic Residue and Diffusional Cumulation

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This author is of the opinion that within the *not-so-distant* future, linguists will no longer refer to Austronesian (AN), Austroasiatic, Tai-Kadai, and Sino-Tibetan as language families, but as branches of one family called Proto-Asian. With this in mind, he proposed the name *Proto-Asian* at the Conference on Asia-Mainland/Austronesian Connections held in Honolulu (May 1993). The title of this article is adapted from an article by Swadesh (1964) entitled *Diffusional Cumulation and Archaic Residue as Historical Explanations*. In his paper, Swadesh (1964:627) explains 'the two-fold relation existing between English and French, which involves both ancient common origin and long recent contact' (in Hymes' classic reader). Roughly a three-thousand-year gap exists between their mutual Indo-European origin--the bifurcation of Proto-Germanic and Proto-Italic--and the onset of diffusion between their daughter languages approximately 2,000 years ago (*ibid.*). Unlike English and French, a much greater gap exists between the breakup of Pre-Proto-Austronesian and its relatives on the Asian mainland and more recent diffusion between Austronesian, Mon-Khmer, and Tai languages on the Thai-Malayan Peninsula and Southeast Asian mainland. In an article entitled *The Special Relationship between Moken, Acehnese, Chamic and Mon-Khmer: Areal Influence or Genetic Affinity?*, Larish (1991) attempts to distinguish between ancient common origin and more recent extended contact. After further consideration of the affinities between the Austronesian, Austroasiatic, and Thai language families, the author observed that the question posed in the title of Larish (1991) can be aptly revised by simply replacing the *or* with *and*. In other words, the affinities between Austronesian, Mon-Khmer (MK), and Tai languages involve both archaic residue *and* diffusional cumulation (i.e., loans and areal diffusion), paralleling the various branches of Indo-European. Since most AN-language speakers are out of contact with MK-language speakers, Moken, Moklen, Acehnese, and Malayo-Chamic are significant sources of data from which the distinction between archaic residue and diffusional cumulation can be examined.