

Re: new book on the spread of IE

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- *From:* ekkilu@xxxxxxxxxx
 - *Date:* Wed, 20 Feb 2008 09:38:18 -0800 (PST)
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On Feb 19, 1:10 pm, "benli...@xxxxxxxxxx" <benli...@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Feb 20, 5:43 am, ekk...@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:

On Feb 16, 11:59 am, "benli...@xxxxxxxxxx" <benli...@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

I guess it's about time we had a Chinese ethnomaniac telling us that linguistics has got it all wrong, to go with our Indian, Slavic, Greek and other specimens of the type.

Ross Clark

You mean Isidore Dyen is not a linguist?

-- Ekki

Which of your views does Isidore Dyen share?

So why did you say "telling us that linguistics has got it all wrong"?

Isidore Dyen was the one that proposed 6 vowels for proto-Austronesian.

Anyhow, it's not clear what your views are in the present discussion.

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You claimed to have posted a lot about Vietnamese and Mon–Khmer, but didn't explain what ideas you have about that.

I am perhaps the first one in the world to discuss nasal continuation of checked vowels in Mon–Khmer, a feature exclusive to Mon–Khmer languages and not shared by Chinese dialects. That probably tells you I know a bit what Mon–Khmer is about and that there is no danger of me confusing Vietnamese as a dialect of Chinese.

So I don't appreciate people providing me with Wikipedia–level information on Mon–Khmer and Austroasiatic.

Apparently your statement that Vietnamese was "not exactly a Chinese dialect" was sarcasm or something. Then there was portentous talk about Chinese people learning their "true history" instead of "lies". What's the "true history"? What "lies"?

That's a whole can of worms. There are just too many to mention.

(1) China has a 5000–year history: I am not disputing the term "5000 years", which itself is controversial enough. It's the "history" part that is problem. China is a country without a history for its people. You think I am crazy, but it suffices to ask any average Joe (or average Wang in this case) in China and they'll admit (a) they don't know where they come from, (2) they don't know where their language/dialect come from. Again, people may think I am crazy, but wait until you hear the words of Su Binqi, the head of the archeological society of China: "The mission of archeological study in China is to build the history of China as a nation (ò)". What? for a country claiming 5000 years of history, why all of the sudden there is need to build (notice, not "re–build") the whole history?

(2) That people of the South are mainly immigrants from the north: total lie. Thank goodness there are DNA studies nowadays (not just one study, but studies after studies), and they show that southerners are often genetically closer to people in Thailand/Malaysia/Indonesia or even Hawaii than to the northern Chinese.

(3) That southern dialects are the result of natural branching off of the original common language due to geographic separation: total lie. The truth is the southerners were speakers of other languages that were forced to speak Chinese. The existence of several dialect groups came about because there were several substratum languages to start with.

Some modern versions of the cultural oppression has been observed in Taiwan until not too long ago. For instance:

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(a) Suppression of any form of writing down the local Southern Min and Hakka dialects (be them in Chinese characters or with romanized writing). Police would harrass and confiscate dictionaries. (The New York Times once upon a time had a report on this.)

(b) Harrassment to researchers for carrying out DNA studies: lawmakers would attempt to bring charges to researchers, citing as excuse privacy and compensations issues to aborigine groups. But the reality was: some of the lawmakers wanted badly to introduce friction between the aborigine people and the Hoklo/Hakka people, so that the aborigines would vote against Hoklo/Hakka candidates. The typical lie was: the Hoklo and Hakka people are just Chinese immigrants that came over to took away your land. Now that repeated and detailed DNA studies have been done, we know the reason behind the fear of these lawmakers: 85% of the Hoklos/Hakkas have partial aborigine blood, and statistically, at least 15% of the genetic material of the Hoklos/Hakkas in Taiwan is from local aborigine ancestry. And the DNA of many of those lawmakers had 0% local aborigine blood.

Of course these are old news nowadays. Academic persecution is a thing of the past, school history books have been properly updated. But hiding true history has been part of psyche of being a Chinese. As a result, the for Chu language, despite the wealth of writing, so far people have been able to reconstruct just about 5 non-sinitic words. In other words, despite the repeated mentioning of Chu language as non-Chinese, from Chinese written records it has been all but impossible to recover any information about this language. And Chu is perhaps the best recorded language from writings of poets like Qu Yuan. Forget about all the other southern languages. So much hiding, so much suppression, to the point that we arrive at today's situation, best described by Su Binqi: "The mission of archeological study in China is to build the history of China as a nation (ò)".

It's therefore heartwarming to see that so much research is happening in mainland nowadays, for people to find out their own past. Let us not forget what this thread was originally about: the original Indo-European people. The same is true for Chinese: they have their languages, and many of them would like to find out more about the original speakers of the roots of their languages.

— Ekki