



Linguistic perspectives on the history of Southeast Asia

Rethinking the potential of historical linguistics within Area Studies

24 February 2012
iCeMS Complex 1, Main Building
Second Floor Meeting Room
Kyoto University
9:30 – 18:00

**Please join us for an exciting day of Southeast Asian
history through the lens of language change.**

Historical linguistics is the study of language change, and provides a dynamic perspective on social change and cultural interaction over time. Languages themselves can be analyzed as 'historical documents'. Historical linguists use both written records and spoken language to identify patterns of linguistic change, reconstruct the pre-history of languages, and establish relationships between languages. In doing this, historical linguistics has contributed to our understanding of ethnicity, population migrations, historical homelands and the nature and timing of cultural development and exchange.

Speakers of five major linguistic families – Sino-Tibetan, Austronesian, Austroasiatic, Tai-Kadai, and Hmong-Mien – have been moving and interacting through the region to produce the social mosaics in which Southeast Asianists currently work. This symposium brings together five preeminent scholars of historical linguistics in the Southeast Asian region. The group represents a deep base of knowledge spanning the major language families of the region, along with a range of perspectives on the application of historical linguistics to understanding the Southeast Asian region. This is a rare opportunity to interact with some of the leaders in this field, and a valuable chance to explore the potential synergies between historical linguistics and area studies.

The present state of Sino-Tibetan studies: Progress and outstanding issues

James Matisoff, University of California, Berkeley

Higher grouping in the Austroasiatic family and its historical implications

Gerard Diffloth, École Française d'extrême-orient, Siem Reap

Comparative Tai-Kadai, proto-zoology and regional history

James Chamberlain, Mahasarakham University

Austronesian subgrouping and migrations, with special reference to Malagasy

Alexander Adelaar, University of Melbourne

The Comparative Method and its linguistic implications for the history and prehistory of Southeast Asia

Weera Ostapirat, Mahidol University



For more information please contact Nathan Badenoch badenoch@cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp

