

Kra-Dai agriculture history through reconstructed vocabulary

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The ancestral Kra-Dai (KD) people are agriculturists, as seen from their reconstructed vocabulary items that include staple plants such as taro, millet, rice, and several other related words on farming (wet rice field, field dike, chaff, winnowing basket, to plant, water buffalo, granary, etc). When we trace down to Kam-Tai (KT), a major KD daughter language group, the full-scale agriculture society has emerged and features an increasing complexity of rice cultivation system that include distinguished terms for dry rice field, irrigational canal and dam, seedling and transplanting method, and the expanded village settlement. Discussions of KD agriculture history will also be made in the perspective of Austro-Tai (AT), the assumed ancestor of KD and Austronesian (AN), and the interaction between KD and other groups in south China.