

Austronesian and Sino-Tibetan words for *Setaria italica* and *Panicum miliaceum*: any connection?

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This paper reviews the names given to the plants *Setaria italica* and *Panicum miliaceum* in Proto-Austronesian (PAN) and in Sino-Tibetan, especially in Old Chinese (OC), in the recent reconstruction of Baxter and Sagart (2014, in press). On *Panicum m.* it shows that interference from an unrelated etymon *baSaw ‘to cool off’ (of cooked cereals) has led to non-viable proto-forms such as *baSaR being proposed. It also rejects Blust’s *baCaj, as the Philippine forms ending in -d, which are crucial in pointing to PAN *-j, refer to Sorghum, not *Panicum*, and can therefore be suspected of having spread by contact from a Western Malayo-Polynesian language where the name of *Panicum m.* had been transferred to intrusive Sorghum. It argues that the names of the two millets in PAN were *beCeŋ (*Setaria*) and *baCaR (*Panicum*) respectively and that the corresponding forms in OC are 稷 *[ts]ək and 稷 *[ts][a][t]-s, even though phonetic convergence between these two terms in Mandarin —where both are now pronounced *ji4*—has led to semantic confusion between the two. It argues that these terms are cognate, and presents the phonetic ground for this claim. Finally, it argues that a farming/language expansion fueled by millets and rice, originating in North China in the period 8700-7000 BCE, is responsible for the spread of the Sino-Tibetan-Austronesian language family, including the names of the two millets, over large parts of mainland and insular East Asia.