

## [8] A Speculation on the Dating of Southwestern Thai Migration

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Among the branches of the Tai languages family according to Li (1960), Southwestern Tai is by far the most widespread. Tai languages in this group are now spoken in northeastern Vietnam, Laos, southern China, northern Myanmar, northeastern India, Thailand, Cambodia, and northern Malaysia. O'Connor (1995) suggests that the Tai migration into Southeast Asia in the first millennium A.D. Diller (2000) similarly suggests that the southwest-ward migration of Tai speakers started in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Based on my own reconstructions of Proto-Tai (Pittayaporn 2009) and Proto-Southwestern Tai (Pittayaporn 2010), I show that Chinese loanwords shared by all Southwestern Tai languages, e.g. PSWT \*p<sup>h</sup>uə<sup>A</sup> 'husband' from Late Middle Chinese 夫 *fuǎ* (Pulleyblank 1991), were most likely borrowed into Tai around the Late Middle Chinese period. In support of earlier speculations, this date suggests that the SWT migration possibly started sometime between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century.

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