

[0488] FRISIAN *DAN* 'RED-COLOURED' AND ITS AUSTRONESIAN 'EQUIVALENT' (Or: The Austronesian-Indoeuropean matching no.79)

For more than a century, beginning with Franz Bopp, scholars have toyed with the idea of a remote genetic relationship between Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) and Indoeuropean. The possible reasons for the failure range from the obvious one - that no such relationship exists in the first place - to the likelihood that evidence at such a time depth would be so highly distorted as to frustrate all attempts at detection. Last (but not least?), Isidore Dyen has dealt with the Austronesian-Indoeuropean Hypothesis gathering 78 'matchings' between reconstructions of the two families (cf., e.g. Proto-Austronesian *kali* 'dig': Proto-Indoeuropean *kel-* 'strike' or Proto-Austronesian *nusa* 'island' : Greek *nēsos* 'island'). In the following, a proposal for matching no. 79 is made. Frisian *dan* 'red-coloured' is generally referred to when trying to find the etymology of *Dan(n)ebrog*, Denmark's flag (a red cloth with a white Latin cross), which is supposed to represent a compound where the first member is a cognate of Frisian *dan* (later folk-etymologized to mean 'Danes'), and where *brog* 'piece of cloth' is a Low German loan. On the basis of Proto-Austronesian *daun* 'leaf' (Malay *daon*): Proto-Indoeuropean *dhǵl-* 'bloom, flourish' (Irish *duille* 'leaf', Albanian *dal* 'sprout'), Frisian *dan* (presupposing a Proto-Indoeuropean form with initial *dh-*) therefore would match Proto-Austronesian *damay* 'torch, light, resin' (Malay *damar* 'torch, resin'), where it should not be difficult to account for the semantic discrepancy: The names of the cardinal colours may be derived from the name of an object or substance that displays some distinctive shade of the colour (cf., e.g., German *Gold* 'gold' and *gelb* 'yellow'); in the present case, then, the word for 'red' would have been derived from that for 'torch, light'.

However, a genetic relationship between Austronesian and Indoeuropean can be posited to exist only when it has been possible to set up element correspondences between Proto-Austronesian and Proto-Indoeuropean (such as Proto-Austronesian *t* = Proto-Indoeuropean *k<sup>w</sup>* for instance), and matching no. 79 then would be verified only if not contradicted by the established correspondences.

*Copenhagen*

*W.W. Schuhmacher*

*Literature:*

Bopp, Franz. 1840. Über die Verwandtschaft der malayisch-polynesischen Sprachen mit den indisch-europäischen. Abh. Preuss. Akad. Wiss. Phil. u. Hist. Abth., 169-246.  
 Dyen, Isidore. 1970. 'Background noise' or 'evidence' in comparative linguistics: The case of the Austronesian-Indo-European hypothesis. Indo-European and Indo-Europeans: papers presented at the Third Indo-European Conference at the University of Pennsylvania, ed. by G. Cardona, H.M. Hoenigswald, and A. Senn, 431-40. Philadelphia.