

Preface

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Preface

Yasuhiko Nagano

This volume is a part of results of three successive research projects conducted under the sponsorship of Monbukagakusho/JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Japan. These projects are: *An International Interdisciplinary Field Survey of the Bon Culture in Tibet* (1996-1998 fiscal years, #08041040), *Reconstruction of the Zhangzhung Language and Formation of Written Tibetan* (1999-2001, #A2-11691050), and *Linguistic Substratum in Tibet -- Synchronic survey of undescribed Tibeto-Burman languages and reconstruction of Zhangzhung language* (2004-2008, #S-16102001).

Bon is one of the pre-Buddhist religions in Tibet. By the term 'pre-Buddhist' here I mean that it existed in Tibet before Buddhism was imported into the area. Bon is therefore an important cultural substratum in Tibet, and, at the same time, Zhangzhung language, that was spoken among the Bonpo people in western Tibet and faded away by the end of the 10th century, is a significant linguistic substratum in the area.

Unfortunately, however, the study of Bon culture has lagged far behind that of Buddhism. To improve this situation, a Bon culture research project was launched in 1996 with funding for joint research from the National Museum of Ethnology, Japan, and a subsidy from the Ministry of Education for Scientific Research. Most of these funds were allocated to the development of the groundwork for research, to the field survey of the actual conditions of Bon culture, to the interim symposium and to publication of our fruits. In close cooperation with Dr. Samten G. Karmay (CNRS, Paris), I led the above-mentioned projects, the results of which have been published in the Bon Studies series that appear in *Senri Ethnological Reports* (SER) as is the case of the present lexicon volume.

In the third project, *Linguistic Substratum in Tibet*, we have focused our research solely on analysis of Zhangzhung language as well as field linguistic survey on undescribed Tibeto-Burman languages which are supposed to have some historical relationship to Zhangzhung.

As for the Zhangzhung language, we distinguish two layers: Old Zhangzhung (OZ) and New Zhangzhung (NZ). OZ is represented by some Dunhuang manuscripts, while NZ is a general term for reconstructed lexical shapes by the Bonpo followers probably before the 15th century. We have been trying to analyze and decipher the OZ materials, but, because of lack of parallel texts and of insufficient numbers of lexical samples, the attempt is not satisfactory as of now.

In the NZ studies, on the other hand, we have succeeded in extracting the NZ words from the Bon literature and Bonpo-proper lexical items also observed in main Bonpo religious texts, in collaboration with Triten Norbutse Bonpo Monastic Center, Kathmandu. Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, Geshe Tsultrim Tenzin, Geshe Tritsuk Namdak

and Geshe Lodroe Rabsal toiled throughout 2005 and 2006 at checking the texts and determining the meaning of words. After several rounds of editing, we have reached the present volume. Without their generous consideration and eagerness, this volume would never have seen the light of day.

It must also be noted that Professor Heather Stoddard, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris, translated Tibetan into English with much resourcefulness and accuracy. Her exact and insightful translation has made this publication all the more valuable.

I hope this volume will be an impetus and a firm groundwork for continued research in Zhangzhung and Tibeto-Burman historical linguistics.

Finally, let me express my heartfelt appreciation to Mrs. Satoko Suzuki and Dr. Shin'ichi Tsumagari for their vital practical help.