

みんなくりポジトリ

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Preface

This report contains, in its Part I, results of the COE symposium on Bon studies and, in Part II, fruits of an overseas field-research project on Tibeto-Burman languages in India. Both attempts were supported by the Ministry of Education, Japan.

Part I is part of the results of the international symposium, "New Horizons in Bon Studies," held on 23 through 27 August 1999 at the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka. Bon is one of the pre-Buddhist religions in Tibet. It existed before Buddhism was imported into the area and has survived into the present. Research on the Zhangzhung language, which is thought to have been spoken by Bon believers, presents an interesting challenge. The attempt to understand Zhangzhung, a language which has been dead for a thousand years, is appealing in and of itself, but linguists also expect that this language will yield important clues for understanding the formation of Written Tibetan, which has characteristics quite different from those of other Tibeto-Burman languages. It may also clarify Zhangzhung's genetic relationship with the other Himalayan languages. The last day of the symposium was entirely devoted to linguistic and philological approaches to Zhangzhung. Five papers from a variety of angles were presented. Those papers and Mr. A. Kato's description of Spiti phonology are included in this part. The papers on non-linguistic concerns read at the symposium appeared in *New Horizons in Bon Studies* (edited by S. G. Karmay and Y. Nagano; *Senri Ethnological Reports* 15, National Museum of Ethnology), in July 2000.

Part II is part of fruits of Professor Yoshio Nishi's fieldwork project concerning the Tibeto-Burman languages in the Indian Himalayas, sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Japan, in the fiscal year of 1989. The languages in that area are of an importance but have long been neglected in terms of detailed description. While Professor Nishi publicized his own descriptions rather quickly, it took a long time for him to obtain the other participants' research results. After having obtained them, Professor Nishi found that those submitted results needed a lot of improvement and editing, and requested Professor Randy LaPolla (City University of Hong Kong) to serve as a contributing editor. Professor LaPolla toiled for two years editing and commenting on the papers. Without his sincere efforts and enthusiasm, these monographs would never have seen the light of day. I believe that, after several rounds of editing, the papers have come to be of great use for Tibeto-Burman linguists. Since the languages dealt with in those papers have some possibility of being genetically related to Zhangzhung, Professor Nishi, Professor LaPolla and I agreed in having these monographs published together with the contents of Part I.

I hope that this publication widens scopes of Tibeto-Burman linguistics. Lastly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mrs. Junko Nakamura for her practical help.

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