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Preface

This volume is part of the research results of the international symposium, "Linguistic Substrata in the Tibeto-Burman Area," held on the 9th through 11th September 2008 at the National Museum of Ethnology, under the sponsorship of Monbusho-JSPS Grant-in-aid, "Linguistic Substratum in Tibet" (category S No. 16102001, 2004–2008 fiscal years) as well as that of the National Museum of Ethnology, my working place.

This project marks the third phase of the *Basic Research into Bon Culture in Tibet* launched at the National Museum of Ethnology in 1995, and represents a summation of that research. Japan has a long tradition of Tibetan studies, and has accumulated significant resources. In the field of linguistics, Hajime Kitamura's descriptive research into the Lhasa dialect and Tatsuo Nishida's study of the Xixia language and historical research of Sino-Tibetan languages are representative. However, ultimately the research has centered on Buddhist studies, and attempts to understand Tibet for its own sake have been sparse. At this Museum, it was determined that we would focus on the Bon culture as one of the elements upon which Tibetan culture was founded, and that we would consolidate our research infrastructure and undertake a comprehensive investigation of the topic. Those results were presented in the Bon Studies series of *Senri Ethnological Reports* at the Museum. The present volume concentrates on the status quo of the study on the Zhangzhung language that was spoken among the Bon followers, formation of Old Tibetan and the surrounding Tibeto-Burman language family, and deriving from that, methodological problems associated with historical linguistics.

I hope that this publication widens the scope of Tibeto-Burman studies. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the National Museum of Ethnology for its generous financial help and to Dr. Lawrence Reid, who carefully edited the volume for style and suggested revisions for the papers prepared by non-native speakers of English. Let me add that I am deeply grateful to Mrs. Satoko Suzuki for her vital editorial assistance.

Yasuhiko Nagano