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Introduction

The Tibeto-Burman language family is a significant one, spanning a wide area which includes the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan, the Tibet Autonomous Region, the Himalayan Region, northeastern and northwestern India and northeastern Pakistan. Synchronic and diachronic research into this language family has made great strides in the last 80 years. The framework of genetic relationship within the family has been demonstrated, based on linguistic analyses of the major languages, and we have reached a stage where to some extent, we can see a scaffold for this whole language group. On the other hand, there is some literature which remains undeciphered and there are many languages which are as yet undescribed. Even taking as an example the Tibetan language, which possesses the oldest written materials in this language family, it is likely to have undergone a process whereby various languages came into contact with the natural language which made up the foundation of Written Tibetan forming a substratum with it. This research was commenced with the goal of grasping the outline of pre-Tibetan (or pre-WT) and reconstructing one of the undeciphered languages, Zhangzhung, by obtaining a precise grasp of these linguistic dynamics through fieldwork on the undocumented languages in the western Sichuan ethnic corridor (the northwestern area of Sichuan Province) and the Himalayan region.

Zhangzhung was the language of the Zhangzhung Empire of Western Tibet, the stronghold of the Bon religion, which was dominant in Tibet before the arrival of Buddhism. It became obsolete around the 9th century, when it was overtaken by the Tibetan language. The rising powers of central Tibet accepted Buddhism as the new ideology of state unification, adopted Tibetan as the national language, and by artificially adjusting the sounds and the grammar, drove the political powers, religion and language of Zhangzhung out of central Tibet. From this historical sequence of events, it is easy to understand how this language represents an old stratum of the Tibeto-Burman languages, given that Zhangzhung played such an important role in the formation of Written Tibetan. However, while the adherents of the Bon religion thenceforth came to write their sutras predominantly in Tibetan (we have only six existing texts of Zhangzhung language from Dunhuang), and although the importance of this dead language is recognized, attempts to reconstruct the Zhangzhung language itself have long been abandoned. In order to reconstruct both the old and the new Zhangzhung language, it will be necessary to comprehend synchronically and diachronically the linguistic dynamics of the substratum languages.

This kind of investigative linguistic research is of value not only to the historical study of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages, but is an important experiment for historical linguistic research methodology as a whole. Previously, historical linguistic research relied mainly on the "comparative method," referring to the method by which a proto-form is reconstructed for a parent language via the comparison of the phonological shapes and morphemes as well as syntax of languages predicated to possess a genetic relationship. In the case of the Indo-European language family for which this method was developed, the reliability of the method increased because each language group pursued its unique history over a long period of time after the prototype spread; however, the method is not necessarily effective for language groups such as the Tibeto-Burman languages, where people frequently moved and had con-

tact with others. In order to reconstruct the history of languages of this kind, a comparison of the dynamics which make up the principal axis of the morphosyntax must be carried out exhaustively through both philology and linguistic fieldwork, while taking into account theories such as drift, contact and linguistic substrata.

In order to accomplish this objective, the following forms of practical research were undertaken.

1) *Investigation into undocumented languages of the Tibeto-Burman family, and construction of a database*
   Descriptive research focusing on the morphosyntax of the languages of the western Sichuan ethnic corridor and the Himalayan region—especially Muya, rGyalrong, Qiang, and the Garhwal Himalayish language group—which are thought to have contacted the speakers of the pre-Tibetan language which made up the basis of Written Tibetan; and construct a grammar database.

2) *Reconstruction of pre-Tibetan and research into the formation process of Written Tibetan*
   Through a comparison of substratum languages and Written Tibetan, explore the influence of the substratum languages on the traditional grammar of Tibetan, and reconstruct the lexical shapes and grammar of pre-Tibetan as a natural language. Simultaneously inquire into how Written Tibetan was artificially developed.

3) *Deciphering of Old Zhangzhung literature and reconstruction of its grammar*
   Aim to decipher Zhangzhung, the dominant language spoken by adherents of the Bon religion before Buddhism was brought into Tibet, by undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the language from the perspectives of philological research and statistical mathematics. Use as the subject the six Zhangzhung texts written in the Tibetan script from Dunhuang. In addition, undertake a search for parallel texts.

4) *Analysis of the New Zhangzhung language and compilation of its lexicon*
   After the formation of the Tufan Dynasty, the Zhangzhung language was driven out, and the dead language was revived about the 14th century by adherents of the Bon religion. However, this was at the lexical level, and was merely embedded in various pieces of Bon literature which were written in Tibetan. A grammar is said to exist, but that text has not yet been found. Even if it is at the level of an improvised lexicon, we believe that through integration and analysis of the literature, we will be able to utilize it to reconstruct Old Zhangzhung.

5) *Rethinking methodologies of Tibeto-Burman historical linguistics*
   Based on this concrete linguistic research, we will rethink what is methodologically necessary for the historical research of the Tibeto-Burman language family. In particular, we will examine the degree of effectiveness of the operational concepts of "substrata," "contact" and "drift," and look at their contributions to general linguistics.

Although we pride ourselves on having accomplished some positive results under this research project, where researchers each advance their own studies, it does not appear that the concept of "linguistic substrata" has been fully utilized or developed. The cause of this, in the main, is that we at first naively believed that languages like Zhangzhung made up the substratum of ancient Tibetan. In addition, consideration of the substratum is contingent upon

a reasonable amount of detailed description of the superstratum language and those which make up the substratum, and the trouble was that such detailed descriptions were missing. I believe that this volume is a good opportunity to reconsolidate the issue.

This volume contains the revised articles of presentation at the occasion of the symposium, "Linguistic Substrata in the Tibeto-Burman Area." It constitutes of four chapters; 'Pronominals and Directives,' 'Zhangzhung and Old Tibetan,' 'Comparison and Typology,' and 'Some Critical Eyes on Linguistic Substrata.'

In 'Pronominals and Directives,' we have four description-oriented papers concerning affixes, while 'Zhangzhung and Old Tibetan' contains three articles on the genetic relationship of Zhangzhung to a few subgroups of Tibeto-Burman languages, a paper on Old Zhangzhung and another on the formation of Old Tibetan. In 'Comparison and Typology,' a paper deals with shared morphology, another with typology and two others with drift. In the last chapter, methodological problems concerning substratum and/or superstratum of languages are discussed by five scholars.

<div align="right">Yasuhiko Nagano</div>