

Foreword

Two centuries after John Leyden (1808) first advanced the idea of “the languages of the Indo-Chinese nations” and one century after August Conrady (1896) proposed a proof of the genetic relation among Sino-Tibetan languages, we have on hand two comprehensive surveys (cf. *The Sino-Tibetan Languages* (2003) edited by Thurgood & LaPolla and *HanZangyu Gailun [An Introduction to Sino-Tibetan Languages]* (1991, 2003) edited by Ma Xueliang) but no general consensus concerning the scope of the Sino-Tibetan family, nor the criteria to decide membership in the family. The papers for inclusion in this Special Issue on “Sino-Tibetan Comparative Studies in the 21st Century” were first presented at an international symposium bearing the same theme and held in June 24-25, 2010 at Academia Sinica. They center on the lexical and morpho-syntactic reconstructions proposed for Sino-Tibetan, with the purpose of further delineating the tasks ahead, and resolving, if possible, some of these outstanding issues. The volume contains seven papers. The first three discuss the reconstruction of valency-changing prefixes in Old Chinese and Proto-Sino-Tibetan. Three other papers deal with subgroups of Tibeto-Burman, including Qiangic, Burmic and the Naga languages, and their position in the Tibeto-Burman family. The last two reflect different views on comparative linguistics with a case study pertaining to the history of rGyalrongic and Kiranti.

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