
The title of the volume might create an expectation that an attempt is made at extensive coverage of medieval Tibeto-Burman languages. In fact, unlike The Sino-Tibetan Languages (Thurgood and LaPolla 2003), Medieval Tibeto-Burman Languages II is not an encyclopedic volume, but a collection of research papers, which follows up on the previous volume in the series, Medieval Tibeto-Burman Languages (Brill, 2002, likewise edited by C. Beckwith).

The editor’s Preface (5 pages) provides a presentation of all the chapters, which compensates in part for the absence of abstracts for individual articles. In terms of practical matters, an index for the entire volume would have been a welcome addition for the reader’s orientation.

The volume contains an introduction by the editor, Christopher Beckwith, and a total of eight articles originally presented by the participants at the second Medieval Tibeto-Burman Languages Symposium: Christian Bauer, Kazue Iwasa, Guillaume Jacques, Vadim Kasevich, Rudolf Yanson, and Bettina Zeisler (note that the editor contributes 3 of the 8 papers). Only two of the participants (Wolfgang Behr and Abel Zadoks) did not contribute a chapter.
Each author's contribution will be reviewed in turn.

*Christopher Beckwith*: C. Beckwith's three papers are entitled in order of appearance: "Towards a Tibeto-Burman Theory" (introductory paper, 38 pp.), "The Sonority Sequencing Principle and Old Tibetan Syllable Margins" (a discussion of Old Tibetan syllable structure, 11 pp.), and "Old Tibetan and the Dialects and Periodization of Old Chinese" (a discussion of the history and relationship of Tibetan and Chinese, starting out from an analysis of 'black' and semantically related words, 22 p.). Beckwith exposes a criticism of the notion of *Sino-Tibetan*, questioning the existence of Sino-Tibetan and Tibeto-Burman as language families. If these classifications are still in common use, this is because, "To quote Baudelaire, 'an atmosphere of fear envelops the field' " (p. 4). The author proposes various alternative hypotheses for Tibeto-Burman languages and their relationship to neighbouring languages in the course of their history, including hypotheses on "a significant connection between Proto-Chinese and Proto-Indo-European" (p. 32) and on "a loan influence of Proto-Indo-European or Common Indo-European on 'Proto-Sino-Tibetan' at around 4000 B.P." (p. 33). Given the extremely broad scope of the author's reflections in "Towards a Tibeto-Burman Theory" and "Old Tibetan and the Dialects and Periodization of Old Chinese", which encompass both diachronic and synchronic questions, it is not reasonable to expect an equally thorough coverage of all the issues addressed. Limiting the review to my area of expertise, I must point out that Beckwith's discussion of the notion of lexical tone overlooks important findings reported in the literature on the intonation of the tone systems of Asia. Beckwith questions the notion of phonemic tone, on the grounds that the phonetic realisation of tone in discourse is very variable; his conclusion is that "obviously the textbook definition of tones, or of the phoneme, cannot be correct" (p. 6). In view of the author's insistence on the importance of "*actual connected speech*" (p. 10; emphasis his), it may be relevant to point