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Preface

This volume, which aims to describe and analyze a variety of linguistic problems focusing on the languages spoken around the Middle Mekong region, is the third volume reporting the research results of our project, “A Study of Languages and Linguistic Change in the Middle Mekong Region” (JSPS Kaken #JP17H02335; Principal Investigator: Norihiko Hayashi, Kobe City University of Foreign Studies), which started in 2017 and officially ended in March 2022.

This research project has been working to document lesser-known and/or underdescribed languages in the Middle Mekong region and its surrounding areas, as well as analyzing the linguistic features from typological and historical perspectives. The last two volumes, *Topics in Middle Mekong Linguistics* and *Topics in Middle Mekong Linguistics 2*, published in 2019 and 2020, focused on faunal nomenclature and various topics of historical and descriptive linguistics in the languages of this region.

As in the previous volumes, this volume also focuses on two aspects: faunal terms and grammatical description and analysis, the former of which comprises **Part A** and the latter **Part B** of this book.

Part A includes five papers on faunal terms. **CHAMBERLAIN**’s paper compares the words relating to lizards in Tai languages and investigates their historical aspects to explore the shared features and differences of the words for lizards in all Tai languages. **BADENOCH**’s paper analyzes the Bit [Austroasiatic; Luang Namtha, Laos] word *ɕɰas* ‘ngeuak’ to explore the semantic changes in a certain cultural context. This paper highlights the importance of documenting data on faunal terms in detail to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the relationship between language and cultural background. **BADENOCH** also presents a long text of the Bit story Lady Bulbul and Ngeuak, which contains many types of expressives as an example of the importance of documenting tales on fauna in a lesser- and underdescribed language. **HAYASHI** describes the mammal terms in Muang Sing dialect of Lolopho [Tibeto-Burman, Sino-Tibetan; Laos], and compares them with those in dialects spoken in Yunnan Province, China. Additionally, **BADENOCH** and **HAYASHI** investigate the historical change of the duodenary cycle in languages of the Laos-China border area, which clearly illustrates the linguistic dynamism of the China-Tai influence on the local Tibeto-Burman languages.

As in the previous volumes, this volume also deals with a variety of issues of faunal terms and zoolinguistic problems in the Middle Mekong region involving descriptive linguistics, historical linguistics, archaeology, linguistic anthropology, philology, zoology, etc. We thus hope that this volume will be of great interest to readers from various backgrounds.

Part B of this volume deals with grammatical description and analysis. **KATO**’s paper describes the verbal particles denoting ‘up’ and ‘down’ in Eastern Pwo Karen [Karenic, Tibeto-Burman; Myanmar] and analyzes the meaning and the cooccurrence conditions of these particles and the head verbs in detail. **TAGUCHI**’s paper describes a kind of nominalizer *taA-/ təA-* in Lan Hmyo [Hmongic, Hmong-Mien; Guizhou, China] and investigates its basic behaviors when it is placed before nouns, numerals, or verbs. These two papers form an integral part of this volume in

that detailed grammatical description of lesser-known languages will have a great impact on areal linguistics, descriptive linguistics, and linguistic typology.

We would like to thank again all the speakers of the languages treated in this volume and to express our sincere gratitude to the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science for their financial support. Note that the publication of this volume is partially supported by JSPS Kakenhi (#JP17H02335). The editor would like to express our appreciation for all kinds of assistance from the contributors for their fascinating papers and mutual comments. During these difficult days of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been able to have fruitful discussions full of joy.

Last but not least, we wish to express our appreciation for the academic and financial assistance generously provided by the Research Institute of Foreign Studies at the Kobe City University of Foreign Studies. Without the help of all the people and institutions above, our project and the publication of this volume would not have been possible.

Following from the last two volumes, we wish this volume to also make a worthwhile and substantial contribution to the field of areal linguistics and language documentation in Southeast Asia.

Norihiko HAYASHI
Kobe City University of Foreign Studies
July, 2022

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Luobohe Miaoyu Cihuiji. 《罗泊河苗语词汇集》 [*A Luobohe Miao Lexicon*. (in Chinese)] Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, published in 2008.

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