

**LALA-LAMBA HANDBOOK: A SHORT
INTRODUCTION TO THE SOUTH-
WESTERN DIVISION OF THE WISA-LALA
DIALECT OF NORTHERN RHODESIA,
WITH STORIES AND VOCABULARY**

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WITH STORIES AND VOCABULARY

BY
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PREFACE

THE Lala and Lamba dialects are so nearly identical, and both so closely allied to the Wisa, that knowledge of either is a sufficient introduction to the others. A Wisa Handbook has already been published (Clarendon Press, 1906). But in view of the size of the Lala country, and its position on the direct route from the Victoria Falls to Lake Tanganyika, making it more accessible than the Wisa, a short supplementary account of Lala, showing its relation both of likeness and unlikeness to Wisa, may be of value for practical purposes of teaching and administration, as well as to students of Bantu.

Accordingly the following pages include (1) an outline of Lala Grammar, with notes chiefly on points in which it differs from Wisa ; (2) a collection of phrases and of Lala and Wisa stories, with translations and notes, supplying what is perhaps the most valuable sort of material for a further and more exact study of both dialects ; (3) a Lala-English Vocabulary, which may also be used to supplement the English-Wisa Vocabulary in the 'Wisa Handbook'.

INTRODUCTION

THE Lala dialect here means the dialect spoken with but small variations over a district of about 20,000 square miles (three times the size of Wales), lying in Northern Rhodesia and the intrusive strip of Congo Free State territory south of Lake Bangweolo. The district is roughly rectangular, and bounded by a line drawn from the Luapula at its first westward bend, along the river Lulimala, just north of Livingstone's African grave, and thence north of Moir's Lake to the nearest point on the river Luangwa, down the Luangwa to its junction with the Lukushashi, along the southern and western boundary of the basin of the Lunsenfwa tributary (of the Lukushashi) to its source, thence to the upper Kafuwe river, and so to the Luapula near its first bend to the north. This district contains (1) the Lala tribe, with its local divisions known to each other as the Wa Mitunta (or Masaninga) on the north-east, the Maswaka on the south-west, and the Walala Ukanda on and within the Congo Free State border; (2) the Lamba, on both sides of the border from the upper waters of the Lunsenfwa and Kafuwe rivers to the Luapula; and (3) the Wambo Senga, along the west bank of the Luangwa, distinct in dialect (whatever their origin) from the Senga of the eastern bank.

There is now no clear line between the Lala and their Wisa neighbours on the north-east, either as to lands or language, though certain recognized landmarks still remain. But there is evidence that the Lalas arrived first from the north, and were pushed south and west by the Wisas (themselves under pressure from the advance of the warlike Wemba (Bemba) tribe), till confronted by the Batonga and kindred tribes on the Zambesi

and lower Kafuwe. But the Lalas, even more than the Wisas, give the impression of being a broken and defenceless people, at any rate since the terrible Zulu invasion swept the country in the last century. And though already showing recovery under British protection and good government, they appear to be even behind their neighbours in tribal cohesion and modes of life. Year after year villages have been totally deserted for months at a time, the inhabitants living in the forest, harvesting and preparing new gardens. Even when they return (if they do so) to their old huts, their food is constantly stored away in distant hiding-places known only to themselves, and only visited as need requires. Iron-work seems to be their one profitable industry, besides making mats, bark cloth, and earthen pots; but their skill in smelting, tempering, and forging attracts customers for axes, hoes, and weapons, even from surrounding tribes. It has been already stated that the Lala and Wisa dialects are practically one. But to ascertain the fact and the limits within which it was true, entailed a quite disproportionate amount of time and attention, simply from the difficulty of finding a Lala acquainted with any but his own language. It would have been more difficult still if it had not been for the kind and efficient help given me by Mr. J. E. Stephenson, a district official of the British South Africa Company, whose careful notes and collections furnished most useful help in arriving at conclusions both as to grammar and vocabulary. My fullest acknowledgements are due to him, and also to Messrs. H. Croad and J. Moffat Thomson, both British South Africa Company officials, for much kind help and encouragement. But the general result, after verification in both divisions of the Lala country, being as given above, it only remains to make clear the object of even a small separate account of Lala.

In brief, the peculiarities of Lala, though relatively small, are sufficiently important to call for a supplement to the 'Wisa Handbook'. At the same time, the comparative prominence

of the Lala dialect, as that which most Europeans would first come in contact with, suggests the addition of an outline of the grammar, as well as a vocabulary and some Lala stories. Thus the Lala and Wisa Handbooks may be regarded as mutually supplementary.

The total number of people speaking Lala-Lamba-Wisa can only be guessed, but is probably not less than 100,000. The Lala people are called Walala, their language Chilala, and their country Wilala (*wi* representing the *w* of many other dialects).

A. C. MADAN.

MKUSHI, N. W. R.,

July, 1907.

In Part I, GRAMMAR, paragraphs are numbered consecutively for convenience of reference.

References to Lala may be taken as equivalent to Lala-Lamba throughout, and the differences pointed out between Lala and Wisa are of course more marked among the Lala of the west (W. Lala, or Maswaka) than on the borderland of the tribes.

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