*Language.—*The language of Tibet bears no special name, it is merely known as “ The Speech of Bod or Tibet,” namely, *Bod-skad* (pronounced *Bhö-kä),* while the vernacular is called *P'al-skad* or “ vulgar speech,” in contradistinction to the *rje-sa* or “ polite respectful speech ” of the educated classes, and the *ch'os-skad* or "book language,” the literary style in which the scriptures and other classical works are written.

It is not a uniform speech, but comprises several dialects which have been classed by jaeschke into three groups, namely (1) the central or the dialects of Lhasa and the central provinces of Ü and Tsang (including Spiti) which is the *lingua franca* of the whole country, (2) the western dialects of Ladak, Lahul, Baltistan and Purig., and (3) the eastern dialects of the province of Khams. In addition to these, however, are many sub-dialects of Tibetan spoken in the frontier Himalayan districts and states outside Tibet, namely, in Kunawar and Bashahr, Garhwal, Kumaon, Nepal including especially the Serpa and Murmi of eastern Nepal, Sikkim (where the dialect is called Dänjong-kã), Bhutan (Lho-kä or Duk-kä), all of which are affiliated to a central group of dialects. Farther east the Takpa qf.Tawang in the eastern Assam Himalayas appears to form a transition between the central and the Sifan group of dialects on the Chinese frontier, which includes the Minyak, Sungpan, Lifan and Tochu dialects. On the north bordering on Turkestan the dialect of the nomadic Hor-pa tribes is much mixed with Turkic ingredients. The number of speakers of Tibetan dialects is probably not far short of eight millions.

Linguistically, Tibetan is allied to the Burmese languages, and forms with the latter a family of the so-called Turano-Scythian stock called “ Tibeto-Burman" (*q.v.*), the unity of which family was first recognized by Brian Hodgson in 1828, and indeed several of the dialects of Tibetan are still only known through the copious vocabularies collected by him. The little that

was known of the Tibetan language before Hodgson’s time

was mainly derived from the writings of the Romish friars who

resided for several years in Lhasa in the first half of the

18th century.@@1 The first serious European student of Tibetan was Csoma de Körös (1784-1842), an indefatigable Hungarian, who devoted his life to the study of this language and the ancient Buddhist records enshrined in its unknown literature. For this purpose he resided like a monk for several years among the lāmas at the monasteries of Zangla and Pukdal in Zanskar and latterly at Kanum in upper Bashahr, enjoying the assistance of learned lāmas. His *Tibetan-English Dictionary,* and pioneer *Tibetan Gram­mar,* both published in 1834, opened to Europeans the way to acquire a knowledge of the Tibetan language as found in the ancient classics.@@2 The next great advance in the study of the Tibetan language we owe to the labours of H. A. Jeaschke of the Moravian mission which was established in Ladak in 1857. This scholarly linguist, equipped with modern methods of scientific research, did not confine himself to the classical period like Csoma, but extended his

investigations to the. language as a whole, and provided Europeans for the first time with the means of making a practical study of modern Tibetan and the speech of the people His *Tibetan-English Dictionary* and *Tibetan Grammar* are models of scientific precision and important sources of our knowledge of the structure and develop­ment of the language, and the former is not superseded by Chandra Das’s Dictionary.@@3

The language was first reduced to writing with the assistance of Indian Buddhist monks in the middle of the .7th century a.d. by Thonmi, a Tibetan layman. The letters, which are a form of the Indian Sanskrit characters of that period, follow the same arrangement, as their Sanskritic prototype. The consonants, 30 in number, which are deemed to possess an inherent sound α, are the following: *ka, k'a, ga, nga, ca, ca, ja, nya, ta, t'a, da, na, pa, ρ'a, ba, ma, tsa, tsta, dza, wa, z'a, za, tha, ya, ra,la,s'a,sa,ha, a;* the so-called Sanskrit cerebrals arc represented by the letters *ta, t'a, da, na, s'a,* turned the other way. *Ya,* when combined as second consonant with *k-, p-, m-,* is written under the first letter. *Ra,* when combined as second letter with *k-, t-, p-,* is written under the first, and when combined with another consonant as first letter over the second. The vowels, are *a, i, u, e, o,* which arc not distinguished as long.or short in writing, except in loan words transcribed from the Sanskrit, &c., though they are so in the vernaculars in the case of words altered by phonetic detrition. By means of agglutination, that is, by adding to the bases form-words as prefixes, suffixes or infixes, the Tibetan language has developed a considerable grammatical system and is now agglutinating rather than isolating. Agglomera­tions of consonants are often met with as initials, giving the appear­ance of telescoped words—an appearance which historical etymology often confirms. Many of these initial consonants are silent in the dialects of the central provinces, or have been resolved into a simpler one of another character. The language is much ruled by laws of euphony, which have been strictly formulated by native gram­marians. Among the initials, five, viz. *g, d, b, m, 'h,* are regarded as prefixes, and are called so for all purposes, though they belong sometimes to the stem. As a rule none of these letters can be placed before any of. the same organic class. Post-positions, *pa* or *ba* and *ma,* are required by the noun (substantive or adjective) that is to be singled out; *po* or *bo* (masc.) and *mo* (fem.) are used for dis­tinction of gender or for emphasis. The cases of nouns are indicated by suffixes, which vary their initials according to the final of the nouns. The plural is denoted when required by adding one of several words of plurality. . When several words are connected in a sentence they seldom require more than one case element, and that comes last. There are personal, demonstrative, interrogative and reflexive pronouns, as well as an indefinite article, which is also the numeral for “ one.” The personal pronouns are replaced by various terms of respect when speaking to or before superiors, and there are many words besides which are only employed in ceremonial language.

@@@1 The Capuchin friars who were settled in Lhasa for a quarter of a century from 1719 studied the language; two of them, Francisco Orazio della Penna, well known from his accurate description of Tibet, and Cassian di Macerata sent home materials which were utilized by the Augustine friar Aug. Ant. Georgi of Rimini (1711- 1797) in his *Alphabetum tibetanum* (Rome, 1762, 4to), a ponderous and confused compilation, which may be still referred to, but with great caution. The Tibetan characters were drawn by Della Penna and engraved by Ant. Fontarita in 1738. In 1820 Abel Rémusat published his *Recherches sur les langues tartares,* a chapter of which was devoted to Tibetan.

@@@2 The first Tibetan dictionary for Europeans was a *Dictionary of the Bhotanta or Bhutan Language,* published at Serampur near Calcutta in 1828. It was, however., crude and unedited and con­tained many serious mistakes, having been taken from the MS. notes of an unknown Italian priest (now believed .to be Father Juvenal of Agra, who had been stationed near the frontier of Bhutan), whose MS. was translated into English by Fr. Chr. G. Schroeter and published without supervision by any Tibetan scholar; and Csoma was unaware of its existence when compiling his dictionary. At St Petersburg J. J. Schmidt published his *Grammatik der tibetischen Sprache* in 1839 and his *Tibetisch-deutsches Wörterbuch* in 1841, but neither of these works justified the great pretensions of the author, whose access to Mongolian sources had enabled him to enrich the results of his labours with a certain amount of information unknown to his predecessors. In France, P. E. Foucaux published in 1847 a translation from the *Rgya tcher rol-pa,* the Tibetan version of the *Lalita Vistara,* and in 1858 a *Grammaire thibétaine·,* while Ant. Schiefner had begun at St Petersburg in 1849 his series of translations and researches. His *Tibetische Studien (1851-1868)* is a valuable collection of documents and observations. In 1861 Lepsius published his paper *Ueber chinesische und tibetische Lautver­hältnisse·,* and after 1864 Léon Feer brought out in Paris many translations of texts from Tibetan Buddhist literature. In 1828- 1849 the *Journal* of the Asiatic Society of Bengal published com­parative vocabularies of spoken and written Tibetan by Brian H. Hodgson, and grammatical notices of Tibetan (according to Csoma’s grammar).

@@@3 Jaeschke from 1860 to 1867 made several important communica­tions, chiefly with reference to the phonetics and the dialectical pronunciation, to the academies of Berlin and St Petersburg, and in the *Journal* of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. In 1868 at Kyelang he published by lithography *A Short Practical Grammar of the Tibetan Language, with special reference to the spoken dialects,* and the following year a Romanized *Tibetan and English Dictionary.* He also published in 1871-1876 at Gnadau in Prussia by the same process a Tibetan and German dictionary. Afterwards he prepared for the English Government a *Tibetan-English Dictionary, with special reference to the prevailing dialects,* in 1881. Dr H. Wenzel, one of his pupils, edited in 1883 from his MS. a *Simplified Tibetan Grammar.* Major Th. H. Lewin with the help of a Sikkimese lama compiled. *A Manual of Tibetan,* or rather a series of colloquial phrases in the Sikkimese dialect, in 1879. In 1894 Mr Graham Sandberg compiled a useful *Handbook of Colloquial Tibetan.* Père Desgodins in 1899 issued from Hong-Kong a large Tibeto-Latin- French dictionary, *Dictionnaire thibétain-latin-français.* In 1890 Captain H. Ramsay published at Lahore his useful *Practical Dictionary of Western Tibet.* In 1902 was brought out at Calcutta Sarat Chandra Das’s *Tibetan English Dictionary with Sanskrit syno­nyms,* a massive volume compiled with the aid of Tibetan lamas and edited by Graham Sandberg and the Moravian missionary A. W. Heyde. The *Tibetan Manual* by V. C. Henderson (1903) is a useful work, and so is the *Manual of Colloquial Tibetan* by C. A. Bell (Calcutta, 1905), which has full. English-Tibetan vocabularies, graduated exercises and examples in the Lhasa dialect of to-day. An interesting and important analysis of many of the dialects and of the general structure of the language has been made by Dr G. A. Grierson, with the collaboration of Dr S. Konow, in his *Linguistic Survey of India* (1908). As regards native philology, the most ancient work extant is a grammar of the Tibetan tongue preserved in the *Bstan-hgyur* (mdo. cxxiv.).. This collection also contains other works of the same kind, dictionaries by later writers, transla­tions of many Sanskrit works on grammar, vocabulary, &c., and bilingual dictionaries, Sanskrit and Tibetan. As separate publica­tions there are several vocabularies of Chinese and Tibetan; Mongol and Tibetan; Chinese, Manchu, Mongol, Oelöt, Tibetan and Turkish; Tibetan, Sanskrit, Manchu, Mongol and Chinese.