

The Haasnoots in Masha

News about the Shekacho Bible Translation Project

June 2001

In June last year we moved to Masha, the biggest town in the Shekacho area. Since then lots of things have happened in the Shekacho project.

Translation of Mark's Gospel

Tegbaru and Tadlele, the two Shekacho translators, have been working on the translation of the gospel of Mark for several months now. This translation is a first draft. We still have a long way to go before it can be printed but the first steps have been made! It is a fascinating and, at times, difficult process to translate God's Word for the first time into the Shekacho language. One of the challenges is this question: How do we translate 'Holy Spirit'? Do we translate it literally (like: 'pure Spirit') or can we use ideas from the traditional religion? What kind of message do we convey if we use terms from the traditional religion? At the same time we are encouraged when we can use a 'cultural equivalent' for a word like 'cornerstone'. Cornerstone does not convey a lot of meaning when

most of the houses are made of wood and bamboo in the Shekacho area. But if we translate cornerstone with 'yengaro' then this idea suddenly becomes very clear to the Shekacho people. The *yengaro* is the roof beam in a Shekacho house. If somebody wants to build a house, the first thing he does is to find a *yengaro*, a roof beam. The *yengaro* holds the whole construction together. Without a *yengaro* there can not be a house! Jesus is our *yengaro*!

And Noah built an ... raft?!

What do you think about this: all the animals, two by two, embark on a bamboo raft!? Tegbaru, one of the Shekacho translators, came across this problem when he was translating the story of Noah from an Amharic children's bible. There is no word for 'boat' or 'ship' in the

Shekacho language. Since most Shekacho's are farmers, they are not really familiar with boats. They have a word for 'bamboo raft'. They use such a raft to cross the rivers in the area. For the time being, Tegbaru chose to use a loanword from Amharic for 'boat'.

Struck by lightning

A family member of one of the translators was hit and killed by lightning some time ago. Through this sad event we heard the following remarkable story about how people hit by lightning are treated in the Shekacho culture. If you see somebody that is hit by lightning lying on the ground, you should not touch that person. What you do have to do is this: you take a knife and cut your own finger. Then you let the blood from your finger drop on the body of the person that was hit by lightning. If you have done this, you can touch the person and he will be healed. According to the Shekacho people, there are quite a number of people that have come to life again by this 'treatment'!

'Our language is the best!'

We have made a start recently with visiting Shekacho churches to tell people more about Bible translation and literacy. It is encouraging to see how enthusiastic people are about getting God's Word in their own language. In one church people started to applaud after we read a few verses of the trial translation of Mark. In that same church Tadlele asked the people: 'What is better for the Shekacho people, to have the Bible in Amharic [national language] or to have it in our own language?'. Everybody raised their hands and they said: 'Our own language is the



best!'. One man shouted: 'Yeeri gala-tiyabe!', praise the Lord. We had announced that we would sell the newly translated church liturgy booklet after the program. As soon as Tadlele had said

the 'amen' of the closing prayer, a number of people ran to the front waving with their money. They wanted to be sure to get a copy of the liturgy booklet!

Quote - Unquote

"A missionary wrote me: 'Sometimes adversity tempts me to discouragement in the face of seeming failure. But I take courage and press on anew, as I remember that God does *not* hold me responsible for success, but for faithfulness'. Jesus said: 'Well done, you faithful servant', not 'Well done, you successful servant.'" (Corrie ten Boom).

The Child of the Blue Nile is thirsty!

We have been collecting a number of proverbs and sayings in the Shekacho language. Sayings and proverbs tell you more about customs and culture. Here are a few Shekacho sayings.

emishe	giishi	giishi	shaane	hetti	yexxi	wuxi	fatayone.
goat	slow	slow	she walks	it says	hitting	killing	he carries

If you hit and kill a goat because it walked so slowly, you will have to carry her yourself. It is better to be patient! Impatience makes things worse.

kotachoyis	shamaaho	katinone.
for the one who sits	the sky	is nearby

For the one who sits the sky is close. If you sit on a chair and you look at the sky, you could think: 'It can't be too hard to get there'. If you try though, it will be different. To look at somebody else's work is not so difficult, but to do it yourself can be a different experience!

niho	daanyo	busho	shottacho.
father	judge	child	robber

The father is a judge and the child is a robber. Where can you complain about a child that steals when his father is the judge? More general: what can you do against a son who does not behave, if his father is in a powerful position?

Abbay	busho	aaco	humaanaye.
Blue Nile	child	water	is thirsty

The child of the Blue Nile is thirsty. The Blue Nile has enough water but it can be that a smaller connected river ('her child') is dry. This means: if the parents are successful it does not mean automatically that the children are also successful.



What about the Haasnoot family?

We are doing well! Joel (12 years old) has been boarding this past year. That was a new experience for all of us. It was not easy for Joel in the beginning but he survived (and his parents as well...) and is doing well now. Jesse (7 years old) is being home schooled most of the time. He can read now in both Dutch and English and starts to enjoy books more and more. Desta (3 years old) likes to be in the home school as well. When he wants to play outside, he just goes and tells our house workers: 'I have finished all my work and the teacher said I could go!'. David (1 year old) likes to explore and to tell his big brothers that these toys are 'mine!!!!'. His limited vocabulary is a combination of four (!) languages: Dutch, Shekacho, Amharic and English. He will be a real linguist!

From June 18 until October 16 this year we will be in the Netherlands for our second furlough. We are looking forward to meeting family and friends. It will also be an opportunity to visit churches and - also important! - to have times of rest.

Ten ways to know your parents are missionaries

1. You flew before you could walk.
2. Your life story uses the phrase 'Then we went to...' five times.
3. National Geographic makes you homesick.
4. You don't know where home is.
5. You know what REAL coffee tastes like.
6. Going to the post office is the highlight of your day.
7. When all your clothes have been worn by someone else.
8. When you find a seven year old picture of yourself on someone's refrigerator.
9. When you write in your diary in a foreign language.
10. People simply don't understand.

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Thanks for your prayers and your support!

Warm greetings,
Mirjam, Jaap, Joel, Jesse, Desta & David Haasnoot

