

so Telugu would have been the natural choice of script, and the sound values of our vowels and consonants would have been amply covered by their alphabet; but because Oriya is the language of all Kond schools and law courts, as well as being necessary for all traders who go down to the markets and towns of the Plains, it was decided to adopt the Oriya script, even though it belongs to the Sanscrit group of Northern India. This has entailed the use of many diacritical marks, the breaking of rules governing the combination of vowels and consonants in Oriya, and the cutting of special type for the printing of Kui. It also means that the compositors in the Press, who are all Oriyas, have to set up type for our work that uses many of their letters but breaks most of their rules, and this makes many difficulties both for them and us.

Through the years many discoveries were made as we strove to find the right words by which to translate the Scriptures, so many that I am convinced that even now there are many more still to be brought to our knowledge. It is inevitable that quite a number of the words and phrases used have little Biblical significance for many of the Christians at present, and certainly for the non-Christians, but these words will gradually assume, in the minds of believers, the special meaning that they are intended to convey, just as words like 'salvation' and 'redemption' in English have grown in significance since the days of King James.

Looking back three things stand out more than anything else; the amazing beauty of the thirteenth of Corinthians which shines through and glorifies the words, no matter what the language; the personality of some of the writers that seemed to emanate from the pages of their writings; and the sense of compulsion, both to go on and to stop, that brooked no questioning.

Questions and Answers

Question:

The Fulani Revision Committee would be grateful if you could help us in finding a word for 'priest'. As you know, Islam has no priesthood; the idea of a priest coming between men and God is foreign to a Moslem. Possibly the Imam of a mosque might be said to correspond as nearly as possible to a priest? The Fulani use the word *Limanjo* for such a person. Would you recommend using this word or coining a new word? And the word 'sacrifice'? The nearest we appear to get is by using the root, meaning 'to cut the throat', so that the noun would be the root plus the suffix for a sheep or goat, or a neutral form. What is done in other languages spoken by Moslems?

What about the word for 'Sabbath'? Do you recommend coining a word from the Hebrew, or using the word for Saturday, or the day of rest? Incidentally, can you please tell us whether or not the Jewish sabbath began at sunset on the day of preparation (Friday) and ended on the sabbath at sunset? Our Fulani reckon a day of twenty-four

hours from sunset to sunset. The matter came up at the revision meeting and none of our theological books could give us any definite ruling!
Answer:

'Priest': This is a notorious difficulty. If *Limanjo* is the Fulani word for Imam, I do not think you can use it as it would have the full Islamic connotation. I would suggest that you coin a word or use a periphrasis such as 'one who speaks to God for the people' or 'one who offers sacrifice', according to the particular context.

'Sacrifice': I suppose the Islamic use of Arabic will not help you here? Quite a number of Islamic languages in Africa and also in India fall back on Arabic religious terminology which is often rooted in Hebrew. (It occurs to me, for instance, that you might use some form of QHN for 'Priest'. In Urdu we use *Kahin* which is not really an Indian word at all, and I see that in Swahili they use the same trilateral with appropriate vowels).

Now for 'sacrifice', can you use some word that would imply more directly the spiritual significance of the act? We must remember that there was a variety of forms of sacrifice. There was the fire-offering, as well as the slaughtered animal—*Zabach* as opposed to *Ishsheh*. It is difficult to say anything helpful without a knowledge of the language and culture, but can you bring into your word the idea of 'offered to God'?

'Sabbath': I think I would recommend transliteration in the case of this word, as the word is peculiar to a particular culture and attempts to translate almost invariably lose some of its features. The best alternative to this is some word meaning 'day of rest'. The Jewish Sabbath began at sunset on the sixth day, ending at sunset on the seventh day. This should fit in with your reckoning.

W. J. B.

N.B. The following note is added by Dr. J. L. Swellengrebel, now working on the translation of the Old Testament into Bahasa Indonesia:

"Perhaps it is interesting to note that in Indonesian Bible translation also, *imam* has been consistently used from the beginning for 'priest' (both Jewish and heathen). The solution certainly is not a perfect one, but, up till now, it has not been possible to find a better one. The opinion of Islam about 'priests' is such that every native word is brought down to the level of 'magician', 'witchdoctor', etc. Therefore translators have been compelled to choose the nearest possible equivalent in Islam, which as a matter of fact is not a very near one, unfortunately.—For 'sacrifice' the Indonesian translation uses a well known Indonesian word which is a borrowing from Arabic (and through that from Hebrew), *korban*, in the meaning it has taken on here, which is, as formulated in Wilkinson's Dictionary (1, 628), 'holocaust, burnt-offering, (esp) the sacrifice at the end of the *hajj*; more loosely, of any sacrifice; of the sacrifice of life in war, or of a woman being the victim of her husband's love of drink.'"