Our placement at Sanggona in Southeast Celebes

by
Dirk Kok

translated by
David Mead

2021

Sulang Language Data and Working Papers: Translations from the Dutch, no. 27

Sulawesi Language Alliance
http://sulang.org/

SulangText001-v1-20100831

LANGUAGES

Subject language : Tolaki
Language of materials : English

DESCRIPTION

In this article the author summarizes the time he and his family spent as missionaries in Southeast Celebes (Sulawesi) from February 1920 to March 1922, including interesting events and pictures of daily life. Particular attention is given to the difficulties they faced in getting established at Sanggona, and their successes afterward.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SOURCE

Kok, D. 1922. Onze vestiging te Sanggona op Z.O.–Celebes. *Orgaan der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging* 62:137–142, 155–158, 165–175. Original pagination is indicated by including the page number in square brackets, e.g. [p. 137].

VERSION HISTORY

Version 1 [26 September 2021] Translated July 2020, prepared for online publication August and September 2021.

[p. 137]

Our placement at Sanggona in Southeast Celebes [1] [2]

By Brother D. Kok of Sanggona (Southeast Celebes)

There was still a year to go before we reached that point.

We arrived at the coastal town of Kolaka in Februrary 1920. We had caught the K.P.M.[3] steamer on its short route and made it from Makassar to Kolaka in three days.

When you hear it said this way, you will probably get the impression of a rather good connection between Kolaka and Makassar. There is nothing but good to tell about the steamer that makes the connection; this is acknowledged from personal experience by everyone who has travelled by such a ship. We can also gratefully report about the help provided to us by the captain and other crew.

However, you will have a better understanding of the time of connection when we put together the following case:

By ship comes a notification of a parcel-post package. The mail is brought up, which takes three days. Three days before the time that the ship is expected in Kolaka, we send a young man down with the mail, thus also with the notification.

The ship arrives every twelve or sixteen days, depending on whether the ship travels via Palopo to Kolaka or vice versa from Kolaka to Palopo.

At best, therefore, after thirty-one days from when the notification was sent from Makassar, we can receive the parcel at Sanggona.

It has happened—and this happened to us more than once—that a young man, on his way bringing down the mail, got pain in his feet or a fever overtook him, and therefore he came down later, after the ship had already departed. Then the time stretched out another twelve or sixteen more days. [p. 138]

We authorized someone at Kolaka to sign such notifications for us, which allowed them to be sent to Makassar by the same ship. This didn't help us much, since as a rule

---

[1] [translator's note: This report was published in the October, November and December 1922 issues (No.s 10, 11 & 12) of *Orgaan der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging*, but had been written in July of that year.]

[2] [translator's note: I would like to thank Frank Doejaaren and René van den Berg for helping me through the Dutch at several turns.]

[3] [translator's note: Koninklijke Paketvaart-Maatschappij, Dutch for Royal Packet Navigation Company.]

the ship arrived very early in the morning and left soon after, whereas our agent was apparently of a regular way of life, that is to say, he didn't shorten his sleep except when very important reasons necessitated him to do so. So this didn't benefit us much.

So it was a remarkable thing when we received a parcel-post package, for which we had not received the notification first.

So now you can imagine the connection with Makassar and also understand that when the mail came up, it was one of the highlights of the month.

Just when we left for Java, we learned that we were allowed to have our own mailbag. That would have been a great improvement.

So we departed Makassar, and after three days of travel arrived in Kolaka in February 1920.

It was early in the morning, but all kinds of larger and smaller vessels were waiting for the ship. From the pier at Kolaka it took about ten minutes of paddling to get to where the ship dropped anchor, then it was a competition of all those boats to see who could reach the ship first.

Young men jumped into the sea to take the rope from a boat to the ship, to attach it there, after which the crew pulled the boat towards the ship, which went faster than rowing.

There is a lot of commotion and yelling, and the fact that not more accidents happen is a miracle.

We boarded a row boat, accompanied by some young men employed by Brother V. D. KLIFT, who brought us a letter from him, insisting that he was sorry not to be able to pick us up, as the happy circumstance of family enlargement had taken place at his home.[4]

Nevertheless, it turned out that he had taken care of us. We were able to move into the pasanggrahan[5] in Kolaka.

For my wife there was some objection to going to Mowewe on horseback and we decided to use a litter for her,[6] while I would ride on horseback.

---

[4] [translator's note: The obscure reference here is to the birth of Johan Joachim van der Klift in Mowewe on the 12th of February, 1920.]

[5] [translator's note: From Javanese, meaning a guest house or hostel for travelling officials.]

[6] [translator's note: Unstated but clearly germane, Dirk's wife Dean had just entered her eighth month of pregnancy. Their son Andries was born in Mowewe on the 15th of April, 1920 (ARvdZ 2028/25).]

Br. V. D. KLIFT's young men went back to Mowewe to convey our decision, while we set ourselves up and waited for the porters and the litter. After a few days what we had been longing for arrived.

We had the opportunity to take a look at Kolaka. Kolaka is not a large place. I doubt the number of people living there—the Chinese, the Buginese, and the Ambonese, who are stationed there as soldiers—even reaches a thousand.

After a few days we journeyed to Mowewe. At seven o'clock in the morning the porters gathered in front of the pasanggrahan. My wife took her place in the litter, and I mounted my horse.

Immediately outside the village the climb started. Here the road is very steep and the litter was almost on end; beyond that it went more gradually.

The trip did not go so fast. Time and again the litter had to be set down. There were eight porters, but the chair itself was quite heavy, and this plus my wife's weight made the burden even more severe.

I tried to help the people by having my horse pull on a rope. This was a little quicker, but now there was something else. The more pulling power the horse exercised, the more the porters felt the force on their shoulders. It soon became apparent that this method was not the right one either. The porters were more receptive to my next suggestion, that my wife should get out every now and then and walk on my arm. My wife also welcomed this proposal. The rocking of the chair, which occasionally stood on end so that my wife stood more than lay, was now not so agreeable to make her say, "Wonderful, to be carried like this!" The road crosses three ridges, so up and down.

It was already getting on toward one o'clock when we were halfway, strengthened and refreshed, but we had to move with speed to get to Mowewe before dark.

Finally at sunset we reached the last mountaintop and saw in front of us, down in the valley, very small, the house of Br. V. D. KLIFT. With a loud cry the porters went on, now that they were so close. My wife had tired herself so much when she went up the mountain that now, going down, she once again made use of the litter.

We had also been spotted from the yard of Br. V. D. KLIFT. As we learned later, someone had seen the white horse, clearly visible and shining in the evening sun, followed by a procession of men. We hadn't reached the foot of the mountain when help met us, and then the group went forward at a run, screaming and yelling.

It was quite dark as we approached the VAN DER KLIFT's house. We saw a lamp, which worked on us like a spotlight. [p 140] We could heard Br. V. D. KLIFT's voice but saw nothing of him.

You can understand how happy we were to have arrived, but also the joy of Br. V. D. KLIFT's family who, after less than a year living in the mountains,[7] received their first lodgers, who would soon become their fellow helpers.

How we felt it in our legs the next day!

It was obvious that our stay in Mowewe would only be temporary. However we didn't expect that it would be more than another year before we would go to Sanggona, the place where we were to be posted.

Since we knew virtually nothing about the language when we arrived at Mowewe, the first few months we did nothing but study language. Later when we had a house boy, he was helpful to us.

That young man had been given a nickname by his companions that meant, roughly, able to get his bread without working. He was a first-class slacker, at least as far as the outside work was concerned. I would therefore have dismissed him long ago, had he not stolen my wife's heart by his neat and tidy work indoors and his patience, with which he endeavored to speak his language to her, and understood precisely the meaning that she wanted to put into her words but, unfortunately, had actually put so little of it in. Of course that didn't just happen to my wife, you understand.

So he stayed, and said to me that I must ask him everything, and he would teach me the language.

Then he could sit on his mat and smoke a cigarette, which I offered him to keep him motivated, you know?

So he also appeared to have his good qualities, and he taught us a lot of the language, because of his patience, which sometimes extended so far that he fell asleep in it.

After a few months, Br. V. D. KLIFT and I were able to make a trip to the north, to find a place where we could settle.

After a fortnight we returned home. A day before we arrived, my wife had become ill and now lay in bed with a continuing intestinal disorder.

Whether it was seeing her husband return or something else, after a few days she happily recovered and we could talk about the future, about Sanggona, a place two days' travel from Mowewe, thus three days from the coast.

---

[7] [translator's note: The Van der Klift family had moved from Kolaka to Mowewe in May of the previous year (1919) (Van der Klift-Snijder 1996:32).]

This village is a big place for those parts, but still had no more than 400 inhabitants. These people belong to a different clan than the people among whom Br. V. D. KLIFT works. [p. 141]

Sanggona is located on the Konaweha River, which flows toward Kendari.

Such a river, which is wide and deep enough for large rafts laden with rattan or coconuts, has its significance for the hinterland, you understand. However the good connection with Kendari had also encouraged the propagation of Islam, and still does, something less desireable for our work.

The traders here consist mainly of Buginese and only a few Chinese. These traders buy up the rattan and the coconuts in the villages along the river.

As true Muslims, they propagate Islam. Along with this, the leaders there descend from their former overlords, from Boni and Luwuk, and therefore are also usually Muslims, which is the case here too.

Now Islam has already found so much of an entrance that there are Muslim religious students, and places of worship have been set up in some villages; that many times we have seen a guru,[8] who lives in one of the neighboring villages, in our village. No dead person is buried there without first waiting for his arrival. Furthermore, many from our village are circumcised. You will soon be clear that there is something behind it other than a sense of affiliation with the religion of Islam.

So Sanggona would be our place of residence, if everything went as we proposed.

When Br. V. D. KLIFT and I determined Sanggona as the place best suited to our work, we called the head of the village, the former village head, named the old kapala,[9] as well as the former clan leader and the village sub-heads.

Our intention was communicated to them. Quietly they heard everything, they made no objections, and when we asked where the most suitable place for our house would be, we were shown a place.

So everything went smoothly. In no time we would have our own small house and then our work would begin.

How mistaken we were!

---

[8] [translator's note: Malay *guru* 'teacher', ultimately of Sanskrit origin. In this text the reference is always to a Muslim cleric.]

[9] [translator's note: Malay *kapala* 'head', or as the context makes clear, specifically the head or leader of a village.]

After a while, Br. V. D. KLIFT and I returned to Sanggona, to encourage the people. After this had been done, Br. V. D. KLIFT returned home and I was left alone to receive what was to be brought.

What expectations I had! I was already worried that there was no storage space for everything, and I decided for the time being to store the beams under the pasanggrahan, so that they would not suffer too much from the rain. If only they brought a hundred thatch panels, so that I could have my young men make a barn. [p. 142]

So I thought and deliberated, until the first day went by without my seeing anyone. The village seemed to be deserted. So it went the next few days.

I had two young men with me. They came from Mowewe and therefore did not belong to the same clan as the people of Sanggona. In addition, perhaps they knew more than I did and were better aware of people's feelings. Be that as it may, they slept with me in the pasanggrahan and tied the rattan door tightly inside, keeping their large machetes close at hand.

I clearly noticed that they were not at ease, and after we had waited a few days, during which no one appeared, they voiced their concerns, that it would come to nothing, that the people were unwilling. When no one showed up the next day and I saw no people in the village, I decided to return.

Nevertheless I was not entirely free from the feeling that a soldier must have when he flees his post. But I was so disappointed, and on top of that I also knew so little of the language that truly little came of a conversation with my young men. Under such circumstances and feeling completely alone, I needed to go back for a few days.

Fear of the people did not make me go back, although in the village lived the former clan leader. This one had a glowing hatred for all that was white.

He was first and chiefly limited in his power by the government. In the past, when the government had not yet asserted itself in the interior, he could do whatever he wanted, even to kill someone. Later he had to comply with the law.

When he was guilty of several things, he was punished with banishment. [p. 155]

When he returned he was no longer allowed to take his place as head, and was then nothing more than an ordinary villager who, like them, had to work on the road when it was time.[10]

In practice, however, he still appeared to have his old influence, and that the present clan leader himself was afraid of him and gave in to him as much as possible.

---

[10] [translator's note: The Dutch administration used corvée labor suppled by the local population to build and improve roads.]

That man with his unsympathetic countenance and glowing hatred for all that was white, who had so much influence because of his brutality and talk, lived in Sanggona.

He was always friendly when he met us, and the day before his arrest he had brought us some more coconuts, but behind our backs he would turn out to be the man who was most against us.

I just said that he was a good talker, and also that he had seen something of the world as a forced labourer, even though for him that world consisted only of Makassar and some places on Java.

He had also learned more Malay and liked to converse with us.

Here it is: whoever can talk best has the right on his side. To take an example:

One of Br. V. D. KLIFT's young men was sent to Kolaka with a porter. The porter carried a chest, and inside the chest some letters had also been stowed, in order to protect them from the rain. The young man and the porter met with adversity on the way. The young man would continue to Kolaka, which he could just reach before dark; the porter would spend the night somewhere, but promised to be in Kolaka the next morning at the crack of dawn.

However, the ship came and left without the letters, because the porter hadn't shown up.

The young man went looking and found the chest still in the village where he had left it, whereupon he gave the man a stout thrashing for not keeping his word.

That porter, however, didn't leave it at that. He went to Br. V. D. KLIFT and threatened to press charges if the young man didn't give him money for damages.

When the young man was called, however, he said: Go ahead, go to the lieutenant governor, and then we shall see who can speak best. [p. 156]

The porter, aware of his inferiority in speaking, backed down and brought nothing before the authorities.

Now, the former clan leader was that kind of a talker, too, and there was no one there who would dare go against his will, let alone press charges against him.

His brutality would bring him down anyway. He became less and less cautious, and finally he went so far that the present clan leader, who in turn had his reasons for being hostile to him, had the certainty that he could have him condemned, and now he no longer held back, but pressed charges against POMBILI.

We had just arrived in Sanggona and so were present for his arrest. I would have preferred not to have been there, to avoid even the appearance of having had a hand in it,

but we had only a few hours advance notice that he would be arrested, and then to leave would have reinforced that appearance.

Out of fear of him, the native officer-in-training[11] had POMBILI called to Kolaka for a small matter. In POMBILI's presence, this official showed me his revolver, if only to change his mind about possible robbery plans.

Once in Kolaka, he was immediately put in prison. If he had to bathe, this was done with a long rope looped around his neck.

During the interrogation, people's tongues were loosened. His sentence followed and now he has been exiled for ten years.

Clearly once his absence in Sanggona was apparent, more people came to talk to us. However they didn't yet harvest wood for us. When we insisted, the village head made a cutting motion with his hand along his chin and said, "Even if you cut my head off, it will not move the people to get wood."

Now I showed my annoyance and although evening had begun to fall, I prepared to leave and left. I stayed overnight at the house of the clan leader, who lived in a further village. This one lashed out angrily at my porters, who came from Sanggona.

When I wanted to leave early the next morning, there was the head of Sanggona village with some of the principal people from there. I pretended that this did not interest me, I saluted them all and wanted to leave. Now, however, they held me back and said they wanted to talk to me again. I agreed.

The head of the village now told us that the people wanted to get wood, but on one condition. That condition consisted of this, that they could not be forced to become Christians. [p. 157]

I could easily meet that condition, and told them that I had never intended to do so and that they could be sure that this would not happen in the future.

Tobacco and paper were now brought out, a cigarette was rolled: the agreement had been struck.

I continued my journey to Mowewe, because I had received messages from my wife, which made it necessary for me to return home.

When I arrived in Kolaka a few days after the incident, I learned that the village head of Sanggona had been arrested there.

---

[11] [translator's note: Dutch *inlandsche assistant*.]

When we had determined the place of our establishment, we had asked the lieutenant governor, if it came to pass, to give the people a permit to fell trees for us.

This request was misconstrued: he had ordered men to obtain wood for us.

Now the head of the village had come to him to say that he could not yet get wood for the missionary, since their rice gardens had to be laid out.

So now again reluctance to get lumber for us.

The lieutenant governor found that it could be difficult during the time of laying in gardens, but since the people had already had more than enough time to do it, the head of the village was arrested, and for the time being he had to stay in Kolaka. That was unpleasant for the man, but also for us. This had not been our intention.

Fortunately, Br. V. D. KLIFT managed to get him to let the man go. We then had to wait for people to finish preparing their gardens. People from other villages, belonging to the clan among whom Br. V. D. KLIFT lives, went to get the wood, and when they received the guilders and the shining rix-dollars as payment for what they had brought, then the people of Sanggona also realized the benefit of getting paid and succumbed to temptation.

Fortunately, everything now changed: the wood was now pouring in, and the panels of thatch, which were to to serve as roofing, were brought in by the hundreds.

We weren't there yet by far, we knew that, but the difficulties that came now, we knew we could handle them.

We also had to prepare the house site. It was situated on the other side of the road from where the village was built.

It was overgrown with tall, reedy grass. The grass stood close together. The stems were thick and solid and therefore dried very slowly, so it was a long before we could burn it. [p. 158]

My two young men and I had to do this ourselves, as there was no one else available. They had their gardens to look after and still procure wood for us. But we got it done. The young men took turns wearing a pair of shoes of mine to protect their exposed feet from biting ants.

After we had cleared a space large enough for where our future house could be built, we started digging a well.

The sand that was excavated was nice for raising that place, because even if our house were to stand on stilts and those posts on large stones to prevent their rotting, it would be better for conveying rainwater if there could be some slope in the drainage ditches.

Furthermore, if we found good water, this would be a stroke of luck and of great importance for later. We still had to make do with river water, which was quite adequate, provided it was boiled first. However, since the river turned muddy after heavy rainfalls, we had to be prepared for rain and keep water in stock.

One time the rain hit us when no one had thought about fetching water. Before it could be boiled, we first had to filter the water a couple of times through a wad of cotton until it looked slightly less grimy, and we consoled ourselves with the thought: sand scours the stomach.

We progressed nicely and after reaching about five meters deep we struck water and couldn't continue working, as we dropped to our knees.

A pump needed to be ordered. However we had no money and for a long time had been looking forward to a money transfer from the Netherlands.

We didn't dare think about ordering, since according to the condition of sale we'd have to pay a month after delivery, which for us amounted to immediate payment.

We had water, suitable for scrubbing all the woodwork, but not yet suitable for drinking.

Nonetheless we made progress.

The carpenters—a craftsman and three people who wanted to learn the trade—were progressing along quite nicely, and when I went to Mowewe for half a month to meet with Ds. LINDENBORN, I thought: now I'm not going back alone anymore, but going to Sanggona with my wife and child.

After Ds. LINDENBORN left, we made ready for the three of us to travel up. [p. 165]

A few days before we left, we had asked the village head of Mowewe for porters to the next village, but on the morning of departure it took a lot of effort to get a satisfactory number together. The people had to be pulled out of their homes.

It was well near 12 o'clock before we were able to leave. In the next village it was the same story with the changing of the porters, and I had to relieve one of them from time to time, since we were short one porter. No one else had been available at the time.

Now the rain started to fall and everything became equally sad and gloomy. Our son DRIES, who sat in front of me on the the horse, had rolled to sleep. I held him with one hand, and with the other held an umbrella over our heads. I had put the [p. 166] reins around my neck and so had my horse under my power.

We had to go a long way to reach Amororo, where there was a good pasanggrahan where we could spend the night. There was still just enough light to be able to find and light the lamp.

Soon we had spread out our bed and could change our clothes, which had become wet through and through. Meanwhile one of the young men set up some water and then warmed up a tin.

Immediately after our arrival the head of the village came and had someone fetch wood. Presently a bright fire was burning and soon the meal was ready for us and the young men.

It tasted good to us. We didn't stay up long, but got into bed as soon as possible. We slept like logs, so that the next morning we found ourselves rested and ready for the onward journey.

We wouldn't be on horseback very long, as we were planning to spend the night at Pehanggo, which is halfway between Mowewe and Sanggona and only fifteen kilometers from Amororo, where we had spent the night.

We arrived at Pehanggo early in the afternoon, which was the Saturday before Pentecost. We decided to stay there on Sunday, as my wife was physically spent.

The following Monday we continued onward, and reached Sanggona in the evening, happy to be at the end of our journey.

I had been away for half a month and expected the frame of our house to be standing. The carpenters, however, had left off the work without accomplishing much. I couldn't say much about it, because if you touch them off then they are ready to resign, and then you are even further away from your goal because of the difficulty of getting others. In the end whether you're plagued by one evil or the other, it doesn't matter.[12]

The first work now was to raise the beams, which took a few days, then the thatch could be put on. We had the thatch laid close together, so that our house would be waterproof for about five years.

Now the work really took off. Planks were cut to length and we were able to enclose one of the rooms. This was done with great urgency.

My wife had caught quite a cold in the pasanggrahan. On one occasion it had rained, accompanied by a strong wind, while [p. 167] I was with the workmen. The roof of the pasanggrahan proved incapable of withstanding such violence, and the water poured in. My wife was busily protecting our bed from the water. In the evening it turned out that she had a bad cold.

---

[12] [translator's note: Dutch *of je nu door de kat of den kater gebeten wordt: het blijft lood om oud ijzer*, literally 'whether you're bitten by the she-cat or the tomcat, it remains lead on old iron'.]

It was horrible having a sick person in such poor quarters, hence everyone was working to close off one of the rooms of our house under construction. In ten minutes a bedstead was erected and I brought my wife over in a blanket.

What a delight that was, to have a spacious room and a big bed. The change was so great that we felt exceedingly rich.

Windows weren't there yet, but a few sheets were soon nailed in front of the openings.

The doors were ready, but there were no screws or hinges. Because of the lack of money we hadn't been able to order them. The doors were placed in front, and a bar between two brackets secured them on the inside. How delighted we were with such a room in these circumstances!

Luckily my wife improved and after a fortnight had recovered. During that time I had instructed the carpenters to do other work in the shed. So we weren't disturbed by hammering.

Now that my wife was back on her feet, the house was further finished. However, this is not properly expressed. For example, for the most part our outbuildings were already standing, while our house was far from finished.

After that it was waiting for screws and hinges, so that we had cabinets without doors. Then we had to wait for glass, so the windows could not yet be hung.

We wanted to put the outbuildings on cement, but the buildings were already there on blocks of wood when the cement came up. We then had to work the cement under the blocks of wood and, after it was good and hard, removed the blocks and lowered the buildings.

The lack of money and the difficulty of supply had the most to do with this.

Nevertheless we have gotten there, which is the most important thing. We also got more help. Four youths came to ask us if they could come into our house; they had come from a village three days away, and told us they had no parents left. We didn't have much space at the time, but we were happy to have them, as there was still so much to do. They had to settle for an unfinished room, [p. 168] which they did willingly, and since happiness is a two-way street, there was a lot of adjusting on both sides.

In these circumstances, youths of that age—twelve, fourteen, or so—can often struggle. Some To Laki may act differently, but the majority don't care about such ones. If there is an abundance, then yes, they can get a handful of rice for performing some service, but a To Laki, who lives from one harvest to the next, rarely has an abundance.

If the rice harvest partially fails, then fortunately people can still make do with sago.

Youths, like those who came to us, are often sent into the woods to chop sago. They don't get many clothes, because a To Laki usually wears his trousers in such a way that it is difficult to speak of a garment.

So these young men came to us with little more than loincloths.

That very evening my wife set herself down at the sewing machine, and soon they had a set of work clothes, to which she later added another more formal set.

Their faces were beaming and they showed their joy by willingly doing all kinds of work. They soon felt at home, but boy, what one has to learn to get along! They are as good to us as we are to them.

Their custom was to blow their noses in the most primitive way. They did so with us, and then, as if this were the self-evident thing to do, wiped their fingers off on the doorposts, or anywhere else they were close to. However, this was a matter of habit, which in the house they soon left behind, and later we could have one of these youths mix flour into the batter, although we kept an eye out to make sure that their hands were well washed, that they had a clean headscarf on, etc.

The door of our living room was always open and anyone who wanted was allowed to come in, either to have a chat or to smoke a cigarette.

Every evening some people strolled over from the village, especially the old kapala came often.

Although he is no longer a village head, as the oldest he has a lot of influence. How such a person is disposed toward us is therefore of great importance.

He always has a number of young men with him, including some of his children. They help him in everything, and he himself, being diligent and energetic, also encouraged his youths, and so together they brought in a beam and a lot of planks. [p. 169]

When the people were not yet inclined to get wood for us, he proceeded cautiously, always friendly but still at a distance. When I came to ask for his help in persuading the people to get us wood, he always answered that he had no say in the matter and would refer me to the present village head.

That he had changed in relation to us was already evident from the fact that he now brought wood for us, but it will soon become even clearer to you.

Most evenings our young men were in the room with us. The lighting was good, they had something to smoke, and now and then we had a good time talking and laughing among ourselves.

I always had the opportunity to write down some of the language, and as one word led to another, my language ability increased nicely.

At the start of collecting wood, when my wife had not yet come up and there were people from other villages who came to sit by the lamp in the evening, I heard quite a few stories told and wrote them down.

Now we had the opportunity to process them, which until now there was no time for. I have already incorporated all the words and expressions that we had elicited into my dictionary.

Of course, these young men sometimes had difficulty with each other, especially since they weren't all from the same clan, and then the mutual help and tolerance doesn't go so far as it does with clansmen.

Our house boy TONGGALA turned out to have a hidden gift here too. He often managed to calm tempers by cracking a joke.

Thanks to the help of these young men, finishing our house went a bit faster, because as apprentices they could give the carpenters a helping hand. We also had to hurry, because we were expecting the GOUWELOOS family, who, coming from Holland, would live with us at first in order to acclimatize and to learn some of the language, and then later to start a post themselves.

We had a lot of help from them. GOUWELOOS helped us with cementing, with landscaping, in short with everything his hand found to do.

This was advantageous for him, too. By being with the young men all day, he learned a great deal of the language and soon knew enough of it that he could manage alone.

We had now also received the medicines provided to the people by the government.

Until now, treatment of patients had been limited to bandaging a fresh wound or administering some quinine. Otherwise, we couldn't do much other than offer advice.

Now other cases could be treated with more success.

Sanggona consisted of the amalgamation of two villages: Sanggona proper and Mokowu.

Our establishment there prompted the head of Mokowu village to ask the lieutenant governor if he could move, which he was allowed to do. A few kilometers from Sanggona he and his supporters founded a hamlet, called Watu mokala (= large stone).

One day he sent for us, because he had been wounded while felling bamboo. GOUWELOOS and I took off on horseback and we looked for him; it turned out that a falling bamboo had penetrated his knee and had also injured his leg. We helped him and went to see him every other day, first GOUWELOOS, then me. When fluid had accumulated around the knee joint and the man was in a lot of pain, we told him that he should be brought to Sanggona. There we could visit him more and better help him.

Transporting him was easily accomplished. A bamboo raft was quickly assembled and the patient was transported to Sanggona by river.

It took a few more weeks for him to improve, and once the wound healed and the pain subsided, he was determined to go home. To spare his leg, which he could still hardly use, we had a pair of crutches made from bamboo, and to his own pleasure and that of the bystanders, after some practice he limped quickly along the road.

In the past, these people were left to themselves, and if they didn't die of infection, they'd still have some sort of lingering effect.

Another time a child was brought to us with various wounds to her face, among other things her lip was torn. We tried to partially stitch this wound, but while I was doing it, I was grabbed by the leg. Looking around, it turned out to be the child's mother. The father wanted to drag her away; to my questioning gaze he responded by saying that he would beat her to pieces. I told him to wait a while, so that we could investigate the matter first..

It turned out that the woman had given the child a piece of dried fish, and having gone out into the yard the child encountered a dog. That dog had jumped on her and tried to snatch the fish from her. In those attempts, the beast had inflicted the wounds, and when the child finally put the piece of fish [p. 171] in her mouth, it also attacked her there, with the result that her lip was torn.

The next day the suture had to be removed, as the wound began to fester. Fortunately by treating it a few times a day, everything was set right.

Every day more people came and, as I now heard, GOUWELOOS's name is now established as a miracle doctor. A man, who came from another village, had been suffering from an eye infection for months, so that the man was blind.

With a simple treatment, the eyes were restored in such a way that the man can distinguish objects from a distance.

The village head himself was always close to home, because he had a large leg wound. By having him regularly drink aqueous iodine and treating the wound, it healed. If we were to give Salversan injections, he'd be one of the first to need it.

When a doctor could get there for a few days, he didn't have to return with nothing to show.

But enough about treating the sick.

That this is a great means of gaining the trust of people is obvious. Temporarily it binds the missionary at home, but that can be remedied by having a young man train to become a nurse. We brought one with us to Bandung and once he has graduated, he can take on a lot of the responsibility.

The fact in itself, that people come to us with their ailments, already proves that there had been a change in their attitude towards us. They noticed that there was nothing to the angry talk strewn from the Muslim side.

Trust must be aroused and grown, and we are pleased to have seen the first signs of it.

We have already told you that there is no silence on the Muslim side, but we would say so again.

The To Laki have a dance, which they call *molulo*. *Molulo* means 'turning around something'. People hold hands and dance in a circle. Sometimes people simply go around a stick that has been stuck in the ground while one of the men sings, whereupon others join in. Here the vocals are the most important. Everything proceeds calmly and unhurriedly.

We have also experienced it otherwise. This was in the house that belonged to POMBILI.

Here, too, there was circle dancing in a circle, by men as well as by women. In the circle hung four brass gongs, [p. 172] on which people beat at different tempos and measures while the dance went on. At first it was very calm and people took a few steps forward and backward in a circle motion while also singing and answering. The old men also participated, including POMBILI's father, a very old man with a gray beard. We had already met him once, as he had come to see us. He came for medicine; he still wanted to have children, and hoped I could do something about it. This fellow also danced and he did okay, although he smelled very much of strong drink, which here consists of fermented rice pap. The others were not free of it either.

After this, a dance was performed in which only the younger men and women participated. Now the brass gongs were beaten more and more quickly. Sometimes the right leg was kicked high, the women's hair came loose from their buns. Finally, they stopped out of breath, walked straight to the river and went into the water up to their waists. That it was less suitable for their health, to cool down so suddenly, seemed of less importance to them.

When we followed them out of the house, we saw—which we hadn't noticed when we came—a small house, in which the Muslim guru had taken up residence.

What had prompted this, we didn't know then. Later we heard that one of POMBILI's wives (the man had eight) had remarried. To that end, she had invoked the guru's intermediation.

The clan leader and that guru were often together in our village. This leader is strongly under the influence of the guru. Among other things, this showed in that the former village head came to complain that the clan leader had insulted him. The clan leader had made it clear that he was dressed as a Dutchman, and that he had to go around, like him, in a sarong, and not in trousers and jackets. Our young men were also stopped

and unkindly addressed about their dress. I advised GOUWELOOS to let this go on only so long until the leader was guilty of several things and then to press charges against him.

This action by the clan leader is driving the people towards us, when it was meant otherwise.

When I asked the old kapala, whose name is I DANGGA, why they kept calling the guru when someone had died, then he replied to me that the clan leader had told them to take up their case with the authorities if they didn't want to, as the lieutenant governor had ordered it so. This, of course, was just talk from the clan leader. The lieutenant governor could never have ordered such a thing. [p. 173] So far we've just been letting him do his thing, because he's only working the people towards us.

Whenever a buffalo is slaughtered, I DANGGA always comes to bring us a piece and doesn't want to be paid for it.

One day he came with about ten men. He told us they were planning to build their gardens. However, they were afraid of the evil spirits, which mainly in reside in the forest. All accidents and diseases are therefore attributed to these spirits.

What had they come for, then, I asked.

"To ask you, sir, if you could do something so that the spirits will not harm us," they replied.

"Then I will pray for you," was my response.

Then I DANGGA grabbed my hand, pressed it and told his people to do the same, which they also did.

They expected far more from touching my hand than from my prayer. Then they left.

They don't eat pork. There are rumors, however, that they actually do. In Mowewe, however, we have witnessed the abhorrence of the young men to pork.

A snake had grabbed a pig, and at the screams of the beast some of the youths had darted off, and me too. It was a six-meter-long snake that had coiled itself around the pig. Both animals were killed. The pig was butchered and that evening dished up. The young men also got their share of the spoils. The Minahasan youths ate heartily, but the others took off. They didn't want to stay around.

As for ourselves, we made the decision not to eat pork.

One time when I was in Kolaka, I had another meeting with a snake. With my back turned to the light, I sat reading a newspaper, with one arm leaning on the table. I had been sitting for a while when I glanced up, and to my horror saw a snake with its head less than a decimeter away from my hand. Seeing him, jumping up, and running away

were all the work of a moment. The beast had crawled over the table towards me, while the rest of its body was still lying on the ground. I rushed to the kitchen, where I had seen a machete, but which now could not be found. When I went back, the snake was in my chair, where it had found a warm spot. When after that I returned with a native soldier, who would have chopped its head off with his klewang,[13] it was gone.

Speaking of those snakes, I remember another [p. 174] humorous occurrence. It was on the day that POMBILI was going to be arrested. VAN DER KLIFT and I slept with each other in opposite directions, but with our legs lying next to each other because of the lack of space. In the pitch darkness, I felt something shuffling along my feet and with my feet I tried to recognize what it might be. When I didn't succeed, I rose up silently and reached out. VAN DER KLIFT had observed the same shuffling sensation on the other side, and not recognizing it with his foot, had also sat up and was reaching out his hand. In the darkness we got hold of each other's hand and we both laughed.

Now there are two things to mention: The baptism of our son and our departure to Java.

Now that the GOUWELOOS family had come, we had planned to christen ANDRIES on Christmas Day. We would have liked to have had our organ brought up and that's why GOUWELOOS and I went to Mowewe to get it. This however did not happen before Christmas and again we postponed his baptism until the last day of the previous year.

All the people from the village were invited to be there. In the morning a buffalo was slaughtered and everything prepared for a big feast.

In the course of the morning, some sixty people came to our front sitting room, including the village head and I DANGGA, the former head.

After a brief introduction to baptism, the ceremony took place. Then they came to shake hands with us all and we sat down to eat. It all tasted good, but there was still a lot left. We followed the popular custom of allowing all the leftovers to be taken. Thus the story of BENJAMIN will have to be understood: he received five times as much as the others. He must not have eaten so much more than his brothers, but must have taken more than them on the journey.

It was a wonderful day, which amongst ourselves we had also made into a special day.

And now our trip to Java.

While still in Mowewe, my wife had a lot of headaches. She was almost no hour without one. We thought it would disappear once we had a bigger house and the suitcase life would be behind us. However, it didn't get any better, and once the GOUWELOOS family settled in, we finally made the decision to go to Java. It was so serious that we

---

[13] [franslator's note: Javanese for sword with a broad curved blade.]

thought we had to go to Holland. Fortunately [p. 175] this wasn't needed. We've been here four months, and we can thank God that my wife is so much improved that she's almost out of her headaches. If she gets any stronger now, it may still happen that we could go back.

So we end with the prayer that God grants our desire.

During our stay here in Java we had the opportunity to edit the stories[14] we had collected in Sanggona and to translate some songs into the To Laki language; maybe we'll compile it into a small bundle of songs.

[14] [translator's note: Five Tolaki stories with Dutch translations, compiled and edited by Dirk Kok, are available at the Archieven van de Rechtsvoorgangers van de Raad voor de Zending (ARvdZ), no. 2028.]

Appendix 1: Letter from Dirk Kok

[The following is the English translation of an archived letter (ARvdZ 2028/44) from Dirk Kok dated July 25, 1922. It was written around the same time as his report concerning their placement at Sanggona and gives further details about his wife's illness, his activities in Bandung, and his hopeful plans for their future—but in fact the Koks returned to the Netherlands in early 1923 (see the timeline in Appendix 2).]

Bandung, 25 July 1922

To the highly esteemed Executive Board.

We received your letter of 9 June from which we learned that you have allowed our request to be placed on Java. About the place of possible establishment you said in writing: We wrote to the Conference that our thoughts went to Indramayu or Cianjur and sought advice, leaving other possibilities open.

We would like to go into this last possibility now.

We have been here for almost four months now and can say that Dien has as good as lost her headaches. Whereas before she wouldn't have been an hour without one, she now goes days. She has also regained her weight, though we would like to see more. We wrote to you that we would face the same difficulties again. Further information shows us that this may not be necessary. The main cause of Dien's illness is malnutrition. There was no fat available there, neither was there milk. She used cans of milk, but they didn't have enough fat in them.

We heard here that fat and lard can be purchased in cans. Moreover in Posso and New Guinea, cows have been imported from Java, also on Sangir.

We therefore propose the following to you:

If within two more months Dien has fully recovered and wholeheartedly longs for Celebes, that we be allowed to return to Celebes. We will take care of some cows ourselves, for which we thus ask you for an advance of five hundred guilders.

If Dien does not completely recover so that Celebes is unsuitable to her, then we must remain on Java. That is why we will ask the Conference to establish a place of residence so that you can decide where to send us if we cannot return to Celebes.

Missionary Bout leaves for Holland tomorrow. I gave him some To Laki stories that I had collected in Sanggona and edited here. I gave it to him so that I can be sure that they make it through properly, as it already represents a considerable investment of labor. I've got a

lot more that I will send to you. The carbon copies can be given to Schuurmans,[15] further I will send copies to the brothers on Celebes. I will also send you a copy of my dictionary[16] for use with the stories. On Dr. Adriani's advice, I had already started to build a card system in Holland and I have maintained this until now so that I can have at my disposal all the words and expressions known up until now. I will also send a copy to the brothers on Celebes. Furthermore, I have made a start here to put together a song bundle and I have already put some songs into the To Laki language.

So I have plenty of work to do until your answer reaches us.

Herewith is also a kind of lecture that I gave for the Bandung section. Since it turned out to be rather well received, I'm sending it to you, maybe you can find one or another use for it.

With sincere greetings,

Your missionary

[D. Kok]

[15] [translator's note: Jacob Schuurmans, who arrived with his family on Celebes in March, 1924 (Van der Klift-Snijder 1996:38).]

[16] [translator's note: A copy of this dictionary was preserved at the Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia (National Library of Indonesia) and subsequently at the Center for Research Libararies (CRL) in Chicago, IL, as part of an assemblage of some 850 microform reels of materials originating from the National Library. See "Woordenlijst der Tamboekusprende [sic] tolaki op Z.O. Celebes Verzemeld [sic] door D. Kok" Reel 639/PNRI MS Call Number VT.132b (CRL Catalog Record # b1500916 = OCLC accession number 40145600).]

Appendix 2: Dirk Kok timeline

[supplied by the translator]

29 May 1919 – Dirk Kok is ordained as a missionary (Van der Klift-Snijder 1996:ix footnote 16).

3 July 1919 – Dirk Kok marries Dien Visser (Van der Klift-Snijder 1996:ix footnote 16).

16 August 1919 – Dirk and Dean Kok depart the Netherlands (Lindenborn 1920:28; Van der Klift-Snijder 1996:ix footnote 16).

19 February 1920 – Dirk and Dean Kok arrive in Mowewe (Van der Klift 1921a:63; Van der Klift-Snijder 1996:ix footnote 16, 35).

15 April 1920 – Son Andries "Dries" is born in Mowewe (D. Kok, archived letter dated 22 April 1920, ARvdZ 2028/25).

July 1920 – Hendrik van der Klift and Dirk Kok make a two-week exploratory trip along the upper Konaweha river as far as the northernmost village Tonga Una; they decide on Sanggona as the best place for the Koks to reside (Van der Klift 1921a:64). This trip must have taken place in the first half of July, as the second half of the month was taken up with the Kruyts' anthropological research trip.[17]

19–30 July 1920 – The father and son team of Albertus and Johannes Kruyt visit Southeast Sulawesi. On the 19th of July they are met in Kolaka by Hendrik van der Klift, who takes them on a trip to the upper Konawe as far as Sanggona and Latoma. The Kruyts depart by way of Kolaka and arrive in Paloppo on July 31st (Kruyt and Kruyt 1921:689, 699, 704).

28 August 1920 – Hendrik van der Klift departs to attend the *monahu ndao* in Ulu Mowewe for several days (Van der Klift 1922:71).

16–25 September 1920 – Hendrik van der Klift and Dirk Kok depart again to Sanggona to push along the house construction. Hendrik van der Klift returns after a few days, and soon thereafter (on the 25th) also Dirk Kok (Kok 1921:29).

28 September to 4 October 1920 – Dirk Kok returns to Sanggona with money to pay for lumber. but departs on October 4 to see the *mokole* in Tawanga, and later the lieutenant governor in Kolaka, to enlist their renewed aid in getting beams procured (Kok 1921:29, 30).

---

[17] [Alternatively this trip was coterminous with the Kruyts' research trip, but if so this fact is never stated explicitly.]

23 November 1920 – School at Mowewe is opened, with Dirk Kok participating (Van der Klift 1921b).

end of January 1921 – Pombili, an influential former District Chief, is imprisoned, charged with major crimes, and eventually sentenced to 12 years of exile. His departure from Sanggona put an end to his influence and allowed the construction of the missionary house to proceed (Van der Klift 1923:2).

25 April to 9 May 1921 – Visit by the missions director M. Lindenborn (Van der Klift-Snijder 1996:35 footnote 78)

16 May 1921 (the day after Pentacost) – Dirk Kok, his wife Dean and their child Dries arrive in Sanggona (Kok 1922:166)

5 December 1921 – Fellow missionaries Gerard Christiaan Storm and Michiel Johannes Gouweloos arrive in Kolaka with their wives (Van der Klift 1923:3, Van der Klift-Snijder 1996:37).

13 December 1921 – The Gouweloos family travels to Sanggona (Van der Klift 1923:3).

31 December 1921 – Christening of Dries Kok in Sanggona (Kok 1922:174).

28 March 1922 – The Kok family departs from Kolaka enroute to Bandung, West Java; their change of assignment is precipitated by Dean's health issues (Van der Klift-Snijder 1996:ix, Kok 1922:174–175).

20 January 1923 – The Kok family departs Tanjong Priok for Amsterdam (Van der Klift-Snijder 1996:ix).

References

Klift, H. van der. 1921a. Uit den zendingsarbeid op Zuid-Oost Celebes gedurende het jaar 1920. *Orgaan der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging* 61:63–67.

Klift, H. van der. 1921b. Een blijde dag op Mowewe. *Orgaan der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging* 61:25–27.

Klift, H. van der. 1922. Het *monahoe ndao*. *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap* 66:68–77.

Klift, H. van der. 1923. Uit den zendingsarbeid op Z.-O.-Celebes. *Orgaan der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging* 63:2–4, 91–95.

Klift-Snijder, Anna G. van der. 1996. *Geroepen, gezonden en gezegend: Memoires van een zendelingsvrouw in Zuidoost-Celebes*. Edited and annotated by Chr. G. F. de Jong. (Uitgaven van de Werkgroep voor de Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Zending en Overzeese Kerken, Kleine Reeks.) Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum.

Kok, D. 1921. Brief van Br. D. Kok. *Orgaan der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging* 61:27–30.

Kok, D. 1922. Onze vestiging te Sanggona op Z.O.–Celebes. *Orgaan der Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging* 62:137–142, 155–158, 165–175.

Kruyt, Alb. C. and J. Kruyt. 1921. Verslag van een reis naar Kolaka. *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap* 38:689–704.

Lindenborn, M. 1920. *De bewerken van den zendingsbodem door zendeling H. van der Klift*. Rotterdam: Nederlandsche Zendingsvereeniging.