

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

RFG - 19
Sonjo Tribe
III - A Biography

c/o Barclays Bank
Arusha, Tanganyika
February 17, 1956.

Dear Mr. Rogers:

In seeking information about Sonjo herbs I came across a young man named Gidiya Budway who was recommended by the elders as a competent authority on the subject. Gidiya was my guide on a number of trips into the forest in search of medicinal herbs, of which I preserved ten of the more important for future identification and perhaps analysis. Being an expert in native botany, he also taught me to recognise the most useful trees and shrubs for making arrow shafts, bows, digging sticks, fire-making apparatus, and other implements. In explaining the use of different herbs he sometimes referred to medical episodes which had happened in his own family, and in this way I became familiar with his family history. Much of my knowledge about the use of herbs and other remedies in Sonjo medicine came from Gidiya. I found his biography interesting in itself and it provides concrete illustrations of some of the features of Sonjo society. In this letter I shall give a sketch of Gidiya's life history, and in the next letter I shall outline the Sonjo medical system, which Gidiya helped me to understand.

A slender youth of about twenty-two with comparatively light complexion, Gidiya is the youngest of eight children born by his father's senior wife. Only one of these children died in infancy but two died in later life. Gidiya's father Budway was a member of the village Water Board, having succeeded his father to this position of dignity and prestige, but inherited little wealth in the form of livestock. By investing all of his resources and with help from his brothers he managed to buy three wives at a time when bride-price was relatively low--20 to 30 goats. At first his affairs did not prosper and he remained poor, so he found it necessary to sell his second wife and her two children to a Masai, being paid 60 goats for the wife and 20 goats each for the children.

Gidiya has never met his two half-brothers who were sold to the Masai. Presumably they have been assimilated to their stepfather's society and are now indistinguishable from other Masai except that they are probably bilingual, having learned the Sonjo language from their mother. With his herd increased by these 100 goats, and later by the bride-price brought in by four daughters, Budway came to be regarded as a moderately wealthy man.



The Author Interviewing Gidiya

Gidiya's eldest brother Sionedi inherited his father's membership on the Water Board and received the largest share of his property in real estate and livestock. He married three wives (one of whom died) and has five children, the two oldest sons being

junior warriors. Since the father's death Sionedi has been head of the family. He is a competent and progressive man who exchanged most of his goats for cattle when cattle-raising was first introduced to Sonjo a few years ago. Gidiya holds his eldest brother in respect and looks on him as a father. He still leaves some of his goats in the trust of Sionedi because he has not yet established himself as head of a stable and independent household.

The eldest sister Namuhobo married a poor but honest villager. She bore him three children safely but died at the birth of the fourth. The husband lacked the means of obtaining another wife to care for his children, so they went to live with their grandmother, Gidiya's mother, who is still a vigorous woman. All the people believe that Namuhobo's death was caused by an act of adultery which she had committed and failed to confess in order to receive absolution and ritual purification. The child survived, thanks to the prompt administration of purification rites soon after birth. It is believed that a child of sinful birth is liable to develop epilepsy in later life. To prevent this Namuhobo's child was subjected to further purification rites at the age of three. He is now a normal healthy lad who is starting to herd his uncles' goats.

Budway's third child was a son who died in infancy. The elders of the family made a postmortem diagnosis of nkenyehe, a dangerous malady to which children are highly susceptible, but which can fortunately be prevented by a simple prophylactic measure. This procedure, which is also curative if applied in time, consists in making a small incision under the left breast and over the left scapula; a pinch of alkaline salt is then applied to the open wound so that it heals with a heavy cicatrice. As every Sonjo child receives this preventive treatment, usually before the age of three, the actual disease is seldom seen and its typical symptoms are not well known. In the case of Gidiya's brother, if he had been treated preventively, or if his nkenyehe had been diagnosed early enough for curative treatment, according to Sonjo theory, he might have been saved.

Yadoi, Gidiya's second sister, also married a poor man. After six children had been born this family found it hard to make ends meet in Sonjo and immigrated to a settlement at Ngurumani on the shore of Lake Natron. Yadoi's husband died and she now carries on the homestead alone with her children, specializing in the raising of the long narrow type of gourd which flourishes in the hot climate. Gidiya occasionally goes to visit her, making the long journey down the Bast Escarpment and through rhino-infested bush on foot.

Another sister, Ndinyi, is also a widow. She lives on in her husband's house in the section of the village belonging to his lineage. Two of her children live with her, two others having died in infancy. Gidiya sees little of her and doesn't know the cause of death of her two children. Although she was "inherited" by her husband's brother, she chooses to live as a widow rather than as his wife. If another man wished to marry her, though, he would have to buy her from the brother, who also has rights over the children.

Gidiya has sad memories of his fourth sister Beneya who was only three years older than him and played with him when he was a child. She

was a pretty girl and was betrothed at an early age for a good bride-price. She contracted tuberculosis of the lung--the dreaded gikupa--and died shortly before the date set for her marriage. This disease is well known in Gidiya's family, as his father and his father's sister both died of it. Beneya was given large quantities of meat broth, five goats being killed specially for this purpose, but her condition deteriorated rapidly. A Sonjo cupping specialist was called in and attempted to remove the pus from the chest, which is believed to be the principal pathology of the disease; but his cupping horn only drew off blood. As a last resort Gidiya and his father took her to a Masai cupper of high repute, but his treatment did not help. She died a few days after returning from the hard journey.

The black sheep of the family is Gidiya's third brother Lomba--a stout hulking fellow who has never been sick a day in his life and hence is of little medical interest. Lomba hates work and loves to eat and drink. Even as a small herd boy, according to Gidiya who shared his herding duties, Lomba could not be trusted to watch his flock and often ran away leaving Gidiya with a double responsibility. He often steals a goat which he takes into the bush with some of his cronies for a feast, but always from a relative so that he can not be charged with theft but only reprimanded by the family elders. He is a friendly likeable fellow, but before I realized that he was a bad risk he had borrowed thirty shillings from me with the most plausible promises of repayment.

Budway's third wife gave birth to four sons and a daughter. This woman died about three years ago from causes, so it is believed, which we would view as supernatural. A year previously her brother had married a girl belonging to the blacksmiths' clan (Waturi). The men of this clan are smiths and the women are potters. They keep livestock but are not allowed to cultivate crops. They form an endogamous group and are not supposed to intermarry with other Sonjo. A few years ago three young Sonjo men decided to break the taboo and marry Waturi girls. The girls were comely and their bride-price low. The young men had just returned from working in Arusha where contact with Christians and Mohamedans must have weakened their belief in tribal lore. The brother of Gidiya's stepmother was the first to marry a girl of the Waturi clan. Exactly a year later he died, and the next day his sister died. About that time the other two men married Waturi girls. One of them died a week later and the other was stricken a month after his marriage but recovered from his illness, thanks to the prompt action of his family in performing purification rites and sacrifices to ancestor spirits. Since these tragedies there has been no further talk of marrying Waturi girls and the taboo is stronger than ever. I found it impossible to obtain a description of the medical conditions of these deaths. As the causes were believed to be supernatural, there was no interest in noting or remembering the symptoms and pathological processes. After the death of Gidiya's stepmother, her four younger children went to live with her eldest son who was married.

Gidiya's earliest memories are concerned with herding his father's goats. As a little toddler of three or four he was put in charge of the newborn kids and lambs which were kept in the house until strong enough to be herded with the young stock. Later he was given the task of watching the home flock, consisting of females and young animals. These were kept in

the house at night and taken to pastures near the village each morning. He liked herding and took the work seriously. At the age of about six he was sent to his father's goat camp in the bush about four miles from the village. This was a corral surrounded by a thorn fence. It contained two shelters built something like the village houses but with strongly reinforced walls for keeping out leopards and hyenas and thatched only on top instead of to the ground. Gidiya manned this camp with another brother or cousin. The two small boys were responsible for a flock of two hundred goats and sheep. At night each boy took half of the animals into one of the shelters, barricaded the entrance, and slept on a bed which was raised above the goats. In the morning they milked the female animals and then took the flock to pasture, returning at noon to eat the cooked food which was brought to them each day from the village. Milk from the camp flock was divided into two portions; half of it was drunk by the boys and half was sent to the village. In the afternoon the goats were again taken to graze and were watered before being brought to camp for the evening.

The two main hazards in herding goats are in losing animals which stray away and in attacks by wild animals. Shortly after being sent to the goat camp Gidiya was guilty of losing his whole flock through carelessness. He left them grazing contentedly in an open glade and went off for a few minutes to chatter with some other herd boys. When he came back the goats were gone. He searched most of the day but could not find them, nor did they come home by themselves like Bo Peep's sheep. That evening he ran to the village to tell his father. The warrior class of the village was called out and searched all night. All but two of the flock were found. Gidiya was severely reprimanded by his father but was not beaten as sometimes happens to errant herdboys. Thereafter he never lost an animal through carelessness. On six occasions, though, his flock was attacked by leopards. Usually the leopard simply seized a goat and ran off with it, but one of the beasts wantonly killed twelve goats before taking one to eat. A leopard twice broke into the shelter at night to get at the goats, and once Gidiya's bed was tipped over in the commotion. The herdboys all carried small boys and arrows but were instructed not to use them against leopards or byenas as it might provoke an attack on the boy. Gidiya became skillful at shooting guinea fowl and partridge, which were a welcome addition to his diet.

After spending several months in a goat camp, a herdboys is usually relieved for a week or two and brought to the village for a rest, but for five or six years his life is spent mostly in the bush with other herdboys in relative isolation from the rest of the population. The art of herding and the lore which herdboys acquire is passed on, not from grown-ups to boys, but from boys to boys. After undergoing initiation and entering the grade of junior warrior a boy is no longer required to herd goats. His interests then center on other matters. Gidiya was circumcised at the age of twelve. He was excited and frightened at the time and doesn't remember much about it. His knowledge of the ceremony comes mainly from later observations of other boys being circumcised. A candidate for circumcision is sponsored by a maternal uncle, if such a relative is available. This man counsels the boy to be brave and supports him during the operation which is performed just outside the father's house, in the presence of elders and warriors. The father himself remains inside the house drinking beer with friends. He tries to appear nonchalant, but listens closely and hopes that his son will not disgrace him by crying out from the pain.

For three days after the operation Gidiya stayed in the house, being fed like a baby by his uncle, as he was not allowed to touch food with his own hands. Then before dawn on the fourth day he took his bow and arrows and left the house to join the four other boys of his clan who had been circumcised together. They crept through the village stealthily so as not to be seen by any woman and entered the forest. They stayed in the forest all day and returned unobserved after dark. This program was followed every day for two months. As their wounds healed they walked about the country trying to shoot birds with their bows and arrows. For every bird shot a boy scraped a mark on his bow. Rats and snakes were also shot, a rat earning its killer four marks and a snake thirty marks. Gidiya filled one bow with marks and part of a second. He estimates that he shot well over a hundred birds, but some of the less fortunate boys shot a mere handful. The birds were skinned and stuffed with dry grass, then hung from a wooden hoop which was worn as a headdress.

With circumcision Gidiya left the age-grade of kijori (uncircumcised boys) and from then till his initiation he was known as a lebardani. In this grade he was considered to be unclean and avoided women. In the evenings he would join with other lebardani round a fire and dance, wearing his bird trophies. During this period he was required to do errands for members of the junior warrior class and to obey their orders. He was beaten if he disobeyed. Finally when all the newly-circumcised boys of the village were healed a day was set for the Kuririba or initiation ceremony. Gidiya's father, like other fathers of initiates, brewed a large batch of honey beer and killed four goats for entertaining his friends during the four days of the ceremony. For the first two days the boys were given instructions by elders concerning the duties and customs of warriorhood into which they were about to be initiated. Then Gidiya shaved his head and prepared his new cloth and ornaments. On the third day there was a dance at which the lebardani discarded their stuffed birds, old cloths, and wooden ear plugs, throwing them away or giving them to younger brothers. They put on new cloths and distinctive ear ornaments, painted their bodies with red ochre, and were now regarded as warriors (batana, sing. motana) of the junior grade. The last day was devoted to a dance of all the warriors, old and new. This ceremony marked the promotion of the previous class of junior warriors to the grade of senior warriors. The previous senior warriors then became elders. The initiation ceremony is held every seven years, and that is the length of time that a youth serves in each warrior grade.

As a junior warrior Gidiya no longer slept at home. A special house was set aside in each ward of the village for the use of the young warriors. Their mothers took turns in preparing food for them so that they could eat together as a group. Gidiya no longer had to herd goats. Instead he accompanied his father or older brother to learn the art of irrigating fields and of constructing and tending bee hives. He spent a good deal of time with his mates singing and dancing. At frequent intervals they planned feasts of goat meat in the forest. The leader of the group, who had been elected at the time of initiation, would instruct several of the junior warriors to provide a goat apiece. They would beg and usually be given these animals by their fathers or elder brothers. The boys would then make a camp along one of the streams in the forest a few miles from the village. There they would stay until their goats were finished, eating and sleeping during the day and coming to the village at night to dance in

the plaza. The meat of the goats would be boiled in clay pots. The broth, which is regarded as very strengthening itself, is infused with the barks of various trees or shrubs and drunk freely with the meat. Some of these barks are believed to strengthen the legs for dancing, while others are supposed to give endurance by thickening the blood. These herbs are also used therapeutically in Sonjo medical practice, but certain other barks have a psychic effect and are used only by men of the warrior grade. The milder of these drugs have a narcotic effect, producing a sense of euphoria in the user. The stronger ones are stimulating and cause irritability and excitement verging on frenzy. It frequently happens that warriors who imbibe heavily of these barks have seizures of furor while dancing during which they may fall down in a catatonic fit or may blindly attack their comrades or spectators. In this condition they are always seized by their friends and restrained until the fit passes off. It seems to me that these fits have a psychological element in their etiology as well as a pharmacological one. It is expected that several warriors will have fits while dancing in the course of a meat feast. A young man who has taken a quantity of stimulating bark anticipates his coming fit so strongly that his threshold of tolerance to the drug is undoubtedly lowered.

Six months after his initiation, when Gidiya had already attended two meat feasts and had his first fit, his father died of consumption. The death was not unexpected as the disease had been progressing steadily for a long time and hope of a cure had been abandoned. Budway himself was reconciled to his impending death and had put his affairs in order, designating his youngest and favorite son Gidiya to bury him. Burial was on the same day as the death. His brothers helped Gidiya dig a shallow grave in the rocky ground near the house. Gidiya then slaughtered a fat goat by smothering it. The skin was removed and cut in two. Half of the skin was laid in the bottom of the grave, into which the body was lowered in a flexed position so that it rested on the right side. The other half of the goat skin was placed over the body and the grave was filled in, fine sand at first so that the body would not be bruised by stones. A large stone was placed on top to mark the grave. The immediate family stayed at the dead man's house for two days while food was brought by neighbors. For four days Gidiya was in a state of ritual impurity. He prepared his own meals and was not allowed to speak to or touch anyone. If he left the village it must not be by the gateway. On the fourth day all the adults of the clan met at the grave. A goat was sacrificed and beer was spilled on the grave as a libation to the dead man's spirit. The eldest son said a prayer: "Father Xambageu, we pray to you. We treated our earthly father well and now he is dead. We are free of sins. Please do not allow others of our clan to die, but grant us children and health and cause our flocks to increase." Gidiya was then shaved by an old woman, went to the river to bathe, and rejoined his society again.

Budway had made known his will in regard to the inheritance of his property before his death. The eldest son of the senior wife was given the largest share of each kind of property, but the second largest share went to Gidiya with the eldest son of the junior wife ranking third in inheritance. Gidiya's inheritance consisted of twenty goats, six beehives, and two fields--one of rich valley-bottom soil and one less valuable on a sandy slope. At that time all of this property was held in trust for

him by his eldest brother; as a junior warrior he was not expected to manage his own livestock and fields. In lieu of the military duties which would formerly have been expected of him he was now subject to be called on by the government to work on roads and other public projects. In each of his first two years after initiation he served three-month tours of government work, the first time at building a stone bridge near Loliondo, the second at cutting hay.¹ Much of his spare time was spent with his companions dancing and singing in the village and attending dances at other villages. His eldest brother, who had succeeded his father as a water elder, taught him the principles of water control. Gidiya helped him irrigate the family fields and tend the beehives.

Two years after his initiation Gidiya left home to seek his fortune in the world. He went first to Loliondo where he obtained work as a garden boy for the District Officer at a salary of 60 shillings a month. Four months later the D.O. took him to Nairobi where he got a job as night watchman in a European shop. Because of the ease with which he learned to speak and understand Kikuyu during his three months in Nairobi, Gidiya believes that the Sonjo and Kikuyu tribes sprang from a common origin in the past. His employer then took him to Mombasa to work in his shop there, but Gidiya did not like Mombasa and left his job after a few days. He bought a railroad ticket to Voi but almost missed his first train ride through his fear of mounting the strange contraption. From Voi he continued to Moshi by bus, then hitchhiked to Arusha.

It has become customary for young Sonjo men who are able to raise some capital to have a fling at trading on the goat market. With their traditional knowledge of handling and judging goats, they are often quite successful. Goats are to be found in Tanganyika wherever cattle are raised and also in areas where cattle are barred because of tsetse fly. At every cattle auction (RFG - 10) there is some trading in goats, though usually on a small scale. The Sonjo traders visit auctions throughout central Tanganyika and bring the goats to Arusha to be sold at a profit to African butchers. When Gidiya arrived in Arusha he got in touch with the Sonjo colony and joined up with two friends to plan a trading expedition. One was a companion of his own age-grade, and the other was a senior warrior with previous experience in buying and selling goats. Gidiya borrowed some money which, added to his savings, gave him 400 shillings for investment. The three men went by bus to Tabora via Singida, continued by train to Shinyanga (the site of Dr. Williamson's fabulous diamond mine), and then walked to a remote cattle auction in Sukumaland. They bought 70 goats, Gidiya's share being 17, and hired two Indian trucks to transport the animals to Arusha. After selling his goats for an average price of 60 shillings, Gidiya made a clear profit of 300 shillings.

¹. This was part of an ill-fated government scheme for teaching the Masai to cut hay in tsetse-infested areas and store it for use in the dry season. The Masai were dubious about this project from the start because of their theory of the cause of trypanosomiasis in cattle. They agree that the tsetse fly is the primary vector of the disease but believe that it is transmitted, not by the bite of the fly, but by eating grass contaminated by tsetse fly urine. In the first experiment with feeding hay several emaciated cows died, probably as a result of overeating while in a starved condition. The Masai feared that the hay was contaminated and refused to feed the rest of it to their cattle.

Soon afterwards he made a second trip to Shinyanga with a group of Sonjo and bought 22 goats. This time they drove the goats to Arusha by foot, taking fifteen days for the journey. Near Issimungur Mountain they were attacked by a company of Masai moran. Three Sonjo herdsmen had gone ahead with the flock while the other twelve were still eating round the camp fire. The Masai clubbed one of the herdsmen and made off with the goats while the other two Sonjo ran back to warn the main party. The whole company then pursued the Masai who ran away when they heard the first poisoned arrows whistling through the air. The goats were recovered and brought safely to Arusha where Gidiya sold his for a profit of 400 shillings. On a third expedition he went to an auction at Dongabesh in Barabaig country and bought 38 goats. When these were sold in Arusha he found that he had 1,600 shillings in hand, which is a comfortable fortune for a young Sonjo. He lent 600 shillings to a friend who was about to leave for an auction at Singida and planned to return home with 1,000 shillings. That night he went to a beer party for the first time in his life--it is against the rules for a junior warrior to drink--and got drunk. In the morning his 1,000 shillings were missing. He took back the 600 shillings which he had lent out and after buying himself a raincoat, a new blanket, and a few ornaments, he returned to Sonjo to turn over the remaining money to his eldest brother according to custom.

Arriving back home, Gidiya was grieved to hear that his fiancée had died during his absence. His betrothal to seven-year-old Ndolisi had been celebrated before his initiation and the bride-price of 60 goats paid in full. After his father's death, the two shambas that he inherited were cultivated by Ndolisi with the help of her mother and cousins (she was an only daughter). The crops from these fields were divided between Ndolisi's mother and Gidiya's eldest brother who exchanged his share for goats which were added to Gidiya's flock, two or three a year. For two years Gidiya had done the man's work on the fields, irrigating them and clearing off the previous year's stubble. He was not allowed to speak to his betrothed or approach close to her, but he watched her carefully from a distance and was pleased with what he saw. Ndolisi was a plump healthy girl who talked and laughed a good deal but never lost her dignity. Her father's two wives had each born him only one child--a son and a daughter. Although she was the darling of the family she had not been spoiled. Old Budway had thought well in choosing her for his favorite son. Already at the age of nine she could apply her digging-stick to the soil with the tireless rhythm of the dance.

One morning, while Gidiya was away in Shinyanga buying goats, she noticed a small itchy pustule on her left arm. As the lesion developed into an indurated ulcer, and the glands of her arm pit swelled, her father recognized the symptoms and diagnosed morimu or anthrax. She was immediately confined to the house so that the rays of the sun, which are thought to be very detrimental in this disease, should not strike her. As plain water is also believed to be harmful she was only given water well sweetened with honey. Local medication in the form of powdered herbs and the juice of certain ants was applied for the purpose of loosening the core of the lesion, for according to Sonjo medicine the core must be removed if the patient is to survive. The girl did not respond to treatment and died a week after the onset of the sickness.

Ndolisi's death meant a loss of 60 goats to Gidiya and his brothers, for there is no refund of a bride-price that has been paid. Gidiya no longer felt that he was in a position to settle down at home and soon planned another trading enterprise. Taking five goats with him he went to visit his sister on the shore of Lake Natron and there he bartered his goats for 35 of the long narrow gourds that grow well in the hot dry climate of Nguramani. These calabashes are much desired by the Masai, who decorate them with cowry shells and use them as milk containers. Carrying the gourds on his back he set off for Ngorongoro, walking for three days through wild country where he had to dodge rhino and lion and avoid any Masai bands which might well have robbed him of his precious burden. He sold the gourds at a Masai cattle auction for 600 shillings and promptly invested this money in goats. Then he set off for Arusha with two other traders where he sold his goats for 1,100 shillings. Once more he started for home with the means of obtaining a wife. While Gidiya was getting into a crowded bus in Arusha a pickpocket must have relieved him of his nest egg. Later in the journey he found his buttoned pocket slit with a razor and the money gone.

For the time being Gidiya gave up his attempts to increase his worldly possessions and lapsed into the lazy life of the junior warriors who lived in the village. According to the book, these young men are supposed to lead celibate lives, and in the old days this rule was strictly enforced. The Sonjo even know of an herb which may be taken by libidinous youths to cool their sexual desire. Nowadays there is more laxity in these matters: senior warriors are allowed to marry, and junior warriors often have affairs of the heart. They must not pursue unmarried maidens, though, but are expected to confine their attentions to married women. Gidiya got mixed up in several affairs of this kind which brought him some notoriety as a philanderer. Once he and two companions were caught rendezvousing with three young wives by one of the husbands. They were hauled up before the Water Board and fined a goat each. Another affair concerned a frivolous woman who was encouraging two young men at the same time. One day she got her dates mixed and the two rivals arrived at the tryst simultaneously. In mutual frustration they started fighting with sticks and were charged with disgraceful conduct and fined a goat. The enmity between them has lasted to the present.

Seven years had gone by since Gidiya's initiation and a new class of junior warriors were initiated. Gidiya became a senior warrior and was eligible to marry. His flock of goats had by then increased to about 70 animals. He set about in seriousness looking for a suitable wife and found the girl he wanted in Kadivi. This girl had been much sought after and her father had demanded the high bride-price of 100 goats. He had already turned down a number of suitors, but time was passing and Kadivi had reached the age of marriage unengaged. Gidiya's offer was accepted and he paid over his 70 goats immediately. A month later Gidiya's brother paid 30 goats to make up the hundred. Gidiya was assigned a house lot in the section of the village belonging to his clan and built a house with the help of his brothers and age-grade mates. The marriage ceremonies were performed promptly and the young couple settled down to housekeeping.

Kadivi was an energetic cultivator and wanted more land than the two shambas that Gidiya had inherited. So once more he went to visi^t

his sister at Ngurumani and bought calabashes which he peddled to Masai villages in the region, earning a profit of 200 shillings. He then bought goats as cheaply as he could from the Masai and sent them off with a friend to be sold in Arusha. With the proceeds from this sale he bought three more fields for cultivation--enough to meet the needs of his family in the future. He also started to build up his own flock again and now possesses 60 goats. A year and a half after the marriage Kadivi announced that she was pregnant. She shaved her head and painted it glossy black with a mixture of pot soot and fat. One of her sisters and two of Gidiya's cousins, who are classified as his sisters, did likewise. These four women, none of whom had borne children yet, stayed at Kadivi's house for four days. Gidiya was required to slaughter a goat for a family feast. A small square piece of the skin was elaborately decorated with beads and Kadivi wore it suspended from her neck. Later when the baby was born the beads were removed and made into a necklace for it. The rest of the goat skin was made into a garment for the baby. For the last three months of her pregnancy Kadivi left off working in the fields and only did house work. From time to time some little ritual was performed to ensure a safe birth and a healthy child.

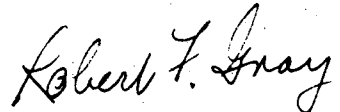
The delivery was uneventful, which informed the people that Kadivi had been a faithful wife. After the birth Gidiya was obliged to kill four goats for separate ceremonies. On the fourth day the young son was brought out of the house, shaved, given beads and other small presents, and introduced to society. In the second month he was brought out to see his first new moon. He was given his name at that time--Lorigei. This name was invented by his mother, for the Sonjo try to give every child a brand new name, which requires a good deal of inventiveness on the part of parents. After the birth of his son, the villagers stopped calling Gidiya by his own name and started calling him Baba-wa-Lorigei (Lorigei's Father). Lorigei is now a year and a half old and will soon be weaned. Before many years he should be ready to manage a goat camp for his father. Sometime in the next year Gidiya hopes that Kadivi will announce a second pregnancy.

Gidiya has seen something of the outside world, has dealt on equal terms with strangers of other cultures and races, and has learned something of other religions--Christian, Mohamedan, and pagan. For instance he is able to discuss quite perceptively the differences between Protestant and Catholic missions. As a result of his broadening experience he tends to reject many of the social values of the Sonjo, recognizes the anachronism of many of their customs, and sees little future for the tribe as it is organized at present; but despite this experience and insight his faith in Sonjo religion seems to remain firm. Gidiya accompanied Betty and me on a visit to Kisangiro one day. We arrived during the siesta hour when nobody was about and walked directly up to the temple to take photographs. Gidiya was afraid to come with us and explained that it was sacriligious for anyone to enter the temple precincts unless he was wearing skin garments. I naturally excused him and he stayed behind while we went ahead and took the photographs, though we stayed at a discreet distance and did not enter the compound. Nevertheless Gidiya was later charged by the elders with guiding us to the temple and was fined four goats. I instructed him not to pay the fine and wrote a certificate in triplicate testifying that he had

not guided us and that if there had been any transgression of tribal law the responsibility was solely mine. His conscience in the affair remained guilty, though, and I suspect that after we had gone he paid the fine rather than risk the supernatural penalty of being cursed by the priest.

Gidiya is deeply discontented and several times asked for permanent employment with me, mainly, I think, to get away from Sonjo. The old way of life offers no scope for his restless energy and his awakening imagination, and he lacks the social power and prestige for initiating significant changes at home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert F. Gray". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name below it.

Robert F. Gray.

Received New York 2/21/56.