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**A TORAJA PILGRIMAGE:
THE LIFE OF FRITZ BASIANG**

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Introduction: Forms of autobiographical narrative

Life history, it has been remarked, is 'a venerable but as yet little theorized genre of ethnographic writing' (Behar 1992:122). An investigation of what has been achieved in this genre leads one to the conclusion that, venerable though it may be, and in spite of the obvious fact that it has enriched the ethnographic corpus with some memorable and outstanding works, attention to its possibilities has been, at best, patchy and inconsistent.¹ These possibilities have therefore remained incompletely realized; yet there are now signs of a renewed interest in exploring and developing its potentials.² Writing as an anthropologist, I find many reasons to be interested in it: anthropology's commitment to understanding the lives of ordinary people; the potentials of a qualitative method to teach us something otherwise inaccessible (see especially Bertaux (1981) for an example of the systematic use of life histories in sociological research, and Passerini (1987) for their use by a historian); the possibility of seeing in an individual life the meaning of living a particular culture, or of enduring and surviving the dramatic clash of two cultures, which has been the life experience of so many colonized peoples; and not least the potentials of life stories to reveal to us the workings of memory, both personal and social, and hence also as a source of personal perspectives on historical events. Since in a sense, the whole of social life could be seen as the sum of interwoven life histories, it is in fact a puzzle to explain why they should have remained so marginal to the practice of the social sciences.

We all tell stories about our lives, if only to ourselves - and indeed, our mental health depends on our ability to do so, so that our lives may have coherence (Ross & Conway 1986; Rappaport 1990; Linde 1993). Without some coherent memory of the past, there is no basis on which to act today. The forms which such stories can take, however, are so varied that we should do better to think of multiple genres arranged in a continuum, of which the life histories elicited by ethnographers are just one, rather peculiar, kind. At the least formal end of this continuum may be found what psychological researchers have termed 'life stories' - fragments of oral discourse or personal storytelling, told in different ways for different audiences, and sometimes purely for the purpose of entertaining (see e.g. Miller 1994). At the most formal end

lie published biography and autobiography. Autobiography, as a particular mode of telling about the self, is itself a distinctive genre with a relatively short history in European cultures.³ 'Personal narratives' is a term which conveniently covers all of these genres, and may be extended to include other forms such as letters and diaries (Caplan 1997).

Bruner (1987:31) argues that 'a life as led is inseparable from a life as told', and that the ability to tell it transcends cultural boundaries. 'While the act of *writing* autobiography is new under the sun - like writing itself - the self-told life narrative is, by all accounts, ancient and universal. People anywhere can tell you some intelligible account of their lives. What varies is the cultural and linguistic perspective or narrative *form* in which it is formulated and expressed' (1987:16). Any culture, he proposes, has its 'tool kit' of narrative forms and heroes from which its members can build their own life stories. While this is doubtless true, his point about writing misses the fact that autobiography as a genre is by no means as old as writing itself, and in fact is more closely related to the history of publishing. Other ethnographers dispute the easy translatability of the genre: Birgitt Röttger-Rössler (1993) found difficulty in collecting autobiographical accounts from her Makassar informants in South Sulawesi, and concluded that notions of 'public' and 'private' identities in this society simply differed too greatly for informants to fulfil her original expectations (based on Western literary standards) that 'an' autobiography would be primarily an account of an individual's inner life. On the other hand, she found that she had 'accidentally' collected a wide range of biographical accounts instead, and that individuals did in fact recount a number of narratives about their own lives, which, although they defied her expectations, could be regarded as 'a kind of autobiographical narrating' (1993:372). These typically were event- or action-centred, and had to do with the public persona, as formulated in connection with ideas about *siri* (honour, self-respect), and not with any confessional account of the individual's inner life or emotions. In fact informants were actively resistant to providing any narrative of the latter type, and clearly found her efforts to elicit them embarrassing. She suggests we should bear in mind that, outside of the Western context, autobiographical documents 'constitute a narrative genre that has come into being only fairly recently through the collaboration of ethnographers and native informants' (1993:367).⁴ Quite possibly, the fact that Fritz Basiang was so readily able to tell me his life story in linear fashion, and that he chose to describe it as a journey, already has much to do with his acculturation, his projection of himself into the wider world of the colonial Dutch East Indies and beyond. He

was a modernist, embracing much that he saw as new and progressive, although he maintained an enduring if selective attachment to what he saw as valuable in his own culture.

As the 'accelerated history' of the twentieth century has drawn to a close, we are in the special position of being able to look back on it and attempt to discern its patterns. Individuals who were born at the start of the century, and lived through all or most of it, have lived extraordinary lives which have been profoundly altered by unprecedented social transformations. My interest in presenting the following life history stems from this conviction: from the desire to record something of the life of a remarkable person; from a continuing fascination with the way his life embodied certain historical transformations; and not least as a debt which I have long owed to his family, who have their own concerns that his life should be remembered. The historian John Smail (1961), in an influential essay, proposed the need for an 'autonomous domestic history' of Indonesia, one which would seek to avoid past errors of Eurocentrism, or of history written from the perspective of the winners only; his argument has of late received revived attention (Sears 1993). Life history research constitutes one potentially rich resource for contributing, in however small a way, to such a continuing project.

Life histories are always the product of collaborations (Mischler 1986; Borland 1991; Behar 1992; Echevarria-Howe 1995). Caplan (1997:22), presenting the personal narratives (both oral and written) which she gathered from her long acquaintance with 'Mohammed', a Tanzanian, comments on the many possible ways in which the anthropologist may choose to execute the task of editing such texts - which is generally unavoidable in order to make them intelligible to a wider audience. She speaks of her eventual decision to write 'a seamed narrative in which the ethnographer sews the seams and is seen to do so, but in which the people who are its sources - their voices and the occasions on which they speak - are made explicit.' Life histories are also always in some sense unfinished products; Langness and Frank (1981) speak of the inescapable incompleteness of lives, as well as the impossibility of any final interpretation. I started fieldwork in Tana Toraja, in the highlands of South Sulawesi, in 1978. During my time there, I came to know Fritz Basiang and his family more and more closely. In 1983, when he was 78 years old, I recorded several long conversations with him, in which he reminisced about his life, as well as providing an illuminating discourse on Toraja kinship principles and other cultural matters. I do not know whether he may have had his own reasons for deciding to talk to me about his life, beyond his courteous willingness to oblige me in my request. Given my inexperience, I inevitably found there were many more questions that I later

wished I had asked him. He made his own selection too of what he wanted to include in his story. He chose to dwell on the historical events he had lived through, while remaining reticent about personal and family life. This might have been because of assumptions about what a life story should contain, or because he assumed that was what I preferred to hear about, or simply because he was more comfortable talking about those things; perhaps all of these. I was not to return to Tana Toraja for a number of years, and when I was finally able to do so, he had already passed away. I am keenly aware, therefore, that my account is in many ways inadequate and partial. As my interest in Fritz continued to deepen, however, his family helped to supply me with more information. In 1994, his son Danny spent considerable time with me going over the tapes (copies of which had by now become a valued memento for him also) and filling in details of explanation.⁵ On a return visit in 1996, Danny for the first time produced the family photo album, which added a further dimension to the story and from which come the photos published here. On this and my next visit, in 1999, I sought out people who had known or worked with Fritz and gathered further recollections about him. Shortly after this, Danny's elder brother Martin sent me a collection of hand-written notes which Fritz had made, mostly in the latter years of his life, which yielded still further details of reminiscence about the past. However imperfect, then, I hope that this account will convey something of a life which dramatically and adventurously crossed the boundaries between cultures, making a significant contribution to a newly emergent vision of what it might mean to be both Toraja, and Indonesian, in the twentieth century.

Life as Pilgrimage

Those who have reached old age in Tana Toraja now - or who were already old at the time I started my fieldwork, and have now passed away - belong to a special generation, the generation whose own lifetimes have encompassed all the remarkable and rapid changes that have taken place in Toraja society this century. They experienced all the transformations effected since the coming of the Dutch in 1905, the introduction of a colonial administration with its schools, its Christian Missions, its taxes and corvée labour, through the hardships of the Japanese Occupation, to the emergence of Indonesia as an independent nation, the troubles of the 1950s, up until the present, with the economic developments of the New Order, and the advent of tourism. Finally, before the century's end, 1998 has brought still more dramatic transformations with the abrupt closure of the Suharto era and the manifold uncertainties about

what is to follow on the road to Reform. In their own lifetimes, they have been witness to the corresponding transformation of world view that has accompanied the progressive shifts in perspective which these changes have brought about, as Toraja became aware of themselves as part of the greater entity of 'Indonesia'. This was the first generation to whom the possibility of a European education presented itself, and as a result of this, some were to embark on journeys that would take them far beyond the horizons of village communities that were the known world of their parents and grandparents.

Anderson has called these journeys 'pilgrimages', particularly those that were part of an educational trajectory in the colonies. Only a few individuals had this opportunity, for educational channels were severely restricted in most colonies; the Netherlands East Indies were no exception in this regard. As Anderson points out, these institutions were organized in a tight hierarchy, whose geographical distribution led from village primary school, to local town middle schools, to tertiary institutions in a provincial city or, for a handful, to Batavia. A very few individuals might progress from here to the ultimate apices of the system, the metropolitan cities of Europe, before they found their path blocked to a permanent career either in Europe or in any other colonial territory. Then the loop of their journey would return them to their own colony. The experience of a newly 'imagined reality' grew out of these journeys, and the lessons learned along the way, so that they played, Anderson (1983:111) suggests, a crucial role in the emergence of nationalist identities and aspirations:

From all over the vast colony, but from nowhere outside it, the tender pilgrims made their inward, upward way, meeting fellow-pilgrims from different, perhaps once hostile, villages in primary school; from different ethnolinguistic groups in middle-school; and from every part of the realm in the tertiary institutions of the capital. And they knew that from wherever they had come they still had read the same books and done the same sums. They also knew, even if they never got so far - and most did not - that Rome was Batavia, and that all these journeyings derived their "sense" from the capital, in effect explaining why "we" are "here" "together". To put it another way, their common experience, and the amiably competitive comradeship of the classroom, gave the maps of the colony which they studied (always coloured differently from British Malaya or the American Philippines) a territorially-specific imagined reality which was every day confirmed by the accents and physiognomies of their classmates.

As the geographical extent of the colonial state, and its specialized functions, expanded, so too did the needs of the administration for trained, bilingual clerks and functionaries; educational provision enlarged accordingly in the early decades of the twentieth century (in

Tana Toraja as elsewhere in the Netherlands Indies), so that 'with every enlargement of the state, the swarm of its inner pilgrims swelled' (Anderson 1983:106). In spite of the expansion of elementary education, however, the top of the educational pyramid remained so narrow that only a tiny fraction of students qualified for university education. High school standards were very high (comparable to the Netherlands) and costs were prohibitive for most Indonesians.⁶ Even in the face of these restrictions, by the 1920s, Dutch-educated graduates were beginning to outnumber the positions available in government service or the 'Western' sector of the economy, giving rise to the formation of an 'intellectual proletariat' (Veur 1969:9). Van Neil (1960) provides a most illuminating analysis of educational developments in the period up to 1927; it was among this newly-educated minority that a nationalist consciousness was first to develop.

Fritz Basiang was a remarkable individual who exemplifies precisely the kind of educational pilgrim Anderson describes. Born in the very year the Dutch entered the Toraja highlands, the span of his long life (1905-1993) encompasses the Toraja encounter with modernity. Being among the first Toraja to attend a Dutch school, he was also an early convert to Christianity. He was one of the first Toraja to travel to Europe, doubtless the first ever to visit Germany. Originally trained as a paramedic, he gained so much practical experience in medicine that he came effectively to work as a doctor, at a time when the number of doctors per head of population in Tana Toraja was tiny. In this role he performed outstanding service to his own people for many decades and was a well-loved and much respected figure in the community. Given the framework I have chosen for this account, the focus will be chiefly on the early decades of his life, though the later ones were by no means uneventful. In the first part of his story, we see him grasping every opportunity to change the course of his personal life; by contrast, the momentous historical events of his middle years, such as the Japanese Occupation and the subsequent struggle for Independence, acted upon him as upon others, leaving less room for manoeuvre as many people found themselves concerned chiefly to survive as best they could. When recalling his early life, he spoke in Toraja, slipping more and more into Indonesian once his account progressed to the point at which he had first left Toraja in pursuit of higher education.

Fritz's life in this sense may be compared with that of other Indonesians of his generation who have published memoirs of their lives or childhood. Indonesians have developed their own traditions of autobiography, and there are several well-known examples

that deal with this period, not only by politicians or those who have had prominent public careers, but also by literary figures.⁷ Two Sumatran examples, by Pospos (1950) and Radjab (1950), have recently been made accessible in English translation by Rodgers (1995); others include Nur Sutan Iskandar (1948) and Hamka (1951-52). It is perhaps significant that, with the exception of the latter, all of these are exclusively about childhood. Within them, the educational trajectory is a dominant theme, and they stop at the point where the author leaves his home region to pursue his education further afield. Rodgers notes how inextricably the personal is woven with historical events in these narratives. Published immediately before or after the achievement of Independence, the authors in effect look back as Indonesians, from the vantage-point of the newly-won Republic of Indonesia, to the world of a village childhood encapsulated within a local ethnic identity and culture. The newly-constructed modern self at the same time looks back, with a mixture of criticism and nostalgia, at a 'traditional' world that has been irrevocably left behind with childhood. Ruslan Abdulgani's 'My Childhood World', translated into English by Frederick (1974), presents a vivid picture of the more ethnically heterogeneous world of a Surabaya neighbourhood of the 1910s-1930s, with many astute insights into the prevailing world view of its residents, including their ways of classifying the variety of non-Javanese (not yet perceived as fellow 'Indonesians') with whom they had contact. He recalls his dawning awareness of the idea of 'Indonesia' in the late 1920s, as nationalist movements began to gather momentum and the ideas of Dr Soetomo and Sukarno began to have an effect in the *kampung*. A few first signs of modernity could be seen in the childrens' enthusiasm for soccer, and the presence in his neighbourhood of a Sumatran doctor, who was 'the sole representative of the world of Western science in the area' (Frederick 1974:134). The neighbours were terrified of this doctor, and exchanged hair-raising stories about his supposed methods. He also remembers his mother supportively buying salt from poor coastal women, who made it illegally in defiance of the government salt monopoly. After hearing of Gandhi's historic march to the sea to make salt in breach of colonial monopoly in India, she tore his picture out of a magazine and pasted it on the wall, next to a picture of Sultan Abdulhamid of Turkey, who, she told him, had helped the Acehnese in their war against the Dutch. Dr Abdulgani's recollections may be regarded as of interest partly because he himself went on to have such a distinguished career, holding many important positions in the government of an independent Indonesia. But the narratives of those who are not famous can be of equal sociological and historical interest. A rare example is the unpublished life story of a young

Javanese man, Soejtipto, written in 1928 and analysed by Kratz (1978). Starting from a difficult and unhappy childhood, the author tells of his efforts to develop his own philosophy of life, in a manner which in some respects is typically Javanese, in others distinctively modern in its confessional content, realism and directness of style, and colloquial use of language. In this instance, we know nothing at all about what happened to Soetjipto in later life; yet his account remains as an intriguing example of a newly emergent form of personal narrative.

Of particular interest in relation to Fritz Basiang's life story are the published memoirs of several contemporaries who were doctors. Earliest of these is the memoir of Dr Soetomo himself, who according to Anderson (1990:245) was 'the first prominent Indonesian to write something like an autobiography.' This work, published in 1934, deals solely with the author's childhood. Oddly, it stops before giving any account of his years of political activity. Anderson points out the strange shape of this memoir, which radically departs from Western expectations of an 'autobiography', arguing that it is nonetheless exemplary in its display of certain peculiarly Javanese concerns. He proposes that a major concern is the author's search for a new way to live without abandoning Javaneness: 'Being a good Javanese by becoming a good Indonesian' (Anderson 1990:262). Already here, personal identity and social transformation predominate as themes. A second example is the autobiography of Dr Soemarno Sosroatmadjo (1981). Born in 1911, he grew up in East Java, where his father, like Dr Soetomo's, was an administrative official. With this relatively privileged background, he was one of the few to receive Dutch-language education, which qualified him for entry to the NIAS (*Nederlansch-Indische Artsenschool*, or Netherlands Indies Medical School) in Surabaya, from which he graduated in 1938. Posted to a remote part of East Kalimantan, he delivered health care to the local Dayaks, journeying largely by canoe to upriver villages. He went on to achieve high rank in the Indonesian army, and served as Governor of Jakarta under Sukarno. Most recently, the autobiography of Dr A. A. M. Djelantik (1997), a son of the Balinese Raja of Karangasem (b.1919), vividly describes yet again that inexorable educational progression which carried the author, first, from the palace in which he grew up to the H.I.S. (*Hollandsch-Inlandsche School*, or Dutch Indonesian Primary School) in Denpasar; next, to Java to attend the M.U.L.O. (*Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs*, or 'More Comprehensive Elementary Education', a lower secondary school) in Malang, and A.M.S. (*Algemeene Middelbare School*, a higher secondary school) in Yogyakarta, where students were lodged with Dutch families to encourage more thorough absorption of Dutch culture and manners; and eventually to study medicine in

Holland. Here he survived the war years and the German Occupation partly in hiding, with the help of Dutch friends. Djelantik was keen to serve in remote areas on his return to Indonesia, and together with his wife, a Dutch nurse, encountered a variety of dangers and adventures in Buru, Sumbawa, and North Sulawesi, before returning to work in Bali where he became Chief Medical Officer, later working overseas for some years as a malariologist for the World Health Organisation. These published works are obviously more substantial than the account I am presenting here. All of the above individuals came from more privileged backgrounds than Fritz Basiang, and have had more distinguished and high-profile careers. Their access to a more complete education in the Dutch language made it possible for them to qualify as doctors, an opportunity which was denied to Fritz. But in spite of these differences, their accounts provide many interesting parallels in experience. Like Fritz, they all lived through the Dutch colonial system and the passage toward a modern Indonesian identity. The training as a doctor in itself must have ensured a radical change in world view, providing a thorough indoctrination into scientific rationalism and a humanist philosophy. All chose to practise their medical skills where they were desperately needed, in areas where at that time the health service was in its infancy and conditions were often primitive. And for all of them this progression was also a political one, in which each came to share the vision of an independent Indonesia, and used their skills to contribute in the most practical way possible to improving life for ordinary people.⁸

A village childhood

Basiang, to give him his original name, was born at Maroson in Banga, in the westerly Toraja district of Saluputti, in 1905. He was the second child of Ne' Pilo and his second wife, Lai' Kanan. He had three elder half-sisters, from his father's first marriage, while the second marriage produced five children in all: an elder brother Palino', Basiang himself, and three sisters. Ne' Pilo was a local aristocrat with a considerable reputation for courage and fairness in dealing with the Bugis who at that time had settled in considerable numbers in Banga and other regions around the market centre of Rembon. In the late nineteenth century, the Bugis from Sidenreng, in the west, attempted to wrest control of the Toraja coffee trade away from Luwu', to the east, and when coffee prices fluctuated, found it profitable to trade in slaves as well. This trade was greatly intensified by the advent of modern firearms, which they offered in exchange. A number of Toraja headmen, being eager to obtain the new rifles for the pursuit of their own ambitions, colluded with Bugis mercenaries in raiding remoter districts for slaves, causing

severe depopulation in the more vulnerable areas.⁹ It was a time of chaos, and Saluputti was one of the regions most severely affected.

Ne' Pilo's original Toraja name was Titting, the name by which his family and fellow-villagers always called him, but later in life he liked to keep company with the Bugis, who gave him the name La Pira or La Piro, which local Toraja pronounced as Pilo. During the 1880s and 1890s, Pilo deftly cooperated with these Bugis infiltrators in order as best he could to protect his community from their depredations, exercising his influence to save many people (particularly, it is said, those of noble families) from being sold into slavery. As a result of these interventions, he could have greatly enriched himself by accepting land offered to him by grateful people in return for his protection (as other local leaders, greedier or less merciful, certainly did); he could have owned land all the way from Banga to Ulusahu. Basiang recalled his father as being a man of few words who, when he did open his mouth, always said something worth hearing.

Basiang's earliest memories were of herding buffaloes with other village boys, from about the age of six. The lyrical quality of these recollections fits with a general Toraja pattern reported also by Hollan and Wellenkamp (1996:50-51) in the life histories they collected. Herding, they note, 'demands a great deal of initiative and independent action', and consequent freedom, though it can be arduous to be out in all weathers with the responsibility to keep temperamental buffaloes out of others' rice fields and gardens; the herding period is one that 'holds considerable psychological and social significance' for many of their respondents, being remembered as 'a bittersweet time... of relative freedom, satiation, and rebellion'. Basiang and his companions would take the buffaloes out on the hillsides all day long, returning home in the evening. They would whoop and call to each other, each with their own special call, to find who else was out herding, and then they would gather for company and work together to tend their charges. When they were hungry, they would eat food brought from home in a woven reed bag (*kapipe*), or help themselves to peanuts, corn or ripe bananas from a neighbour's garden (this is considered acceptable Toraja practice, within limits - cf. Hollan and Wellenkamp 1996:52). Sometimes they would light a fire and steam some food inside bamboos; sometimes they cooked buffalo milk inside a pumpkin taken from someone's garden. They would coat the pumpkin in clay before baking it, a slow but delicious process; one had to be careful once it was cooked, in order not to break it and spill the milk. One herdboy might tend as many as ten buffaloes, some of his own family, others belonging to neighbours. In those days, he recalled,

there were still 'few people and plentiful resources'. There was much more uncultivated land - open grassy areas rather than woodland - in this part of Toraja then than now, and it was his impression that people then had owned more buffaloes than they commonly do nowadays.¹⁰

He also remembered people performing *corvée* labour (D: *heerendienst*) for the Dutch, making roads and wooden bridges. The District Head would be in charge of organizing this labour and ensuring that it was carried out until allotted tasks were completed. Under the Dutch administration, Banga formed a District and the District Head was a man called Tapparan. His first sight of a Dutchman was when his father once took him to Ma'kale (the small town founded as an administrative centre by the Dutch) on market day in order to sell some rice. He had to find a friend to tend his buffaloes that day, and felt obliged to hurry home after, for fear that the buffaloes, if unattended, might eat somebody's gardens - an early training, as he put it, in responsibility. They walked all the way there and back (about 15 km each way), attending the market which was held on a patch of open ground near the large pool built by the Dutch, which still forms the centre of the little town. There he caught sight of the Governor or *Controleur*, and was struck by the extreme whiteness of his skin. The *Controleur* had introduced orange trees (*lemo cina*) to Ma'kale, a number of which he had planted near the site of the present Catholic Church. By 1909 a school had opened in Ma'kale; it was staffed with teachers from Ambon, Timor, Manado and Sangir. The Toraja, Basiang observed, tended to act submissively toward these fellow-Indonesians employed by the Dutch, and obediently followed their orders.

'Family' for Basiang included a wide network of relatives, and like many Toraja children he spent time in more than one household while he was growing up. At one point he was fostered (*disarak*) by a friend of Ne' Pilo who lived in the same village. His job was to feed this person's dogs, but on one occasion he pulled a dog's tail while it was eating and it bit him in the face. After this, Ne' Pilo took him home again, and he went back to herding. Sometimes he also went to stay with his grandparents at Surakan for a few days, and from there, would go on to visit a first cousin of his grandparents at another village, Buttu, and go out with the buffalo herders there. Buffaloes in Toraja are very rarely used for ploughing, but hold supreme value in a prestige economy which focuses on their sacrifice in funeral rituals. Consequently, emotional attachment to a carefully-tended buffalo was liable to end painfully, though he laughed in recalling it so many years later:

"When this *nenek* ('grandparent') at Buttu died, I felt it very much, because a buffalo I had tended there was the first to be slaughtered in the *ma'palao* ritual (a stage of the

funeral ceremony). My father tried to prevent me seeing it because I was so fond of that buffalo, and in those days the buffalo did not have its throat cut (*ditinggoro* ') quickly, but was hacked to pieces (*na ta'tak tau*). When I saw them doing that, I yelled at all the people and cursed them!"

The wife of the deceased moved to Basiang's home village, Tapparan, from Buttu, because she was on her own and had no children, and for a time, Basiang went to live with her. Later, his father moved back to Maroson in Banga, where another elderly relative gave Basiang a puppy to raise. Basiang diligently applied himself to a training in Toraja economics: when the puppy was grown, he sold it to a man from Mamasa, and bought a pig, and when that was grown, he sold it and bought a small female buffalo calf. He raised this buffalo until it had a calf, his grandparent all the while keeping an eye on his progress.

Possibly a formative experience for the thirteen-year-old Basiang was the outbreak of the great influenza pandemic of 1918, which reportedly claimed the lives of ten percent of the population in Toraja (Bigalke 1981:254; Brown 1987).¹¹ The colonial government had not yet begun to introduce any modern medical services in the highlands, and had no help to offer the local population. Toraja still recall this as the time when people 'were cut down like grass' (*ra'ba biang*):

So many people were dying, you would bury someone in the morning, and there would be a new death by noon; you would bury someone at noon, and by the afternoon, there'd be another death. There was no medical service capable of reaching out to the population then; the armed forces had their doctors, but the people had no doctors yet - "natural selection" was good enough for them!¹²

Later on, his medical work was to become Basiang's own contribution to his local community, as well as to the struggle for Independence.

Going to school

One day in 1921, Basiang's parents went to market in Ma'kale. Feeling the urge to follow them, he found someone willing to tend his buffalo for the day, and set out after them. Ne' Pilo had a regular arrangement to supply rice to the household of the Public Prosecutor (I: *Jaksa*), a Manadonese, in the town, and Basiang caught up with his parents there. Seeing him, the *Jaksa* inquired about him and suggested that it would be a good idea if he were to stay in

Ma'kale and go to school. 'I was silent, but in my heart I was very thrilled', Fritz recalled. His parents agreed, and so in that same year he started school.

Schooling at this date was open to only a tiny proportion of the population in Toraja. According to Basiang's own recollection, twelve village schools (D: *Volksschool*), with classes 1-3 only, had been opened by 1913, and 20-30 children were chosen from neighbouring aristocratic families to attend each of them.¹³ But many noble parents were afraid to send their children; they thought the Dutch might carry them off to Holland, or send them from the highlands in military service, and some at first sent the children of their slaves as substitutes.¹⁴ Perhaps for these reasons, Basiang had not attended either of the two village schools nearest to his home.¹⁵ Ne' Pilo, however, knew the Prosecutor and trusted him, which was why he agreed to his proposal. Ironically, perhaps there was some intuitive truth in the parents' fear of school and its powers of acculturation; Ne' Pilo could hardly have imagined that he had just set his son on the first step of a journey that would really take him to Europe.

Basiang therefore moved to Ma'kale in 1921, where he first entered the regional elementary school (D: *Landschapschool*), graduating in 1926 to the intermediate-level *Schakelschool*.¹⁶ Since the schools offered no accommodation for boarders, he lodged at the Prosecutor's house, where he helped out after school by looking after the household's ducks, geese and pigs, and fetching water from the well. He made himself a handy device to assist him in this daily task. It was a wooden wheel with a long handle, to which he attached a cross-bar on which he could hang an old tin can in which he carried the water. He felt proud when the Prosecutor saw him pushing it along, and admired his ingenuity. To keep the ducks and geese from straying, he built a fence around their pond. This earned him further praise, and he was entrusted with more jobs around the house. As for the school work, 'Whatever I could do, I liked; I liked everything.' School also included instruction in Christianity. Basiang was given the job of ringing the bell for church on Sundays, and began to join in the services. In his written notes, he recalls:

Headmaster Patti asked me to ring the bell on Sundays. I thought to myself that if I hit the bell with a big stone, it would be sure to make a bigger noise. I gave it two or three good blows, and on the third one, it broke. Needless to say, I got a big scolding from the Headmaster.

In this new milieu, and under the influence of his guardian, Basiang in 1923 converted to Christianity. The Prosecutor's Christian name was Fritz, and he bestowed the same name on Basiang, who began to call himself Fritz also. But he always kept his Toraja name too, which has now become the family name used by his children. In 1924, the Prosecutor's family moved away, and he then lodged in a house shared by three Manadonese schoolteachers, a foreman in charge of road-building, a clerk and a prison warder. Subsequently, they too moved, and he took up residence with the new Prosecutor, a single man from Ambon. His family would come and visit him on market days, when they brought rice and eggs to sell. Sometimes his father would give him a little spending money to purchase vegetables or onions. There was no school uniform in those days:

You felt special already if you had a short-sleeved shirt with two buttons on it, and a pair of shorts. On Saturdays, the headmaster of the school would order those with cleaner-looking clothes to go to the office of the *Controleur* (Governor). The orange trees he had planted were already bearing fruit, and he would give us some, and praise us to encourage us in our studies.

In 1926, the Ambonese Prosecutor moved from Ma'kale to Rantepao, the other emergent town in Toraja, and so he moved with him and attended school there. This school had one class of 30 pupils from all over Toraja. There were very few possibilities for a student to further his education beyond the *Schakelschool* level, but Basiang had obviously impressed his teachers enough that they encouraged him to enter the examinations for the *Normaalschool*, a teacher training school in Makassar (the provincial capital of South Sulawesi), which at this date took only one or two pupils annually from Toraja.¹⁷ It is 300 kms from Rantepao to Makassar, and Basiang started out on the journey by walking two days through the forest to reach the coastal town of Palopo. The Prosecutor sent someone with him to carry his luggage. From Palopo they travelled by car to Makassar, through the Bugis districts of Bone and Sengkang, spending a night in each, and finally arriving shortly before midnight of the night before the exam. Tired from the journey, Basiang felt that he had performed poorly in the exam; if only he could have arrived earlier and had a few days to prepare himself, he could have stood a chance of success. A Sangirese teacher at the Rantepao school, however, encouraged him to try again the following year, so in 1927 he set out for Makassar again. By now, the friendly Ambonese Prosecutor had moved to a post in Enrekang, (the district bordering Tana Toraja to the south), so this time Basiang and one other hopeful pupil set out to walk there, and from there were driven to Makassar. This time they both passed the exams, but it was to do him no good:

But now, because we were both from Rantepao, and I was already a year older than the other boy, they chose only the younger. So I decided my future did not lie in that direction. So I went to work. Things were not as they are now, when anyone who can pass can be accepted; the Dutch at that time kept only a tiny number of school places available. People were capable, but they weren't allowed to (I: *orang bisa, tetapi tidak boleh*).

Bitter as he understandably felt about this setback, Basiang made the best of it and applied himself in his new job, as an assistant in the *Controleur*'s office in Rantepao. He wrote letters, answered the telephone, and helped to count the silver money with which employees of the Dutch were paid. There was now a German doctor, Dr Simon, and his family, living in Rantepao. He had come out originally with the Mission, but did not get on with them and contracted to work for three years for the regional government (of *Landschap* Rantepao). He was the sole doctor in Tana Toraja at this time. And now, in a manner which was to prove so characteristic of him, Basiang saw a chance and seized upon it:

I often went from my Office to the hospital to take Dr Simon his letters. One day when I went to the hospital, I saw many young men of my own age gathered there. I was already friendly with the Doctor, because I always brought him his letters, so I asked him: 'A lot of young men are here, Doctor, the same age as me; what are they doing here?' He said, 'I've chosen these young people from all the different districts, to come here so I can train them as health workers.' I said, 'How would it be, Doctor, if Basiang were to join you, would you take me on too?' Ah! He was very happy! But he said, 'What about your other job? Perhaps the *Controleur* won't release you?' But there was no problem. I told the *Controleur* that the Doctor would be glad to take me, and that I wanted to go too.

Discovering a medical vocation

Fritz had now found something that truly engaged him, and he plunged into the new work with enthusiasm:

So I started there in 1928...I liked the work very much. Once I was registered I was allowed to help the Doctor as a travelling health worker (*tukang tornieur*). So I followed him whenever he went around Tana Toraja on horseback. Every month, he had to go on tour, all around the different districts.¹⁸ If I'm not wrong, there were more than ten of us assistants, who all went with him. And in each district there was a government rest house (I: *pasanggrahan*) for us to stay in. He would send out word that there would be a clinic the next day, and everyone would come. And then he would examine all the patients, and give them medicine - worm medicine, and vaccinations against cholera, typhus and other major diseases.... There was already a vaccination programme against

smallpox being carried out. In that year, of my own desire, I went continuously with the Doctor and worked in the hospital. But in the evenings, we'd listen to his stories, then when we saw him nodding off, we'd think, 'Ah! Now it's time to sleep, we're tired.' We travelled all over the place! For twenty days or more at a time. In one month, we'd be on tour more than we were in the hospital. You can imagine: we'd travel on horseback from here to Sangalla', the place called Batuallo. As far as Ulu Uai - near the mountain that's tallest over there. Then down to Mengkendek, to Palesan, then to Buakayu, and from there to Mappa', and from there to Simbuang. It takes two days if you travel fast, before you reach Simbuang. From there, there were still two more places to visit, each of which took a day to reach, then we'd go on to Balepe', come down towards Sasak, then Bittuang. We'd spend the night in Bittuang, at Alang, and go from there to Baruppu', then after treating people there, when the medicine was nearly finished, we'd send a letter ahead to Rantepao, telling them to send more medicine on ahead to Pangala'. So I really got to know the whole of Tana Toraja, and almost all the village heads (I: *kepala kampung*) of that era, I knew them all, and there are some who still remember me.

In his written notes, Fritz recalled that the most common diseases at that time included malaria, yaws, scabies, syphilis, gonorrhoea, trachoma, and intestinal worms. Dr Simon found practical opportunities to further his pupils' instruction. If a pig was killed to feed the party at one of their overnight stops, he would use the animal to teach anatomy, explaining the passage of food through the body, and showing them all the internal organs.

Fritz's schooling, incomplete as it was, had already given him a degree of advantage over the others in that he knew more Dutch. Palilu, a surviving member of the original group of trainees, who later went on to become a pastor, recalled that Dr Simon made Fritz his personal assistant for this reason.¹⁹ As for Fritz, he was planning ahead, his ambition setting him apart from his fellows:

So for months, almost the whole of that year, 1928, I was thinking, 'This is one kind of work that is really socially useful'; and I was wondering how I could go further. The idea was for the other health workers, after they had received sufficient training, and learnt what was considered important, to go back to their village clinics and work there, but I was looking for a way to go further, beyond just training with Dr Simon. So he said, 'I will give you a choice of three places: do you want to go to Weltevreden in Batavia, or to Semarang or Surabaya?' Those three places all had large hospitals, all equally good. So I said, 'If it pleases you, I will go to Weltevreden.' So he said, 'Write a letter for yourself, saying that you would like to do this work, and I will give you a letter of introduction explaining that you are the only one from Toraja.' So I was happy. The answer came back: 'You may leave and start here on 1 January 1929.' So I had to hurry. I went to tell my parents about it and ask their help. There was a buffalo I had tended, still there in the village. We slaughtered it and sold the meat in Ma'kale, and with the money I paid for my journey... So when everything was ready I set off, and the

Doctor took me all the way to Palopo in his car. By then there was a motor road opened all the way to Palopo and the journey took only a few hours. By chance, Dr Simon knew a Javanese man employed by the Public Works Department, so I stayed one night with his family in Palopo, then I boarded a ship from Palopo to Ujung Pandang. That took one day, and the ticket cost Rp.12 1/2. It seems cheap now, but in those days it was a lot! There by chance there was a soldier going to Java on furlough, so I travelled together with him, as a deck passenger, on a ship to Surabaya. In Surabaya, we disembarked, and I asked the soldier's family to help me find a place to stay, then travelled on again. By chance, at the hotel where I spent the night, I met a Manadonese who worked for the Controleur here in Toraja, who had been bitten by a mad dog. He had to go to Bandung...because in those days that was the only place you could get treatment for rabies. So we travelled on again together on the train. He was allowed to travel First Class and I was only allowed to go Third Class. But because I was with him, I was allowed to travel First Class!

Fritz was now discovering at first hand the much larger world of the Dutch colonial empire, making chance encounters with people from many parts of the archipelago and enjoying many new experiences. Those he met were also on the move because of their positions within the colonial hierarchy, and many further lessons in inequality and politics were to follow. Interestingly, a training in medicine seems to have led on to radical political activity for several early nationalists in Indonesia: Tjipto Mangunkusumo, Gunawan Mangunkusumo, Adbul Muis, Suwardi Surjaningrat, and Dr Soetomo, had all studied at medical schools such as the STOVIA (*School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen*, or School for Training Native Doctors), which Van Niel (1960:51) suggests became a leading source for members of a new intellectual elite. It was in Batavia that Fritz first became aware of Indonesian nationalist aspirations:

Surabaya of course was very busy, compared to anything I had yet seen. And my mind was opened as a result. And it was the first time I had ever been on a train - it was a steam locomotive. I parted from the Manadonese man at the Rabies Hospital in Bandung...and from there I went on to Weltevreden. I got off the train at the central station (Batavia Centrum). Then I found a taxi and asked to go to the hospital. But the taxi put me off at the wrong place, at the Central Hospital. But the people there said never mind, and got someone to show me the way. I was given a place in the hostel. The next day I was shown where I was to work. There were people from all over Indonesia there, and most of them hardly knew where Sulawesi was, let alone Toraja. So I had to say, Makassar, and then they would know: 'Ah, Makassar, Sulawesi'. When we met, we spoke Indonesian to each other [not Dutch]. In those years there were already signs of a desire for Independence. The *Soempah Pemuda* had been declared, but the Dutch controlled the political situation tightly and suppressed these organisations.²⁰ Really, those who became members of those organisations were followed the whole time. The people in charge of hospital organisation, all the nurses at the hospital, were all Dutch. We Indonesians had to obey them and do whatever they said, even if you were of the same rank as a Dutch nurse. Sometimes, it made us

unhappy, but no matter what, you had to accept it...It was in Java where I first became aware, 'Oh, there are people who think like this, whose ideas are quite different' (i.e., Indonesian nationalists). Among them was our own doctor. He was from Ujung Pandang, but his wife was Dutch. But he was politically active. Sometimes the atmosphere was tense...Dr Leimena²¹ was at Bandung then, and there were several groups of activists in Surabaya, Bandung, and Batavia. But they were not too obvious about it; they had to work discreetly, promote their ideas from within, being careful because of their positions within the Dutch administration. But when they came home from work, then for sure, when young people came to visit them, then they would speak freely of their ideas.

To Europe

For eighteen months, Fritz worked at Weltevreden, before another turning-point presented itself to him:

In July 1930, Dr Simon sent a letter saying: 'Fritz, my contract is expiring. I must go back to Germany.' I started thinking. I was still young, and hadn't yet completed my training as a nurse at the hospital; I still had a year and a half to go before I could qualify. I thought, 'I am still young, I would like to go with him to Europe.' So I wrote and asked him if he would agree to my accompanying his family to Europe. I said: 'If you agree, please contact my parents, and if they have no objection to my going, send me some money so I can come home first for a few days. If I get the money, I'll know it means it is agreed.' I received a reply that all was arranged. My heart was young and my ambition was to travel as far as I could. When the money arrived, it was only Rp.25, which was enough to take the boat from Tanjung Priok²² to Makassar. Because in those days, to hire a car from Makassar to Rantepao cost only 1 ringgit²³, so it was easy, even if I didn't have any money left when I got to Makassar, to pay for the ride once I got back to Rantepao. So I went and told the director of the hospital that I wanted to go home. He was surprised. 'You are the only one from Sulawesi, why are you leaving?' I told him: 'I have to go home to see to some affairs, then I will come back.' I didn't tell him I was going to Germany. I was afraid he wouldn't give me permission otherwise. So I left the hospital, came back to Rantepao for a few days, saw all my family, then we left right away for Europe.

For the first few months, Dr Simon remained on leave in his home town of Düsseldorf, living on his savings, for he had been highly valued by the Dutch Administration in Toraja and had been very well paid by them. Fritz was aware of this from his time of employment in the Governor's Office when he had had to count the money used for payment of salaries. It felt like a holiday to Fritz, though in the afternoons Dr Simon taught him skills, such as bandaging. The Doctor's original plan had been to work in Europe for six months before taking another contract to work in South Africa, or perhaps another African country. Fritz was prepared to follow him

even there. Eventually, however, the Doctor accepted a position at Essen in a private hospital, Krankenhaus Krups. Here he also gave training to the local Red Cross, and Fritz would follow these lessons. At the same time he did his best to learn German:

I had to learn it when I got there, because no-one else could speak my language. Only when I got back home, then I could speak to Dr Simon in Malay. But outside, I had to use German. And not only that, but all the time I was in Essen, I hardly ever saw another “black” person. Only when the circus came to town, then there were all sorts of humans!²⁴ You have to force yourself to learn because you are mixing with other people every day, and I studied hard by myself so I could talk to people. More than anything I had to learn the medical terminology, because all the books used were in German. All the surgical textbooks that I had were in German. In six or seven months I could get along; whatever someone asked, I could answer, and although I spoke haltingly they could understand me too, even if it wasn’t perfect. So I was happy, doing what I was doing. But as to the future, I didn’t know. Because up to that point, wherever the Doctor and his family went, there I had followed, and I always told myself, well, so long as I live, that is how it must be, and besides, I felt, I’m still young. So I said, however far this can lead me, that’s how it must be....I thought if I could get a Diploma in Nursing that was already sufficient to give me a passport to anywhere in the world....All I really wanted was to keep on travelling and do whatever I wanted, because it still didn’t feel enough to help the people [in Toraja]. But to get into medical school would have been difficult, because for a start, you needed to have graduated from high school. Dr Simon said, ‘It’s a pity you couldn’t have finished high school.’ I said, ‘Yes, I regret it too.’ But still, I carried on trying to do and learn all I could, following whatever paths I could - if I could find a way, I did, and where I couldn’t, I just told myself, ‘Well, it can’t be helped’.

Fritz had now reached the outer limit of his pilgrimage: his onward path was blocked by a number of obstacles. One of them was the inadequacy of the basic education he had been able to receive, even though this had already made him exceptional among colonised Indonesians. Lateral movement to a colony on another continent, following Dr Simon, presented itself as a possibility, though one which in the end was not to materialise. One senses in this account the possible conflict entailed in his relationship with Dr Simon, which had become both enabling and binding; attachment to his patron had brought him so far, yet now his fate rested upon the Doctor’s own life decisions. For Fritz there was also the moral question, about how to use his knowledge to the benefit of his own people, which would predispose him ultimately to make the return journey to the point from which he had started. Retrospectively, this decision was presented to me in a somewhat simplified form, though at the time it must have entailed more confused emotions; according to his son, Fritz had formed a romantic attachment to a German nurse, and had considered the possibility of marrying her and settling in Germany, a course

against which Dr Simon had expostulated since it would have defeated the aim which he also shared, that Fritz should return to where his medical knowledge could be put to the best possible use in helping his own people. Given the political situation, and the near impossibility for any foreigner to obtain German citizenship, such a course of action would have been highly problematic. For all of this was taking place in the years 1930-32, during Hitler's rise to power – years of economic collapse, mass unemployment, and mounting political violence. In 1932, the public endured an exhausting series of election campaigns, while Nazi murders of political opponents, and a wave of street battles, mostly between Communists and Nazis, claimed hundreds of lives and brought things to crisis pitch. It was this increasingly ominous atmosphere which was in the end to prove the most conclusive factor in deciding what to do next:

Doctor Simon also thought the same way. And what he saw was that so much help was still required to meet the needs of the people. And that mattered to me too. So if he said, 'You can stay for another year', I would, because I was still young and benefiting from his guidance. But the atmosphere in Germany was getting tense. There was going to be a General Election, and there were three main parties contesting it: the Nazis, the Communists, and the Centre.²⁵ This was 1932. Whoever won the election would become Chancellor. Things were already at crisis point. But the longer I stayed there, the more I said to myself: there may be war later on....The thing was, National Socialism was already strong, so sometimes, if the Communists gave their salute, with the clenched fist, the Nazis would start a fight. Those who were for or against were becoming polarised. If someone we knew gave the Nazi salute, we'd know they were Nazis. It was dangerous! If I met someone, and had to give the salute, they'd think I was a Nazi too! And there were many political meetings. We had to be careful about what might happen next. So at that time, I said to Dr Simon: 'Really, I am not a citizen of Germany. I would follow your politics but...' - Dr Simon at that time was still a supporter of the centre party, but he was beginning to lean toward the National Socialists. That was already clear. But if I were to take German citizenship, that would mean that I must inevitably take sides too.²⁶ So I said: 'If you don't mind, I will just go home. And what I have already learned here I feel is enough for me to be able to help my people as a nurse - if it were food, I have enough to give my fellow-Toraja something to eat.

There followed an emotional parting:

He was ready to let me go. But there were tears in his eyes. He felt sorry that I must part from them. I had been there almost three years - 1930, '31, and '32. And Dr Simon's contract was almost over too. He was to change his job and become a doctor at a Police Hospital. He couldn't go to Africa any more, because the situation had changed. So there was nothing to do but come straight home. And by chance, Dr van der Veen...was in Holland.²⁷ He was on leave there. He was already working on his dictionary then, and also writing school books in Toraja, for use in the village primary schools....Dr Simon sent him a letter asking him to help me find a place on any ship

going to Indonesia, so that I could get home. So I felt a bit relieved, of course. Dr van der Veen sent a letter saying, 'Yes, there is one.' So I prepared to leave for Holland, where I met van der Veen. I stayed three or four days there. I knew him quite well; for as long as I'd been working in Rantepao, I had known him. He got me a place on a ship leaving from Rotterdam. In those days the voyage took exactly a month. There was a Dutch colonel returning on the same ship. Van der Veen introduced me to him, and explained that I was returning home. So had I wanted to, I could have asked this colonel to get me a place in the [Dutch colonial] Army medical corps. Of course, I could have got in, but I said to myself: 'Wah! never mind: we'll be at war with them one of these days!' - I already thought like that.

The return home

When I got home to Rantepao, in January 1933, the hospital was already finished - because when I left, in 1929, they were just beginning to build it - and the doctor who had taken over after Dr Simon was also Indo-German, but very old, from South Africa.²⁸ I went to the hospital and told him of my return, and he at once got hold of me and said: 'Fritz, I give you no more permission to go anywhere; I need your help here!' I said: 'I need to go somewhere first' [probably to visit his family in the village]. He said: 'Oh, yes, I might say you can go for one or two days, but then you'll run off!' I said no. I told him straight, of my own accord: 'I have come back here to help Toraja.' And this old doctor was content with that. So I started to work with him as his assistant.

Thus Fritz's pilgrimage to Europe had brought him full circle, exactly in the pattern mapped out by Anderson. But this was by no means the end of the story, for momentous events were about to erupt into the quiet life of the Toraja highlands and alter them still more dramatically. In 1935 a new doctor, Dr J. J. J. Goslinga, was posted by the Mission to Rantepao, and Fritz worked with him for the next two years. Dr Goslinga's predecessor had achieved an agreement with the local government to build a leprosy treatment centre, and in 1935 Fritz was given the job of riding around all of the districts on horseback, to search out and register any people showing symptoms of the disease, collect medical histories, and register them so that plans could be finalised for the building of the centre. He registered more than a thousand people and helped to bring them to the centre. This work involved considerable tact in overcoming the fear and stigma at that time associated with the disease, to help sufferers accept treatment. Fritz maintained his concern and interest in the leprosy centre for the rest of his life, collecting donations of money or groceries from the shops in town every Christmas, and continuing to visit the later much reduced number of residents.

While he had been away, others had been travelling too: although Dr Simon's original selection of trainee paramedics had been exclusively male, the Mission had now recruited three or four young women too, for training as hospital nurses. One of them was Marta Gora from Tikala, who had just come back from a hospital in Surabaya, where she had spent three years (1929-32) training as a midwife. Fritz found himself working with her at the Elim Hospital in Rantepao. In 1934 they were married, and the following year their first child, Ida (Matilda), was born. For many years, Marta remained the only trained midwife in Toraja, and just like her husband is fondly remembered by many of her former patients and those who knew her.

Dr Goslinga wanted Fritz to gain more experience as a theatre assistant, and so the family moved to Malang (East Java) in 1936, where Fritz worked with a specialist at the Mission Hospital, learning at first hand about more complicated surgery. The broadening of horizons continued in other ways too. While they were there, Fritz learned Javanese; photos in the family album show him in a group of medical students in Javanese dress, while pictures of Marta from her earlier stay in Surabaya show her in both Javanese and European dress.²⁹ One senses in these pictures how, with every outward movement, new dimensions of identity can be tried on, and added to one's repertoire. New relationships, too, must have shaped an ever-developing idea of what it meant to be Indonesian, though unfortunately, Fritz did not say much about the acquaintances he made in Java. The couple stayed in Malang almost a year, and their second child, Katrina, was born there. All the time Fritz was working harder and harder, gaining more responsibility, and felt that he was making good progress. After their return to Toraja, he continued to work as assistant to Dr Goslinga. There was plenty to do, for his written notes record how the highlands in these years were swept by a number of epidemics, including bacillary dysentery and anthrax. The latter started among the buffalo population, but could not be contained from spreading. Unaware of the danger, people were slaughtering their sick buffaloes without realising that contact with the blood of an infected animal could cause the disease to cross over to humans. Dr Goslinga and his assistants toured the districts regularly, maintaining a vaccination programme against typhus, cholera and dysentery. Together with other nurses at the hospital, Fritz also assisted Dr Goslinga in hundreds of operations for other conditions then common among the people, such as goitre, hare lip, cleft palate, and stones in the urinary tract. Dr Goslinga in fact began to train him more actively to perform the operations himself:

Dr Goslinga saw that it would most likely be a long time before there were enough doctors in Tana Toraja, but he said to me that he believed I would be capable of carrying out all the tasks that we had worked on together. He wrote a testimonial letter for me. And because he thought like this, he said to me, 'Every time we do an operation, I am going to give you the scalpel, and I will explain to you what to do from beginning to end.'

Dr Goslinga was so well known that doctors from Palopo, Duri, Enrekang and Makassar visited the hospital to see and work with him. In 1938, the hospital was visited by a Dutch eye specialist who performed dozens of cataract operations, as well as treating many trachoma patients. Fritz was detailed to assist him, and accompanied him further afield to Enrekang, Rappang, and Pare-Pare when he went on there to continue his work. From Pare-Pare, Fritz hurried home on receiving the news that his wife Marta had given birth to their third child (a son, Martin), but had haemorrhaged and was in danger. To his relief she made a good recovery, and after a month had regained her strength. After this he continued with the normal work at the hospital. But now the threat of war began to loom.

War, Independence struggle, and rebellion – two troubled decades

Things remained peaceful in Toraja until 1942, but with the Japanese invasion, which reached Makassar in February of that year, and into the highlands by March, all the Dutch had to leave their posts for internment camps. As uncertain as the situation now was, Fritz at least felt thankful not to be still in Germany:

My predictions had proved themselves correct. I felt God had really looked after me. I felt it was a blessing I had left. And what I had guessed might happen, the way I had thought about it, turned out to be rather accurate, and not mistaken. Then the Japanese came, and I said, 'The situation has spread to Indonesia too, in connection with the war in Europe.' ... After the Japanese invasion, all the Dutch were to be interned, including the doctor, and I was given responsibility for things at the hospital, insofar as I was capable. The Dutch doctor's place was taken by a Japanese army doctor - the Japanese took over everything, of course, including the hospital. They took over Rantepao without much trouble, because South Sulawesi had already fallen. Tens of thousands of troops arrived! There were air force, navy, and agricultural units, who immediately began to cultivate, make gardens, rear pigs and everything, to feed the forces. At the same time they also brought the Heiho [Auxiliary Forces]. The Heiho was an Indonesian force being trained to help the Japanese army. Or, to put it another way, they

were labourers, who had to do whatever the Japanese needed done - build roads, or whatever. They were brought from all over: people from Surabaya, Bataks, and all sorts, people from all over Indonesia, mixed together. Those who came here were already a mixture. So, at that time, we just had to do whatever work the Japanese wanted: we weren't in a position to resist or make trouble. In 1942-3, the schools were reopened, with teaching in Japanese, and the whole curriculum was altered... It was difficult; the teachers were given some lessons in Japanese, and the few words they managed to learn, they carried with them to school, and taught them, then they'd go back and learn some more. So they still mixed it with Malay. They had to. The atmosphere then...we didn't feel too badly oppressed. But in spite of that, the feeling was always confusing, unsafe. It was a time we can never forget.

In this atmosphere of uncertainty, Fritz now found himself placed more or less in charge of the hospital, under some supervision, and had to feel his way with his new Japanese bosses. In Sa'dan district, north of Rantepao, was the Sangkaropi' copper mine, which the Japanese took over. A specialist surgeon named Dr Suzuki was employed as doctor for the Japanese staff at the mine, and Fritz had to report to him:

He was of the same family as Minister Suzuki at that time. If anything came up I had to tell him. Because he said: 'We want you to be the head of the Rantepao hospital.' So if anyone was in labour or anything, they had to come and look for me...and I would tell him, 'Doctor, here is this patient...' Once there was a woman in labour. He said, 'I am not a gynaecologist - I only do surgery. Surgery is my speciality.' I said, 'I can do the delivery, if you've no objection; do you want to watch while I do it?' He said, 'Are you experienced?' I said, 'Yes, I'm experienced'. So I took charge of the delivery, and thank God, all went well. We went into the office. He took down one of the books there and said, 'Whose are these?' I told him, 'They belong to the Dutch doctor; he did a lot of work here, and I keep them so that I too can refer to them, and if I have to do something specific, I can look it up and be sure I don't make a mistake.' He said, 'How is this? Can you read German?' I said, 'Yes, I can a little, I can understand it.' He said, 'Where did you learn it?' I said, 'From a German doctor.' He said, 'Japan - Germany - friends!' claspings his hands together. He was pleased. And it felt like some protection for me. He was more inclined to trust me.

Fritz consequently took over more and more responsibility in the hospital, and established a reasonably effective communication with Dr Suzuki, in a mixture of Indonesian and mutually understood medical terms. He recalled one frightening assignment: the local Kempeitai (military police) executioner and torturer, a man well known locally for his cruelty, came with a toothache, and wanted to have the tooth pulled. Dr Suzuki was warmly praising his assistant, but Fritz was alarmed that if anything went wrong, the patient might turn nasty. He suggested, to no avail, that the executioner might prefer the services of the Japanese dentist who

was staying south of the police station. Dr Suzuki replied that the officer didn't care to go there; he wanted Fritz to do it.

So I said, 'I'll have a look first.' I was thinking, 'I'll feel it, and if it looks easy, then I can get it out without a problem, but if it's still firm and a bit difficult, and then it breaks, I'll have a job to get it out, because I haven't the right small instruments, only large tongs, nothing small enough to extract the root.' But I felt it, and it was already loose, so I said: 'If you, Sir, are willing, then I am brave enough to do it also.' I was already thinking to myself, 'I could pull this out even without any instruments, but I had better make a good show of it.' So I said, 'Very well, Sir, are you ready for me to pull it, so I can give instructions to prepare everything that's needed?' He said, 'Yes, it's very painful, I can't sleep.' I told my nurse to prepare the couch, and lay out the instruments and a glass of mouthwash, medicines, sterile cotton, and everything. I put it all ready so that I'd be able to work quickly. Then I invited him to lie down, and told one person to hold his head and others his arms, in case he tried to grab my arm and I might not pull hard enough. Everything was arranged as I wanted it. Then I asked him to open his mouth and I got ready. As a distraction I said, 'After you open your mouth, Sir, would you give a strong cough, please.' He opened his mouth and coughed; I already had hold of it, and yanked it; he said, 'Aagh!', and I showed it to him: 'Sir, it's out already!' Oh, he slapped me on the shoulder, and I thought, 'I'll get a gold star for this!' I was so relieved that it had all gone well. Even though I could have got it out right away, my piece of theatre had served its purpose, and he was happy.

Fritz recalled the large numbers of Japanese stationed in the highlands, including quite a number of doctors. There was a headquarters at Barana' in Tikala, and military posts in Tallung Lipu and elsewhere, including almost an entire navy battalion at Sangalla'. Like others who survived the Occupation, he remembered the severe shortages and hardships which everyone suffered:

But all the while we were thinking, 'How long can this go on?' We tried to get through each day, but we were always thinking, 'What will happen tomorrow, or the next day?' That was always in our thoughts. And life was very hard. Everything was in short supply. You can imagine...we would thresh our rice, and hide it inside big bamboos. Then we'd take a little and try to pound it without making too much noise, away in the gardens, and cook it there. Because the rice, all crops, were supposed to be handed over to the Japanese. Then you just had to do whatever you could to feed yourself...If the Japanese had a surplus, they gave out some rations, if not, you just had to try and grow whatever you could to stay alive, and live from the produce of your own gardens. We gathered the edible plants from the rice fields, too. It was no use complaining. You had to work with determination and make do with whatever there was. Most of the townspeople went back to their own villages, so very few people - only those who had to - remained. We were subject to all sorts of repression if we stayed in the towns. My wife and I didn't stay in town either; when we'd finished our day's work at the hospital, we went to Kalambe' and stayed at the school there.³⁰

One of the only consolations in this situation was that he was still able to help people, with whatever medicines he still had; he would even request permission to go to the villages to give TB vaccinations, since he still had some supplies of vaccine left. Compared to other parts of Indonesia, it must be said that the Toraja experience was rather less terrible than some, because it was used chiefly as a supply centre and there was little fighting or resistance in the area. The end of the war did not bring an immediate end to uncertainty, however.

In August 1945, rumours at last began to reach Tana Toraja that the Japanese had lost the war. In Rantepao the people were summoned to the football field for the announcement that Japan had surrendered. They heard that Australian troops would be coming to take over - although it was to be mid-November before they actually arrived. In the ensuing power vacuum, the local political situation was distinctly uncertain:

At that time, there were not only Torajans, but people here from all over Indonesia, in the Heiho [Auxiliary Forces]. Among them, there were some who were already politicised. Right away, they took weapons from the Japanese when they surrendered.³¹ Some were given up by the Japanese, some were just taken. They hadn't yet been surrendered officially, because it was a while before the Australians got here. The Dutch were still in the internment camp at Awan, near Bittuang, and then, when the Australians came, they were freed. At that time, the *pemuda Indonesia* were also emerging from underground and becoming visible.³² So once again we lived in fear from day to day. You had to look out for yourselves, for you could say, whatever happened next, the youth of Indonesia were certain to rise up; they had their goals, and the Allies were coming with their own agenda too. The situation was confusing, and no-one knew what was the best way to face it. Then the NICA troops came, and the *pemuda* were preparing to defend themselves, even with the very few weapons they had; they planned to form a guerrilla force against them....³³ Some Toraja were strongly pro-*pemuda*, some were pro-Dutch...It was difficult to predict how things would go.³⁴

As one might expect, degrees of politicisation varied widely among Torajans at this time, and awareness of what was happening on Java was unevenly distributed. But Torajans were by no means completely cut off from these events, even if news was difficult to come by. Those who had a radio, Fritz recalled, could pick up broadcasts from Java, but if NICA knew that anyone was listening to the radio, they would confiscate it. NICA troops were now in Toraja in force, and they included many seasoned soldiers formerly of the Dutch colonial army (KNIL). They began to recruit as many Toraja youth as they could, using the region as a training-ground.³⁵ At the same time, the youth movements in Sulawesi were very vigorous, until in 1947 the special forces of the notorious Captain 'Turk' Westerling

perpetrated a series of ruthless massacres of independence activists in South Sulawesi, in which 40,000 people are said to have died. Fritz was a keen observer and talked at some length about the unfolding of events in what was to be a period of prolonged upheaval and uncertainty in Tana Toraja.

At that point, some of the youth were co-opted into the KNIL, but a larger number had already taken to the hills as guerrillas. So for people like me, ordinary *pegawai* (administrative employees) in the town, it was a very troubled, difficult time. Finally, in 1949, when there was a complete transfer of power from Holland to Indonesia, then all the Toraja youth who had been in the KNIL were sent home to their own people, and of course it was a big question what would happen when they came up against those who had been fighting for the Republican cause....³⁶ But in spite of all this, the way Torajans were thinking - yes, although many of them had been pro-Dutch, it was inevitable that the education we had received from the Dutch would eventually be used against them!

These comments were doubtless informed by his own experiences. Just as Fritz had seized every opportunity to acquire training and then sought to exercise his skills independently, so the colonial education itself, with the exposure to ideas which it involved, was in the long run bound to add its own impetus to Indonesian desires for an independent nation. As for Fritz himself, he found himself now effectively doing two jobs. The Dutch Dr Goslinga had returned from internment, and so long as NICA forces remained in Toraja, there were also several Dutch army doctors helping out in the hospital. Fritz worked with them, but he also was left more and more to take care of the hospital administration, and in the continuing military confusion his position as a medic put him in a somewhat uncomfortable position of enforced neutrality toward the different parties in the struggle, since he had to treat the wounded of both sides. Danny told me that he had, all the same, done what he could for the independence fighters by passing medicines to them when he was able, and that he had regarded this as his contribution to the struggle.³⁷ At the same time, he felt the ambiguity of his status: although his incomplete basic education would forever disqualify him from becoming a doctor, he effectively now had so much practical experience that he operated as one anyway, and given the extreme shortage of medical staff in Tana Toraja, the other doctors were glad to let him:

Dr Goslinga only did the medical work; the actual running of the hospital was left to me. He was always saying, 'Fritz, you just take care of that'. Anything that needed signing, the administration, I myself took responsibility for it. If there were an ambush or skirmishes between the troops anywhere, the wounded would be brought to the Elim hospital. Whatever happened, and no matter what I felt, I had to deal with

it, together with them. The Dutch doctor, seeing my way of working at whatever I had to do there, handed over more and more of the work to me. Sometimes now and again, I would say to myself, 'It's all very well that he trusts me, but the work is not easy!' I felt the situation was a difficult one to work in, but then my thoughts would return to the fact that this was my job. Winners may become losers, and friends may become enemies, but I must [tend to them all regardless]...

All the doctors I worked with were very pleased because whatever we worked at together turned out well. A group came with the Health Minister from Java for a visit. I had just done a load of operations; some of the patients were already up and about, others were still in bed recuperating. I did all this not to show up the other doctors, but because there were sick people who needed help. So I was helping. Really it was not my job - it should have been done by the doctors, there should have been specialists to do it. When the Minister's group was due to leave, I said to one of the doctors from Ujung Pandang who had come with him, 'How is it, Doctor, that I haven't been scolded by the health team? Why has no-one told me, "You can do this, but you shouldn't be doing that"?' He said, 'Fritz, whatever you are able to do, you just do it, I will take personal responsibility for that.'... At that time, I did a lot of operations myself - appendectomy, several kinds of eye operations, stomach operations, obstetrics - all sorts. And all these doctors gave me their assurance that I could do all this work. It's not possible really that a nurse can perform all the specialisations of doctors, but I had already gained experience as an assistant in all these fields...and personally, I said, 'I thank God that whatever I've undertaken has been blessed with success and has benefited the people. So long as the people are satisfied, that is enough for me!'

After Indonesian independence became a reality at the end of 1949, the military and political situation in South Sulawesi remained confused. Javanese troops from the Brawijaya and Diponegoro Divisions of the Indonesian National Army (TNI) were sent to secure South Sulawesi for the Republic. But there was conflict over the terms on which lowland guerrilla leaders were to be incorporated into the TNI. Notable among them was Kahar Muzakkar, who, denied his own battalion in 1950, gathered around him a group calling itself the South Sulawesi Guerrilla Union (KGSS). His lieutenant Andi' Sose, who came from the region of Duri on Toraja's southern border, and had attended the *Schakelschool* in Ma'kale, was stationed in Tana Toraja. Andi' Sose came from a high-ranking family with long-standing marriage connections to the aristocracy of the southern Toraja districts, and counted some Toraja youths of aristocratic families among his followers. He was essentially a warlord running his own private army and financing it through his efforts to control local trade (Bigalke 1981:380, 408-9). In 1952 Kahar joined forces with the Darul Islam rebellion centred in West Java, and fought to create an Islamic state in South Sulawesi. Andi' Sose at this point split from Kahar, and accepted a commission as captain in the TNI, his troops being

incorporated as Battalion 720. They were now to co-operate with Diponegoro Battalion 422, which spent two years in the highlands from late 1951 or early 1952. But there was tension between Sose, with his aristocratic connections, and the markedly leftist Battalion 422, which was giving its support to claims for land redistribution in Toraja at this time. Within Andi' Sose's forces was Company 2, made up of Torajans under the leadership of Frans Karangan. After induction into the TNI, Company 2 became alienated from Andi' Sose as the latter's ill-disciplined troops began to commit outrages in Tana Toraja, and Andi' Sose himself became more and more heavy-handed, demonstrating an openly pro-Muslim, anti-Christian stance. At the same time, tensions ran high as left-wing organisations supported an increasing number of peasant actions against large landowners in 1952-53. Andi' Sose's oppression was made more disgraceful, in Fritz's opinion, not only because it appeared as a revival of age-old Bugis designs to dominate the highlands, but because his troops were by now supposed to be regular forces of the national army. He also recalled (as some others do) the capture of some of Andi' Sose's troops, who, in spite of the trouble they had been causing, were not harmed but sent out of the highlands:

We said we were living in a burnt-up world - villages were burned; at Rante, at Tondon, at Ma'kale, at Nonongan, houses were burned. Thank God there was still a group of people who said, 'This is wrong, what these forces of the Indonesian Republic are doing'...Thank God, those people were not able to spread and deepen their hold over the whole of Toraja, and when they saw they couldn't succeed, they fled.

By 1953, Christian Toraja leaders were plotting an assault against Andi' Sose and drew Frans Karangan and his troops with them into the action. Large numbers of villagers joined in the attack on Andi' Sose's battalion, which after fierce fighting was driven out of Toraja.

Then a number of them were captured, sent to Palopo, and put on a ship back to Ujung Pandang. In such a situation, supposing Torajans had been shortsighted, they could have killed all of them! But because people thought clearly, they sent all those troops back and put them 'in storage'. Because clearly it was they who had tried to make trouble in Toraja.

Andi' Sose's troops were to be driven out a second time in 1958, when they were once again posted to Toraja to replace Javanese troops relocated to North Sulawesi to deal with the Permesta rebellion which began in 1957. Once again Fritz found himself treating the

wounded on both sides of the conflict. And throughout most of this decade, Kahar's DI/TII (*Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia*) rebellion continued, taking its toll on Toraja villages whose men were sometimes co-opted into the guerrilla forces. Some communities then in turn suffered reprisals from Torajan regular forces of the national army for having supported the rebels. Peace and slow economic progress returned finally by the late 1960s, with the 1970s seeing an outflux of Torajans seeking higher education or employment beyond their homeland. Their remittances began to have a marked effect on the still overwhelmingly subsistence economy at home. There was also an influx of foreigners with the modest beginnings of a tourist trade which has grown considerably in recent decades. Fritz made little comment on the events of this period, which for him was a time of continuity and stability, as he worked at the hospital and raised his family. His travels were over, and his life and career had by now taken definitive shape; his narrative here ceased to focus on his personal experiences and reverted to more general subjects.

Unsettled though conditions were in the 1950s, this had not prevented some progress at the hospital. In 1935 it had been taken over by the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (*Gereformeerde Zendingsbond*), and when the Toraja Church (*Gereja Toraja*) became independent of the Mission in 1947, it continued its involvement in the running of the hospital. Fritz became the first chairman of the Church's Health Organisation (*Yayasan Kesehatan Gereja Toraja*), serving in this position until 1965. In 1952, he and his co-workers formed another committee to build a nurses' hostel. He succeeded in getting help from the Public Works Department so that this could be done at limited expense. In the following years he also ran a variety of health training courses.

Until his eventual retirement in 1971, Fritz remained at the hospital in Rantepao, working together with a succession of doctors. He joked how anyone with a problem would come looking for 'Om [Uncle] Basiang'. One of his nurses, Papa' Remas, who had worked with him as a theatre assistant for fifteen years from 1957 to 1971, recalled his distinctive manner of working. He maintained strict hospital discipline, and demanded punctuality and efficiency from his staff. If a fly got into the operating theatre, whoever had prepared the theatre that day could expect to be given a banana as a 'prize', as well as a stern lecture in front of the others. The hospital was still very short of supplies, so he would instruct the staff to bring their old sheets from home, to be washed and boiled over a wood fire to sterilize for use as dressings. In spite of these makeshift conditions, his strictness paid off in ensuring

avoidance of post-operative infection. His boyhood ingenuity in fixing up useful appliances from available odds and ends still came in useful, too: in the absence of a proper lamp for the operating theatre, he made one himself out of an old car headlamp, powered by numerous batteries packed into a large bamboo tube. He went out of his way to help people in the community, and would receive patients even if they couldn't afford to pay. Sometimes, he would accept payment in cassava or vegetables. He did many operations to correct cleft palates; one patient, a young boy named Taruk, who had no money, paid for his operation in eels.³⁸

Fritz had five children in all, most of whom grew up to travel adventurously, as he had, out of Tana Toraja. In 1957, when his wife Marta fell ill of cervical cancer, he himself operated on her. But the cancer was too far advanced, and he was unable to save her. After her death, he remarried. His second spouse was Damaris Palin, also a nurse in the Rantepao hospital, and a distant cousin of his first wife. For some years after his retirement, he still helped out at the hospital at times when he was needed, later concentrating on the cultivation of clove trees in his gardens. He was often to be seen on his bicycle, and children knew that he always had sweets in his pocket. He remained a beloved figure around town until his death in March 1993 at the age of 88. In keeping with his always sincerely held Christian beliefs, his children obeyed his wishes that his funeral be kept very modest, with the slaughter of only a single buffalo. This is still most uncharacteristic in Tana Toraja today, where if anything the renewed security and prosperity of the past few decades has led to an escalation of ritual expenditure. It also requires great skill on the part of those organising the funeral, to avoid giving offence to more traditionally-minded relatives.

There is a coda to this story. In 1973, Fritz went to Germany to visit his daughter Rina who was living there, and they set out to trace Dr Simon's family. Düsseldorf was almost unrecognisable after the heavy bombing it had sustained during the war, and subsequent rebuilding; but the street names were unchanged, and he even recognised the restaurant where they used to eat in Halberstrasse. A new house had been built on the site of Dr Simon's former residence, and the woman who lived there could tell them nothing at all, but they went into the restaurant and looked up all the Simons in the phone directory. The fourth call they made connected them to Dr Simon's family, who with great excitement immediately invited them over to their new house. They had to ask at the Police Station for directions, which turned out to be not so simple: having been told to cross the bridge over the

Rhine and take the second street they came to, they reached the river to find that there were now, not one bridge as in the 1930s, but several. The second one they tried turned out to be the right one. They found the house and rang the bell; there followed an emotional meeting, especially with Dr Simon's son Harald (the small boy in the photograph), who still remembered Fritz well. Dr Simon himself had died in 1959. After Fritz's departure from Germany, he had taken the job with the police; they saw his Nazi insignia still lying on his desk. [This image sticks in my mind uncomfortably, though I know so little about Dr Simon that I am certainly in no position to judge his motives, nor those of his wife who presumably was continuing to dust them]. Harald, still in his teens at the end of the war, had been blinded by a stray bullet during the final German retreat. But he went to blind school, learned to type, and studied law, and had subsequently become a judge. His girlfriend stood by him and married him, and she and his mother used to read to him and help him with his papers. Thus the contact between the two families was renewed, forty years later.

Conclusion

I began by setting the life of Fritz Basiang within the framework of the colonial 'pilgrimage' through education into modernity, as postulated by Anderson. But this says more about the early part of his story than the later parts. Other suggested frameworks for analysis may be helpful in considering the life history as a whole. Mandelbaum (1973) and Agar (1980) both suggest some categories of analysis which might be applied to any life history, though they involve rather different methods. Mandelbaum, taking the life of Gandhi as his example, draws attention to the overlapping 'dimensions' of a life - biological, cultural, social, and psychosocial (i.e. relating to an individual's subjective experience); the 'turnings', or moments when key decisions are taken concerning what to do and be, and what not to be; and the 'adaptations', or periods of longer duration in which can be seen 'ongoing development in various spheres of behaviour', as the individual also must find the means to cope with the changing conditions of life (Mandelbaum 1973:181). Yet underlying all these formulations, there remains what is individually unique and irreducible in any life history, the person's own creativity which cannot be fully accounted for. Marx's famous formula that people make history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing, finds an echo in Mandelbaum's insistence on the person as 'both a bound actor and a free agent', caught up in historical events. No life can be reduced simply to categories of analysis; in studying the

whole life of a real person, ‘the student tends to become especially aware of the person as an active doer and seeker, and not only as a passive recipient or a subject for scientific generalizations’ (Mandelbaum 1973:181). In the present case, the turning-points in Fritz’s early life stand out clearly, as we see him seizing the opportunities to invent a new life for himself which would carry him far beyond the confines of the village life of his early childhood; one can see also the consistency with which he later pursued his chosen vocation, which he obviously found deeply satisfying, and the necessity to make the most of difficult conditions in periods of social upheaval.

Whereas Mandelbaum is in the exceptional position of being able to draw on a rich variety of first-hand and published sources, including Gandhi’s own voluminous autobiography, Agar’s approach differs in dealing more directly with fieldwork materials. A person’s own recorded first-hand account can lend itself to more direct textual analysis. The coherence of any life story, Agar proposes, suggests the existence of ‘schemata’ by which it is organised to form a narrative comprehensible to the listener. Agar does not deal in detail with the origins of such schemata. I have already presented evidence that the very idea of a ‘life history’ has a degree of cultural specificity attached to it, but the ability to grasp a narrative structure, which Agar proposes is intuitive on the part of the listener, is something we may take as universal. Whether ‘intuitive’ in this context is to be taken as meaning that it forms part of a person’s ‘tacit’ cultural knowledge (Polanyi 1975), or that it has something to do with the brain’s circuitry (cf. Sperber 1985), or most likely both, is a question which there is no space to expand on here. The story also makes use of ‘background assumptions’ (the cultural knowledge necessary to understand the content; these I have tried to fill in where necessary). Within the narrative, ‘episodes’ stand out as separate stories embedded within the larger tale – such as, in Fritz’s case, the story of how he got taken on by Dr Simon, or the episode of the tooth extraction. The various journeys, in particular, stand out in terms of the great amount of incidental detail recounted (more even than I have been able to reproduce here), while longer, more stable periods were condensed and passed over with little elaboration. This latter aspect of narration is typical of how memory works for all of us; yet still, the fact that so many of the detailed episodes are journeys remains a significant feature of the account as a whole.

Textual analysis, however, is never an end in itself for the ethnographer or historian, who is always using it as a route to some greater understanding of the cultural or historical world of the informant. 'Themes' extracted from the narrator's own patterns of expression can for instance be drawn together to provide insights into significant 'domains' of cognition (Agar 1980:231-33); the way in which a story is told may provide surprising insights into the psychology of the narrator and even of the social group to which he belongs (Portelli 1990). It is to be expected, too, that any life account will be to some degree self-serving: this, I believe, is not simply because we wish to present ourselves in a good light, but becomes part of our efforts at coherence. There may be a psychological necessity to persuade oneself that key decisions, or even events which may have looked disastrous at the time, were all for the best in the end, and this becomes part of the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves. Peneff (1990:36) suggests that the often pre-existing frameworks we select as a means to arrange our memories into comprehensible stories should be thought of as 'mythical', in the sense that they provide the structure for narrative coherence. Especially pertinent to the present case is his observation that, while such mythical frameworks are common in all societies, they are 'especially widespread in societies undergoing rapid development and change, where individuals tell their histories as a kind of progress or journey.'

In Fritz Basiang's story, two themes that appear repeatedly are the sense of adventure, expressed in the desire to experience everything new and to travel as far as possible, and the desire to help his own people by doing something socially useful. While at first these themes run parallel to each other (it was necessary to travel and acquire knowledge first *in order to* be useful), at some point they might have come into conflict with each other (when it came to deciding whether to follow Dr Simon to South Africa, or to attempt to settle in Germany, rather than returning to Toraja). This tension is resolved, however, by his decision to return home, while the remainder of the narrative describes the transition to a more settled period, marked by the great consistency he showed in his adherence to the second theme, the ideal of service to others. Of course, another implicit theme, the experience of cultural transformation, is one that attracted my attention in the first place, so some comment is in order here about the dramatic shift in world view which his life encompassed. When I asked Fritz what was the greatest change he had witnessed in his life, he replied that it was the advent of education and all that came with it. Most specifically, he noted that this had greatly increased the geographical mobility of his children and their

generation, for whom educational opportunities were hugely expanded. This fact is something that was also immediately observable from his family's genealogy. His initial break away from the traditional life has been followed by an explosion of diversity in the life paths chosen by his children. All but one have married people from other parts of Indonesia or overseas – his eldest daughter met and married a Batak while studying economics in Java; his second daughter Rina married a Dutch man, a nephew of Dr van der Veen, and lives in Germany; one son, Martin, who has had a prominent career as a lawyer (recently retiring as Deputy Attorney General), married first, a woman from Palembang (Sumatra), and subsequently after her death remarried a Manadonese; his younger brother Danny travelled in the merchant marine, and married a Betawi woman from Jakarta before eventually returning to live in Tana Toraja; only the youngest daughter is married to a Torajan, though they reside in Jakarta. All the children share an outlook which is distinctly modernist, and if anything even more fervently Christian than that of their father, who was not outspoken about his faith but who undoubtedly influenced many people by example.

Christianity was the second innovation that dramatically altered his world view. His conversion is hardly surprising, given the strong emphasis placed on the teaching of Christianity in the schools he attended. Religion was very much a part of hospital life, too. In his written notes Fritz remarks that morning prayers were held daily, and that the ministers and evangelists who served as hospital chaplains were diligent in visiting non-Christian patients and attempting to convert them.³⁹ When they were discharged, they would often be given a letter of introduction to their local pastor, in the hope that they would continue to seek instruction in the new faith. Toraja Christians were aware that their conversion connected them to a world-wide community. In the past, travel outside the Toraja highlands was often difficult and dangerous, and hostilities often prevailed even between neighbouring villages. The slave trade of the late nineteenth century, which caused so much social disruption, meant that most Toraja who traveled out of their homeland in this period did so as captives to be put on sale in lowland markets. Although there was some Toraja resistance to Dutch takeover, the fact that the colonial regime put an end to these chaotic conditions has much to do with the relative lack of animosity toward the Dutch in Toraja people's memories. Toraja Christians sometimes remarked to me that one of the great benefits of their faith, as they see it, is that being part of a larger world community of Christians makes travel safe for them in distant parts of the world such as Europe, Australia

or America. Fritz too commented that once, in 1932, after he had been in Germany three years already, he had received a letter from his parents saying that they were concerned about him and were anxious to see him again. 'I wrote to them in reply that they shouldn't worry about me, that I was with good people and that the reason I had been able to travel so far in safety was because those people were Christians.' Encouraged by their son to consider conversion, they were among the first in the Banga district to accept the new religion. Although Fritz made no mention of this in our interviews, he had sponsored the building of churches in his home district, at Maroson, Buri and Surakan, as well as raising donations for the building of churches in other places. In more traditional vein, he also organised the rebuilding of a family origin-house (*tongkonan*), Tondok Tanga, at Surakan (which had originally been built by Fritz's grandmother), and contributed to the rebuilding of a *tongkonan* of his second wife's family, at Batullelleng outside Rantepao. He always spoke warmly of the strong bonds of mutual support between kin which he saw as characteristic of the Toraja kinship system, as an aspect of his own society which he truly admired. One may note here that the rebuilding of origin-houses remains in Toraja one of the most highly valued acts and the mark of a successful career; modern church-building is in many ways an extension of this traditional pattern by which successful individuals demonstrate allegiance to their places of origin. The summation of a more traditional Toraja career, though, is one's funeral, the size of which, and the number and quality of buffaloes slaughtered, will be remembered by descendants and discussed for long afterwards. Dutch Reformed Church missionaries were hopelessly unsuccessful in their efforts to end a ceremonial economy which they perceived as shockingly wasteful, and funerals today continue to be the most important social occasions in Toraja life. Fritz however had taken to heart the mission's attitudes toward this issue, and firmly eschewed any desire for an elaborate funeral, with its connotations of rank, and the economic burdens that it inevitably places on the deceased person's children. Given the value that he still attached to kinship relations, he had obviously had to give considerable thought to how to extricate himself from the prestige economy. He had cleared most of the ceremonial debts which he had inherited from his father, Ne' Pilo, in order that his children be free of them. He would still attend funerals, but without taking a pig, only other contributions such as palm wine. He would make a point of leaving early, before the meat division took place. In this way he avoided receiving meat, and thus reduced his participation in funeral exchanges without actually severing his links with kin. Since he

served people so generously in other ways, they could not take too much offense at this minimalist approach to the traditional ceremonial obligations. In this respect his attitudes were distinctly modernist, and his career ended unconventionally.

Fritz Basiang's life stands out in several ways, besides his exemplary record of service to the community. Spanning almost the entire twentieth century, as he remarked himself, 'I can honestly say that I have had to face all kinds of experiences in my life.' Through his own energies and initiative, at the same time as he gradually discovered himself as an Indonesian, he also traced for himself a passage toward a radically new way of being Toraja. Along the way he left deep impressions on many of those who knew him.

¹ This remark comes almost twenty years after Mandelbaum (1973:178) complained that 'the study of lives for purposes of social science has been more often advocated than practised.' Comprehensive reviews of what has been achieved may be found in Langness and Frank (1981), and Watson and Watson-Franke (1985); important comments on method are made in Mandelbaum (1973), Agar (1980), Bruner (1987), Röttger-Rössler (1993) and Echevarria-Howe (1995).

² Plummer (1990), while noting the same uneven pattern of attention to its possibilities, has gone so far as to declare a 'renaissance' of interest in life history in the social sciences. Some recent examples include Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992) and Cruikshank (1992); Rodgers (1995) draws attention to the potentials of published autobiography for the understanding of modern Indonesian history and society.

³ See Gusdorf (1980), Graham et al. (1989), Mascusch (1997).

⁴ Even within a European context, the *kinds* of stories told about the self will differ depending on the context in which they are elicited, and whether the recounting is oral or written, shaping itself differently according to already existing genres of verbal or literary performance. Passerini (1984:62) demonstrates this vividly in her analysis of life histories connected with working class memories of Fascism in Turin. In oral testimonies, self-characterisations tended to fall into fixed types - often comic or rebellious - which Passerini maintains are drawn from 'genres older than writing'; they 'could be put in that category that Bakhtin referred to as "comic-serious", which includes genres such as mime, fable, dialogue and satire'; whereas, she notes, 'one can observe a radical change in style when the same individual is writing rather than talking', when they adopt a more open kind of identity, whose conception has been markedly influenced by the novel.

⁵ I am especially grateful to Danny for all the help he gave me. I have also drawn some details from a brief memorial chronology of Fritz's life produced by Danny at the time of his funeral. There are one or two minor discrepancies between the dates given in this account and those given me by Fritz himself in the interviews. I have chosen to keep to the latter since it is the interview materials that I am chiefly dealing with here. My thanks also go to Bill Watson for his very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

⁶ Detailed statistics of enrolment in the different types of schools in the Netherlands East Indies from 1900-1940 can be found in Veur (1969).

⁷ See also Watson (1989) and Sweeney (1990) for discussion of a range of Indonesian and Malay autobiographical writings. Watson (1989:4) emphasizes the rich potential of such works to provide access to areas of 'shareable experience.'

⁸ One other example which I have not been able to consult is mentioned by Watson (1989:10). It is the privately published autobiography of a Minangkabau doctor, Dr Mohd. Ali Hanafiah Gelar Sutan Maharaja, who studied at the STOVIA from 1916-1926 and, like the others mentioned here, gave medical service to his community under three regimes, the colonial, Japanese and Republican: periods which the author himself observed 'have a meaning and special character all of themselves, influencing my life, and indeed the life of our whole nation' (Hanafiah 1977).

⁹ A full account of this period can be found in Bigalke (1981).

¹⁰ The perception that life was easier in the past, and pressure on resources less, is one repeated to me by many older people in Toraja.

¹¹ This was one of the severest disease pandemics in human history, claiming perhaps 20 million lives world wide, including at least 1.5 million in Indonesia (Brown 1987:235). It appears to have been brought into the battlefields of western Europe by American troops in the last summer of World War I, and spread from there in three waves, partly as a result of the massive movements of people occasioned by the war (Crosby 1989). Distinct memories of the pandemic are retained in Toraja; some thought the 'winds' of war had blown across the world unleashing pestilence - not an inaccurate description in fact.

¹² He used the Indonesian, *seleksi alam*.

¹³ The three-year *Volksschool* was first instituted in 1907 (Veur 1969:2). This was a breakthrough since for the first time, a Western-style elementary education thus became available to Indonesians in rural areas. Establishment of the schools, however, depended on the degree of local initiative. According to Bigalke (1981:263), those in Toraja were set up by the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (*Gereformeerde Zendingsbond*), and received some government subsidy.

¹⁴ This at least is a common memory in Toraja, though how many children of dependents may have actually succeeded in escaping their low status through this 'crack in the school house door', Bigalke (1981:262) suggests is questionable; cf. Volkman (1985:37).

¹⁵ There was a school in Banga and another at Parappo, not far from Rembon market.

¹⁶ The *Schakelschool* or 'Link School' had a five-year Dutch-language curriculum which, from 1921, prepared indigenous pupils for entry to secondary schools. Prior to this date, Malay-language primary education was a dead-end, and pupils had been unable to go on to secondary schools, where Dutch was the medium of education (Veur 1969:4; Bigalke 1981:261-5). Even then, there were only three institutions of Dutch-language higher education in the Indies, started after 1913, and all of them were in Java (Bigalke 1981:268).

¹⁷ Renamed Ujung Pandang in the late 1960s, the city reverted to its older and better known name of Makassar in October 1999.

¹⁸ Clinics had been built in the different districts at Sangalla', Mebali (Mengkendek), Buakayu (Bonggakaradeng), Parappo (Saluputti), Bittuang, Pangala', Sa'dan, Nanggala and Buntao'. Rantepao and Ma'kale each had a hospital for admissions.

¹⁹ Interview with Pendeta Palilu at Dende', November 1999.

²⁰ The *Soempah Pemuda* or 'Youth Pledge' was taken at the Youth Congress held in Batavia in 1928. It was a radical pledge of loyalty to three ideals: one homeland, Indonesia; one nation, Indonesia; one language, Bahasa Indonesia. 1929 was a year of intensified activity among nationalists, matched by mounting repression by the Dutch administration. Political meetings were often broken up by the police. A contemporary Dutch perspective on these events is provided by Blumenberger (1931), a retired government official. The membership of PNI in particular expanded dramatically, and throughout this year, Sukarno was making frequent and provocative speeches until his arrest, with that of other PNI leaders, in December (Ingleson 1979).

²¹ An Ambonese who later (in 1957) became one of three Deputy Prime Ministers under Sukarno.

²² The harbour at Batavia.

²³ 1 ringgit = 2 1/2 rupiah.

²⁴ Fritz here referred to himself in Indonesian, as *berkulit hitam*, in a comment which served to emphasise to me how different he obviously must have felt as a single Asian in a largely homogeneous white community. He met no other Indonesians while he was there. He seemingly had no incidents of racial hostility to recount; this may have been partly because he was protected by his relationship with Dr Simon. But it was a dangerous time to be different in Germany. The comment about the circus is of some historical interest since in fact, a recent film has documented how black and mixed-race Germans did tour in the Hillerkus Safrikaschau circuses or acted in films and 'ethnic' shows in an attempt to escape Nazi persecution in the 1930s. In 1932 Hitler gave a speech to crowds in Breslau, in which he ordered all Africans, Jews and others who were not Aryans to leave Germany or face the concentration camps. (Some Africans in Germany came from German colonies and had fought for Germany in World War I; others were from French colonies and had been deliberately deployed by France in the occupied Rhineland as an extra 'humiliation' to Germany [or so many Germans perceived it] after the Treaty of Versailles.) (see Michael Barnett & Delroy Constantine-Simms' film, *Black Survivors of the Holocaust* [Afro-Wisdom Films, 1997], and the review of it in *Anthropology Newsletter*, May 1998, p. 13.)

²⁵ I am unsure whether Fritz was here referring to the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the largest moderate party of the time, or to the smaller, Roman Catholic, Centre Party.

²⁶ This was probably not a viable option in any case. Criteria for citizenship in Germany have always been highly dependent upon German descent, and some Germans of colour had their citizenship revoked later, during the War.

²⁷ H. van der Veen was a highly talented linguist who was employed by the Dutch Reformed Church Mission. He collected and published several long texts of Toraja ritual chants, translated the Bible into Toraja, and with the aid of his Toraja assistant, J. Tammu, compiled a Toraja dictionary. The house he lived and worked in in Rantepao was later to become the Basiang family home.

²⁸ According to Fritz's written notes, this would have been Dr Esser, who succeeded Dr Simon (1930-33). He was followed by a Dutch doctor, Dr Buitelaar (1933-35), before Dr Goslinga took over in 1935.

²⁹ It was a rule at the STOVIA medical school that all Javanese and Sumatran non-Christian students wear native dress while in attendance at the school. This was deeply resented, since it was felt to be discriminatory

and humiliating (Van Neil 1960:54). Possibly a similar rule accounts for the predominance of Javanese dress among the medical students in this photo.

³⁰ At his wife's village in Tikala. According to Fritz's written notes, the patients from the hospital were actually evacuated to emergency shelters at Pangrante. Even the doors and windows were removed from the hospital and taken there, in case the hospital might be bombed. Fritz and his wife were often called out to the villages to attend not only to local people but also to Chinese evacuees from Ujung Pandang, who had settled in various parts of the highlands. Sometimes people would come with a horse for Marta or Fritz to ride to accompany them to distant hill villages. In attending childbirths with complications, they often worked closely together; he records one night when they were called to Sareale, high on the slopes of Mount Sesean, to deliver a breech birth. The baby was presenting its hand; between them ('and by the grace of God', he adds) they succeeded in turning it and ensuring a safe delivery. At other times they might be called out to different locations, and not see each other for two or three days at a time.

³¹ Bigalke (1981:351-52) describes these incidents in more detail.

³² Literally, 'Indonesian youth'. Bigalke well describes the somewhat confusing uses of this term at the time: while in Java, it signalled a 'revolutionary activist', in the Toraja region it became a label for any 'nationalist' or 'activist', moderate as well as radical. In the aftermath of the Japanese defeat, various *pemuda* groups were forming, with some tensions emerging between those who were Christian and those more closely aligned with the Muslim-dominated *Pemuda Republik Indonesia*, which formed in October under the leadership of *pemuda* from Palopo (in the neighbouring Bugis region of Luwu') (Bigalke 1981:344-51). Fritz is here also using the term in this broad sense.

³³ NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration) forces were responsible, under the terms of the agreement signed between the Netherlands government and the major Allied powers, for restoring Dutch judicial and administrative power in Indonesia.

³⁴ As Bigalke describes, in Tana Toraja the desire for Indonesian independence was tempered by anxieties about being absorbed by lowland Bugis or Makassarese power centres in any emerging new order, involving loss of Toraja autonomy and perhaps enforced Islamisation. The Dutch regime had provided a buffer against such developments. At the same time, old rivalries between the leaders of the southern districts around Ma'kale, and those of the Rantepao area to the north, reasserted themselves in the new political landscape that was unfolding (Bigalke 1981:355-60).

³⁵ In the three years 1946-48, three classes of Toraja KNIL were recruited, totalling around 1250 people, and trained for 8 months before being sent on active duty in South Sulawesi or Java (Bigalke 1981:358-59). Some of them deserted and joined South Sulawesi guerrillas.

³⁶ In the event, some returning Torajans demobilised from KNIL were absorbed into the company of a local Toraja commander, Frans Karangan.

³⁷ Danny added that later, when a national effort was under way to compile lists of local Independence Heroes (with the right to interment in the local Heroes' Cemetery), Fritz was proposed for inclusion in the Toraja lists, but he typically declined the honour.

³⁸ Interview with Papa' Remas (Pak Musa Tambing), June 1996. Another friend who remembered both Fritz and his wife Marta was a retired minister, Pendeta Herman Rapa, whom I met in November 1999. He commented that he felt great respect and admiration for Fritz on account of the fact that with so little education, he had managed to go so far, and had really fulfilled the role of a doctor. He added that Marta had achieved a great deal with even less educational advantage, since she had only had three years of primary education.

³⁹ It is not uncommon in Toraja for illness to precipitate a conversion. Possibly this connects with a cultural pattern by which indigenous healers also customarily find their vocation after a period of illness or mental disturbance, during which they communicate with the deities.



Photo 1: Fritz's father, Ne' Pilo (standing, far left) and his elder brother Palino (far right), photographed some time in the 1920s. Neither the occasion, nor the names of others in the photo, are known.

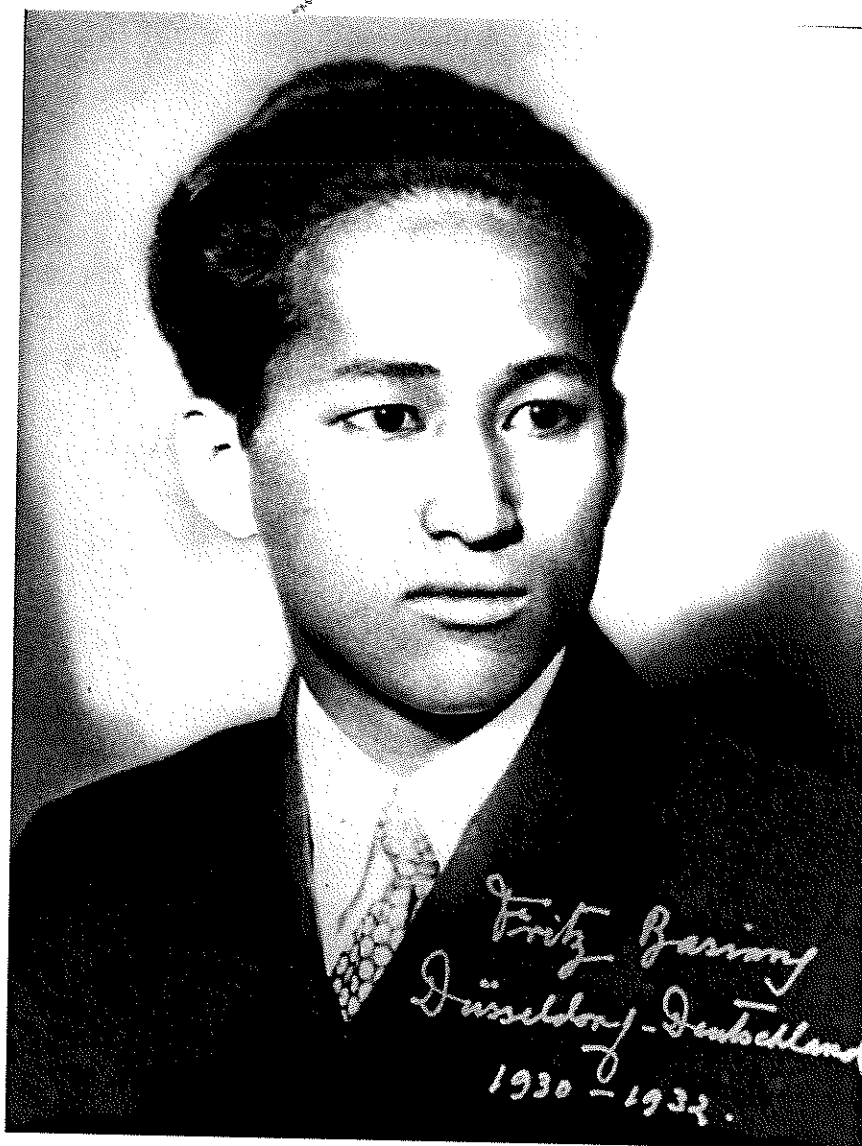


Photo 2: A studio portrait of Fritz taken in Düsseldorf, 1932.



Fritz in Essen, Germany, with Dr Simon and his son, Harald (far left) and small daughter.



Photo 4: Marta Gora (right), pictured with a friend in Surabaya before her marriage, while she was studying midwifery at the hospital there, 1929.



Photo 5: Marta in European dress, Surabaya, 1929.



Photo 6: Fritz (fourth from left) in a group of fellow nursing students in Javanese dress, having just passed their exams, Malang, 1936.

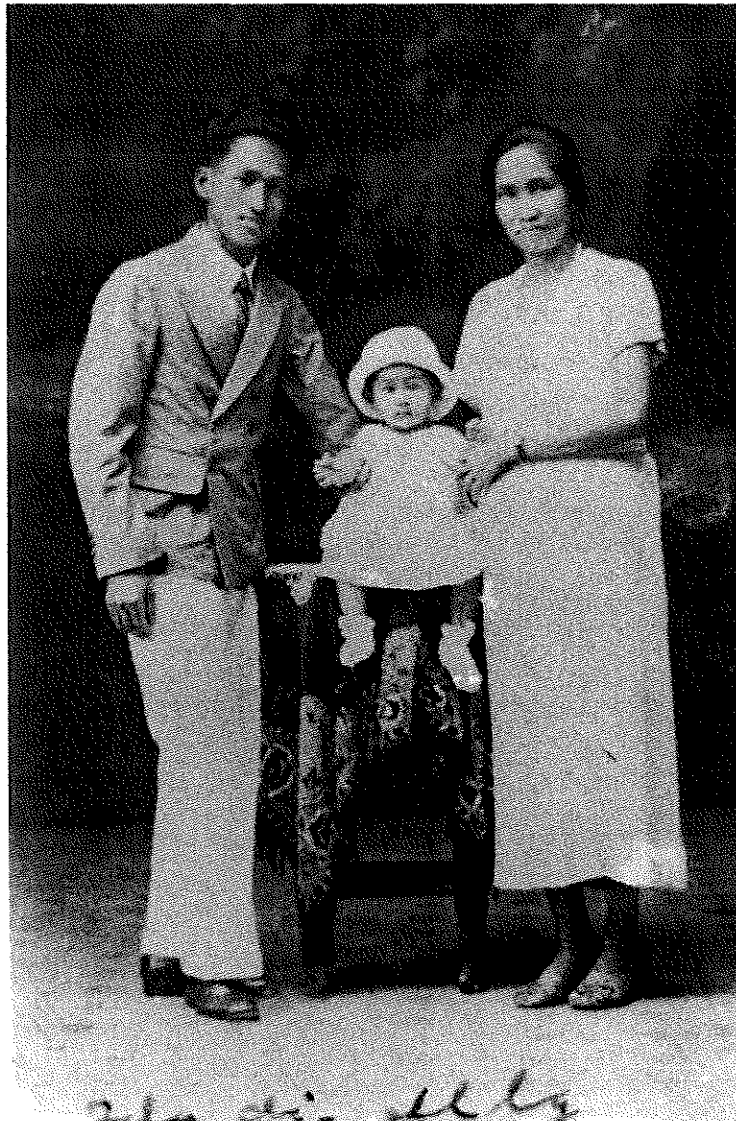


Photo 7: Fritz and Marta with their first child, Ida, in Malang, 1936.

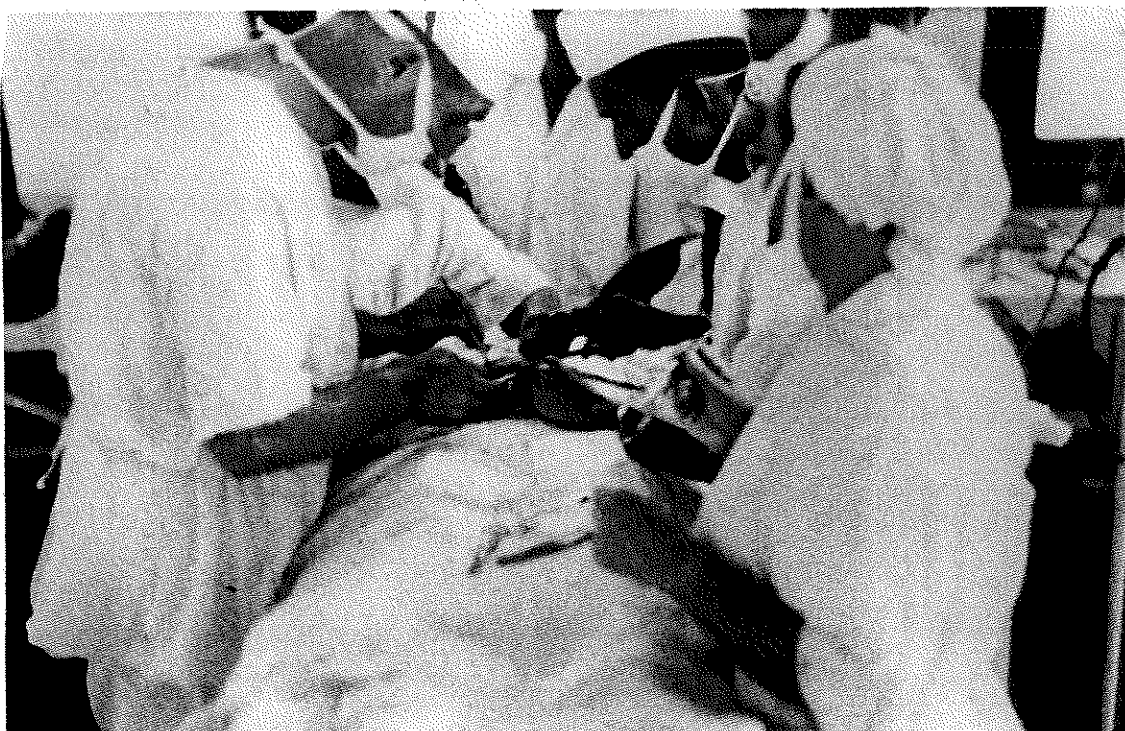


Photo 8: Fritz (right of centre) and Dr Goslinga (left) working in the operating theatre of the Elim hospital in Rantepao, late 1930s.

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