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## **Grandmother Narwimba**

### **What She Experienced and What She Suffered**

by Elise Kootz

1925

Basler Mission Zürich

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### **Forward**

Narwimba was a friendly old woman with prematurely graying hair, many wrinkles in her face, and eyes that looked as though she were still searching for something that wasn't there. She told me herself how she came to the Mission at Utengule<sup>1</sup> after a life full of darkness and distress. I therefore recount the following in her own words, with just a few added explanations here and there where the gentle reader might otherwise not understand.

Safwaland in the former German East-Africa, where Utengule is located, became her home for several years -- a place where she was happy. But she was born to the southeast, in the land of Urambya.<sup>2</sup> Upon her birth there, her mother laid her on a raw tanned sheepskin and whispered to her, in the language of her people, the first words of motherly love.

Then her feet carried her from North to South and back again under the glowing sun as a stolen captive and a slave, and then again to freedom. Though a chieftain's daughter first and then a chieftain's wife, she was well acquainted with hunger, burning thirst, and threatening death. She bore twelve children and had to give eleven back. She lived to see her last son converted to Christianity and he offered her a home, where she also came to know that higher, eternal home.

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<sup>1</sup> A town now called Utengule Unsongwe. Located in present-day Tanzania.

<sup>2</sup> Alternate spelling: Urambia. Located northwest of Lake Nyasa.

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My father was chief Sirwimba – “the great, important song” – and I am named Narwimba after him. When I was born, my parents lived in a village in the land of Urambya. The village lay on the Songwe<sup>3</sup>, which flows south through Kondeland<sup>4</sup>, into Lake Nyassa<sup>5</sup> not far from Karonga.<sup>6</sup> I quickly got to know Karonga, because of the terror that came over our land. The Bangoni<sup>7</sup> invaded my homeland and we had flee before these ferocious enemies. I went with my parents to Karonga in Kondeland on the big lake to the chief Chungu. At that time he was a very powerful chief, to whom all of Kondeland, (my homeland Urambya, a part of the Safwalandes<sup>8</sup> and the Njihaland) was subject. There my parents were allowed to farm in his territory and we lived in peace for several years.

When I grew up, a man came to my parents and sought to court me. He had to work for few years during the rainy season in a millet field for my parents, bring them many gifts, and build them a new hut. When my father satisfied, the man was allowed to take me into his hut, and I became his wife. My husband was named Sambu, but he wasn't one of the chieftains of the Safwa<sup>9</sup>, who was also named Sambu, but he was the Sambu Simutjimba. The last name he received from his father and it meant, “He knows how to make himself very strong.” Maybe he had had a wound that pained him greatly, but he made himself strong and he did not let it bother him.

We had six children in Kondeland, but five of these died at birth; the only one that survived was a daughter named Tjifwa. This name comes from dying; we named the girl this because all the other children died. When she was grown up, she chose for herself another name that suited her better.

After several years had elapsed the Bagoni, who were robbers and murderers, also came to Kondeland, where we had fled at that time. They also overran this land with war, and in battle against them, my husband, Sambu Simutjimba, perished. The great chief Chungu couldn't stand firm against the enemies.

Now I was a widow and I had to see which man from my husband's kinsman would take me to wife. My husband didn't have a brother; otherwise I would have become his wife. Up in Njihalande, a few day's journey away from my current home, the sole sister of my husband lived as the wife of the chief of the land, Muachitete. She had a son named Mirambo. After the death of my husband, she sent her son as the next of kin of her fallen brother in Kondeland, to greet our chief Chungu, whose land we lived in, as is the custom of the people. And when Mirambo had

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<sup>3</sup> a river forming the border between Tanzania and Malawi flowing into Lake Malawi

<sup>4</sup> located N. N.E. of Lake Malawi

<sup>5</sup> modernly called Lake Malawi, situated between Malawi, Mozambique, and Tanzania

<sup>6</sup> a city in the northern region of modern day Malawi

<sup>7</sup> an African tribe

<sup>8</sup> home of the Safwa, located in the mountains of the Mbeya Region in Tanzania, just north of Lake Malawi

<sup>9</sup> an ethnic and linguistic group based in the mountains of Mbeya Region of Tanzania

reached Karonga<sup>10</sup> the two spoke to each other. Chungu recounted the battle with the enemies, in which my husband died.

In conclusion, Chungu said to Mirambo, the son of the chief: “You, son of Muachitete! You have come here because you mourn the loss of your uncle who has been slain by the enemies. But before you return again to your homeland, I ask you: “What should become of the wife and child, whom your uncle has left behind? Who should provide for them now? There are no other relatives here besides you. Therefore attend to Narwimba and her child, inherit her from your uncle, Sambi.”

So the chief spoke with Marimbo, and I also asked him if he would take me as his wife, so that we would be provided for. Marimbo didn't answer right away but first returned to his own country and discussed the inheritance with his mother and when she agreed, he took me and my child out of Karonga, brought me to Chitete,<sup>11</sup> in the country of his father, and there I became his wife.

As Marimbo's wife, I bore six more children, three boys and three girls, of whom four died.

Do you know what it is like? I have mourned so often because they buried one of my children in the earth; I cried and wailed, until I could do so no longer.

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Alas, our country had no peace! The Bangoni, who live there down by Lake Nyassa traveled through the countries far and wide, pillaged and murdered, burned the harvest on the fields, or cut it off with their machetes if it was still too green to burn. And the people who fell into their hands were killed or made into slaves. Sometimes the invaders remained for a year in our land, sometimes two; and once they had pillaged it entirely, they returned to their homeland Ungoni<sup>12</sup>

It was at that time that my husband and I fled; we sought refuge with various chiefs. We had to beg, or else we would have starved. And only when our enemies had left our land, were we able to return to Chitete, to rebuild the huts that had been burnt down and replant the fields when the rainy season arrived. Then the old Chief Muachitete died. After a while, the elders and the advisors chose the one they liked best from among the brothers and sons of the deceased and that was Mirambo, my husband. They made him chief of the Njihalandes and he took on the legacy of his father.

Besides me, Mirambo still had more wives; I was one of the oldest. He didn't have to court me, instead I was only inherited by him. When he was to become the chief, he had to, according to the custom of the land, take another wife, a young one, with whom he would be “crowned”.

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<sup>10</sup> On the western shore of Lake Nyasa

<sup>11</sup> Chitete is a region of Malawi

<sup>12</sup> Ungoni is the land of the Ngoni before the German colonial rule

And then the Harvest season came again and the Dry season came again; the years passed, and the Bangoni didn't come back. But in our neighboring land, Inamanga where the powerful Mkoma was chief, a famine had broken out; many of the Inamanga people fled into other lands and begged for food there, so that they wouldn't die of starvation. They also came into our land. But hidden among them were surely spies, who only wanted to come into our land and then betray our Chief. Because of pressing counsel from his elders, my husband had one of them, a beggar from Ruamba, executed.

But the sacrifice didn't do any good. Now the warriors of the Chief Mkoma really started coming, for they wanted to avenge the death of their fellow comrade. They attacked our village, shooting us with their guns, throwing their spears, and setting fire to the huts. During the combat I was taken captive along with many other women and cattle and we were taken to Inamanga. I had a daughter with me, my tenth child; we were separated and to this day, I have not seen her again. She was probably sacrificed by Chief Mkoma over the graves of his ancestors, praying for rain, so that the land would no longer be plagued by hunger.

Alas! Now things went very badly for me, because I had already become old and could not work much more. The Inamanga Man, who had stolen me away, spoke with the merchants, seeing if they wouldn't buy me as a slave, but when they saw me, they said that I was merely an old hag. When the man could not be rid of me, he took to hating me, beat me, bound me to tall grass stalks, and intended to burn me.

There was however, a woman nearby, a sister of the Chief of the Land, who saw that the man wanted to kill me and said to him: "The law states that only the Chief can kill people. You are not allowed to kill this woman, or else you will be punished by the Chief." And so the man let me off, but said, "Good, then I will go with her to Kiwere,<sup>13</sup> in the Land where the people of the coast travel about with their slaves. Perchance I will get rid of her there."

When we started off hiking toward Kiwere, the man bound my arms together with chords behind my back; and in this manner he drove me in front of him.

After we had hiked a great distance, we arrived in the land of Chief Kapara, which lay on the Rukwa Lake. When I saw it, I thought in my heart, "Now it is over with me, now I have lost my homeland. Now I will never go back there."

When the sun went down, we spent the night outside in the wilderness. I didn't know whether we could no longer reach a village, or if the bandit had avoided the villages.

In the night, as the man and the others who were by him slept, I crept away entirely quiet. It was very dark, and in the darkness I climbed up a mountain, huddled low behind a bush and dozed off. In the morning, as it became light, I looked around, and walked about, but I couldn't orient myself. I was on the mountain five days. I had no food to eat and found no water to drink. And I kept going back and forth and knew not where I was.

Then, in the distance, I saw smoke rising from a fire and said, "there I want to go, and there I will die." I ran in the direction of the smoke and came to the fire. In this way it became

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<sup>13</sup> a city in the country of Tanzania

clear to me, that I was once again in the land of Inamanga, from which I had departed with the robbers. What should I do now? If I were to go back, I would die of hunger and thirst. If I were to go forward, wouldn't they kill me?

Then I exclaimed: "Come! If I die, then I die. I cannot continue to live in such a manner!"

So I ran there, where the smoke rose, and saw a girl sitting at the fire. The mother of the girl was with the other women down by the stream picking grass. The grass would be dried and burned, and out of the ash of the grass, they would distill salt, in order to flavor their vegetables. I asked the girl for water to drink, but when I tried to drink, it wouldn't go down my throat. I couldn't swallow, so much had I deteriorated.

The girl ran to the stream and called the women for help. They asked me where I came from, and I answered that I came from this country. Then they recognized me and said: "That is one of the women that our warriors captured from Muachitete in the Njihalande!"

Then they asked for my name, but I could not tell them my name, nor the name of my family or my husband, but rather I named myself only Namira, that is: "that I can drink"; because I thought: they don't know the name of my family, and if I name my village or husband, the Chief of Mirambo Muachitete, then they will say, "Really, and you are our enemy!" and what will happen to me then? On the other hand, the name Namira was not strange to them; many women in this country were also named so.

After I had told them this name, they talked together and finally said, "We do not want to bring her back to the Chief Mkoma, rather only to our chief in the village."

Next, they put water on the fire, made it hot, gave it to me and said, "You must drink this, because your throat is all dried out. When the hot water has cleared out the dried saliva, which makes your throat stick together, then you will be able to quench your thirst." And after I had drunk enough, they walked with me in their village and hid me in their huts.

Then they notified the village chieftain and said, "We have picked up an old woman in the far off wilderness; she was perishing from exposure."

The chieftain exclaimed, "Oh, we want to kill her!"

Then Samuene, who was also a chieftain's daughter, replied, "You want to kill the woman? Have you forgotten that in this land it is not permissible to kill someone, unless Mkoma desires it?"

Oh, this woman Samuene! Her real name was Musuna. At that time, when we were fleeing from the Bangoni, we found refuge in the village, in the house where Musuna also lived. Now she recognized me and saved my life. She knew that I was one of the wives of Chief Muachitete, and for that reason she wanted to keep the village chieftain from killing me.

After they had kept me in the village for a few days, I again snuck away in the night and fled. And this time luck was with me; I finally came back to our village, Chitete and to my

people. They were all very happy, they greeted and embraced me, and after I had told them everything that had happened to me, they shouted: “Samarare, samarare, wapuruchira!” That is: Praise and thanks that you have escaped from the enemy.

Afterwards I lived peacefully for one year in Chitete with my husband, the chief Mirambo Muachitete. Out of all twelve children, only my adult-aged daughter Tjifuwa, and one son, Ngwara, who was about sixteen, remained. But Ngwara wanted to move away; he had seen, that many of his father’s had left to the Englishmen, who had settled in Karonga by Lake Nyassa<sup>14</sup> and the surrounding area. Some of them traded with the people, others held school and taught the people to read and write. In Ngerenge, a few marching hours inland from Karonga, was a mission station, and that’s where my son wanted to go, to work for clothing.

While he was away, I went to see my daughter Tjifuwa in Burambya, where she had married a man named Njondo. But Njondo was not a good man! First he had taken my daughter as his wife without paying any dowry, and now he had given her a poisonous drink, from which she almost died. The other people of the village had labeled my daughter a witch. Njondo didn’t want to let the shame rest upon his family, and so he required his wife undergo the judgment of God, through a poisonous drink. This was in order to verify that she wasn’t a witch.

As she drank the poison, she threw it back up, and that was the verification, that she hadn’t practiced any sorcery. Now no one dared to badmouth her; but I said to my daughter: “Come with me now to Chitete, and never return to this horrible man, who almost poisoned you.” And my daughter took my advice and stayed with her little daughter in my hut. She gave birth to Njondo’s little girl and named her Musamarire; which means, “It is not yet going to end,” namely the quarrelling around the child. Njondo had not paid a dowry for my daughter. He had no right to the child; she now belonged, like his mother, to the chieftain’s family. There would still be many conflicts around my granddaughter.

The chief, Muachitete, had a slave, Muandarirwa; he now gave Muandarirwa my daughter, Tjifuwa, as a wife. This slave had not been bought by dealers, nor stolen in the war by the chieftain’s people; rather, the Arabians had lost him. Once, after the Arabians had driven a slave caravan through Muachitete’s country, someone found the small boy lying in the high grass. His mother would have been one of the stolen women, who the Arabians dragged to the coast to sell. Perhaps she got sick and no longer had strength to carry the child, or she had already died. The foreign boy stayed with the Chief and was raised by his wives until he could fend for himself.

Now he is grown-up, married to my daughter and together they have two boys. However, my granddaughter Musarire stays with me in my hut, where I care for and love her very much.

There was, however, still a great dispute in the Land, for which cause I was supposed to give up my granddaughter. When the great Chief Mkoma brought war into our land because Muachitete had put the beggar Ruamba to death as a spy, two other men were also killed during the battle in our village.

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<sup>14</sup> Also known as Lake Malawi, the third largest lake in Africa, situated between Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania

The relatives of the dead men came to Muachitete and said: “Sir, you must compensate us, because our relatives in the village who lost their lives. Why did you have that Inamanga fellow killed, a man who was driven into your land by hunger. Muachitete answered: “No, my friends, do you not think so in your hearts? It is the war that has come into our land, as always happens through our enemies, the Inamanga people.”

The accusers said: “No sir, you are to blame for the death of the men and now you must compensate us with a girl.”

They argued back and forth and in order to finally put the matter to rest, in the end when there was peace, the chief the Chief took my granddaughter, Musamaririe, and wanted to give her to the people. However, I, took the child and fled with her to my son Ngwara in Kondeland.

He was very frightened when I arrived at his place and after I had rested he said: “No Mother, I would not like you to stay here, what are you going to live on? Come we will return you to my father.” And he spoke to me until I was willing to go back again.

After he brought my granddaughter and me back to Chitete, he returned to work again with the Englishmen in Ngerenge.<sup>15</sup> However, about a year after, in addition to the English, the Germans came into the country and it was explained to me that my son had traveled to Utengule,<sup>16</sup> in Safwaland, with a German missionary and his wife and now he works there as a cook for the white people.

O, my heart pained me, that my son did not remain with me. I thought to myself: Muachitete will once again need a woman, to pay for any debts of his, and he will once again come after my granddaughter because there is no one here to protect us.

My husband’s brother, the chief, took a new wife into his home, whom another man was already courting. Because of this, the first man became very angry and demanded compensation. When he didn’t receive it fast enough and that he helped himself according to our customs of our country. One day we were working outside in the fields, when he seized my granddaughter Musamarire, stole her and brought her to a village in Inamanga, the land of our enemies. And so my granddaughter was taken to the country in which I had been a slave and I sat in Chitete<sup>17</sup> and mourned over her. Later they found another way to resolve the conflict and the child war brought back to me.

And again, because of this child, misery came upon me! One day chief Muchaitete beat her when he was drunk. After which I became very irate and asked him: “Sir, why do you beat Musamarire? What crime has the child committed?”

I wanted to snatch the child away from him, but then he took his cane and beat me as well.

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<sup>15</sup> village in Malawi

<sup>16</sup> Located in Mbarali, one of 8 districts in the Mbeya region of Tanzania

<sup>17</sup> a village in northern Malawi in Africa

When he quit beating me, I ran to my cabin, wherein I fetched my leather pack, bound it to my back, and fled with my granddaughter. We came to Urambya, the country of my childhood, where we were permitted in one of the villages of the chief Muampache.

But there I had nobody to care for me. Who would help me farm in the rainy season? Who would build me a new home, when the old one crumbles? Now my daughter became a widow; her husband, Muandjarirwa, lost his life in the service of his master, the chief. The cause of the argument over which my son-in-law died, was not his own, and was not that of his master, rather it was of two other men, of which only one was a subject of Muachitete's and lived in his land. This one was called Papatara. The other man was called Halinga; he lived in the land of Nsunda and was one of the great advisors to the chief Nsunda, almost as great as if he were the chief himself. These two men had an dispute with one another; Papatara should have paid a debt to Halinga, but he didn't do it, rather he would postpone payment again and again. Because Papatara now lived in the land of the chief Muachitete, it was almost as if this argument was also Muachitete's argument.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, there was a man by the name of Namusechi; he lived in the land of the chief Kaponda. One day, this Namusechi went with his small son across the country and came to the village in which the great minister Halinga lived. Now when Halinga saw Namusechi with his child, he grabbed the boy and hid him in his hut and said to the father:

“So, now I am going to keep your child prisoner until Papatara has atoned his debt to me. Go and tell it to him, and when he has atoned for it, then I will come and bring you back your child.” Yes, this is how the people here in our land do it! If someone has a claim against another and it is not settled, then the claimant causes someone else to suffer for it; he will steal something from another's valuables or even one of his children! And the one, who now must suffer innocently, will go in and pressure and pressure the one at fault until he finally yields and appeases the claimant. Now Namusechi came to Chitete, into Chief Muachitete's village, and said to Halinga's debtor: “You, Papatara! Halinga has stolen my child from me because of your doings! Quickly give me what you owe to him; I will carry it there and release my child again.” But Papatara did not want to hear anything of it, and said he had no obligation to Halinga.

Then the man went to the Chieftain, but he also did not help him.

Then the German government came to Namusechi's aid. The regional official came from Langenburg<sup>19</sup> and traveled through the land. The people named him Chinjanga. And when the powerful white man came to Chitete, Namusechi came in to him and said: “You, Chinjanga, powerful Lord! Help me against Halinga, who has taken my child from me without cause, for I have no conflict with the Minister of the Chieftain Nsunda.”

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<sup>18</sup> In Narwimba's homeland it is custom that one is liable for another: the father for the son, and the tribe for everyone who belongs to it; a single man for his village comrades, and the whole village for the debt of the individual; and the chief is liable for his people, and for those who fled from another land and found refuge with him.

<sup>19</sup> a state in West Germany along the river Jagst

Then the regional official permitted my husband, Muachitete, to be called, and asked him about the matter. Muachitete answered, "Yes Lord, it is so. Namusechi is not at fault for the argument between Halinga and Papatara."

When the white man had heard the confirmation, he dispatched three of his Askari (black soldiers) to Halinga's village. They were supposed to discuss the matter with Halinga and demand the return of the stolen child.

But when Askari came in the vicinity of the village, Halinga's people seized their rifles and spears and commenced fighting with them. The soldiers became very angry about this, but they did not defend themselves, because they had no order from their superiors to fight. They were only supposed to get the child back. So they only took the cattle and Halinga's flock and drove them out ahead of them. When they wanted to return with this collateral to their superiors, Halinga's people came out of their village, blocked their path and shot at them; they hit one of the soldiers and shattered his leg.

And they shot my son-in-law, who was the leader of Muachitete, in the head, so that he died. The soldier also died later from the wound.

Now the soldiers also grabbed their rifles and wounded one of the attackers.

The regional official heard the gunshots in the distance, called Muachitete to be summoned and said to him: "Do you hear the guns? Halinga is fighting with the Askari! Call your people together quickly, that we may help them!"

When the men were all together, he left with them and the rest of the soldiers; but when they had arrived at Halinga's village, the people shot at them from the village entrance. Now the regional official allowed his men to shoot as well, and when a man had been fatally hit, the others escaped and left all that they had back at the village. Of the cattle, the regional official gave Muachitete ten goats and said: "Here, take these goats for the man who has been shot."

Whether Papatara's argument with Halinga is now reconciled, I do not know; But it so happened that, because of this dispute, my daughter lost her husband and the chief lost his slave. None of them were at fault; they merely paid for the guilt of others.

And so it was, always strife with no peace! I should have returned to Chitete but I did not, because in my heart I thought: If at any time the chief needs to compensate anyone for a debt, will he not take my granddaughter away from me again? The words which were always spoken about this child made me so weary; I determined to go to Kondeland and see whether or not my relatives, who I still had, would be willing to provide for me.

But just before I could finish my preparations to leave, the taxes came. The government required a three rupees (four Marks) yearly tax on every hut in the village. It was the village chief's responsibility to see that every person paid their share.

But who would pay it for me? I was far away from my husband, the chief Muachitete, and my step-son was dead. Why should the tax collectors believe that I was a stranger for whom none would lend or offer money? They do not know me. The village chief should have paid for

me, but I said that he should not be inconvenienced because of me, Therefore, I left and went to Utengule to my son Ngwara. What ultimately brought me to the mission station was, , the struggle over my granddaughter Musamarire.

In Utengule, my son built a hut and tilled a field for me, ensuring us something to eat. My son was no longer called Ngwara, and also not Maritjara, as he had named himself in Karongo; on the contrary, now he was called Muganovugorofu, which means “he who loves the truth.”

Here in Utengule, he had taken lessons from Missionary Kootz, and attended the school and then asked for baptism. When he was supposed to have be baptized, the missionary said to him: “Ngwara, until now you have often told lies; but now you want to become a new man and bear a new name; from now on you shall be Muganovugorofu, or “one who loves truth”. So my son now was called Muganovugorofu; mostly though they just called him Gorofu, the just.

After a while my daughter, Tjifuwa, also came to us in Utengule and brought both her children to me. Soon thereafter she became sick and died. She lies buried here in Utengule. Then I had three grandchildren for whom I was obliged to care.

Later I also went to school to learn from the missionary; but I was so old, I couldn't understand very much of what the missionary said to us. After I had been taking lessons for many years I was finally baptized and received the name Musundjirirwa, which means: “you have been cared for”. And now my granddaughter is also Christian and is called: Mukumbuchirwa, “you have been thought of,” or more correctly: Jesus has thought of you, he has not forgotten you.

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### **Conclusion**

Grandmother Narwimba became happy; as happy as she could be given her scarred heart and soul.

One night she sat in front of the stone house that her son had built. Her seat was the edge of the protruding veranda; it was built to encircle the house. Her eyes looked over the Mission station that lay in front of her, away from the church and the dwelling of the white man and farther upward toward the mountains, which ascended behind the station.

The mighty knoll of Mbeje mountain lay golden in the evening sunshine. Do you think Narwimba saw that? Her eyes had an inquiring expression, and her heart was troubled and pained. Grandmother, why are you so sad?

O, her son, Gorofu, was with the missionary, and the missionary had said this to him: “you Muganovugorofu! In the land of Ivungu,<sup>20</sup> in two day's journey from here, there must we construct a small missionary station because the people there should also learn of God's word;

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<sup>20</sup> Both a small hill in Zimbabwe as well as a region in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is most likely the latter

and the people cannot learn God's word if we only go to them so seldom. You, Muganovugorofu, should go there with Sansamusire as a companion, and when you have built yourselves a hut, you should also bring your family up. And then you should do God's work, which he gives to you, because can you read and write and teach the others; I have no one better, whom I can send, than you."

It took a while before Muganovugorofu was willing to be sent there. And mother Narwimba's heart hurt when she thought of separation. The land Ivungu is so hot and unhealthy, and Muenivungu, the chief, is an evil man.

Would he allow her son, the son of the Nyiha<sup>21</sup> Chief Muachitete, live in his land and be allowed to work without causing him any harm? Would her son, her very last child, in the hot land not become diseased and die?

Gorofu had also said to the missionary that to go there and do the work was not his heart's desire, but the missionary answered him this: "Our heart often does this; it will always want to be something different, than what we should do; my heart also does just that." Gorofu now found courage and said yes to his assignment.

He wanted to leave in the morning. His wife had already ground millet seeds into flour to live on during the march through the country. Gorofu was there to fill the sack (made of bast fiber) with flour, in which it could be most easily carried. And a few houses further down, Sansamusire was busy preparing the trip provisions. He was a quieter person, not very gifted; but he could be a faithful companion to the Gorofu.

The short twilight was past, and the entire village already lay in darkness. Only in the west, where the sun had just "fallen down," like the people say there, one still saw a few clouds with light around the edges. The stars rose and illuminated in southern splendor. And in the sky over Narwimba's house, the Southern Cross stood and told those that wanted to hear about God's creative glory.

"We Maama, ujinsadje – you, grandmother, do come!" called Narwimba's now soon-to-be-grown-up granddaughter. Grandmother rose, sighing, and went into the house. The years passed. Her granddaughter had married. She was doing well, living in Utengule and Narwimba with her, but nevertheless the longing for the distant son gnawed at her motherly heart. I tried to comfort her, but she looked past me, shook her head and said: "I can't endure it any longer, I must go to my son. Now you say, here there is peace and no more disputes around me and my granddaughter as there was earlier. But when you come to my house one day, and find it empty, you will know where I have gone." And one morning the village people came and reported that Narwimba had disappeared.

We would have kept the friendly old woman at the station with us and would have discouraged against traveling; but now the longing to become too powerful within her. She went to her son and there she hugged her grandchildren and rejoiced over them.

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<sup>21</sup> Ethnic and linguistic group based in southwestern Tanzania and northeastern Zambia

But I know that she sits in front of her hut at night, and her eyes search for something that is not there; because grandmother Narwimba's heart – as well as yours and mine – will not calm until it rests with God.