

SE of Mandily, Water Needs

Again, to put some flesh on the water needs of Androy, we will visit the quite remote area southeast of Mandily. We have visited Mandily but now it's our point of departure in the early morning. We'll put the name of the chiefs we catch, in parenthesis.

Marosoritse S25° 02.610' E45° 32.159' (Tanantsoa)

Just south of Mandily we turn eastward onto a trail that is at times of ox-cart width, and at other times just a foot path traversable by bicycle. Soon we descend the deep gorge of the Fanoroke, where deep V-shaped wells have been dug in the sand of the dry river to extract water. In this area the water



is still sweet, while near Kotsobey it is close to sea-water salinity. We met a woman carrying a pail of water 3,5 km from the Fanoroke on her head toward this village—on a very rocky trail. The city has several times requested a well through the Fokontany to the Commune, but has never had a fulfilling reply. They crave a well, but when we proffered the basic Gospel it was not understood, they are quite also in need of the Living Water.

Ampamata Nanomboha S25° 02.764' E45° 30.604' (Mañatsitsake)

Following a foot path we come out on the Andraña-nivo Road from Kotsobey. Actually it passes through Marofoty and then Andriambaratse before coming out just at Tolia Amboriñabo. But we only descend to where a bike trail heads north at a cluster of large traditional graves. A fair crowd comes together and we explain our visit, though we've been here several times to teach them the tenet of our faith. This is the chief village of several others nearby, all prefaced by Ampamata.



Ampamata Ankilemionjo S25° 02.272' E45° 30.470' (Mahavily)

Heading northward out of Nanomboha the terrain turns to karst, with limestone protruding from the ground in strings appearing as lines of boulders, but which are deeply anchored. We see the same in this picture where Mahavily offers a chair to Rehaha, our partner, the latter is well known here as he has taught them how to read and write. And we've also supplied them with Bible Story books, and a Bible or two.



Ankelokala S25° 02.581' E45° 29.658' (Manankango)

Departing Ankilemionjo, we wind our way through forest trails, often quite narrow, and eventually come into a village in the forest, where most of the houses of the village cannot be seen, being tucked in among the trees. We approach the house of Sirie, our friend and contact in the north portion of this extended village. She's the sole Christian, outside of whose place we share the Gospel with those that gather. Rehaha is beginning to visit Ankelokala in his worship circuit. Masitoetse, one of our team from Añaviavy, has visited this village several times with his homeopathic medical kit, to treat their sick, and was the first to introduce them to the Gospel.



It's interesting that the water they fetch locally from deep wells in the Fanoroke, though clear when offered in a gourd for drinking, turns black when heated. We've seen that this can be Manganese or Iron, but why it only blackens on heating is interesting.

Rehaha will separate from us here, to head back to Mandily, his home, but he will first accompany us over the Fanoroke to the correct crossroads, of which there are several. After farewells, he goes north while we turn south. If we had continued to go straight west we'd have soon come into Andronono'e village of Befarehetse, which has also been keen to have a well, but have dug for water unsuccessfully.



Tolia-Maromainte S25° 02.830' E45° 28.802'

Where we come out on the 4 wheel vehicle access is right across from Tolia-M. A large village, this one is quite some distance to the Fanoroke, so none of the village has any gardens there, We are told that it's because the river salts up easily with heavy use.



Tolia-Amboriñabo S25° 04.060' E45° 28.552' (Retsikatrae)

Here we come on a dokany crowded with people on the benches and outside, so we stop to ask about their water situation, it matches the above. But their water from the Fonoroke is even saltier, Soon we are engulfed with people from both villages complaining of illnesses, for the village is split to being on either sides of the road, both retracted into the forest, invisible from the road. We first explain to them the Gospel about Jesus, in whom there is deep healing. But our healing remedies also come from his creative power, out of the minerals in the ground, and the roots, leaves and bark of the plants and trees in their forests. And so we treat according to illness, but to the one having intestinal issues, we point at the Vahombey (king aloe) across the road, and tell her to break off a length of one of the dry leaves hanging down, and insert the piece into a container of water. Let it soak until the water turns pink and take a drink of it, holding some in the mouth before swallowing. (no pix)

Añaviavy - Masitoetse S25° 06.467' E45° 29.884'

We have visited this village about a half kilometer southwest of this stop, but what has attracted our attention, is the fenced garden in the background, of which we learn that Mrs. Solo-voatse has carried the water by head over hill and dale 2,5 km. That's why the garden is not as large as they'd like. Grandma Pelamanintsy in the foreground is coming with a container load of manure, to mix with earth to seal the walls in her house. (This site is between both maps.)



Behara River Wells S25° 08.916' E45° 29.721'

We've descended from Añaviavy, crossed a couple of sharp creeks, and before the long hill up to Kibory Harae, we cut south on a road from which we can see villages in the distances on both sides. But eventually we take a sharp right and climb over a high hill to descend to the Behara River. The water has become too deep here for digging wells in the sand. So the people have carved 12,5 m. through a limestone outcropping, in fact they put two wells in about 25m apart. This is the only stretch of a mined river we have ever seen in the south where wells are dug in at the side. We also note that they have carved watering troughs in the limestone for their animals.



Ankilemamy - Vañonjolohe S25° 09.416' E45° 29.676'

We retrace our tracks over the hill and back down to the road we'd come south on. Continuing south we eventually come to a growing village on top of a hill. The first to move here from the main village having a school, was Vañonjolohe and his family. Vola Tolosoroe, his wife, and their daughter are both active Believers, and Vola also has a case of local homeopathic remedies with which she treats people in that whole area and as far as Marobasia, near Behabobo.



Ankilemamy Center S25° 09.704' E45° 29.260'

Dropping down from their village and over a creek we will come to the old Ankilemamy center, still having numerous dwellings, but from which the other's have grown, this one has a large grove of tamarinds from which comes the name of the area. These people are even more distant from the wells, and the creek nearby has long been dry. Now the Kile tree usually tells us that abundant water is available where it is situated, but strangely, no wells are seen in this area.



Amborongo S25° 10.377' E45° 28.014'

We continue southwest, over some deep gullies, and through some tunnels of cactus, before taking the “exit” for Beborongo, a large village having a school. Here when we first brought the Gospel they asked if we could locate water. On that



day I taught several young men how to use a forked branch off a tree to scout for water, and they have been digging but slowed at 8m. I told them at Anjamarotea that Ombasoa had gone down 18 m, but without some experience with that branch, over water sources and wells of known depth, they would not know how deep to go. Alternatively, if the excavation is in rock and difficult, they could wait until an expert arrives—hopefully soon—to find the best location in their vicinity.

Belemboke S25° 14.743' E45° 28.074' (Mahafehe)

Now we continue southwest to the intersection at Anjamarotea, greet the people there with a general “Talilio’areo”, and run south to continue passed Antsakoantsoa, which we’ve also introduced by a similar report, and over the rocky Behara River and then over its sandy Matemate tributary, until we come into Belemboke. Stopping for tea at a dokany we ask the hostess if she knows the current chief, suggesting Mahafehe (Able to govern), to which: “Yes,” how could it be another? “Aye, it’s the power of the name of blessing by his parents.” All the hill people in villages in the forest above Belemboke including the latter fetch water in the Behara River a few kilometers north, and not where it “flow’s” west of their village, for here it’s salty, and up there it stays sweet longer. In fact that stretch of the Behara River had supplied the city of Tsihombe, back in the stiff drought, when the Manambovo R. had gone salty from heavy use.

Summary

This trip has taken us off the road, into the forests and some of the more remote areas, where people suffer from the hardships of seeking sweet water. Some may have to open roads through scrub or forest to let large vehicles in. Ampamata Ankilemionjo has already cut a road through to the Mandily Rd., not to be left out! So, I trust this adds a little color to the story of a people accustomed to hardship, but always working to make it through.

Truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Steven M. Lellelid'.

Steven M. Lellelid

12 September, 2021