



Fig. 1. The leaning statue "Watoe Langko" stands on a long low ridge near the village of Lamba, at the base of high mountains which surround the plain of Napoe. Note the hooks sculptured on its breast

## The Stone Images and Vats of Central Celebes<sup>1</sup>

By H. C. RAVEN

Associate Curator, Comparative and Human Anatomy

IN 1917 while passing through the village of Bamba in the district of Bada, Central Celebes, I chanced to see an interesting stone image standing among the bananas close to a native house. I photographed it and inquired of the natives concerning it. They informed me that it was an image of a woman named "Langke Boelawa" (Golden Anklet) who had turned to stone, and that the image until a few years before, when they brought it to its present position, had stood near the foot of the mountain on the northern side of the near-by Tawelia River.

Naturally I tried to find out by whom the image was made and if there were more like it about. My informants

told me nothing of importance concerning its origin, but they did tell me that I would be able to see images and other objects of stone in the districts of Besoa and Napoe, both of which I was on my way to visit.

I spent several weeks in Besoa and later in Napoe, studying and photographing all the stone objects in the vicinity. It was easy to reach the sites when guided by natives, but a visitor passing through the districts would certainly never have seen any of them, as they are located some distance from villages and from the main trails. In Besoa I saw an image somewhat similar to the one in Bada and a number of great vats, each hewn from a single

<sup>1</sup>The field notes and pictures for this article were made while the author was collecting natural-history material in the East Indies for the Smithsonian Institution, Washington.



Fig. 2. "Langke Boelawa," meaning Golden Anklet, is the name given by the natives of the Bada district to the legless granite image in the village of Bamba

piece of granite, some having ornamented covers, and a floor made of smooth flat pieces of stone. In Napoe were two stone images and one hollowed-out rock very unlike the vats of Besoa and crude in comparison, though its purpose may have been similar. The only other stone objects I saw in Central Celebes were mortars undoubtedly used in the pounding of grain, as the present inhabitants use

wooden mortars. These stone mortars, each consisting of two hemispherical hollows six or eight inches in diameter and a foot or more apart in the rock, the upper surface of which was levelled and smooth, were at Lemo in the Koelawi district. Another was located near the Lake of Lindoe.

From the village Doda in Besoa an old man guided me to Boeleli to show me the stone image there. Boeleli is a



low hill covered with long coarse grass and is close to the foot of the high mountain Toewo. Upon reaching the image my companion rode his horse close beside it and leaning over, wiped his hand first across the brow of the image and then across his own. He explained that he did this "to get strength from Tadoe Lakoe," as the image was called by the natives. "Tadoe Lakoe," it is said, was an ancient local war leader, and the natives believe the image to be the chieftain himself and not merely a representation of him. The statue (Fig. 13) stands about seven feet high, is about thirty inches wide, and is made from a single block of granite. The accompanying photographs, showing both front and side views, make detailed description unnecessary but it may be well to call attention to some of the characters which are not so clear, owing to the low relief in which they were executed: (1) the ears are represented by bumps high up on the sides of the head, their lower borders being about the level of the eyebrows; (2) the shoulders, arms, and hands are in low relief, the fingers pressed to the lower abdominal region; (3) the male generative organ in higher relief is upright and to be seen clearly in the profile; (4) the limit of the forehead is marked, evidence that headgear of some sort is represented. The stone of the top of the head, however, appears to be more or less weathered and this may account for part of the asymmetry.

The image in Besoa, "Tadoe Lakoe," on the evidence of the phallus alone represents a man. The image in Bada known as "Langke Boelawa" was said to represent a woman but there is no positive evidence for such a statement. The images in Bada and Besoa resemble each other closely in the

matter of the breasts, ears, headdress, and position of the hands, and perhaps in the phallus. The Napoe images (Figs. 1, 11) differ from those of Bada and Besoa in the apparent lack of headgear and the lack of arms and hands. A mouth is not shown in the figures of Bada and Besoa, but my photographs of the Napoe specimens appear to show in each case what may be a slight groove below the nose, suggesting a mouth. The placing of the ears in the Napoe specimens is lower on the sides of the head, thus more normal than in the figures of Bada and Besoa.

The first stone vats I found in Besoa were near the image "Tadoe Lakoe" where there were four or five together. The most interesting one (Fig. 17) was cracked and had more or less recently been turned on its side. It was of average size, about five feet in diameter by six in height, but its peculiar feature was a concave shelf about eight or ten inches wide inside the vat a few inches from the upper rim, as shown in the accompanying photograph and diagram (Figs. 5 and 17). Except for this shelf the inside of the vat was perfectly smooth and well worked, the outside somewhat weathered and less smooth on that account. The bottom of the vat outside was flat, with the edge bevelled off hexagonally. The vats in nearly every case were encircled by consecutive raised rings, (Fig. 15) and it is possible that in the few cases where these were lacking they had been weathered off, as all were in low relief.

Across the plain nearly five miles from Boeleli were nineteen more stone vats of various sizes, the largest one (Fig. 16) standing about seven feet above the ground and measuring more than that in diameter. I dug under



Fig. 3. Stone vats in Besoa. The outer edges of the rim are rounded, the sides slightly bulging. Note size in comparison with horse and natives



Fig. 4. Elliptical vat at Napoe. Unlike the circular vats of Besoa this one is long, not deeply hollowed-out, and comparatively crude. The natives have referred to it as the "bath place" of a prince

the lower edge of this and made certain that it too was bevelled hexagonally below. On this vat, the only

one having any ornamentation other than the raised rings, was a series of faces resembling those of the statues and executed in relief around the upper third of the vat. Each of the faces was separated from its neighbor by a shallow vertical groove and the series bounded below by another groove encircling the whole vat, clearly seen in the photograph. All the vats that still remained upright were filled with mud and water in which there was a dense growth of sedge. I emptied some of these but found only mud and soft earth except in one in which there were in addition wood ashes and fragments of a clay pot. The simplest cover, made for one of the small vats, was smooth and flat below, evenly convex above but somewhat weathered, with a thin edge all around. Near-by was a squat, barrel-like vat much less in diameter at the top than through the middle, which if fitted with this convex cover would have appeared nearly spherical or at least domelike in side view. The three remaining covers were of about the same size, huge stone discs more than six feet in diameter and seven or eight inches in thickness, bevelled so that the diameter above was slightly more than that below. The simplest of these was decorated in the center with a nicely hewn knob more than a foot in diameter and six inches high. Another cover was carved with images of three large monkeys and one small monkey hewn in a row across the middle (Fig. 12). The most elaborate cover was also decorated with images of these black monkeys peculiar to Celebes. The figures were well modeled, arranged symmetrically around the periphery, and in the center was a raised circular boss, flattened on top (Figs. 14 and 15).

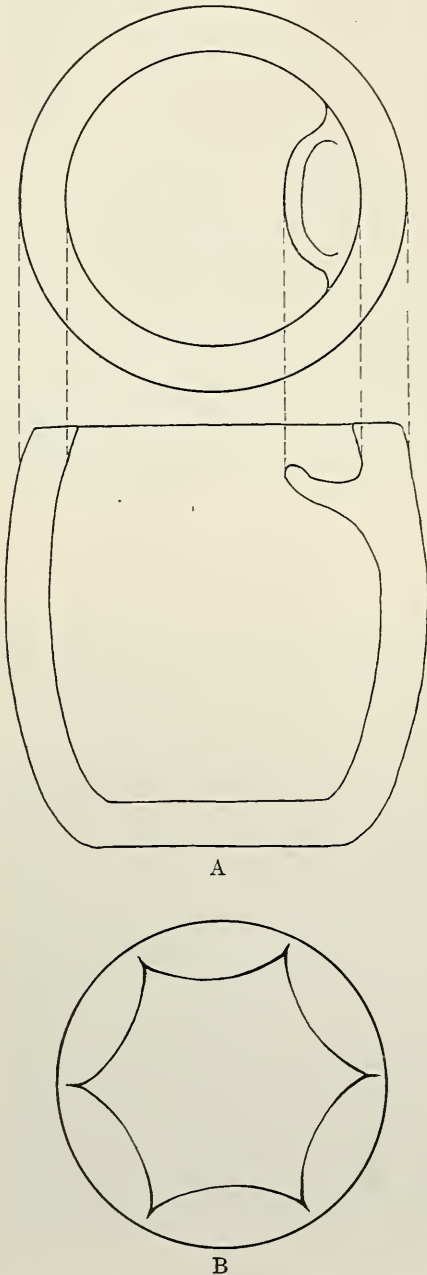


Fig. 5.—(A) Diagram of the stone vat pictured in Fig. 17, to show the concave shelf on the inside, a few inches below the rim. (B) Diagram of the bottom of a vat, to illustrate how the edge was bevelled hexagonally





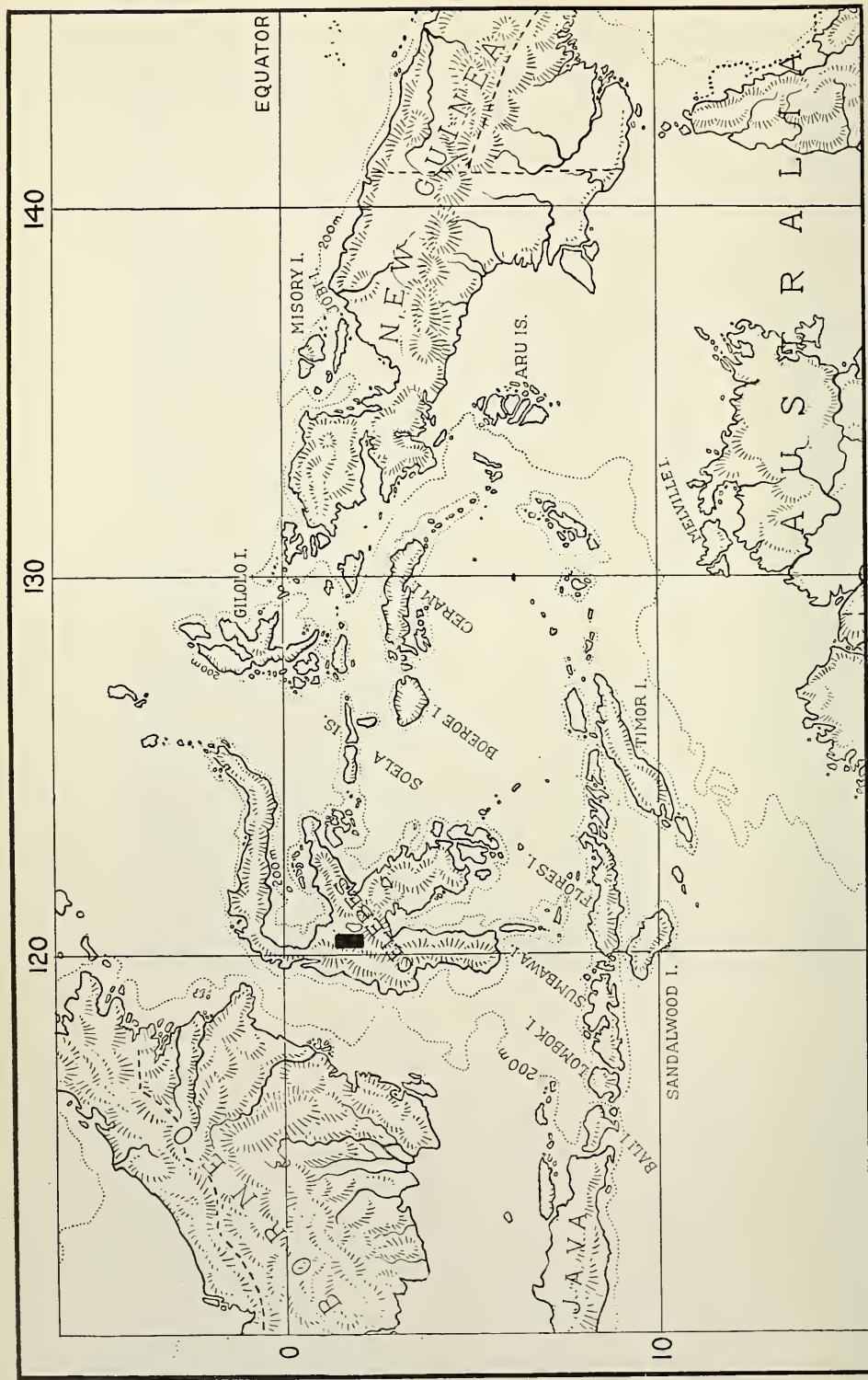
Fig. 6. Stone vat near the image "Tadoe Lakoe," Besoa (Fig. 13).—This vat was filled with mud and water in which sedge was growing. Note characteristic granite weathering, partially effacing the horizontal rings

In the nine years since I left Celebes I have occasionally inquired among my friends and colleagues regarding these stone objects. All supposed them to be well known but none could tell by whom they were made, when, or for what purpose. Recently I have searched through much of the literature on the archæology of the Oriental-Indo-Malay-Pacific region in an effort to find out, if possible, to what culture

they belong. I am now able to compare them with somewhat similar stone objects in various other localities.

The literature reveals the fact that some of the stone objects shown here were briefly described in 1908 by Mr. J. Th. E. Kiliaan,<sup>1</sup> an official of the Netherlands East Indian Government.

<sup>1</sup>Kiliaan, 1908. "Oudheden Aangetroffen in het Landschap Besoa (Midden-Celebes)," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-Land en Volkenkunde*, Vol. L, pp. 407-410.



SKETCH MAP OF CELEBES AND ADJACENT EAST INDIAN ISLANDS

(Indonesia, in part)

Fig. 7. The black rectangle on Central Celebes covers an area of approximately 1,000 square miles, including the mountainous districts of Bada, Besou, and Napoo, where the stone objects herein described are located

Later the same year another brief notice was published by the Reverend Dr. Albert C. Kruyt,<sup>1</sup> who better understood the inhabitants of the country and on that account was able to learn more from them and to correct certain statements made by the original discoverer of the stones as well as to add new facts. Doctor Kruyt also reports three fallen images from Besoa in the vicinity of the vats with the covers described above, and in addition, a mortar at Sigi in the Paloe valley. In a more recent publication he mentions another image at Gintoe in the district of Bada. This image, however, is buried up to its neck in the earth.

The only general work, so far as I know, that treats of East Indian archæology earlier than the Islamic, Buddhist and Hindoo cultures, is that of W. J. Perry, 1918, on *The Megalithic Culture of Indonesia*. In this book the attempt is made to show that the stone objects of Central Celebes are part of an early culture that was spread from Burma to Nias, Borneo, Celebes, Sumbawa, Flores, Sumba, Timor, Aru, "Seran" (=Ceram), and adjacent small islands as well as Formosa, by "stone-using immigrants" who imposed this culture upon the indigenous peoples of "Indonesia"; also that these stone-using immigrants, who were in search of gold and other wealth, introduced many other customs, among them terraced irrigation, metal-working and rice-growing. He states further: "Finally, it must be remembered that the existence of megalithic monuments, terraced irrigation, mining sites, the sun-cult, 'children of the sun,' and other elements of the culture introduced by

stone-using immigrants has been recorded in all inhabited regions of the earth." Notwithstanding this implication of relationship, the vats and images of Celebes contrast so strikingly in shape and other characters with stone objects in other parts of the Indo-Malayan region that I cannot believe that they belong to the same culture.

Mr. Perry remarks<sup>2</sup> that stone seats occur at Napoe and Besoa and Doctor Kruyt describes as stone seats what I have termed shelves in the inside of the vats. The one at Besoa is shown here both by photograph and diagram (Figs. 5A and 17) and though it may be said to resemble a seat it is, I believe, too small, and is placed where it could not be used as such. Thus if we consider these as shelves there are no known stone seats in Central Celebes to be compared with the stone seats of other places, such as those of Nias, figured by Modigliani,<sup>3</sup> which closely resemble large modern arm chairs.

Just beside the image at Boeleli are two or three small stones to which Kiliaan gave mention as the children of the woman who had, in the native legend, been turned to stone.<sup>4</sup> On this account apparently Perry refers<sup>5</sup> to this as a *cromlech*, but I am unable to see any resemblance to such a structure. These stones are seen in the photograph (Fig. 13a and b) to be simply pieces of rock, possibly used to brace the image, and they are beside it, not under it.

If we look at stone objects made by Buddhists in India, China, Japan, or the East Indies, we find a remarkable similarity among them. The same is true of objects made or introduced by other peoples whose influence and

<sup>1</sup>Kruyt, 1908. "Nadere gegevens betreffende de Oudheden Angetroffen in het Landschap Besoa (Midden-Celebes)." *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-Land en Volkenkunde*, Vol. L, pp. 549-551.

<sup>2</sup>Perry, W. J., 1918, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>*Un Viaggio A Nias*, pp. 311, 313.

<sup>4</sup>Kiliaan, 1908.

<sup>5</sup>Perry, W. J. 1918, p. 52.



migrations can be traced with certainty. It is then to be expected that if the stone culture of an earlier day, the remnants of which are to be seen in Central Celebes, was brought by stone-using immigrants who spread their images and structures so widely through Indonesia, all these images and structures would very closely resemble one another. Such, however, is not the case.



Fig. 8. Marquesan stone image. Resembling those of Celebes more closely than anything which is geographically nearer, yet differing in many features. After Linton

A comparison of these objects with all other stone objects of which I could find figures or descriptions has led me to the conclusion that those of Celebes are not closely related to anything of the kind thus far known from the East Indian region.

There has been found on the island of Nias, west of Sumatra, a small statue (about twenty inches high) with a round face and head as wide as the body, similar to the Celebes images in these particulars but differing in the possession of legs and a mouth, and also in the position of the hands and the shape of the eyes, ears, and other features.<sup>1</sup> Thus it is not very close to the images with which we are here concerned. No stone vats are recorded from Nias.

<sup>1</sup>Modigliani, *Un Viaggio A Nias*, p. 308, fig. 63.

Not finding any resemblance nearer, I turned toward the Pacific. In the Caroline Islands<sup>2</sup> prehistoric stone objects are found in the form of large discs three feet or more in diameter with a hole in the center, but no human images or vats are recorded. In the Marquesas many stone and wooden human images have been found<sup>3</sup> which resemble the Celebean statues in general shape, and in fact are closer than anything seen nearer Celebes. I therefore figure one of these Marquesan images (Fig. 8) so that the reader may make his own comparisons. They differ from the Celebean images in the following points: (1) no eyebrows are represented; (2) the nose is short and wide; (3) the mouth and lips are large; (4) the face is flat or convex, not concave; (5) arms are very distinct; (6) the hands rest on the chest, not on the abdomen; (7) the posterior limbs are always present. It is seen then that although the Marquesan images in general form are like those in Celebes, the differences are also striking.

Finally we come to the huge images of Easter Island. Due to the good descriptions and illustrations of these by Mrs. Routledge<sup>4</sup> a very satisfactory comparison can be made with the images of Celebes. The Easter Island images are several times larger than the Celebean and they differ from them in certain respects but in others they bear a marked degree of resemblance. It will be seen in a comparison of the Besoa figure "Tadoe Lakoe" (Fig. 13a and b) with the Easter Island image (Fig. 9) here reproduced, that they differ in fewer characters than do the other images available for comparison.

<sup>2</sup>Christian, F. W., 1899, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 236.  
<sup>3</sup>Linton, Ralph, 1925, "Archæology of the Marquesas Islands," *Bishop Mus. Bull.* 23.  
<sup>4</sup>Routledge, Mrs. Scoresby, 1919, *The Mystery of Easter Island*.

It seems very probable that ancient sculptors would model their figures after their own people, therefore the features represented in the examples of their art should bear a resemblance

guished type, brachycephalic, hypsi-  
cephalic and leptorrhine. This third  
type with short high heads and slender  
noses has been termed a Malayan type.  
Its characters are to be seen in the



Fig. 9. One of the great stone figures of Easter Island.—Note the arms and hands in low relief, with the hands on the abdomen as in the Celebean images. After Routledge

to their makers. Turning with this in mind, to the literature on the physical features of the peoples of Polynesia<sup>1</sup> I find three types are recognized: the first or Polynesian is dolichocephalic, hypsi-cephalic and leptorrhine; the second or Indonesian, brachycephalic, hypsi-cephalic, platyrrhine Negrito in type; the third and less easily distin-

images of both Celebes and Easter Island, although those of the latter have the large long nose, large chin and heavy brow of the Polynesian. All the points of difference between the Marquesan and Celebean images are here points of resemblance. Another interesting point is afforded by the hooklike markings on the breast of one of the Napoe statues of Celebes (Fig. 1) in comparison with designs for tat-

<sup>1</sup>Sullivan, Louis R., 1923, "Marquesan Somatology with Comparative Notes on Samoa and Tonga," *Mem. Bishop Mus.*, IX, No. 2, p. 232.

tooting formerly used by the natives of Easter Island (Fig. 10).

No vats or anything resembling them are recorded from the Marquesas, but of Easter Island the following state-



Fig. 10. Tattoo designs used by Easter Islanders within the memory of the oldest natives. After Routledge.

The hooks on the breast strikingly resemble those on the Celebean image shown in Fig. 1

ment is made: "There is a roughly constructed ahu [burial place] on the outside of Rano Raraku at the corner nearest to the sea, of which more will be said hereafter, and a quarried block of rock on the very top of the westerly peak was also said to be used for the exposure of the dead. Close to this

block there are some very curious circular pits cut in the rock; one examined was 5 feet 6 inches in depth and 3 feet 6 inches in diameter. It is possible they were used as vaults, but, if so, the shape is quite different from those of the ahu."<sup>1</sup> Thus we see that Easter Island also has its circular vatlike pits near the images.

While considering the points of resemblance between Celebes and Easter Island, it may be mentioned that in looking over a glossary<sup>2</sup> of some fifty words, several are the same as words used by the people of Central Celebes, as Rano for lake, Manu for bird, Atua for God, Ika for fish, etc.; and there are others that look as if they might sound like Celebean words if due allowance were made for differences of spelling.

My conclusion is that the similarities in physical features must be largely discounted, due to the great mingling of peoples throughout the whole region. The positive evidence, such as the lack of legs, the placing of the hands, the hooks on the breast (compared with tattoo patterns), the association of circular vats and images, and similarities at the present time in the languages of the two places, may prove to be indicative of rather close cultural relationship. Much further archæological exploration of the whole region, however, is necessary before the questions raised by the stone objects of Celebes can be fully answered.

<sup>1</sup>Routledge, 1919, *The Mystery of Easter Island*, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>Routledge, p. 123.



## The Stone Images and Vats of Central Celebes



THE STONE MAN AT NAPOE

Fig. 11. An image stands among ferns in second-growth jungle not far from the village of Watoe Taoc (= Stone Man) in the Napoe district now inhabited by a happy peaceful Toradja people, who but a comparatively few years ago were warlike head-hunters. Is this image evidence of the artistic skill of their ancestors or of another race?





Fig. 12. Partly buried under earth and coarse grass was the granite cover for a huge vat and across this cover were carved three large monkeys and one small one



Fig. 13. Front and side views of the image at Boeleli Besoa, known to the inhabitants as "Tadoe Lakoe"





Fig. 14. A great vat in Besoa filled with mud and water on which sedge is growing. The cover is to be seen just as it was shoved off



Fig. 15. The same vat as shown above, from another angle affording a better view of the cover and the arrangement of monkey figures on it





Fig. 16. The largest of the Besoa vats, about seven feet high and nearly ten in diameter, is the only one ornamented with faces



Fig. 17. One of the most interesting vats was cracked, of medium size, and provided with a shelf inside; like the others it was hewn from a single block of granite