CHILD TRAINING IN BENIM,

A VILLAGE IN ASHANTI.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Description of Benim, a Village in Ashanti

Benim is a small village of about 80 houses covering an area of about 24,000 sq. yards in the North of Ashanti, about 42 miles from Kumasi.

The village is a planned village so that all the houses are mainly built of brick with the exception of two which are built with blocks. Most of the houses are roofed with iron sheets, others with shingles and the rest are mixture of both shingles on one half and iron sheets on the other. They are built in rows with lanes and streets between them. An open space of about 80 yards wide is left around the whole village to keep it free from snakes and harmful insects.

There is a football park at the centre of the village where the people, especially the young boys in the village play football and other games.

Domestic pets such as sheep, goats, dogs, fowls and cats roam about freely in the streets. Because of this all the near by gardens and farms are fenced round with sticks and bamboos.

There are two rivers in the village which supply the inhabitants with water. One of them is called Benim, after which the village is named. The second one is known
as Anyinasu; this one has a reservoir and pipes which make the water supply there healthier than the other.

There is no market in the village and the people sell their food-stuffs etc in front of their houses or just carry them about on their heads.

The total population is about 1000 people made up roughly of 500 children under sixteen; 400 between sixteen and fifty, and about 100 aged. The proportion of men to women is about 1:2.

The people are mainly Ashantis with a few strangers from the Colony who work as teachers, and some people from the Northern Territories who work as farm labourers.

The main occupation of the people is farming. They grow crops such as plantain, cocoyam, pepper, garden-eggs, groundnuts, kola and cocoa which are their main sources of income. Nearly every person in the village produces his or her own food and the surplus are sold at Mampong and to the few strangers in the village. These farmers have no fixed hours of work and spend almost the whole day in the bush.

One may leave home very early in the morning and come back when it is almost dark.

This habit of coming home very late, I noticed, was mostly with those women without husbands and who have no special responsibilities.

The mothers usually carry their young babies on their backs to the farms.
with the older children walking in front of them. The little boys and girls of two to four years are left behind with an elder sister or grandmother and sometimes unattended. In some cases where farm is not very far away, the babies are left very often in the care of the older children or sometimes in the care of the old women in the family, in which case the mothers come home as early as possible.

There are a small number of people who in addition to farming have other independent occupations; they are about two carpenters, three shopkeepers (small ones) one seamstress, two tailors and about four masons. These workers choose a day or two during the week on which they go to their farms.

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Another thing I noticed and found about the village was that, with the
exception of the few strangers, nearly no husband
is living in the same house with the wife, and
the children are living with mothers among their
kinspeople. The wives have to carry both
their husbands' food and bath water to their
houses. In the evening, you will see the wives
proudly carrying their husbands' meals on their
heads, nicely covered with the most beautiful
towels they can afford.

There are three Christian Churches in the
village namely, the Presbyterian, Methodist and
the Roman Catholic Churches. There is one United
School, from Primary I to Middle Form III run
by the three Missions.

There is a lorry road six miles long linking
Benin with Mampong, the nearest big town,
head of Local Government, seat of Omanhene
(paramount chief) and the Government. Agent
with a Post Office and Police Station.

There are two other roads leading from Benin
to the rural areas which produce cocoa, cola
and food-stuffs in large quantities. The
first which is three miles long goes to Dome;
a village on the West and the second six
miles long goes to Kofiase, by far the
largest food-stuff market in the area.

The following is a study of
child training in this village. It begins
with pregnancy and continues after birth
until the child becomes old enough to
enter into full adult life.
The Geographical Position of Benin.

Fig 2.

Key

- Towns
- Villages
- Roads
- Railways

Scale: 1 inch = 12 miles.
The Gold Coast showing the position of Benim in Ashanti.

Scale = 1:4,000,000.

Legend:
- Green: Ashanti Boundary
- Red: Main Motor Roads
- Purple: Railways
- Blue: Towns
- Black: Villages
CHAPTER TWO.

Attitudes Towards Having Children.

Since Benim is a typical Akan Village, the attitude of the people of Benim on childbearing is fundamentally the same as that of other Akan people.

Akan society is based on matrilineal descent. Every one is born into his or her mother's lineage and inherits property through the mother. Because of this, women play a very important part in Akan society. It is through them that the future of a family can be perpetuated. It is considered very unfortunate to give birth to boys only because without a daughter the mother's line comes to an end, the worst that can befall any Akan family. It will be seen from this that child-bearing is a very important aspect of marriage if not the sole aim. Every marriage without children is considered a failure and barrenness in women or sterility in men may be sufficient and legitimate cause for divorce. The Twi name for a barren is "obonini" (literally male-female) and the whole society look down upon such a person.

Barrenness is considered unnatural and various causes are attributed to it. In certain cases it is attributed to the devilish action of witches from the woman's family who are supposed to possess a supernatural power by which they can upturn a woman's wombl or remove her ova and thus make
her barren. People who are often suspected of such evil practices are old women and in polygamous marriage, the other wives of the barren woman's husband.

A barren woman in Benin told me that a medicine man had told her that she was going to have many children, but an old woman in her family who was a witch had taken all her ova and burned them under a big stone in the bush. Such cases are considered hopeless cases. Others are attributed to disease or weakness in the husband or immaturity; and attempts are made by the medicine man to provide a cure.

The lot of an unproductive husband in this society is equally hard. He may lose his wife through divorce and may not be able to get another. He is an object for ridicule and his opinions on social matters may be frowned at.

In the past, a man who had married for over a year without a child could be forced through a very humiliating ceremony known as 'krewa'.

The victim is stripped naked, shaved bald and besmeared with the blood of slaughtered sheep mixed with powdered charcoal. A rope is tied around his waist by which he is dragged through the streets followed by crowds of people, who shout, "Krewa, we demand your child!"
After this ceremony the man is allowed to go on marrying his wife for a year after which the wife may be taken from him if no child is born.

The maximum number of children preferred by most people is ten (made up, if possible, of equal number boys and girls.) If a woman produces more than three boys in succession without any daughter, both the husband and the wife may consult a fetish priest about it in order to get a girl. It is believed that a fetish priest can by some mysterious means turn an unborn boy into a girl, before she is born. The great respect shown to women who have brought forth ten children is equalled only by that shown to mothers of twins. In the past both were exempt from taxation and any form of communal labour.

Twins and the tenth children are sacred persons. At their birth a special ceremony is performed at which sheep are slaughtered and the blood used in making a fetish for them. They are given different treatment in the house; they have special talismans which I shall talk about when I come to talk about birth.

Because of great emphasis laid on child-bearing and the security provided by the matrilineal inheritance, no difference is made between children born outside marriage or inside it. Both are provided for by the uncles (mother's brothers).

The unit of Akan society is the family
which includes in the cases of one person, one's mother, mother's sisters, mother's brothers, mother's mother, etc. Everybody in this vast circle is supposed to owe a duty towards the children in the family. There is no question of man, wife, and children. So that within the range of the family traced through the mother (in which their fathers of the children do not count) there is room for all children on equal footing.

Pregnancy.

Fig. 2.
A pregnant woman preparing her kola for sale.
CHAPTER THREE

Pregnancy and its Implications.

The physiological aspect of conception as understood and believed by the Ashanti is that, every conception is caused by the mingling of the woman's blood (bogyaa or mogya) with the spiritual elements of the male. Thus every Ashanti is supposed to have two distinct elements in him. These are 'mogya (blood) transmitted by the mother and the spirit of the father.

Though ntoro is not quite as important as 'bogyaa' if we are thinking in terms of descent and inheritance, it is very important in the life of a child. It is believed that a child cannot live and succeed in life if his father's 'sunsum' (spirit) is alienated from him. There should be a complete harmony between the spirit in a child and that of his father in order to keep him healthy.

It is very important for a married woman to respect all her husband's ntoro taboos as her own, because as it is believed, it is the husband's ntoro that is instrumental in making and building up the health of the children that may come from the union. If the woman fails to do this, the husband's spirit hinders conception and makes child-bearing unduly difficult. In other words, a wife must submit herself to the husband and should agree with him in all their undertakings in order.
to make conception possible,

Typical Feelings of Pregnant Women.

A pregnant woman is regarded as a sick person or an old woman (Akerewa), and she is supposed to have some typical feelings which she does not have in the normal life.

I had an interview at Benin with a pregnant woman who has already had four children, and many other women and they told me that the typical feelings of pregnancy are usually morning sickness and frequent vomiting especially at the beginning of pregnancy. Other feelings are quick temper, that is pregnant woman is often angry about very trivial things. She also develops queer taste. She may also have a strong dislike for a special kind of food or meat which she liked before she became pregnant.

One woman told me that, during her pregnancy she disliked beef and that even the very flavour of it made her sick. The woman further explained to me that this feeling changes during the different pregnancies. She said though cocoyam fufu was her favourite, she tended to dislike it during her first pregnancy.

Many other experienced women told me similar things, for example, one woman said that, what she liked most during her previous pregnancy was to eat
pieces of bricks or swish which she used to break from walls. She said, "Na eye me huarn dodo." (I liked the scent very much.) This strong dislike for some kinds of food during pregnancy was explained by all the women I approached except one in the same way; they said that when the pregnant woman disliked a special kind of food meant that, that particular food would be the unborn baby's favourite and it is the baby who prevents the mother from eating it so that it will not get finished before it is born.

The other woman also explained that during pregnancy the mother's senses of taste and smell get stronger so she could smell all things which she could not under normal circumstances. The acute sense of smell was therefore partly responsible for the change in the food habits of pregnant women. The latter explanation, I am inclined to think, is more reasonable and likely to be true.

A pregnant woman is not restricted in her diet. She can eat whatever she likes, provided it is not very sweet such as sugar cane, honey, mangoes etc are strongly prohibited; the reason for this is that, these fruits melt the blood which in the case of a pregnant woman may cause miscarriage. Another thing a pregnant woman in Benin is advised not to eat is fresh
snails because it is believed that the baby will have a watery mouth when it is born, because of the slippery substance on fresh snails.

Normal life is continued during pregnancy, and marital intercourse continues according to inclination of the couple, though according to what I gathered in conversation from people, the eighth month was the month to discontinue it.

As stated already, a pregnant woman in Benim is considered a sick person and is described as, "ogyina oruo ne nkwa nkwan’ata." (one who stands between life and death.) She is thought to be particularly subject to outside evil influences against which she must be protected and so there are special taboos and prescriptions for the mother to insure the well-being of the mother and the unborn child. In the first place, she should be as scarce as possible, keep within the bounds of her own compound and not travel to different places unnecessarily, she should not take part in public ceremonies such as Adae ceremony, funeral ceremonies, Adowa dances etc. She should not put on new clothes etc till after birth and should not uncover her belly in the presence of unknown people who might harm the child.

To protect her and the unborn child against witchcraft which is particularly
susceptible at this stage, she is usually taken to a medicine man who gives her charms against witchcraft and evil influences. These preventive measures generally consist in making small cuts on the forehead, at the back of the waist and rubbing in medicine. Sometimes the woman wears amulets as a protection.

The pregnant woman on the other hand must try as much as she can to avoid miscarriage by hard labour. She should not commit adultery. She must observe her husband's taboos and should not abuse the 'abosom' (gods). She should not think evil of others especially a co-wife. The husband should not quarrel with her. The sight of much blood can also cause miscarriage and a pregnant woman should avoid. She is advised not to look upon ugly people or animals like monkeys, lest she give birth to a child who may look like that.

A pregnant woman should do hard work in order to strengthen the unborn baby and to make the labour easier. She is expected to do such work and stretching exercises as pounding of fufu, cutting of firewood etc.

One of the pregnant women told me, "Though I sometimes feel lazy, tired and sleepy, I must go on with my usual work, if not people will say that I am lazy."

A lazy pregnant woman is condemned by everybody in the society.
In the course of my investigation on pregnancy, I asked the women how they could see and detect pregnancy. I was told that a pregnant woman is identified by physical changes such as stoppage of menstruation, morning sickness and the enlargement of the breasts. The latter was explained, that during pregnancy much of the blood circulates into the breasts and this makes them become large.

Pregnant women in this village have a peculiar way of counting the months of pregnancy, by making a mark on a wall any time they see a new moon or by counting with pebbles. A pebble is put aside for every moon seen. When they have got eight nuts or pebbles then they know their time of labour is approaching.
CHAPTER FOUR

BIRTH

One custom which is seriously observed in Benim is that a woman who is expecting a child must go and live with her mother where the expected baby should be born. In cases where the parents are staying in a different town or village, the expectant mother usually goes home for birth. This custom is explained, is to ensure that the woman is under the care of her own close maternal relatives, in particular her mother at this time. It is also believed that by being born at home a child enters directly into the family whose lineage is traced through the mother, grandmother etc. Another reason is that if any unusual thing happens during the birth, it will be kept secret for example: giving birth to a creature which is not human, a freak or to a child with unusual number of fingers or toes. These are considered disgraceful and should be kept as secret as possible.

An old woman who is said to be the best and most experienced midwife in the village who gave me most of the information in this chapter told me that, there are specially lucky times in which births take place; these are, midnight, at dawn and early in the morning. She said that any birth which comes on at any time other than those as stated above is considered unlucky and very often results the death of
Fig. 4

An old woman who is said to be the most experienced midwife who gave me most of the information about birth.
the mother, child, or both. ✗

The usual length of time for pregnancy is nine months. (see appendix I).

Every normal child should proceed with the head first. The midwife told me that there are some children who bring out their buttocks first and in such cases the children very often die. The worst case is the child who brings out the arm or the leg first. She said, in such a case, there is no doubt about the death of both the mother and the child.

The old woman told me that when the child is coming into the world, God asks it, "What are you going to do in the world?" And then if the child is a normal one, it will answer, "I am going to pray." Puts together its hands on its chest in the position of prayer, and my old woman explained, "That is why the baby in cases of normal birth comes out in such position, with the head first." She demonstrated this to me.

When a pregnant woman sees that the time of labour is getting near she makes some preparations to meet the confinement; that is, things are removed from a room and the room cleaned. Old rags are washed and kept aside to be used for sanitary purposes during the confinement. In the olden days people used 'baha' (dried plantain fibre) for the sanitary purposes.

Before the birth takes place, the
pregnant woman feels uneasy and much pain in the lower part of the abdomen. This kind of pain differs from one person to another. Some women told me they feel pain in their waists, others feel it in their thighs.

Before the baby is born, the sac in which it lies in the womb breaks and some fluid comes out. This stage is known as "the breaking of waters," and this my old lady explained to me as follows:

"Before a baby comes out, it has to turn itself bringing the head clean, and it is due to this turning which gives the pains to the mother. As the child turns itself it pushes out a small bag of water out with its leg and that is the water we see before birth."

When a woman experiences this fluid coming out, she reports it and a midwife is called in with two or three female relatives. The expectant woman sits on mags which are strewn upon the floor, and she is supported by her mother or the midwife. The other two women also help by holding the limbs and encourage her to press hard to help the child to come out. The reason for holding the arms is that they say that if the woman out of pain presses on holds any part of the body she may hurt the unborn baby. If the woman holds or grasps her thigh, it will cause deformity on the child's thigh and it is the same with any part of the body.
The only part she is allowed to touch before the baby is born is her hair.

In cases of excessive pains and very hard labour, unfaithfulness on the part of the mother is suspected. Confession is therefore expected to lessen the pains and to bring forth the child.

In this case the husband or the father who at this stage is very unhappy and alarmed is called in.

The father then with left hand pats the abdomen of the wife and talks like this to the unborn baby, "If you are really my own child, come out at once"!

After these words of the father if the child fails to come the mother then is forced to confess if she has been to any other man apart from her husband during or before her period of pregnancy. It is believed that after the confession the baby always comes out and I think this is really due to psychological reasons. The mother after confession has no guilty conscience and can therefore act freely.

In many cases the child comes out with its placenta, that is the placenta comes out immediately the child is born. In some cases the placenta fails to come after the child in which case, the navel cord is cut to separate the child from the mother; then the remaining cord which is attached to the placenta inside the
Mother is wound round a piece of stick. This is expected to draw out the placenta. Medicines are used to help this placenta to come out. In some cases application of some medicine can help; others have to be taken to the clinic at Mampung or to the hospital in Kumasi. When the midwife sees that her medicine cannot succeed.

When everything is alright, and the child is born, the midwife cuts the cord at once with about four inches left to the body of the child. This is done to separate the child from the placenta. The midwife then quickly pours a mouthful of water over the child’s face, and pushes her forefinger into the child’s mouth to make the baby cry if it had not already been crying. If the baby still fails to cry after all these, then it means the baby is dead and it is thrown together with its placenta into a pit and buried.

If the baby proves to be alive, the midwife then quickly examines all parts of its body. The toes and fingers are counted. In some families the child is thrown away. If they see that it has got more than five fingers or toes on each limb, other people nowadays just cut off the extra fingers or toes and keep the baby. Another important part examined on the child’s body is the anus.
My old lady told me that some of the
children are born with closed anus, in
such a case the baby is thrown away.
If there is any deformity the child is
considered abnormal and is often thrown
away.

When the child is normal, it is
then given its first bath. The grandmother
or aunt of the child sits on a low
chair, stretches her legs and puts the
child on her lap, with the head towards
her toes. The head is first washed and
wiped. The child is then turned with the
head up then the body is washed down to
the feet. Cold water and old sponge is
used for this first bath. During the bath
the woman rubs all the joints of the
child with a towel with the intention of
strengthening them. In case of premature
babies hot water is used. After the bath
vaseline or shea butter is applied on the
baby to free it from the sticky
substance which is on its body when
it is born.

The baby is bathed twice every day
for the first year. For the first week
the hair is also washed twice a day; afte
that it is done only in the mornings.

On the first and sometimes on
the second day, the baby is not given
any breast milk but just ordinary
water with the middle finger.

The mother is left to rest
during the time that the baby is being
attended to. When the infant is alright, the mother is next attended. She is cleaned and if still bleeding is given some medicine prepared from a kind of herb called 'egoro.' It is rubbed between the two palms of the midwife and then mixed with chalk and cold water. When this is taken, it stops the bleeding.

Special attention is paid to the mother who is served by her relatives and friends during the first week. All are at her service. Women bring with them gifts of foodstuffs, firewood, to feed the mother during her confinement. Some of them either come themselves or send their daughters to help to prepare the food and fetch water and do other domestic tasks which the mother cannot now do.

Anybody who may hear of the delivery may come to congratulate the mother and say to the newly born child, "Aba a tena as" (if you have come then stay with us.) The infant is given a drop of gin or rum to clear the throat by means of dropping a finger into the spirit and touching the back of the throat with it.

The mother is served three times daily with fufu and a special kind of soup called 'abeduro' (palm-medicine). The soup is prepared from a few palmnuts with some herbs, pepper and different kinds of good meat and fish. This 'abeduro' (palm-medicine) is continued till the baby is two or three weeks old.
and it is said to make the mother look fresh and strong and to give her good and much breast milk.

After birth, the mother has to go under a hot water treatment. She has to sit on very hot water and some very hot medicine like ginger, pepper, ‘wisa’ and some hot leaves are ground together and applied to the private part. This will continue for about two to three weeks after birth. This treatment is given to heal the wounds in the womb and the private parts after birth.

All the women I approached concerning this chapter, told me that this hot treatment is the most difficult stage in child-bearing and they always remember this nasty feelings.

The child, until the eighth day is given no name, but just called after the day on which it was born; and at this time not considered as a member of the family but as a visiting guest. Both the mother and the child remain indoors during the first eight days.

If the baby dies before the eighth day, the little body is treated cruelly. The parents are to show only signs of joy. All these is done to disgrace the child so that it may not come back to them again (see appendix II).

To avoid this death and the influence of the evil spirits some protective measures are taken such as making small cuts in the forehead and on all the joints of the infant and rubbing in medicine afterwards.
CHAPTER FIVE

Naming Ceremony

For the first eight days of a child's life, it is regarded as a temporary being, not fully human, not fully spiritual. If it is dead before the eighth day it would be considered as the exit of a visitor and there will be no weeping.

So the eighth day of a child's life is an important occasion. On that day the child is admitted as a full member of the family. He assumes a personality and is given a name. From that day he is no more considered as a stranger. This day is marked with various important celebrations. It is the first time the baby is given water with a metal spoon usually made of silver, or of gold in the case of babies in royal families; it is the first time the baby is carried on the mother's back, set on the ground or taken out into mild sunlight and dressed properly. The day is celebrated by the family, neighbours and friends.

Every Akan baby has at least two names. The first name is taken from the day on which the child is born. That is called (kava din) spiritual, or the name of the soul and is not given or imposed on the baby.

The soul of a child is believed to exist long before it is born. It may be the soul of an old man or
relative who has visited this world several times through birth and gone back through death. So that every soul is supposed to have its own name long before it enters the mother's womb. This first name which is taken from the days of the week is therefore not given to a child. It is born with it and the child is supposed to select the soul's day as the day on which it has to be born. These are the seven days of the week with their corresponding soul's names for boys and girls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Week</th>
<th>Name of boy</th>
<th>Name of Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday (Dwoada)</td>
<td>Kwadwo</td>
<td>Adwoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday (Benada)</td>
<td>Kweabena</td>
<td>Akena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday (Wahuda)</td>
<td>Kwakweu</td>
<td>Akwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday (Yawoada)</td>
<td>Yawu</td>
<td>Yaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday (Fiaala)</td>
<td>Kofi</td>
<td>Afua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday (Memeneda)</td>
<td>Kwame</td>
<td>Amna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday (Kwasiada)</td>
<td>Kwasi</td>
<td>Akosua</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The naming ceremony which I am going to describe is concerned only with the second name which the father has to add to the soul's name.

Early in the morning of the eighth day, the maternal grandmother of the infant will give verbal invitations to their neighbours and friends telling them that "the new comer" is going to be named on that day.

The father chooses the name of the baby from the names of any person he likes, either from his family such as mother, aunt, sister, father, uncle etc or from friends. He names the child after the person he chooses.
The person after whom the child is named becomes its god-mother or god-father. If a girl it will be named after a female friend or relative and if male after a male. Sometimes the father can name the child after himself.

When the father has decided on the name of the child, he sends very often his own sister or any female member of his family with gifts to the mother and child and instructs them to name the infant after the person he has chosen. The gifts generally include the following: funumatama (umbilical cloth, 2 yards) a towel, sponge, tin of powder, vaseline, or pomade, towel, bucket, pillow, very often with velvet cover; mat, cup with saucer, teaspoon (silver), four to ten different dresses for the child. The mother's gifts are often two to five different cloths in addition to meat and fish. Many fathers nowadays just bring any amount of money from £1 (seven pounds) onwards to the mother and for both from £20 (twenty pounds) onwards so that the mother has to decide what to buy for herself and her baby. Some men find this cheaper than buying all the things themselves.

Apart from these presents from the father, the child's paternal aunts, and grandparents too have to send an amount of money ranging from seven shillings onwards to the child.

In cases of illegitimate children
whose fathers are not known or unwanted, the mother's brother or uncle has to perform all these duties of the father.

This is how the baby is prepared for this occasion. It is bathed and rubbed with shea butter. It is then laid on its new mat and pillow and placed in the morning sun. The sun bath is intended to clear away the cold and chilly air of the ghost world where the child is supposed to come from. Bands of precious beads e.g. 'gyanie' or 'bota', are placed round the waist, knees and wrists of the child. Some charms or amulets are also put around some of these parts to protect it against evil influences and witchcraft.

The mother too is smeared over her shoulders, breasts and arms with white clay. She then goes up to the infant, kneels before it, and calls the child's birth clay name as thus, "Akua, mede woase aso! Se wounfa me akan." (Akua, I thank you for not taking me away)

Relatives, friends and neighbours bring presents and gifts usually in the form of money to the mother and child, congratulate her and thank the child, in the same way as the mother did, for not taking or killing the mother and repeats the words again this time: "Aba a, tra ase o!" (If you have come stay) which means the child should not die.

On one of these occasions I saw that the baby was covered with a basket.
I was surprised and asked why; I was explained that it was because the child was thin, and by being covered with a basket on that special occasion it would grow fatter. After sometime, the mother sprinkles a mouthful of water over the infant and afterwards removes it from the sun.

In the evening, the mother with other relatives and friends go to the husband to thank him for his gifts.

The parents then decide and appoint a day, on which the child shall be presented to its god-father. The father then sends a message to him that he has chosen him to be the god-father of their child and gives the day on which the child shall be shown to him.

On the appointed day, the parents together with a few friends take the child to the god-father who also at this time has gathered some friends or relatives to help him to accept this child which is an honour to him. The mother places the baby on the god-father’s knees as she speaks these words, “We present to you, your grand-child, Kofi Amaniampong.” (the name of the god-father.)

And a pot of palm-wine or a bottle of rum is placed on a table by the father as soon as the last words are spoken. The god-father then embraces the infant thrice, spits into its mouth and says these words, “Spirits of my ancestors and god Bosummun, (his ntoro’s gods) my son, (or whatever relationship between him and the father of the child)
A--- has got a child and has brought him to me and is called after myself; grant that he may grow up and continue to meet me here, and let him give me something to eat.” The spittle is supposed to give the child some of the god-father’s spirit. Some of the wine is poured on to the ground for the spirits which might be witnessing the ceremony and the rest is drunk by all the people present.

Now the god-father of the child asks his friends and relatives to help him in thanking the parents of the child, and all who accompanied them. He then gives any kind of gift to the child. The gift can be a gold ring, a piece of gold, some money, a domestic animal such as a hen, or a sheep or anything at all he can afford.

The parents and their company in turn thank the new ‘grandfather’ and then go away to their homes.

The wife and her relatives appoint a day on which they will go to the husband to thank him. They get ready some things such as a sheep or fowl and some bottles of beer, gin or rum with which to thank the husband. The things are chosen according to the amount of money or the quantity of gifts the husband brought to the wife and the child.

On that day the wife dresses her baby and herself very beautifully and with her friends and relatives all female go to the husband and thank him with these things.
Most of the husbands as I was told, return these gifts secretly to their wives after they are shown to the public.

From the husband's house, the wife and the friends go round the town from house to house thanking everybody they meet.

"Baggina Ba"

I have given an account of the rites and ceremonies performed in naming any ordinary child. There are a few other birth and naming ceremonies which are a little different from the ordinary ones and which are performed in special cases.

An interesting custom is performed when previous issues of a couple have all died. Such losses are looked upon as caused by some spiritual influences. Parents therefore try to cleanse these spirits by resorting to various devices. One of these is to give the child queer and bad names such as "Dinks" (slave) "Mosi" (a person from the Northern Territories for whom the Ashantis have no respect) "Summina" (rubbish pit) etc. This idea may be carried further by giving the infant some markings at the corners of the mouth and other parts of the face.

Again the child may be dedicated to a particular "obosom" (god) who is expected to protect him. The hair of such a child is never combed. The strands of the hair
Fig. 5

A week old Twins.
are fastened with many kinds of charms in the form of pennies, half-pennies, farthings, cowries and amulets. All such children are known as "Baguina-Ba". (come and stay children.)

They are treated as I have described above to make those spirits think that the children are not wanted here so that they too will not want them as they have spoilt them by giving them bad names and by making some nasty markings on their faces.

No special ceremonies are held for these babies; and the parents pretend that they are unwanted children. It is believed that spirits would only take away children who are loved by the parents but would not bother those who are mutilated and neglected by their parents.

"Abammo":

Another important ceremony is held in cases of the births of twins and tenth children.

Twins are considered sacred persons, and there is a special ceremony performed at their birth. When twins are born some of their hair is cut off and put in a special pot called "abammo" pot; two kinds of precious beads are put into this pot.

When the twins are a week old, they go through the same naming ceremony as I have described in connexion with that of the ordinary child. With this
addition that in this case a sheep is slaughtered and some of the blood added to the contents of the pot which now become the fetish for the twins.

On every Adae Ceremony a national ceremony which is observed by the chief of every town after every forty days, this abammo too is worshipped on a small scale. This is how it is done. Mashed yam together with boiled eggs are prepared for their abammo as a sacrifice and when the children are old enough they eat the rest. Some of the parents who can afford it offer fowls as sacrifice on these days.

Twins are treated with special care in the house and each in the same way as the other. They have special taboos to observe.

On these special days of Adae, the children (until a sacrifice has been made to their abammo) have no right to eat. Annual ceremonial occasions are also held in respect of these abammo children known as "Abammo Afahye" (abammo ceremony). It is held at harvest time for new yams. Until this ceremony is held, no abammo child is allowed to eat yams in the year. This taboo is extended to parents and even relatives who live in the same house with the twins. They are also not allowed to bring yams into the house before this ceremony takes place. In the olden days, the whole members
of the village were involved in this taboo. Nobody was allowed to bring yams from
the farm into the village without covering or hiding them. After the abammo
ceremony every one could carry yams to the
town and eat them.

Every tenth child is also considered
sacred and the same things are done
for him and he has to observe all the
taboo and customs as described above.

One thing I noticed during my
research is that this abammo custom is
taken very seriously; even the Christian
parents of twins and tenth children
observe it somehow openly or secretly.

Twins in Ashanti if both are girls
are regarded from birth as the chief's
future wives who cannot marry anyone
else unless the chief fails to do his
duty towards them or neglects them.

If they are both boys, they serve in the
chief's court. Their birth must be reported
to the chief at once.

On state occasions as well as on
abammo ceremonies, twins are dressed
in white.

Again when a mother of twins dies,
the twins are dressed in white, with
white clay smeared on their arms and
chest with a few on their faces. A
fowl is killed to prepare a nice dish
for them.

I tried to find out the reasons
why they do all these but all they could
tell me was that the children would die if they did not do that.

Mothers of twins and of tenth children are highly esteemed in Ashanti and have some privileges in the community such as exemption from taxation and from any kind of communal labour.
Fig. 6

Mothers forget that they have something else to do besides feeding their babies.

Fig. 7

A young father with his first child.
(Men are also fond of babies.)
CHAPTER SIX

Care of the Infants.

Mothers in Benin have great delight in feeding their children. A young mother told me that she was so happy when she fed her baby that she wished she had nothing to do besides baby-feeding.

During the early months, the child is entirely dependent on the mother’s breast milk for the sat make the milks hunger. It is often carried in the thermos or back of its mother or a female relative, and at times by the father.

In this village everyone is fond of babies and interested in the welfare of one another’s baby. Men are also fond of babies and sometimes, especially towards the end of the day, you will see a father proudly carrying his young baby about playing delightfully with it. Mothers in this village do not take pains in training their babies to sleep or rest in bed. They are often seen on the mother’s back even when the babies are asleep.

Very often a woman will be seen going to the river side to fetch water, or pounding fufu or harder still working on the farm or in the garden with the baby sleeping at the back.

New born babies are very weak and tender and so mothers in this village, treat their new babies with the tenderest care.

In the case of a newly married woman who has not had any experience of child-bearing...
Fig. 6

A mother feeding her baby of a few months old.
the child's grandmother does most of the
care of the baby to teach the young mother
how to handle the delicate child. The
young mother is taught the correct way
of holding the baby during feeding.

In the first few months, the baby
is put on the mother's laps with the
head resting on the left arm during feeding.
The mother serves the baby with the breasts.
She puts one into the baby's mouth to be
suckled and with the other hand presses
the breasts to make the milk flow. The
child is put to the other breast after some
time. The times of feeding the child is
not at all regulated. It is fed as soon as
it cries or makes an attempt to cry, and
no limited length of time is given for the
feeding. The child can just suckle until
it refuses to do so. And at times efforts
are made to encourage the baby to take
more.

Though breast is often used as a
comforter when the baby cries; at times
the breast does not succeed. Therefore,
mothers in addition to their breasts as
comforters for their babies have other means
and ways such as clapping of hands
and singing to the child when it is
annoyed and refuses to suck the breast.
Mothers have different songs with which
they play with their babies or sing to
them when they are annoyed.
I have given the words of some of these
common songs in Vernacular in the appendix.
Fig. 9

A grandmother bathing the baby to teach the young mother how to hold the delicate child.

Fig. 10

Mother wiping the baby after bath.
Another means of entertainment for babies is the toy. The commonest toy seen with children in the village is a small gourd containing pebbles which the children rattle and enjoy the noise it makes.

The young mother is taught how to hold and treat the infant during its bath. The baby is held on the mother's laps as I have described in the baby's first bath. During the bath, the mother tries to shape the baby's head by dipping a towel into hot water and pressing it against the child's fore-head and the back of the head. This is done to make the head broad as Ashanti regard broad heads as beautiful.

The baby is bathed twice everyday for the first year of its life. But the hair is washed once a day after the first week of the birth of the baby. Special attention is given to the folds and the private parts during the bath. The washing always begins from the head or neck right down to the toes. No mother in this village will ever start cleaning her baby from the feet upwards. On asking the reasons for this, I was told that when you start cleaning a baby or even an older child from the feet upwards it means spreading disease over its body. By washing from the head downwards you wash away all the diseases.

When the baby is five to six months old, other forms of food are given to it in addition to the mother's breast milk, such
Fig. 11
Bathing the child of two years old.

Fig. 12
This is the time the mother leaves her baby in the care of an older daughter without fear, when she is busy in the kitchen.
as light porridge and sometimes soup. The mother uses her middle finger instead of a spoon in feeding the baby, though in some rich homes they use teaspoons. The child will be half sitting and half lying on the mother’s laps during feeding at this stage.

Solid food is given to the child in addition to the breast milk and porridge when it starts teething. The solid food given in this case is the same as that eaten by the adults such as cocoyam, plantain, yam, cassava, meat, fish bone etc. Sometimes the mother chews the solid food before she gives it to the baby. The mother just gives a little bit of what she is eating at any time to the child. There is no special food stuff for children. The mother will stop giving a special kind of food to her baby when she notices that the child becomes ill or sick whenever it eats that kind of food.

The time for weaning is not specific; it differs from one to another according to the individual mother. A mother may wean her baby when she is expecting another one and sometimes to suit her own convenience.

When a baby is three to four months old it becomes strong and this is the time the mother may leave it in the care of an older daughter or niece without fear when she is busy in the kitchen or washing. The baby is then trained to sit down by the help of solid objects such as a wooden
The little girl is training the baby to sit up.
stool which may be placed at the back of the child with some rags and cloths spread over it to make it soft so that when the child falls back into it, it may not be hurt. Or better still, an elder sister or brother sits behind the child and holds it up; this continues till the child is able to sit up all by itself.

The time for the average child to cut its teeth is between four and five months. When a baby cuts its first teeth an egg is boiled for it. It tries to bite it and afterwards it is divided among the children in the house. It is a taboo to say so if one sees that a child is cutting its first teeth. Anybody who says it will will have to give some eggs or money to the child. A child's teeth is never mentioned, it is called 'stone' (ebo) instead of teeth even after it has been given an egg.

Weaning starts after the child has got teeth, but there is no given time for it. Some children are weaned at very early age. Others are left to suckle until they are so old that they feel ashamed of themselves when other children laugh at them when they see them. This is very common with the last borns. Weaning in this village is a very slow process, It is started by giving the baby some other kinds of food such as soup and porridge, and as time goes on solid food such as those eaten by adults are given in addition to the milk. This continues till the mother is sure that the baby
can satisfy itself with the solid food.

When a mother wants to wean her baby, she tries to disgust the child with the breast. She smears the breasts with bitter solution which are often prepared from some herbs and from a special kind of garden eggs called "nsusuwa". Others sometimes use quinine. When the child tries to suckle and tastes the bitterness, it stops though some suck during the night and do not care about the taste. This method of weaning has been very successful with almost all the mothers.

Another way, my old lady told me of was that weaning can be obtained by putting some kind of medicine into the child's nose though I did not see one myself she said that this method is very effective.

It is a belief in Benin that if a baby sucks the breasts of its mother during pregnancy it becomes sickly and nasty to look at, because the breasts then consist of new blood which is going to form the new milk for the next baby.

Most children as they grow older learn to substitute new things for the mother's breast whenever they are not sucking. Some suck their thumbs, others suck their fore-fingers and the rest suck the other fingers. Mothers do not like this finger sucking at all because of some superstitions which are attached to the sucking of the different fingers. It is believed that when a child sucks the little and middle fingers, that is considered
very bad. It is believed that, that may stop the
mother from having another child. The fore-finger
is considered good for sucking. When a child
sucks any of the fingers which are supposed to
bring bad luck, the mother tries to stop the baby
by tying a small gourd or a nicely carved
round wood to a piece of thread round the
wrist of the child for it to play with and suck
instead of the finger. Sometimes a small cut
is made with a blade or sharp knife on the
finger which the baby sucks to prevent the
child from sucking it.

Toilet training is begun at a very early age. Very little babies usually soil their mothers
or whoever is carrying them at the time. Mothers
rather have a delight in cleaning themselves after
they have been soiled by their babies. No mother
in Benin will grumble for being soiled by her baby.
I very often heard mothers saying with pride,
“Obaatan ntama nyee fe da.” (A mother’s cloth is
never clean.) Even other people such as sisters,
aunts, grandmothers or friends do not get angry
nor do they grumble when a child soils them.

Mothers in this village however, often
put old, clean rags between their babies’
loins which serves as napkins especially when
the mother is giving the baby to somebody
else or another another person. This
prevents the child from soiling her.

People in this village believe
strongly that, if one gets annoyed or shows
any sign of disapproval when a child
soils one, it makes the child sad; It can
even cause its death, because it is believed
that, the child may feel that it is not
wanted and so may return to its ghost
mother. Even when a child passes urine or
stool into the food which its mother or adults
are eating, they have no right to pour all
the food out. This sometimes happens in
this village because the child lies on its
mother's laps during meals. When such a
thing happens the mother has just to pour
out the part where the stool has been
and the rest is eaten. It is believed that
if the food is thrown away after this
happening, the child will die. At times
one can see from the faces of these
eating with the mother that they do not
like it though they try to hide their dislike.
This dislike is often shown by young girls
who are just coming to the age of puberty
or older girls who have no children of
their own.

As the child grows, it is
taught to eliminate before it is put on the
back or on a mat to sleep. If the mother
wants the child to urinate, she holds the
child up and says, “SZZ—”
until the child urinates, this continues until
the child associates the sound SZZ
with urinating, and then whenever the
mother says “SZ—” the child knows
what to do.

This training continues until the
child learns not to eliminate while being
carried on the back. It cries or stretches
itself whenever it wants to do so.
A child is again trained in passing its stool when it is about three months old when it is able to sit. The mother puts her feet together leaving a little space between them. The child is then placed between the feet of the mother to pass the stool. In some homes the child is put on the pot.

Mothers are very particular about the health of their babies and are very clever in finding out when their babies are not well. The common illnesses in children are malaria, worms, convulsion, stomachache, and headache. As soon as a mother sees that her child is suffering from any kind of sickness as they are clever enough to find out, she quickly gives it treatment if she can. For example a child who is suffering from stomachache will be given an enema, and very often when the child is a year or more old some medicine is prepared from herbs and leaves such as Nim Tree or 'Nunum' which are boiled together with some roots and pepper and given to the child. This boiled medicine is kept in the pot for a long time. Every morning fresh water is added to it and reboiled, then all the children in the house drink about half a pint each. Old herbs and roots are replaced by fresh ones when the colour of the liquid becomes pale. At times when the child's sickness is very serious the mother sends it to a medicine man or to a fetish priest for treatment. The more enlightened mothers
As soon as the child is able to sit and crawl, then efforts are made to induce it to stand.
send their children to Mampueng where there is a clinic, before it is too late.

Mothers in Benin believe that when a child cries very often then it means it is growing fat; and the baby cries in order to expand the chest. And mothers smear plenty of oil on the chest to make the muscles supple.

Children start making all sorts of sounds when they are very young; they are fond of babbling and cooing. Mothers in the village encourage their babies in making these babbling sounds like, “Adaa daa - da.” by repeating after the children. Adults in turn teach the child to talk e.g. when a mother sees the father of her baby, she will point at him showing the child that “Papa is coming” or “Go to papa etc.”

The father, the grand-mother or sister may do the same thing when somebody is coming; and in the same way all the relatives are introduced to the child and their names taught. Most children start talking when they are two years old and it is believed that girls talk earlier than boys.

As soon as a child is able to sit up it begins to crawl and then efforts are made to induce the child to stand and afterwards to walk. Very often, a child under the age of one is seen held up in a standing position by a sister, mother or anybody who may happen to be with the child. It may be pushed along the ground and against the leg of the person who
Fig. 15

The child can stand all by herself.

Fig. 16

The girl is training the child to walk by dragging it gently along, saying, "Taa—taa".
holds it. It is a great joy for a mother to see that her child can stand all by itself. In the evening when the father comes to visit the mother and child as is often the case, you will hear the mother saying to her husband, “Ei listen, our baby has been able to stand all by itself.” The father happily then picks the baby up, praises him and lets the child stand for him to see.

When a baby is able to stand, it is next encouraged to walk. A sister or somebody else may stand about a yard away from the infant, then clap her hands and call the child to come saying “Taa-tea-.” Sometimes the adult or elder sister or brother may hold the hands of the infant and drag it along gently saying taa-tea. At times, a piece of stick is used for the “taa-tea” but most parents do not like it as it may hurt the child. Another way fathers in this village use to encourage their children to walk is by making for them a wooden tricycle which the children hold on and push along. When a child makes its first steps in walking it gives a great joy to the parents and the household. The child is rewarded with some eggs and at times with mashed yam mixed with palm oil. Parents especially the mothers who have been carrying these heavy children along become very happy as they feel a part of the heavy burden is removed from them. When the child
Fig. 17
Mother says, "Bring it along" to encourage the infant to practise walking.

Fig. 18
The little girl is trying to comfort the child who has been crying since the mother left her to the farm.
is able to walk, the mother can just leave it with its elder brother or sisters at home while she goes to the farm. Very often the child cries for some time while the mother is away, it becomes happy and comforted when it sees that mother is coming. The child will run together with the other siblings to meet the mother coming from farm while singing, "Mami ni ee, nkwan dende!" (Here is mother nice soup!) repeatedly till the child reaches the mother; the mother in turn embraces her baby and there is a happy reunion. Now is the moment when one can observe the real love between mother and child. She sits down when she has reached home, puts her child on her laps and plays with the child after it has been fed. Mothers enjoy this play with their babies so much that at times they forget that they have got to cook something for their husbands.

When the child is fed and has regained its sense of security it goes out to play with the other children outside their house.
Fig. 19
Mother and Child.
CHAPTER SEVEN

The Early Childhood and Its Training.

There is no systematic moral training of children at Benin. The young children carry out instructions unconsciously, in most cases through imitation of their elders.

Sometimes, they are taught directly many different things and in many different ways e.g. it is taught first and foremost to respect elders. It is not to call any person above the age of puberty without the prefix 'eno or agga' (mother or father). It has no right to refuse to go when it has been sent on an errand by any elderly person. The child is taught not to speak abusive words to grown ups or even to children who are older than itself.

A mother in this village is very much concerned with the speech of her baby. She teaches the child to control its tongue and not to say or speak about everything that it sees. Mothers in Benin often frighten their children by saying, "If you always speak about what you see, a chicken will be hung to your lips." In this way a child is trained to control its speech.

In this society, the left hand is regarded as unclean and so a child is taught not to use the left hand for eating and gesticulation or for giving something to, or receiving anything from somebody.
He has to use the right hand for eating, for gestures, for saluting, giving and receiving. The left hand is only used for toilet purposes and as a helper to the right when necessary.

Another verbal training given to a child in this village is that it is taught not to stare at people unless it is talking to them.

The child is instructed to value other people's possessions and is not encouraged to take anything which does not belong to it. Very often a mother will tell her child: "Don't take it, it is for Kwadwo etc." or will sleep its hand when the child takes something belonging to somebody.

The child is taught from this early age to observe his food taboos. It is a taboo for some in this village to eat certain kinds of food. The kind of taboo depends on the child's 'ntoro'. For example, a person of the 'Ekoana' ntoro does not eat a bush cow and so any child of the Ekoana ntoro is told never to eat the bush cow.

One important form of training during the early childhood is the training in correct behaviour at meals. A child is expected to be able to feed itself at the age of three, and is taught how to do so. At this early age, the child eats with the mother until it masters all the table manners. It is taught not to talk at meals. To enforce this the child is told that, when a child...
The child is encouraged to share its food with other children of the family.
talks or sings during meals, its mother will die. He is taught to use the right hand only for eating. A mother may shout at her small child who starts eating with the left. She may take the left hand away and put the right one in the food. If the child continues to use the left all the time, a cut may be made on the hand with a sharp knife or razor in order to force the child to use the right hand. The child is shown how to remove bones from fish before it is eaten. When eating, he is directed not to eat too quickly nor too slowly. When eating fufu, the child is not to eat too big lumps nor too small lumps. He is encouraged to share its food with other children of the family. He is again instructed to chew without making noise.

When the child has learnt to feed itself, it continues to eat with the mother till it has mastered all the table manners before it is allowed to eat with other children.

Young children in this village are encouraged to eat food that has fallen down to the ground as they believe that makes the child grow quickly.

The child's instructions are in most cases given verbally, directly or indirectly through such expressions as "Stop that! Don't say that!" or "If you do that, a ghost will catch you" or "The policeman will arrest you." At times when a child has once been treated by a doctor, and say has for instance been once
Fig. 21

The mother says, "Stop, so that the ghost will not catch you."
given an injection, the mother might make use of that. When she wants to threaten her child because she wants discipline and obedience. She will say, "If you don't stop, the doctor will come again and give you another injection."

Sometimes a member of the household may stand across the house or room in which the mother and the child are and will pretend to brush for the ghost, the policeman, the policeman or whatever person or thing the mother has used for threatening the child. This person changes his or her voice and says, "Who is that child crying or misbehaving? I shall come there just now, if it does not stop!" Then you will see the child full of fear clinging to its mother for safety. At once peace will be maintained. Mother will then comfort the child by saying, "Stop, so that this bad policeman or doctor will not come and catch you."

In this village, children are not to utter obscene words especially in the presence of the opposite sex. Words referring to the genitals are not to be uttered by children now do parents utter them to children, for example, when a child is bathing, and mother wants to draw her child's attention to the genital especially of the daughter, she will never mention the correct name but will just point at that part and say, "Clean those too."

There are three main ways in
which mothers at Benin punish their little children when they misbehave. They may do so by scolding or by slapping the buttocks or by putting pepper or ginger into the anus or private parts. A child is punished for stealing, especially stealing something which belongs to somebody outside the family and at times within the family circle. It may also be punished for abusing a grown-up, or for playing with the genitals. If a small boy plays or holds his genitals often, it will be threatened that it will be cut off if he continues to hold it.

A child is trained to remain silent in the presence of grown-ups. A great part of the child's training is derived from listening to 'anansesem' (spider stories) which grandparents usually narrate to their grandchildren in the evenings as they are sitting round the hearth. For example, a grand-parent will tell children an 'anansesem' about a disobedient child and some misfortune that came upon him. After the story, references will be made to this story when a child disobeys, etc.

As the child grows a little older, it is taught not to make a mess in the yard, kitchen or room, but directed to go outside the walls of the house. There the mother sweeps the stool and throws it away as soon as the child finishes. At the same time she checks the stool of her baby to see if the child is well or not. When the child is
Suffering from constipation or diarrhoea she will give it some medicine and treat its buttocks. Mothers are very particular about their babies and every mother knows her baby’s constitution; she can tell whether her baby’s stool is too frequent or too little or whether it is regular or not. As the child grows older he is told by the mother or any adult in the family to go to the village latrine which is at the outskirts of the village one for female and the other for male, the child will go to one of them according to its sex.

At the age of three, a child is not expected to wet its bed. If it continues to wet its bed after three years it is scolded lightly until it is seven or eight years old. If it continues after that age, the father or mother will call in small boys and girls about the child’s own age to jeer at him call at him and sing to him to dance a dance called, “bonsua bonsu.” The child will be tied up in his bed mat and taken to the outskirts of the village dressed in ‘nsansono’ (a kind of nettle). Water will be thrown over him and the boys and girls will sing after him, “Tumodobie e e! Wasi wo kete anadwo o!” repeatedly. (You wash your sleeping mat and cloths in the night.)

The child is afterwards taken to an elderly man usually from the lineage to repeat these words, “I swear by your leg that I
Little children are not encouraged to put on clothes especially on hot days.
will not make water again at night."

Some parents choose to send their children to the village tree and there, the child has to say, "Grandfather Tree, I swear by your leg that I will not make water again at night."

In the village, there is no special training given to the child about dressing, and even little children under the age of seven are not encouraged to put on clothes especially on hot days. Very often you will hear a mother shouting at her child to leave its cloth home when it is going out to play. With little girls, they are always instructed to wear an "etem" (loincloth) and with that they can go out without clothes and without the concern of anybody till they are old enough to feel ashamed of themselves when they walk about naked.

In this village, mother and child are hardly ever apart. From the day it was born, the child sleeps with its mother in the same bed or mat close to its mother and this continues till the child is about four years old. Then it goes to its brothers or sisters and sleeps with them.

After meals in the evening, the child sits with other little children with their grandparent round the hearth and listen to stories till it feels sleepy then it is carried to its mat. The child can keep up as long as it is awake and
The Age of Imagination.

Boys and girls play together at this age.

The "mother" is pounding fufu with her children around her.

Another group of housewives.
playing 'knuts' (make-belief) she will grow up to be a hard worker; such a girl, she said, is always helpful and enthusiastic. Little boys like to play at hunting in various forms such as chasing butterflies or birds, catching animals, insects, and throwing stones. Girls prefer to play at things connected with the age, family and how they are going to make a living. It is a time of play, make-belief and fantasy. The child lives in a world where anything at all may happen and the laws of nature are not binding, and hard facts are ignored. It is the time when both boys and girls play together, acting doctors, lorry drivers, teachers or any hero at all they may think of. Very often when you go round the village, you will see little boys and girls busy playing under the shelter of uncompleted buildings or behind a house where there is shade. They act mothers and fathers. The older girls and boys are the mothers and fathers, and their little brothers and sisters are their children. The mothers may be busy cooking while the fathers will be sitting down waiting for their food or may be going to the farm. More interesting still is to watch these infants playing a lorry driver and his passengers or playing a shop-keeper and his customers or a farmer selling her crops etc. These make-belief plays are called "knuts" and even parents encourage their children in doing them. One mother told me that, if a girl likes
The lorry driver with his passengers.
"Pull! We are for Mampong," says the driver.

Fig. 27
These children choose to play outside the village.

Fig. 28
These girls are having their 'nikuro' behind a house where is shade.

Fig. 29
The work of the small girl is mainly the tending on her younger sister or brother.
playing 'khurs' (make-belief) she will grow up to be a hard worker; such a girl, she said, is always helpful and enthusiastic. Little boys like to play at hunting in various forms such as chasing butterflies or birds, catching animals or insects, and throwing stones. And girls prefer to play at things connected with family and home life, being mothers, and looking after babies.

In watching these little children at their different plays I noticed how these children do not co-operate with their companions. Each one plays on its own. Each child thinks and speaks almost always about itself and other things as they affect it.

Little children are very good imitators and can imitate others easily, e.g. at dancing. The children learn to dance by watching their parents and older brothers and sisters dancing at funerals or puberty ceremonies. In the home, you will see a mother or father tapping and clapping the hands as she or he sings for the child to dance.

The work of the small girl up to the age of six or seven is mainly the tending of her younger sister or brother in addition to little domestic duties which she renders to her mother. A boy's main work lies in the running of errands and at times looking after his younger sister or brother.
He is not interested in abstract ideas but in things he can see and handle.
CHAPTER EIGHT.

Later Childhood (7-13 years)

This is very important age for the parents to understand. The child does not grow so quickly as in the earlier and later periods. He becomes harder and gains full control over his smaller muscles. This is the age for forming habits and developing skill. The mind at this time develops properly, and fantasy thinking largely gives place to reality thinking. The child begins to think of things as they really are in his experience, and not dream about magical world. He is not interested in abstract ideas but in things he can see and handle and he becomes full of activity. He becomes more sociable than before and his self instincts are very strong. In playing games with others, he tends to play them for his own glory rather than for his team.

While the young child is quite content to run and jump and throw, the child often wants to run fast, to jump high, to throw far and to outstrip his comrades. It is an age of rivalry and competition.

Parents in Benin are very particular with their children at this age. Boys and girls are supposed to behave differently, and their physical and mental differences become greater.

The daily duties of the boy become
Fig. 31
The boy begins to follow his father and learns the activities of men.

Fig. 32
The boy is busy repairing his lorry which his younger sister has spoilt when he was away.
gradually different from those of the girl. This differentiation of labour leads to daughters growing away from father and sons from mother. The boy begins to follow his father or uncle and learns the activities of men while the girl follows her mother to carry out the routine domestic duties.

By the age of seven, the boy has to go under his father’s authority and discipline. He begins to accompany the father or uncle to farm and sometimes on hunting expeditions. At first, the boy does nothing on the farm to help his father or uncle but just goes and sits down under a tree and there you will see the boy very busy at making wheels for his toy lorry he has left at home or for a new one he is going to construct. At times the boy will not sit down but rather go on hunting birds with his catapult until the father tells him that it is time to go home. Sometimes on the way home, this hunting continues and very often, the boy is so interested in this hunting that the father has to leave him on the way while the boy may be practising shooting at birds, lizards, rats, mice, etc. and laying traps as well.

The father as he walks with his son in the bush teaches him the names of some trees, herbs and plants and their uses. On the farm too, the father teaches his boy all the qualities of the soil, the right kind of soil for sowing and particular crops
The boy is carrying his father's cocoa home.
He has got one nice pawpaw for himself.
and the time for sowing and reaping. The bringing up of a boy falls naturally on the father in this village, and so very often you will see a father conversing with his son on the way to farm, teaching him and giving him warnings such as whom he should respect, to guard his tongue, to use the right hand for gesticulation. He is warned not to use the words "Niam Kese Mmienoa" (The greatest oath of Ashanti) and again warned not to use some terms of abuse.

Usually, the fathers train their sons in the same trade, profession or occupation as they are doing e.g. farming, hunting, masonry, tailoring etc.

Boys from this age onwards tend to be very different and disobedient towards their mothers but obey the fathers. When a son disobeys his father, he is sent away to his uncle. This is considered very serious; therefore the mother, uncle and other members of the family meet and then go to the father together to apologise and pay some compensation fee or present to appease the anger of the father, particularly his son’s anger which it is feared may cause the boy to die.

When a father sees that his son is old enough to help on the farm, he buys him a cutlass usually a smaller one to begin with.

A boy of this age is punished by his father if he neglects his duty e.g. if he fails to go on an errand or steals somebody’s possession or disobeys orders.
Fig. 34

The boy is going to the river side with his lorry. He is driving, walking and carrying at the same time.

Fig. 35

Boys at this age like playing football. "They are full of activity."
or shows unwillingness to go to the farm. The common punishment for boys of seven to fourteen years is whipping with a stick. Good behaviour is rewarded with praise or a penny, a fruit, etc.

The boys of this age continue to play with their rubber balls, toy lorries and cars made of their own. Very often you will see a boy going to the river side to fetch water with his lorry, though all he does is to drive his lorry and walk behind it carrying his bucket of water at the same time. He likes playing football and his instincts lead him to all kinds of play that train him for primitive life such as hunting and fighting. They like playing other games such as, 'Anto akyo' (that it is not behind you), Hide and seek, Cache 2 Cache (I finish you) and circular stones (Nana Abosea) use evenings outside their houses in the streets. (See Appendix IV)

The training of a boy should be done by a man and that of a girl by a woman. Thus a male child who has been brought up by a woman is called 'Baba laa' (a woman's child) and also a boy is laughed at if for example, he exclaims 'Eno e!' (Oh mother!) when something bites him or hits his leg against something instead of exclaiming 'Agya e!' (Oh father!) A boy is discouraged from associating too much with his mother and from playing often with girls. He is told, if he does so he will grow up to be a fool. A boy in the company of girls is laughed
at. He is called, "Odunwini koro a odi mmam" (one he-sheep among many she-sheeps).

A boy who behaves girlishly is told to behave like a man and not to be a girl. Such a boy is often looked upon as a fool. Boys in Benin at this stage have no respect for girls and look down upon them; even most of these boys would extend this to their mothers.

The boy, from the age of four, ceases to sleep with the parents, but goes to sleep with the other boys of the family. He is taught the use of chewing sticks early in the morning. Little boys of the same age often group themselves together and sleep in one room. Some parents in Benin do not bother themselves about where their sons sleep. Others are very strict and severe with their sons and see to it that they come home to sleep after they have finished with their games and activities in the evening.

A boy may be staying with his mother in her house but goes to the father for his meals. A father sends for his sons and nephews when his wives bring him food; and it is very interesting to watch a father with his sons and nephews at table, eating from the same dish.

The girl learns from her mother how to carry out the domestic duties such as fetching water from the river, sweeping the house, washing up of utensils and plastering the hearth with red clay; and learns cooking which she usually begins long before she is ready for it through playing at cooking or
Fig. 36

The girl is selling bananas she has brought from the farm.

Fig. 37

She is pounding palmnuts for her mother.
in make-belief plays in which the girl imitates her parents and other adults.

The girl at this age is expected to know how to wash her clothes and to wash her body in the right procedure, soaping the body from head downwards.

When the girl is old enough, she accompanies her mother to the farm and she is taught farm work. Early in the morning you will see the girl above seven years of age, walking, carrying a basket in front of her mother to the farm.

On the farm, the girl’s main work is to look after the young baby if there is one, or pluck pepper and other vegetables on the farm while the mother is weeding or gathering food such as cocoyam or plantain. At times, she is left behind at home to look after the younger sister or brother.

The girl’s main duty in the home is baby-tending. Even when the mother is at home she will take the baby outside to play with it and the mother on the other hand is free and can carry on more freely with her domestic duties. The girl in many cases is responsible for her younger brothers and sisters. She bathes and dresses them and cooks for them when the mother is away. She again helps her mother in the cooking and all the little services as she is capable of doing, such as grinding or mashing of pepper, garden-eggs etc. and washing up of utensils, pounding of fufu or palmnuts.
The girl from this age until after puberty stage is restricted from boy’s company. Thus, girls who behave like boys are taunted with nick-names, “Obaa-beena” (woman-man). Mothers in Benin protest against daughters playing with boys and behaving like boys; it is considered a disgrace and shameful neglect of proper child-training on the part of the mother.

In the evening after supper, boys and girls of different age groups join up and play in the village streets. The girls have different activities and games from those of the boys. The girls play “ampe” and “ass” both of which I have described in the appendix. The whole village becomes lively with noise of their merriment as they play and sing. At times, one can hear shrieking noises from the girls which are usually due to the boys pursuing them and trying to fight them when the two groups happen to be in same area. It is interesting to watch and listen how the mothers who are near by get alarmed when they hear of the flare ups between the boys and girls. You will hear them shouting, each calling her daughter “Akua eee! Amma eee!” etc “Come to bed.”

When there is no fight of the sort, they go on playing till each one feels she or he is tired. They go out one by one to their homes, and when the rest realise they are too few to carry on with the games they disperse and each jumping, clapping and singing the last song they have been singing to herself, runs home to bed.
One thing I noticed with the children especially the girls is that they do not just from play go to bed straight away, but go to the hearth to eat the rest of their supper which the mothers purposely keep for them. After the second supper they go to bed.

Very early in the morning the girl gets up again and the cycle of the routine domestic duty is begun. A girl who gets up late in the morning is regarded as a lazy girl and so mothers are very much concerned with their daughter's getting up in the morning.

A couple of years before her puberty, when she grows strong enough, more difficult tasks are required of her and she is taught more skilled techniques; the girl's play ceases and she contributes to the work of the household more seriously. Girls in this village find this period the most uninteresting.
CHAPTER NINE.

Puberty Ceremony For Girls.

Until a girl makes her first menses she is considered a child and does not take part in any communal labour. She is not taxed.

When a girl reaches the age of puberty, it is considered very important. It is therefore marked by ceremony and public observance. This ceremony takes place after the first menstruation. The ceremony always takes place in the mother's house. It is more or less an initiation ceremony for girls, which marks the end of girlhood and the beginning of womanhood. After this ceremony the girl is recognised as an adult citizen of the village and the district and is therefore liable to taxation and communal labour; she can then marry or have children. She begins to dress as a woman with head dress and shoulder covers. Children begin to call her eno (mother) which is used as an address of respect for a grown-up woman by younger children as a prefix to their names.

The puberty ceremony is regulated by custom. Every girl has to undergo it because she can neither get married nor have children without it.

If a girl becomes pregnant before the puberty ceremony, she is considered to have committed a crime.
which affects not only herself and her partner but also the whole state. It amounts much more to failure to declare oneself taxable as it is considered to bring curse or wrath to the whole community. It is considered a great offence against the ancestral spirits. The punishment for this crime known as "Kviriobra" (pregnancy without menses) is the greatest indignity that a girl can be subjected to. It affects the whole family. I shall describe the "Kviriobra" after I have dealt with the puberty ceremony itself.

Girls in this country menstruate at the average age of fourteen to fifteen years. Menstruation is the sign that a girl has reached the puberty state. As soon as a girl in Benin or in Ashanti sees her first menses she reports to her mother or anybody in her mother's place if she has lost her. It is one of the superstitious beliefs in this village that it is very unlucky for a girl to menstruate for the first time in the day time. The best time considered for this is at dawn or very early in the morning. It is believed that naughty and disobedient girls menstruate for the first time in the day. Very often, little girls are even threatened with this belief to make them obedient when they are disobedient. Another time considered bad in this connexion is when it happens on one of the state festivals e.g. "Awuakudae, Akwasidae," etc which are termed "m'abone" (bad days).
When a girl menstruates during the day or on one of the 'bad days' knowing the superstitious attached to it, she tries to hide it, and only discloses the fact at the proper time. Sometimes a mother may happen to know it but she too does not say anything about it till the lucky time. Some of the girls are so shy that they cannot disclose their conditions to their mothers even if it happens at the correct time, but all the same the mothers who are always anxiously awaiting for this time, detect and find it out themselves.

As soon as a mother sees the condition of her daughter she gives her some eggs to eat, and reports the incident to the queen mother of the village who examines the breasts. The queen-mother keeps mental records of all girls who have been registered in her residence as having had their first menses.

In the olden days the ceremony started immediately after the first menses but now, as things are getting more and more complicated and as more expenses are being made on this ceremony, the ceremony is postponed till the time when the parents are ready with their preparations. Nowadays, the ceremony has no relation with the actual date upon which the girl grows up. It is very often postponed till Christmas which is also the main
cocoa season. Because of this, I was able to witness myself six different ceremonies during the Christmas vacation.

Parents prefer the time round about Christmas because it is the cocoa season when nearly everybody becomes rich in his or her own way and more gifts are expected from friends than any other time. I was told that in a case where the girl is not trusted or suspected of immoral behaviour, the parents do their best to celebrate it as early as possible to avoid 'Kyinibra' (pregnancy without menses).

Much preparation is needed to meet the puberty ceremony. The mother who is the most responsible person for this ceremony has to prepare and get ready many things such as gold ornaments both her own and others' borrowed for the occasion to make a fine show; hair ornament, bands of precious beads, white and other costly kente cloths. Many yams, eggs and many other food stuffs are bought or collected for the occasion. The house is cleaned, and drums are hired for the ceremony.

On the previous evening, the mother goes round the village announcing to relatives and friends that her daughter has come to the age of puberty and asks them to help her with the ceremony. Again if the girl is betrothed announcement of the ceremony is made to the intended.
Puberty Ceremony.

Fig. 39

The girl in the ‘bra’ state sits in the village street under a shed specially prepared for this purpose.

Fig. 40

As the girl sits in the village street, a band of women sing ‘bra’ songs and from one end of the street to the other.
In this village, girls are betrothed at very early age, sometimes from the first clay of birth or even before the baby is born. This infant marriage is known as 'asiwa' (see appendix VI).

**Celebration**

Very early in the morning, the girl sits on a white stool which is placed on a beautiful mat in the village street, under an umbrella or a shed specially made for this purpose. In front of her are an egg, dry okro bean, and a basin of a solution of white clay and water to which a special kind of leaves called 'odwiri' are added. Behind her are also an egg and another dry okro bean and a soup pot. A grandmother or any old woman whom the mother has specially invited sits beside her.

As the girl sits, a band of some women sing 'bra' songs, dancing from one end of the street to the other and occasionally round the 'bra girl'. This continues and more and more women join in as time goes on. When the clay breaks most of the women go back to their homes, carry on with their domestic duties, take their baths, put on good clothes and come back to continue.

The girl is never left alone all the time she is surrounded by many women and girls. When the sun starts to appear the mother brings soap, sponge, water.
Fig. 41
A woman who has never lost any of her children dresses the girl's hair in the typical Ashanti fashion called, 'dansinkran'.

Fig. 42
The women come back this time with their drums.
and wazaw and a woman who has never lost any of her children dresses the hair in the typical Ashanti fashion called ‘dansinkran’. See fig. 4. The hair is trimmed evenly round the head and darkened at the base. All round with soot from the under part of a sauce pot. If the girl has lost her mother, all the hair will be shaved and afterwards the soot will be used in the same way. She is then sponged down to the waist by the same woman. She wears a white kente round her waist leaving the top of the body from the breasts up to the head bare. Shea butter is rubbed round the bare part to look shiny and beautiful. Precious beads and gold trinkets are put round her neck.

The women by now come back to continue with singing, this time carrying ‘dano drums’ under their left arms, which they beat with sticks held in the right. This dano drum is the only kind of drum in Ashanti that women are allowed to use. It is the only exception to the rule that women are not allowed to touch a drum such as the talking drums in the chief’s house.

The women this time become livelier with their singing and dancing in the street where the girl is seated.

If the girl is betrothed her future
Fig. 43
Band of drummers with the writer.

Fig. 44
A second girl in the 'bra' state sitting in the street with her grandmother.
husband's name will be mentioned and praised during the singing (see appendix V).

As the girl sits down, she will be receiving gifts such as eggs and money ranging from sixpence onwards from most of the women and girls in the village. Whenever anybody brings a gift the old woman sitting on the same mat with the girl gets it, touches the back and front of the girl with it then makes a circle over the girl's head with it before she places it in the bowl of the solution of white clay. That is intended to invoke blessing on the girl.

Getting to the noon, the parents and the husband too if betrothed, bring their presents to the girl. The gifts were more or less the same in all the ceremonies I watched. In one case, her mother brought two different cloths of six yards each, some eggs and yams. The father brought £40 (forty pounds). I was told afterwards that, not all the money would be given to the girl but it was just for a show. She would be given about £10 (ten pounds) or perhaps less. Her paternal aunt brought one guinea; then the husband brought gifts of one tin trunk containing five different cloths and handkerchiefs, a gold necklace and earrings, a pair of sandals, eggs, yams and in addition £10. All the gifts were given in public and
Fig. 45
Drummers for the second girl.

Fig. 46
The writer and the second girl in the 'bara' state.
and spread over in front of the girl for all to see.

The presents for the other girls I watched were almost the same, but they varied in number and quantity.

In the case of one girl, I saw that she received presents from almost every woman in the village and had the most number of women to sing and play for her. I asked why some had fewer gifts and singers and others more. I was told that the difference is due to the difference in character and behaviour of the different girls. One woman told me, "Good, obedient and hard-working girls get more presents and more people to sing for them. Because of this, many girls just when they are about to come to the age of puberty, realise what is coming and pretend to be good in order to get many gifts at their puberty celebration. But after the ceremony, they go back to their old behaviour. This has now become the common practice among the girls."

In the afternoon, the girl is carried in turn on the back of two or three women to the River Benin, which is considered the most sacred river in the village. At the river side, some customary rites are performed. A prayer is said to the river to help the girl to prosper and have ten children. After the prayer, a sacrifice is made.
to the river. Some eggs are put down at the bank for sacrifice.
The girl then sits in the water and is washed by the women who carried her. Afterwards lime is rubbed over the body and she is carried back home.

During the absence of the girl's party at the river side, the grandmother with the help of some friends will prepare a meal of boiled eggs mashed yam and plantain of which half is mixed with palm oil and the other half left white.

From the river, the girl is seated on the white stool on a verandah or an open room inside the house with the head covered. An old woman whose first born is still alive will perform a kind of rite which is considered the most important part of the ceremony. It is done like this. The woman takes three small pieces of the hide of hippopotamus puts it into the girl's mouth one after another, in each case, the girl spits it out. Then she will put three eggs into the girl's mouth in the same way, but this time she eats them while her head is still covered. It is very important that the girl does not bite any of the eggs with the teeth nor should she allow any bit to fall down from her mouth. If any of these happens, it is said to portend some
The girls get up early, do all sorts of domestic duties, such as fetching water for their friend in the 'boa' state.
of her future children. When she finishes eating the three boiled eggs, the next thing is that the woman puts some of the mashed yam into her mouth again three times, and each time throwing them out as before. After this, the girl is left alone to eat as much of the meal and as many eggs as she can. The remaining food is put together into a big basin or vessel and many children of both sexes are called round; the meal and they scramble with their hands in the vessel. The 'bira girl' with her head completely covered with a white cloth, snatches at their hands. It is believed that her first born would be a boy or girl according as it was a boy's or a girl's hand which she caught during the scrambling.

During the five days following the ceremony, the girl is considered a 'bira' that is a person in the 'bira' state, and does no work in the house. She only takes her bath in the morning sits on the white stool and everybody is at her service.

Every night most of the girls (those under the age of puberty) in the village come to sleep with her. At dawn, they rise up very early go and fetch water, sweep and do all sorts of domestic services for their friend who is in the 'bira' state.
Some of them go back to their homes and come back during the day to sit and converse with their friends and help to prepare the meals etc. Some of the girls do not go back to their homes until the 'bae state' is over.

At the end of the five days she dresses up in her best. A very beautiful 'kente' cloth or velvet is worn round under the breasts down to the knees leaving the breasts uncovered. She is then adorned with many gold ornaments and precious beads with a finely shaped long chewing stick decorated with a gold pin at the end of it in her mouth. The girl then goes round the village accompanied by her mother and some female relatives thanking all those people who attended the ceremony or offered her gifts and congratulations during the ceremony.

What I have described so far is the puberty ceremony for non-Christian girls. With Christians the ceremony is just a simple thing. The girls and boys are confirmed together in the church. After the service, the parents hold grand feasts for their children. People bring gifts to them each in her house. In the afternoon all those confirmed dress in white and sing marching through the village greeting people as they go along. The Christian girl is also exempted.
Fig. 48

A girl confirmed not yet a week ago.
from domestic duties during the week following the confirmation ceremony. On the next Sunday a Christian girl who has been confirmed dresses up in her best and with her mother or a friend goes round the village thanking all the people. Though boys are confirmed, no notice is taken of them after the first day. The boy's confirmation is not looked upon as coming to the age of puberty.

Since the ideas of puberty rites are founded on the beliefs concerning menstruation they are not extended to boys. There is no ceremony for boys' puberty stage. This is marked only by the physical changes of the boy. He becomes physically strong and becomes more interested in the activities of men than of boys. He begins to behave as a man, starts his own farms and increases them as time goes on. He begins to earn money and save some. The boy at this age becomes proud and difficult; but it is very surprising how they respect and obey their fathers and also men of their fathers' age. A boy in Benin believes that if a son does not respect his father and refuses to help him in his farm work, his 'ntoro' (spirit) may be taken from him in which case he may die or have a misfortune.
If a girl becomes pregnant, before the puberty ceremony, she is considered to have committed a great crime for which the two parties concerned are liable to a heavy fine and a severe punishment. This crime is called 'Kyinibra' (literally, it means pregnancy without menstruation).

This crime is not considered an offence affecting only the guilty parties alone, but also the whole clan or even the whole village and district of which they are members. It is considered a great offence against the ancestral spirits so that if it is not severely punished it will bring curse and wrath upon the whole community.

When a girl whose puberty stage has not been celebrated or made known to the queen-mother is seen under pregnancy, the matter will be reported to the queen-mother of the village. The queen-mother too will report to the chief and the chief in turn will report to the Omanhene of Mampong. A native authority police will be sent to arrest the girl and her lover. When they are brought back, two sheep will be slaughtered and the blood mixed with palm oil will be poured upon the heads of the two criminals. During this action, the chief's linguist will speak some cursing words upon them asking the ancestral spirits to bring all the wrath upon the relatives of these people and if possible to the two alone.
and not to the whole village and state.

The two are not allowed to put on any good cloth but just small pieces of cloth tied round their waists leaving naked the upper part of their bodies from the waist and also from the knees downwards.

After the curse a new water pot is given to the girl and with her lover to go to the river side to fetch water. People hoot at them as they go along. On their return from the river, the water in the pot is poured over them again and the two lovers are sent away from the community to the bush. They are told to stay away with their curse and bad luck till the expected baby is born.

The two go away and stay somewhere in a farm house or hut till the baby is born; then if they like they can come back. Many very often choose not to come back to their homes for many years.

In this way the importance of the ideal of chastity before puberty rite is stressed and driven home not only to the guilty couple but also to those at or about to reach the age of puberty. Observance of some rules of conduct is in Benin, considered a sacred obligation, and the young members of the community must be trained to respect the beliefs and ideals of conduct held by their seniors.
CHAPTER TEN

Adolescence and Marriage

Under normal circumstances, the celebration of the puberty rites means that the girl is ready for marriage and to have children. If she has not already been betrothed, she is expected to become so after this ceremony.

Boys and girls in the adolescent stage become interested in each other and in most cases befriend each other and become what is known as 'Jole' in Ashanti. This 'jole' or friendship between the two sexes are very often kept as much as possible secretly, the two meeting in the evenings and at night.

Parents in Benin do not bother very much about their adolescent children in connexion with sexual matters so long as girls' puberty rites are performed. They are only worried and strict with the son if he is suspected of meeting or playing with a girl of pre-puberty stage. A girl under puberty age is also restricted from sexual behaviour for fear of 'kyimbra'.

When the adolescent boy is sure of his love for the girl he has been meeting and is sure of his love for the girl he has been meeting and is sure of his pocket, he informs his mother and uncles of his intention of marrying a girl and asks them to marry her for him.
The mother and her brother then sit together and think deeply about that particular girl and all her circumstances. They find out everything about her. First of all they find out whether there is no bad disease such as madness, leprosy, tuberculosis etc. among her family. Then they find out whether the girl has a good character and that she has respect for elders; she is hard working, industrious and does not steal. Another very important thing they try to find out is, whether she does not belong to their clan or the boy's 'ntoro'. If the girl is in the same clan or 'ntoro' their union would violate the prohibited degrees of consanguinity (see appendix VII).

Now when the mother and uncle satisfy themselves that the girl is good under all the circumstances, the next step is to seek the consent of the girl's people particularly her mother, uncle, and lastly the father. But before they can approach these people for their consent they have to pay an amount of five shillings literally called "knocking at the door."

The girl's people on the other hand find out all about the young man who wishes to marry their daughter. They find out whether he has a good character, he is hard working and respectful and if there is no bad disease in his family. If they are also satisfied and give their consent, the young adolescent will then make the money and wine payments known as 'tiri aseda' (thanks for the head or the bride price) which is usually an amount of £5.
eight pounds) and two bottles of gin and four shillings called 'akantaque sejah' (brother-in-law's cutlass). The four shillings is given to the girl's brothers. The head wine and the money is divided into three parts and one part is sent to the father, and the rest is shared among the maternal relatives.

The young adolescent boy afterwards sends some gifts to the bride. The following things are in most cases included in the gifts though the quantity may differ from one person to another according to each one's own means. They are: one tin trunk, two to ten different kinds of cloths and a head kerchief to each cloth, waist beads, a pair or more, sandals, gold trinkets and earrings, meat, fish etc and in addition any amount of money.

After these, the couple is now free to marry. They are taught all the secrets of married life and sex education is given to the girl. She is taught how to behave during marital intercourse; and is taught how to behave and care for her husband and is warned to observe her husband's "ntoro".

The couple is brought before the adult relatives of the two, and the ancestral spirits are called upon to bless them; as wine is poured down, the following words are spoken. "Bone, gha na yiye mmoro! Nanaaom nsamanfo mma no nwe du. Womma mo
akwahosay, onyinkye ne anunonyam." (All bad happenings should go and only good things may come to you. May the spirits of our ancestors make you have ten children, give you happiness, glory and longlives.)

After this the girl may continue to stay in her mother's house, or go with her husband if he stays in a different town or village. One thing is certain. The boy and the girl assume the responsibility of married life, and are now full adults ready to send more children into the world to continue the cycle.
CONCLUSION.

In my study on child training from Pregnancy to Adolescence in Benin, I found out three important things in the lives of the people.

The first is that, the aim in marriage and outside marriage, especially of the women is the production of children.

The second is that, the spirits of their dead ancestors and of their living fathers are thought to possess special powers over them which can either help or destroy them. I found out also that these ancestral rites had taken more or less a religious character.

Thirdly, I have noticed that a lot of superstitious beliefs such as in witchcrafts is common in their doings and in their upbringing of children. These superstitious beliefs are injected into the children and create fear and a sense of insecurity in them.

The three are combined and are always in the centre of all their dealings and ceremonies. In pregnancy, there are so many superstitious acts based on beliefs in the spirits of the ancestors and of the living husband. The same things can be found at birth in their naming ceremonies, in the upbringing of the children, at the puberty ceremonies, and at marriage ceremonies as well.

One important fact is that these superstitious beliefs have roots far down in the minds of all the people including the Christians and that Christian beliefs do not get down into the conscious minds of the people, but are just lying
on top. The Christians practise directly or indirectly most of the superstitious acts e.g. those practised during pregnancy and "abammo" for twins and the tenth child and strongly believe these children are sacred.

These superstitious beliefs connected with the training of the children and their welfare and ceremonies have a far-reaching effect on their lives. The child is afraid to go out at night or sleep alone in a room because he is afraid of ghost and witches. He is afraid to eat a special kind of food because it is a taboo for his 'ntoro' or because the abammo festival has not been celebrated etc.

I feel these fears make the children unhappy at times and prevents them from free movements.

In my research into birth, I can conclude that many of the children born are buried alive; sometimes the baby is too tired to cry just after the birth and this is at times considered dead and buried together with the placenta.

At Benin, parents, especially the mothers have special ways and methods of training their children, some of which I consider wrong. They often use fear and threats as the main instrument of discipline. For example, a mother will try to stop her child from crying by telling him the doctor, a policeman or a ghost is outside etc. This method is wrong because it makes the child unreasonably afraid of the doctor and other harmless citizens. Another instrument the mothers use to get their children do what they want
giving pain to the child, that is by making a small cut on the finger e.g. when the child is sucking a finger or using the left hand for eating. This I consider as cruelty. Other methods can be used such as giving something to the child to such instead of the finger.

In the section on child training, I observed that parents and adults teach the children to guard their tongues that is, they are warned not to talk about anything they see and also to keep quiet in the presence of adults. Very often, a mother will tell her child to shut up his mouth otherwise a chicken would be hung on his lips when the child asks something or wants to know something. This is a sad mistake on the part of the mothers, because children all over the world like to ask questions which is their natural method of learning; but parents in this village through ignorance repress this curiosity and the desire to learn. This treatment of the parents prevents the child from giving his mind on opinion about things from expressing himself, and kills his interest in observing and seeking knowledge about his environment.

Some of the performances in the ceremonies and in the care of the infant I consider very unhygienic. For example, at birth, the midwife sprinkles a mouthful of water over the new baby which is so delicate and is particularly subject to diseases. Another very unhygienic act is that during the naming ceremony the god-mother or father spits three times into the
child's mouth which is intended to give the child
the god-father's spirit. This is very dangerous
and I think it rather gives diseases such as
tooth-ache, cough etc of the god-father or
mother to the child. Again, mothers feed the
babies with unwashed fingers which is also
dangerous for the health of the baby.

Though some of the training of the child
in Benin are bad according to my own opinion
as I have given above, there are others which
I appreciate and think good. For example, a
child is taught to have respect for others'
possessions and not to steal. It is again taught
to have respect for elders and to share it's food
with other children. It is taught to be of good
behaviour that the society appreciates such as
being useful to elders e.g going on errands
willingly etc. Another thing I liked in child-
training is teaching the child to bath from the
head down-wards and not upwards. This I
consider very hygienic as it is always wise to
wash the less dirty parts of the body before we
proceed to the dirtier parts.

Parents encourage their children in make-
believe plays which is very good, because
play is very valuable in the life of the child;
it exercises its faculties and leads him to
practise many things which will be useful in
later life. In the activities of the children I
observed that, the girls are more obedient and
sensitive either to praise or blame than the
boys and parents especially mothers have less
difficulty with girls than with the boys.

Another good point I observed during
my research in Benin is that on the whole, there is strong unity among the women in the village apart from quarrels between rival wives and other simple quarrels. Each woman is interested in one another’s welfare especially towards child bearing and bringing up of children. For example, one can leave her domestic duties and go to a friend or relative who has newly delivered or is celebrating her daughter’s puberty stage, serve her and give her all the help she can. This sense of unity and co-operation between one another has reflected on the children especially the girls. The young girls too will go to serve their friend who is in the 'bra' state, and keep her company. And again every woman is concerned with the welfare of one another’s child, e.g. when a child cries any woman who may happen to be near at that time, either a relative of the mother or not will just hurry to attend it in the same way as its own mother will do.

I realised during my research that some of these native medicines are quite good if only applied in the correct way, but most of them are very dangerous and rather cause harm instead of doing good, e.g. some of the medicines used to cure convulsion and other sicknesses of the children do great harm to them. I have found about two or three children who have nearly just become blind due to the medicines used for curing these from different diseases. Infant marriage is very common.
in Benin which to my mind is very bad.
In the first place, it does not give the young
adolescence free chance of choosing their
own partners. This very often results in frequent
divorces. Secondly, it increases polygamy
which is also very common in the village.

My reason is that a young man may have an
infant wife who is not yet mature to be
married whilst he is ready to marry, so
he usually marries and then when the
infant is ready he will marry her in addition.

The teacher of such a village has
a great responsibility and in order to carry
out his work successfully, the teacher must
first of all visit the homes of her children
and co-operate with the parents. Parents
should be encouraged to know what goes on
in the school so that serious disagreements
do not occur. This will prevent the child
arguing with the parents and saying,
"But our teacher taught us so and so."

The teacher must try as much as possible
to throw and overcome these superstitious
beliefs and the fear of ghosts, witch-crafts
and of such people as doctors and
policemen, and teach them the importance
of the doctor and the policeman in the
community. The teacher must have a real
scientific attitudes and should plant it in
the children from the very beginning and
teach them that life is controlled by nature.

The Western Education has had a
great effect and influence on the people
and their child-training in the village.
It has decreased deaths at birth. In the olden days, many mothers used to die at birth as these native midwives were not quite efficient. Now as there are hospitals and clinics near by in towns like Marapong and Kumasi fewer people are dying at child births. In most cases as soon as the midwife sees she cannot help, the mother is sent to the hospital or clinic though at times it is too late that she dies before the doctor can give any help.

Also babies born with more or less fingers or toes on one limb were killed just after birth, but now the Western Education has influenced so many people that only very few families especially the royal ones do that. The rest just cut the extra finger and keep the child.

Western Education has more or less removed some of their burdens e.g. people were not allowed to bring yams into the village until after the ‘akammo’ festival for the twins and the tenth children.

A cruel thing such as the ‘kyimbra’ ceremony (pregnancy without mensae) is not strictly observed by the Christians as with the heathens which is also an effect of the Western Education.

As I can see from the gradual changes which are coming into the village, in future as education spreads, all the superstitious beliefs and religious acts I have talked about will die away. Gradually, the benefits of scientific discoveries may be used
to solve some of the problems of child training. The disappearance of superstitious, the weakening of the fear of ancestral spirits and the consequent abandonment of many of the practices connected with child training are bound to have disorganising effect on the tribal life of this village. Whether the invading civilization from Europe and America has anything ready to take their place is another question.
APPENDIX

The Development of the Embryo - According to a Native Midwife

In an interview with the native midwife who gave me much of my information about birth, she endeavoured to tell me the stages of the embryo in the mother's womb during pregnancy.

She said, "Until the child is three months old it looks like a dot with much blood around it. When it is three months it looks like a lizard surrounded by blood. This lizard-like embryo swallows up some of the blood each month. At seven months old it becomes a complete baby with all the parts complete." She continued, "Even a child born at seven months old can live when properly looked after. In the eighth month it melts again into blood and hardens in the ninth month. Some of the children are very slow in hardening and in that case the baby only comes out after ten to eleven months."

Appendix II

The Death of a Baby Who is Less than a Week Old

If a baby dies before the eighth day, which is then considered as a potential ghost, the body is treated cruelly, a finger or toe...
may be cut off or even, sometimes the little body is beaten or whipped and buried in a pot instead of a coffin.

In the olden days, the parents shaved their heads, dressed in white and were forced to eat. Under other circumstances they would fast when their child died. The parents on no account should show any sign of sadness but rather of joy, though in reality these parents as I could judge when I last watched one was very sad especially the mother; and yet she was forced by the people around her to look happy.

The mother was fed with a wooden spoon or laddel by her own mother. She was given food three times while the following words were being recited:

"Sudie, didi skwan so na enuye ne, yafunu mu." (dead baby, eat on the path and not in her belly.)

This ceremony is performed to disgrace the dead child so that it will not come back again for such a short time.

Appendix III

Sons of Mothers Sing to their Babies.

Here are the words of a few of the songs mothers in Benin sing to their babies to comfort and soothe them:
1
I have got a beautiful child,
But I don’t get full time to entertain it.
Show your face, Show your back.
(C Turning the baby as she sings the last line.)

2.
Stop!
For your yam is being toasted,
Let us get it ready for you.
For your yam is being toasted,
Let us get it ready for you.

3.
Somebody wished you were hers. But you are mine.
Somebody wished to put you on her costly mat
But I with an old mat have got you.
Somebody wished to own you to put you on
her arms. But I have got you.

4.
I don’t mind if you are not beautiful
Because you have got a smooth
And clean skin.

5.
Kwame, e e! (Name of the child)
You cry when you are hungry.
You play when you are satisfied
Kwame e!
1
Mawo me ba fefesfe.
Mennya adagye. mennye no agors,
Kyere wanum.
Kyere watiko.

2.
Gyae 00!
Na wo bayere da gyam,
Ma yinhwa
Na wo bayere da gyam
Ma yinhwa.

3.
Obi nya wos, me na manya wos
Obi nya wos ato kete pa sos,
Obi nya wos ato nsua sos
Me na manya wo ma ketege sos
Obi nya wos, me na manya wos.

4
Wo ho nye fe a,
Menfa nye biri bi
Na wo honum mu twa!
Kyereden.

5.
Kwame ee, Abosiabo:
Djom de wo a, na woresu.
Wodidi mee a, na worego.
Kwame ee, Abosiabo.
Appendix IV

Games and Dances.

Each day, after the day’s work both on the farm and in the home, boys and girls in Benin spend the evening in the streets playing, singing and dancing. Here are two kinds of games which are mostly played by boys though girls can play too:

(A) Hide and Seek.

A group of boys (any number) group themselves together at one place. A place is marked as a ‘safety home’. One boy stands away from the group who is to be the finder and catcher. The other boys go and find hiding places. At a signal, the ‘finder’ tries to find them from their hiding places and during his hunt each boy tries to reach the safety home before he is caught. Anybody who is caught before he gets to the safety home is to be the new finder. The previous finder joins in the group, and the game is started again.

(B) ‘Nana Aberewa’.

Here is another game which is played by both boys and girls. It is played in the day time or in the evenings when the moon is full.

The children each with a stone
in the right hand sit in a circle. One gives a command, "Yereilee, Go!" (Ready, Go!) all the boys in the circle beat the ground with their stones three times. A song, "Nana Aberewa funa pata tokwrom behwee are o tun etc," is started and the stones after the first pause of the song are passed round immediately from hand to hand to the tune of the music. This continues until one makes a mistake e.g. if one fails to pass his stone in time, then all the rest run up to him and beat him. He runs up to the safety home and says, 'Adwo bree.' (I beg) The game starts again.

(C) *'Ampe.'*

This is a special game for girls only which can be played by any number of them, and can be played both day and night. A number of girls stand in a semi-circle with one in the middle. The one in the middle begins with the first girl on the extreme left end. The two standing opposite each other clap their hands twice and jump high, on landing they bring one foot forward each. When the two opposite legs meet then the other girl has won, and the middle one goes to stand at the end of the line of girls. The other girl starts again from the next girl towards the right end counting each time she is successful. When scores ten then she has finished. This goes on until all have
finished but one.

The girl who finishes last counts ten beating the back of the girl who has not finished on each count. On the tenth they all run up to the safety home before they are caught by the last girl. If she is able to catch one, she joins and becomes the counter; and the one caught is the new catcher. This continues till they are tired and feel to start the game afresh.

This game is very common throughout the Coold coast with little differences at different places.

(D)

'Ass'

This is another kind of game played by girls alone and it is very common all over Khatiki. It is a game which even grown-up women at times play e.g. at funerals etc. It is again played by any number of girls from ten to hundred.

This is how it is played:

The girls stand in a circle or semi-circle with one in the middle. They all clap their hands, sing one of the 'Ass' songs which one of them may start. They all join and sing to the end. On completion of the song the girl in the middle starts and sings alone in some cases mentioning her lover. She falls back on to the people standing in the circle whilst they try to catch her before she is down on the ground.
This falling and catching goes on round in the circle to the tune of the song. When the song is repeated by the others the next person comes in and starts the song again while the previous girl goes to stand at the end till it comes to her turn again. The song is changed when it has gone round. The game continues till the players are tired.

This game is mostly played at night. Only very little girls try to play it during the day.

Here are three different 'ass' songs:

1
Oye saadin koo!
Tinnapa,
Oye saadin koo!
Koo koo.
Oye saadin koo!

2
Yede abasa po o!
Yeretwa o.
Wunnim twa a, yeretwa.
Yede abasa po o!
Yeretwa o.

3
Mnienu ye fe o,
Mnienu ye fe,
Toma mnienu ye fe o!

Mniensa ye fe o
Mniensa ye fe,
Toma mniensa ye fe o!
Appendix V

Bara Songs

Hini me O, Kwaku hini me O!
Hini me O, Kwaku, hini me.
Ogyebirie Kofi a oSi Bantama kotia Hini me
Kwaku Appio Hini me O.
Wonti na yereba O!

This song is usually sung in honour of the girl's betrothal if she has one, if not it is sung naming the father or uncle of the girl.

The words are this:

"Open me, Kwaku Appio (the name of the husband)
It is because of you we are coming."

2.

Osee Agyeman ee, ebio.
Yen uma ee, ma wo homene so e.
Okyekyebiekye ne Kyirekekye,
Na hwan na odoymi aqye atwene?
Werenkyemmemu, yentumi yenso;
Hwan na odoymi aqye atwene?
Afia ne tiri aqyeec, afia ne nana aqyeec,
Afia ne nsa aqyeec, Asafo ee,
Asafo thumi tuo oo, sanwo ensam.
Opoku ba, afua akofena oo.
Osee ba na edii akabinsem yi.
Agyeman ee, ebio.
Infant Marriage (Asiwa)

Infant wives exist and is very common in Benin. A married couple may promise to give an infant girl or even a child as yet unborn to a friend as his future bride. The infant will be brought up to consider herself betrothed to the man whom her parents had promised. In these infant engagements, the future husband will have to present the parents with small gifts e.g. fish, meat, tobacco or sometimes help them on their farm. (If the child when born turns to be a boy the parents are not to repay these presents.)

When the future bride is born the husband brings a present. From time to time he makes his future parents-in-law small additional gifts and may continue to assist them on the farm. In this way, the bride price and dowry are paid and this constitutes a recognised legal union which will entitle the future husband to claim the customary seduction of adultery fees from any other man who makes unlawful advances to his infant wife.

When the child is old enough she may do some services to her future husband by carrying a small bundle of firewood for him or accompanying him to farm. She will always with her people and not her future husband.
Sometimes the girl when reaching mature years tend to disagree with the behaviour. In such a case, her parents and relatives have to pay the value of the gifts received.

In most cases the young couple become attracted to each other and so get married after the puberty ceremony.

Appendix VII

Marriage Prohibitions.

An Ashanti may not knowingly marry any of the following persons:

1. Any of his maternal relatives such as mother, sister, cousin, aunt, and their daughters etc.
2. His half sister or half-sister's daughter.
3. His paternal aunt.
4. His father's brother's daughter.
5. His son's daughter or grand-daughter nor anyone of the same "ntoro" whether really kindred or not.

Sexual union between any of the above mentioned is considered a great offence which affects the whole clan of the two offenders and would bring the wrath of the unseen powers to be wreaked upon if the two are not severely punished. In the olden days the penalty for this was death but now it is a monetary and sheep fine.
Methods of Obtaining Information.

Most of the information in this thesis was collected from informants in the village and through observation I witnessed myself.

I  Informants used During Field Work.

(a) Madam Akua Amomays: Native midwife.
(b) Madam Afua Nyarko: A mother of twins.
(c) Madam Afua Konadu: A mother of ten.
(d) Kofi Amoako: A father of ten.
(e) Madam Yaa Nsowaa: A mother of ten with twins.
(f) Nana Ama Takajuwa: The Queen mother of Benin.
(g) Madam Yaa Nsia: A pregnant woman.
(h) Kofi Kobi: A medicine-man.

There are many more others who added to what these told me.

II  Ceremonies Witnessed.

(a) 'Sudie' a child which died before it was a week old.
(b) Naming Ceremony.
(c) 'Abammo' for twins.
(d) Puberty Ceremonies.
(e) Marriage Ceremony.

III  List of Reference books which I used in preparing this thesis:

(a) Rattany: Religion and Art of Ashanti.
(b) Rattany: Ashanti.
(c) Ruth Benedict: Patterns of Culture.
(d) W. M. Beveridge: Child Study.
(a) Free Drawing on a Blank Page.

A House

This is the door

Two girls are fighting

A Hen

elbo legs.

A Flag.

An orange tree

A snake
(e) Something the child is afraid of.

(a) Free Drawing:

- Akoko
- Hen
- Atadee
- Dress
- Phyinga
  - Water pot
- Umbralke
- Umbrella
- Dana
- House
- Yani
- Tree
- Ako koko
- Cock
- Raven
- Flag
(e) Something the child is afraid of

(b) A Man and a Woman

Man

Woman

Horse

Baby
(c) A Fight

Kwasi

"Kwasi has got a new ball and Yaw wants to play with it too, but Kwasi will not agree so they are fighting."

(This incident really happened the day before the child was asked to do this drawing in her own house.)
A Dream

A boy going to the river side.

The car is chasing the boy.

Two boys fighting over a ball.

The snake is going to bite the boy who is going to the river.
Records of Conditions Under Which Work was Done.

The work was done at home in the interviewer's own room where the children concerned spent much time during the days. The work was done with two children of school age and in classes I and II respectively and were both girls of almost 6 years. These children were not staying far from the interviewer's house and they visited her every morning when their mothers had left them to their farms. The interviewer waited for some time and when the children became familiar with her, she started with the tasks.

(a) Free Drawing.

The first girl was given a blank sheet of paper and the interviewer said, "Draw anything at all you like to feel the page." The child happily said, "Oh, then I am going to draw a house, two girls fighting, a hen, a tree and a flag. Our teachers says I can draw nicely." She started drawing interpreting each one she drew.

(c) Something The Child is Afraid of.

The interviewer said to the second girl, "Your friend, Roma, is drawing nicely. I want you too to draw anything that you are afraid of most." Second girl, " I am going to draw a ghost!" She said this with a queer face.
(c) A Fight.
Interviewer to the first girl, "Have you ever watched some people fighting? Draw any fight you have seen."
Child, "Yesterday, Kwasi and Yaw fought. I am going to draw them."
Interviewer, "Why did they fight?"
Child, "Kwasi got a new ball and Yaw wanted to play with it too, but Kwasi would not agree so they fought."
She started drawing showing Kwasi, Yaw and the ball as she drew them. When she finished she ran with it that she was going to show it to them and she did come back happily.

(d) The Pleasantest Thing the Child Can Think of.

On the next day, the interviewer asked the child (the second one) to draw the pleasantest thing she can think of.
Child: "I am drawing a woman who is pounding fufu and her daughter is turning it." She said this when she had nearly finished drawing. This time she preferred to use a pencil.

(f) A Dream

The first girl was asked to draw a dream she had had and still remembered. She too would use a pencil because her friend was using one. She interpreted the drawing after she had finished the whole thing.
"The boy is going to the river side to fetch water."
The car is running after the boy who is going to the river.

There are two boys fighting. One is taller than the other. The tall boy wants to get the ball from the short one, but he would not agree so they are fighting. The snake is going to bite the boy who is going to the river.

(a) The Inside of the Child's House.

Interviewer to the second girl, "Now the next thing you are going to draw is the inside of your own house. Draw anything that can be seen in the house. After you have finished drawing, I shall go and see if they are right.

Child, "I am going to see once more" she goes off to her house, comes back out of breath after a few minutes. She starts drawing, giving comments on each one she draws as on the drawing like this:
"This is my house. I fought with Yaa this morning so I am going to draw etc."
Once upon a time, there was famine, and Aranse (spider) told his son Nthikuma that he should go to his family, and he himself was also going to his family. Nthikuma started off, and on the way, he saw a palm-nut; he took it up and started cracking it on a big stone. The nut jumped and went into a hole. Nthikuma followed the nut and went into the hole too. In the hole, he saw an old woman who asked him why he had come into her house. Nthikuma told her that there had been famine, and his father Aranse had sent him away. On the way, he got a nut and that nut had run into her house, and that was why he had come to her house.

The old woman said, "All right! Go into that room and you will find three drums. Beat each of them, one will say, 'Take me take me,' and the other will say 'don't take me, don't take me.' Then take the 'don't take me' and you will see something." Nthikuma went into the room, and did what the old lady told him to do. He took the don't take me drum and at once, there dropped down many big yams from the drum. Nthikuma took them to the old lady. The old woman told him to peel the yams, cook the peel and throw the food away. Nthikuma did that and when the food was cooked, it turned into a very good yam. Nthikuma carried the pot of yam to the old woman. She breathed once, and all the food went into her nose.
Ntikuma cooked some again. This time he left some in the kitchen; so when the old woman had taken all the food in by one breadth, he went and ate what he had left in the kitchen.

The old woman gave Ntikuma plenty of the yams and he took them away.

(b1) **A Story About a Bad Girl.**

"Once upon a time, there lived a girl and her mother. One day, when they were going to the farm, and there was a tree which had fallen across the road, her mother told her to pass under the tree. The girl refused and tried to climb. She could not climb it and so she began to pass under and he turned into a water yam." (water yam is called. Afu-asse literally 'pass under'.)

(b2) **A Story About a Good Girl.**

"There lived two rival wives; both of them had a daughter each. One of the daughters was very good and the other was very bad.

One day, the two daughters went to fetch water from the river. When they were collecting the water, an old woman came and begged them for some of the water. The bad girl threw water over her and began to abuse her. But the good girl called her and gave her some of the water. The old woman thanked the good girl and went away. When the two girls came home, they both began to
vomit. The good girl vomitted pieces of
gold and the bad girl vomitted snakes."

(c) The Child's First Wish.

"If I were granted one wish, I would ask
for a new cloth."

(d) Self Description.

"I am a person who can tell many stories.
Again I know how to tell stories and my sisters
tell me many stories. Again I can draw nicely."

(e) The Child's Life History.

"I was born in this village (Benin). I was born
on Saturday because I am called Ama. My
father says, when I was a small child they took
me to a far away town called Akan. Again
I go to school."