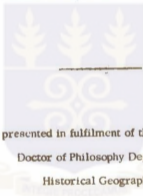


CULTURAL ECOLOGY OF ASANTE: 1702 - 1945

by

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A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements of  
Doctor of Philosophy Degree in  
Historical Geography.

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY,  
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,  
LEGON.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that except references to other people's works which have been duly cited, this work is the result of my own research and that this thesis has neither in whole nor in part been presented for another degree elsewhere.

  
.....  
Candidate's Signature

  
.....  
Supervisor's Signature

Date *1st June* ..... 1974.



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**To the Practitioners of Historical Geography of Africa.**

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ABSTRACT

"The present can be considered as the product of the past." The truth of the statement is demonstrated in a study like this one which uses the genetic approach. Such an approach makes it possible for the present to be illuminated by the past; thus making it possible to explain many of the elements in the environment.

This study on Asante reveals that the region had passed through two major socio-economic phases since the formation of the Asante Confederacy in about 1702. The date 1702, therefore, marks the beginning of the first phase which ends in 1901. During this phase the dominant force (theme) which controlled the cultural ecology was the Asante political power. The Asante Court controlled the main economic activities, namely, trade and gold mining; as well as the various crafts, such as goldsmithing, cire purdue metal casting, cloth making and wood carving. The Court also controlled the population growth and distribution. Unfortunately, agriculture was not considered an important economic venture, therefore, it did not form part of the Court's deliberations. The Asante political power did not flourish forever. In 1902 this power collapsed completely and Asante annexed to the British Crown.

This saw the beginning of the second phase. This phase was characterized by the establishment of Pax Britannica. Within this peaceful atmosphere the cultivation of cocoa was encouraged. This was the era of commercial agriculture. It was this innovation which made all the difference in the cultural ecology of Asante. The processes in this phase ushered Asante into the contemporary by 1945. Indeed, by this date, it was clear that the basic characteristics of the contemporary cultural ecology were sketched. The various elements that make each phase distinctive have been treated with the view of showing both developments and changes that occurred.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am deeply indebted to Prof. K.B. Dickson, the Head of Geography Department and the Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences, my supervisor for his guidance and critical supervision of the work.

Special thanks are due to the late Dr. K.Y. Daaku, Dr. Kofi Frimpong, Dr. Asimeng and Mr. Brefo-Boaten, all of the University of Ghana as well as my colleagues in the Department of Geography for their frank discussions and encouragement.

Mention must also be made of Mr. P.A. Kemevor, the Chief Technician, Mr. J.F. Antwi, technician and the technical staff of the Department of Geography for tracing the maps as well as Nana Boaten and Miss Adwoa Oye for the excellent secretarial work.

I should also like to thank Otumfuo Opoku Ware II, the King of Asante and the Chiefs and Elders of Asante for supplying the basic information (Oral Tradition) for this work.

Finally, I should like to thank the late Mrs A. Boaten, and the Boakye-Boaten family, especially Eno and Nana for their encouragement which has seen me through this work.

AKWASI BOAKYE-BOATEN

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

CONCEPTUAL BASIS

This work seeks to focus attention on a portion of the earth's surface (Fig. 1. 1) which has been humanized by a group of people, who can be identified as a cultural group: the Asante. Various terms can be applied to such a study: Human geography, human ecology, historical geography (because of the time element) or cultural ecology. There is in reality little difference among these, but cultural ecology will be used here since it is obviously more expressive of the intentions of this study.

The term culture has a variety of meanings, such as tillage, good taste, refinements<sup>1</sup>, learning, good breeding etc. In this context, the word culture must be looked at from the anthropological point of view<sup>2</sup>. The descriptive definition which

1. Edited by Thatcher, U.S., The New Websters Dictionary of the English Language (Chicago 1965), p.209.
2. (a) Kroeber, A. L., and Kluckhohn, C., Culture (Cambridge, Mass, 1952) pp. 81-142.  
(b) Kroeber, A. L., The Nature of Culture (Chicago 1950) p. 10.  
(c) Kluckhohn, C., Mirror For Man (New York 1957) p. 20.  
(d) Richards, Audrey, "The Concept of Culture in Malinowski's Work" in Man and Culture (London 1957), pp. 15-16, Edited by Raymond, F.

## LOCATION OF ASANTE

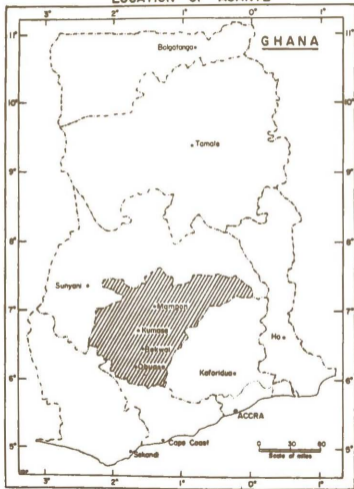


FIG 11



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continues to be quoted very often is Tylor's : "Culture or civilization is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired as a member of society."<sup>1</sup> This definition has influenced anthropologists such as Boas, Wissler, Dixon, Kroeber etc. The above definition probably influenced Spencer who defined culture simply as the "sum total of human experience".<sup>2</sup> This 'human experience' is acquired through socialization, and it is this singular quality which man possesses that sets him apart from other living things, as a unique evolutionary product.

The word ecology was originally used by biologists to mean a kind of relationship shown by living organisms to their physical environment, and in relation to one another.<sup>3</sup> This relationship leads to the structural modification of plants and animals and their activities. This term is, however, used

1. Quoted by Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *op. cit.*, p. 81
2. Spencer, J. E., Thomas W. I., *Cultural Geography* (1969), p. 2.
3. (a) Henderson, J. H. & W. D., *Dictionary of Biological Terms*, p. 160.  
(b) *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science Techn.* Vol. 4.  
(c) *Van Nostrand's Scientific Encyclopedia* (Princeton 1968), and Edit. by Bridgewater W. & Kurtz, S., *The Columbia Encyclopedia* (Columbia 1956).

## LOCATION OF ASANTE

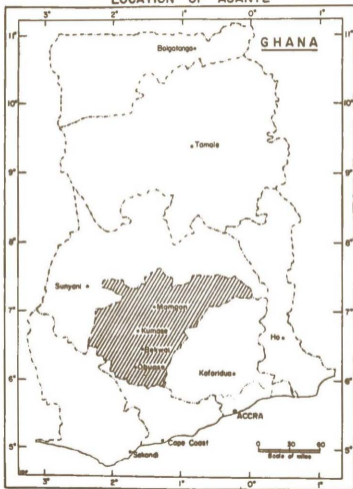


FIG 1.1

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1. Quoted by Kroeber and Kluckhohn, op. cit., p. 81
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(c) Van Nonstrand's Scientific Encyclopedia (Princeton 1968), and Edit. by Bridgewater W. & Kurtz, S., The Columbia Encyclopedia (Columbia 1956).

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differently by the social scientists. It is broadly defined as "the study of the reciprocal relationship between community and its physical environment"<sup>1</sup>. It was this biological view which influenced Ratzel who suggested that anthropogeography is, in effect, human ecology.<sup>2</sup> In sociology it is now used in a way which does violence to its biological origin: "It is conceived as a study of spatial distribution and movements in space of human beings, groups and institutions"<sup>3</sup>.

In geography it has been used to refer to the relationship of man and his total environment.<sup>4</sup> Carl Sauer appears dissatisfied with the use of the word ecology, because of its biological bias. He writes: "It is better not to force into geography too much biological nomenclature. Since we waive the claim for measurement of environmental influences, we may use, in preference to ecology, the term morphology to apply to cultural study, since it describes perfectly the method".<sup>5</sup>

1. (a) Madge, J., The Origins of Scientific Sociology (London 1963), p. 23.  
(b) Edit. by O'Brien, R. W., Readings in General Sociology (Cambridge 1951), pp. 199-200.
2. House, F. N., The Development of Sociology (New York 1936) First Edit. p. 139.
3. House, F. N., *loc. cit.* p. 139.
4. Fried, M. H., "Land Tenure, Geography and Ecology in the Contact of Cultures" in Readings in Cultural Geography Edit. by Wagner Mikesell, p. 302.
5. Sauer, Carl O., Land & Life (Berkeley 1967), Selected works Edited by Leighly John, p. 342.

Jan Broek also criticised the word ecology on the grounds that it seeks to concentrate on the local relationships of a society and its habitat, "virtually ignoring interaction between areas"<sup>1</sup>. The view of human ecology as expressed by Eyre and Jones may not be fundamentally different from the definition above: "a heightened understanding of such relationships can be gained only through disciplined investigation of both sides of the fence, the natural environment (physical and biotic) and the human or cultural one"<sup>2</sup>. This does not, therefore, escape the criticisms noted earlier.

Whatever the criticisms, the concept can be maintained if it is handled properly. One warning is that the environment must not be presented as something relatively fixed or static, "a rigid stage upon which the unfolding human drama is enacted."<sup>3</sup> Indeed this is the criticism Eyre and Jones<sup>4</sup> found with Barrows' human ecology.<sup>5</sup> The environment must

1. Broek, J.O. M., Geography: Its Scope and Spirit (Columbus 1966), p.77.
2. Eyre, S. R., & Jones, G. R. J., Geography as Human Ecology: Methodology By Example (London 1966) Introduction.
3. Ibid. (Introduction)
4. Ibid. (Introduction)
5. Barrows, H. H. "Geography as Human Ecology" in Annals of Association of American Geographers Vol. 13 No. 23 pp. 1-14.

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be seen as something evolving under the natural influences and affected by the work of man of many and different outlooks, very varied equipment, opportunity and initiative.

Methodologically it becomes clear that the basic reasoning behind cultural ecology is that the subject is anthropocentric. In this connection a name such as George Perkins Marsh<sup>1</sup> must be mentioned because he raised the point that man plays great role in shaping his home.<sup>2</sup> Other great names such as Ratzel and Vidal de la Blache must be mentioned when talking about anthropocentricity of Geography.<sup>3</sup> Carl Sauer<sup>4</sup> in his article "Foreward to Historical Geography", enumerated three points underpinning geography and suggested that geography should well be based on the sister subject anthropology. This assertion is true because there cannot

- 
1. Marsh, G. P. Man & Nature (Massach, 1965) passim.
  2. Brock, J. O. M., op. cit. p. 78  
Glacken, C. J., "Changing Ideas of Habitable World" in Man's Role In Changing the Face of the Earth, Edited by Thomas and others.
  3. (a) Tatham, G., "Geography in the 19th Century" in Geography in the 20th Century Edited by Griffith-Taylor (Lond, 1965), p. 63.  
(b) Blache, Vidal de la, Principles of Human Geography, (London 1962), (passim)
  4. Sauer, C. O., op. cit., p. 356.

be any geography that does not consider man as an association of skills. As a result cultural ecology is concerned with the systems of human technologies and cultural practices, as these are developed in particular regions through time by human populations, conceived as cultural groups. Some of the technologies are strictly material ones; for example, working with stones, iron etc., others are social structural systems of administration of both material and social affairs.

This study considers the changes that have occurred as a result of man's creativeness and his ability to borrow from another cultural group. This leads the cultural ecologist to a form of evolutionary and ecological systematization of human occupancy of the earth. Thus man is conceived as an active agent of change.<sup>1</sup> The evolutionary process is known to be directional in time and is generally irreversible, and that in its course it always generates "novelty, greater variety, more complex organization and higher levels of awareness."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. (a) Broek, J.O.M., op. cit., p.23

(b) Edited by Thomas and others, op. cit., (passim).

2. Fried, M.H., op. cit. p.302.

The present study, therefore, addresses itself to an evolutionary or historical perspective. This is essential because the cultural ecologist must be concerned not only with what? and where? but also how? and why? for the period that the phenomena or processes in question have been in existence.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of time dimension or genetic approach in the study of cultural ecology cannot be overemphasized. In his diagrammatic representation of the morphology of the cultural landscape Sauer emphasized the importance of time.<sup>2</sup> Again, in an address "Foreward to Historical Geography" in 1941, Sauer stressed the importance of the historical view in geography, a point which is also made by Hettner. He regretted Hartshorne's neglect of this important contribution by Hettner that geography in any of its branches must be a genetic science.<sup>3</sup> Hartshorne<sup>4</sup> later changed his mind on the importance of the genetic approach in his book: Perspective On the Nature of Geography.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Carr, E. H., What is History (London 1965), p. 87

2. Sauer, op. cit., p. 343.

3. Ibid. p. 352.

4. Hartshorne, R., The Nature of Geography, p. 187.

5. Hartshorne, R., Perspective on the Nature of Geography (London, 1961), pp. 102-106.



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He agreed that in considering the earth as the home of man, the interest of geographer is not confined to the present man but extends to the whole human race throughout its history.<sup>1</sup>

Andrew H. Clark clarified the point of view of historical geography by stating that the genetic approach leads to an examination of the past. This does not mean that one is to seek simple causes in the past to account for contemporary conditions, but rather the conditions observed at any period of time are to be understood as momentary states in continuing and complex processes of change.<sup>2</sup>

This approach has been employed in the present study in order that it may be used, whenever possible, to explain certain contemporary phenomena.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, the genetic approach is bound to generalize; and in so doing, it provides general guides for future action which, though cannot be regarded as specific predictions, are both valid and useful.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Ibid. p. 105

2. Clark, A. H., "Historical Geography" in American Geography: Inventory and Prospects (Syracuse 1954), Edited by James, P. E. & Jones, C. F. Chapter 3.

3. Dray, W. H. , Philosophy of History (Toronto, 1964), pp. 19-20.

4. Carr, op. cit. , p.69.

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This is the realm of probabilism. In short the genetic approach draws inferences from the past in order to conclude that it is probable that a particular process may develop either this way or that way. However weak its predictive nature is, it is better than the one which does not throw any ray of light into the future. This makes geography not only a study of the contemporary, but also of the past and to some extent of the future.

#### SOURCE MATERIAL

The chief source material for this work is oral tradition. In a noteworthy study devoted to oral tradition Vansina gives a good definition. For him "oral traditions consist of all oral and hearsay evidence concerning the past."<sup>1</sup> He thus distinguishes oral traditions from written evidence and from all material objects which may be used as sources for knowledge of the past. Only sources transmitted from mouth to mouth are oral traditions. These constitute aural evidence passed on through the intermediary of language, including the drum language. These communicate a fact neither observed nor recorded by the informant himself.

---

1. Vansina, J., Oral Tradition(Belgium, 1961), p. 22,  
(Chicago 1965) p. 19,

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To study the processes of cultural ecology of Asante

the present author has borrowed from Vansina the distinction between "fixed" and "free" traditions. Fixed traditions are transmitted within groups by specialists and in well-defined forms. They are transmitted as prayers, as songs (eg. Kwadwom) or as proverbs (the drum language) with strict check on their accurate repetition. In each case inaccurate repetition is linked with penalty. On the other hand "free" traditions are transmitted freely from generation to generation. Inaccurate repetition of them is not linked with any penalty. They are passed on from generation to generation as stories, lists and commentaries. Their function is to instruct the youth, sometimes formally,<sup>1</sup> about the community's history, wanderings and heroes. Oral tradition (fixed/free) is known to be rich and respected among the people<sup>2</sup> and could therefore be depended on. In a society where written documents covering the period before the 19th Century are non-existent or difficult to come by,

- 
1. Efa, E., Forosie. (Aylesbury & Slough 1958) passim
  2. This is evidenced by the wealth of information collected by Daaku and Darkwa, Oral Tradition of Mampon (Legon 1968) Daaku, K. Y. Oral Tradition of Adanse (Legon 1969).

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such source material becomes indispensable.<sup>1</sup> There are several shortcomings inherent in oral tradition which can nevertheless be off-set by the use of material from other sources.

In the text several references have been made to Oral Traditions collected by Kofi Darkwa and K. Y. Daaku. Daaku's collection of Oral Traditions of Adanse has been published by the Institute of African Studies, Legon and can therefore serve as a dependable source of reference.<sup>2</sup> A number of references have also been made to the stool Histories collected by J. Agyeman-Duah of Institute of African Studies: Ashanti Research Project, Kumase. These have also been published by the Institute of African Studies. Agyeman-Duah's work deals with the histories of royal houses in Asante, and was

- 
1. Dickson, K. B., "Historical Geography in Africa" In Progress in Historical Geography (Bristol 1972) p. 204 Edfr. Baker, Alan R.H.
  2. The author's dependence on these sources is due to the fact that he was a member of the panel of interviewers who collected the Traditions from Chiefs and elders of the states mentioned. He is therefore aware of their dependability.
- \* See the Table of Bibliography.

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mainly used in the early chapters of the first part of this work to cross-check the author's own information from oral sources. As far as the collection of oral traditions by the author was concerned the names of those interviewed are indicated in the text and also provided in the appendix.

Next comes the primary written source material, made up of colonial records, such as Blue Books, Annual Reports, Commissioners' Reports, Census Reports, etc. As far as Asante is concerned this source becomes important from the time of annexation (1902). These reports, especially Commissioners' Reports, which are kept in the National Archives (Accra & Kumase) and those kept by Balme Library, Legon such as Census Reports, Annual Reports, etc., afford, perhaps, the best information on the people's economic and social activities and on the decay of old enterprises and the beginning of new ones.<sup>1</sup> The reconstruction of Asante during

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<sup>1</sup>. The test of the significance of Archival materials is seen in Kwame Arhin's "Aspects of Colonial District Administration; The Case of the Northwestern District of Ashanti, 1904 - 1911, I.A.S. Research Review, Vol. 8 No. 1, in which he discusses Commissioners' Reports as a source of information.

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the colonial period was made possible by careful utilization of this source material. Like oral traditions, they also have their shortcomings, because occasionally, one comes across a biased statement which should not be accepted at its face value.

The third source material for this work has been books. Among the important books which provide first hand information on Asante in the first two decades of the nineteenth century are the works of T. E. Bowdich and J. Dupuis. These are invaluable sources of information for contemporary writers on Asante. Mention must also be made of the works of Huydecooper, a Dutch who also visited Kumase in the second decade of the nineteenth century.

These works remind one of an earlier European visitor, David van Nyendaal, to Asante in the early part of the eighteenth century. Unfortunately, his report on Asante is not available because he died soon after his arrival at the coast. If his report were available it would, no doubt, have thrown light on Asante nation at its infancy, and served as a basis for the study of the cultural ecology of Asante.

There are also books of travel, such as those by H. M. Stanley, Rev. T. B. Freeman, Ramseyer & Kuhne; also works of British soldiers, such as G. A. Henty, F. Boyle, etc. These works become relevant to the study of Asante from the 1840s. They reveal some aspects of the socio-economic conditions of Asante in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Anthropological works, such as those of Captain R. A. Rattray and Eva L. A. Meyerowitz, also serve as a valuable source of information on crafts, customs, laws, government and the nature of the Asante society. Meyerowitz worked in Brong area, therefore her works are not specific on Asante, yet they serve as a valuable source of information since the Brong are the Asante's northern neighbours.

History books such as those by Reindorf, and W. E. Ward also give some account of the history of Asante and Ghana as a whole, and could provide information to supplement that from oral sources. It must be realised that there are some generalizations from this source,

Mention must also be made of the work of Sir Francis Fuller, the second Chief Commissioner of Asante. His book provides on-the-spot information of what happened in the region from 1905 to about 1920.

Aside from these original works are some secondary sources such as books written by Tordoff and K. A. Busia on Asante. These have relied on the earlier works such as those of Dupuis and Bowdich. No doubt, these also help to supplement the information from the primary sources. On the whole, attempts have been made as much as possible to check on the validity of the information from this general source, because most of these books also suffer the same draw-backs as the Colonial Reports and oral traditions.

#### PRESENTATION

The study covers the period from when a number of independent principalities came together to form a kingdom under the name Asante, after the Feyiase War (1701) up to the end of the Second World War (1945). The significance of the year 1702 (which marked the rise of Asante), in the historical geography of Ghana as a whole has been recognised by Dickson.<sup>1</sup>

1. Dickson, K. B., A Historical Geography of Ghana (C. U. P., 1969), p. 118.



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He contends that the significance of the rise of Asante is not just political; Asante power also "had considerable influence on the country's economic geography"<sup>1</sup>.

The date 1945 is considered by the present author as logical point where the past makes a clear contact with the present: around 1945 the broad patterns of contemporary cultural ecology had crystallised and the growth which is seen now only meant in-filling. Dickson ends his book on Ghana at the beginning of the Second World War (1939).<sup>2</sup> There, he was generalising for the whole country, whereas this work is only limited to Asante. The difference does not invalidate either of the dates.

Within this long time span (1702-1945) there is seen a break in 1902, when there occurred a change in the trend of the cultural evolution or the processes. In short one sees a change in the emphasis of the values of the people of Asante as a result of their intimate contact with an outside culture - the British. Again, this division is only true for Asante and does not conform to the divisions recognised by Dickson.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid.

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Several methods have been employed by historical

geographers to reconstruct the past. One of the popular methods has been that of 'sequence occupance' advocated by Whittlesey.<sup>1</sup> 'Sequence occupance' is the same as cross-section through time. The method suggests that stages could be recognised during which human occupation of an area remained constant in its fundamental aspects, followed by the onset of rapid and profound changes. By this method the present is clarified by pointing out the impact of the past. This method is seen employed in some parts of Dickson's book; for example, Chapters three, four and five form a cross-sectional study of the country's human geography around the year 1700, Chapters twelve and thirteen are also a cross-sectional study of the "final picture period" of the country's human geography.

Another method emphasises development and change. This is the evolutionary approach employed to discuss the development of the major topics of cultural ecology and used by many historical geographers.<sup>2</sup> If this method is used alone

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1. Whittlesey, D., "Sequence Occupance", in Annals of American Association of Geographers, 19 (1929), pp. 162-165.
  2. (a) East, W. G., An Historical Geography of Europe (Lond. 1935).  
(b) Smith, C. T., An Historical Geography of Western Europe (London 1967).  
(c) Pollock, N. C., Agnew, S., An Historical Geography of South Africa. (Aylesbury, 1963)

the result is an unconnected narration of topics. It can be extremely useful if it is blended with the cross-sectional approach as Dickson did.<sup>1</sup> The blending of the two methods calls for ingenuity and proper training in order to avoid repetitions: and in fact, this is a rare quality (as far as methodology is concerned), which Dickson's book possesses. Whatever criticisms that may be levelled against the book, the method is a break-through in the presentation of the cultural ecology of a place.

The other approach is the thematic one where a dominant theme is identified for a given time span and studied in its logical relationships with all relevant variables. This approach works on the principle of the open system, in that as soon as something happens to the dominant theme, the system is bound to change. This is the method employed in the present study. It is believed that this method will make possible the interrelation of relevant phenomena, while at the same time the processes and changes can be seen. For example, during the first phase (1702-1901), the dominant theme was the Asante political power embodied in the Asante Kotoko Court.

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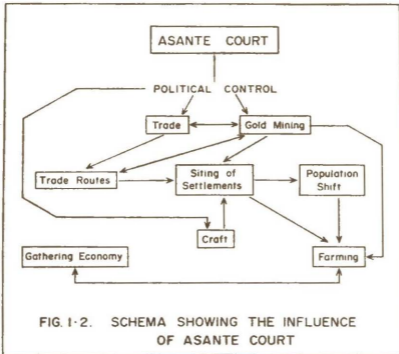
1. Dickson, K. B., op. cit.

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It was the court which influenced the socio-economic life of the kingdom. The influence of the court was directly seen on what were considered to be the two most important economic ventures: trade and goldmining. These two economic activities also had inter-connections. In turn they affected other elements in the cultural ecology of the area as shown in (Fig. 1.2).

The diagram shows the over-riding influence of the court, and so long as the court maintained itself the above system remained. This order was bound to change whenever the dominant theme was affected, as it did in 1902 with the annexation of Asante to the British Crown.

From 1902 onward, it was the colonial power which created an atmosphere of peace under which the cultivation of cocoa flourished, (Fig. 1.3). It was this cocoa growing industry which made the difference. The result of these developments was seen in road building, trade, settlements and population growth/distribution. There are also seen inter-connections between trade and roads, roads and settlements and settlements and population.



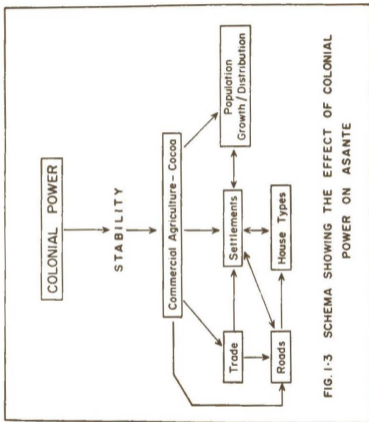


FIG. 1-3 SCHEMA SHOWING THE EFFECT OF COLONIAL POWER ON ASANTE

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The work is broadly divided into two main sections.

Section one begins with an introductory chapter, the present one, which deals with the conceptual basis of the work and also introduces Asante as a cultural group. This is followed by chapter two which gives the background information of the territory before 1701. Then comes the First Phase, chapters three to six, which discusses the evolution of the cultural ecology of Asante from 1702 to 1901. The Second Phase is introduced by the fall of Asante power and the establishment of the British rule (the indirect rule and Pax Britanica). The remaining chapters are about the cultural ecology of Asante from 1902 to 1945.

Finally in the presentation, some dates have been fixed where necessary in the text. In so doing, some documented events of local significance have been employed as guides, e.g. when an event is known to have occurred, say, a year after the exile of Prempe I (1896) then the date can be fixed around 1897. Dates so fixed can only be approximate. In a semi-literate society where there is a paucity of written documents, and where oral tradition has been carefully handed down, and where it is highly respected as a facet of historical study, this should be accepted as valid in fixing approximate dates. This method was

used in the 1960 and 1970 Population Censuses.

Even though the study of place names may, strictly speaking, fall outside the purview of geography, it can be useful to the geographer by providing support for an argument, or by helping to make a picture he has painted richer or more lush.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, place names can be misleading if their modern, apparent meaning is different from their original genuine one, especially as a result of changes in spelling. For example, the name Efidwaase, originally meant Efiada-dwa-ase, (which literally means Friday market); but with its contemporary spelling of Effiduase, the word dua-ase means 'under a tree', completely renders the original meaning obscure and incomprehensible. In Asante, this problem arose because those who first wrote these names merely wrote what they might have heard but not exactly what the informants said. This was because these people were non-Akan. For example, Kumase (Kum-ase) which means 'under the Kum (tree)' was first anglicized as Coommassie, and is now spelt Kumasi. But without going into linguistics, the suffix -asi is not the same as -ase, because whereas -ase when rendered freely means under, -asi may denote an end.

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1. Lind, Ivan., "Geography and Place Names" in Readings In Cultural Geography: ed. by Wagner, P. L. & Mikesell (Chicago 1962), p. 118.



This problem is known to be prevalent in the place names of Asante.

In order not to repeat an old mistake the spelling of place names in this work has been written in Asante-Twi, exactly as the chiefs and elders pronounced them to the author.<sup>1</sup> These forms of spelling are not very different from the spelling used in 1960 and 1970 Population Censuses; in order that the "new" spelling will not bring any confusion the old spelling is, where necessary, written in parenthesis, e.g. Juaben, Juaso, and Ejura become Dwaben, Dwaso, and Adwera, respectively; the major changes here being Jua- to Dwa- and Eju- to Adwe-. Furthermore, the ending -si becomes -se, for example, Kumasi and Obuasi become Kumase and Obuase respectively. It is hoped that these forms of spelling, based on exact pronunciation current in Asante, will be a contribution to the spelling of place names in Ghana.

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1. Because of this the author spent two weeks in Kumase Traditional Court listening to the chiefs; and another two weeks in Mamponhene's Court; he has also been to Adansehene's Court, all during the period of research as an observer.

## THE ASANTE AS A CULTURAL GROUP

### The Political System of Asante

One cultural index of the Asante was their political organization. The significance of this was the way this phenomenon was utilised to make Asante the greatest middle-man state in the greater part of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, (refer Chapter 6 ) and how it also indirectly affected other human elements. Asante was known to possess an unwritten but elaborate Law and Constitution,<sup>1</sup> which was worked by a government traditionally arranged hierarchically. At the apex of the governmental machinery was the Asantehene and his national court, made up of the powerful Lords, (the Abrempon), the paramount chiefs in the realm (Fig. 1. 4). Next came the various Paramount Chiefs and their State Councils made up of the chiefs of the sub-states (Fig. 1. 5). The third tier, that is the court of sub-chiefs, also had a council made up of the village headmen (the Adikrofo). These in turn had the Apamfo or the counselors who were clan or family heads. At the lowest stratum of the body politic was the family or clan which was the

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1. Rattray, R. S., Ashanti Law and Constitution (O. U. P. 1929) (passim).

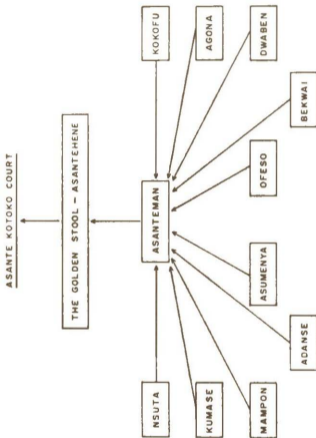
HIERARCHY OF ASANTE POLITICAL SYSTEM

FIG. 1 4

## HIERARCHY OF MAMPON KONTONKYI STATE COUNCIL

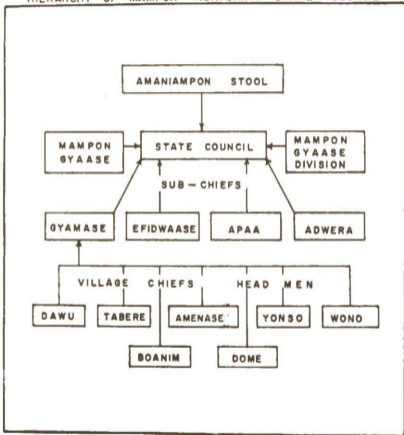


FIG. 1-5

basis of the political system. This staggered arrangement made the participation of the government of Asante an affair for all.

It was the national council, the Asante Kotoko Court<sup>1</sup>, which controlled the economy as referred to above. The composition of this court was very simple (Fig. 1.4). It was headed by the Asantehene or the King of Asante, who was also the occupant of the Golden Stool. The other members of the court were the Amanhene, or the Paramount Chiefs of Mampon, Dwaben, Kumawu, Nsuta, Kokofu, Bekwai, Adanse, Agona, Ofeso (Ofinso), Edweso, etc., as well as the chiefs of Kumase. The occupant of the Mampon Silver Stool was made the second in command after the Asantehene.

The Asante political organization could be described as a confederation. The following were some of the tenets of this confederation:

- (a) All the Abrempon, that is, the Paramount Chiefs, had to swear the oath of allegiance to the Asantehene (who in turn had to swear the oath of allegiance to the Amanhene).

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1. The Asante Kotoko Court is the same as The Asante Royal Court or the Asante Court.



Whatever the measures to curtail the powers of the Amanhene, the latter remained jealous of their privileges and powers and were ready to take up arms if the central authority proved inclined to act too despotically. Dwaben took up arms against Kumase in 1835 and 1875 for apparent despotic behaviour of the men in Kumase. Indeed the commands of Kumase were obeyed so long as the prerogatives of the Asantehene were exercised according to established customs.

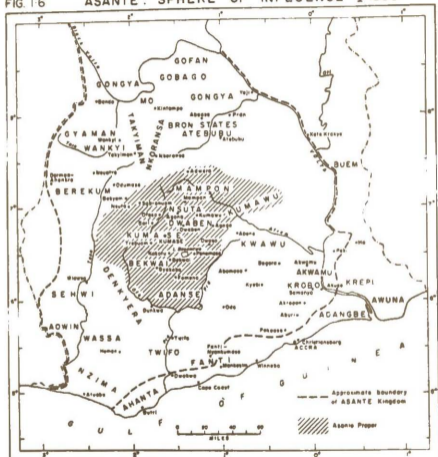
Politically, the decisions of the Asante court were regarded as national and had to be carried right through to the cottages and hamlets. In some cases, the Amanhene had to go back to inform their various state councils before final decisions were taken in Kumase. Once agreed, they became laws, and offences arising out of such decisions had to be settled at the Asantehene's court at Kumase. By a careful study of the Asante constitution, one would be right to conclude that the union was a loose confederation,<sup>1</sup> and its success depended on the system of decentralization.

Asante's political rule over the Provincial States (Vassal States), (Fig. 1.6), was not direct as in Asante proper. The

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1. Fuller, F. C., A Vanished Dynasty: Ashanti (London 1921), p. 34

FIG 1.6 ASANTE: SPHERE OF INFLUENCE c 1800



Adapted from a map in "THE GOLD COAST COLONY & ASHANTI: HISTORICAL EVENTS" 1800-1846  
Survey of Ghana, Accra, 1967



provincial vassal chiefs were left a measure of freedom to practise their own customs. What they were obliged to do was two-fold. Firstly, they had to pay their annual tribute to Kumase regularly; for example, the Dagomba had to pay their annual tribute of one hundred each of the following items: slaves, fowls, cattle and sheep.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, they were to supply men-at-arms to replenish the Asante army whenever the Asante were going to war.<sup>2</sup> But the rulers were not obliged to attend the Odwira, nor were they made members of the Asanteman Council. Thus, the various states which made up provincial Asante never regarded themselves as Asante and even detested being vassals to a distant monarch.

Each of the vassal states was put under one of the Abirempon of Kumase. These chiefs never visited their respective territories. So long as the latter paid their annual tribute, they were left in peace to practise their own traditions and customs. In short, the Asante's rule over the outer territories was only military, hence the many revolts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, it was due to this weak political control over provincial Asante that made all the vassal states of

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1. Ibid., p. 34

2. Bowdich, T. E., Mission From Cape Coast to Ashantee  
(London 1819) p. 317.

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Asante declare their independence in 1874 when Asante was defeated by the British.

### Politics and Society

The Asante political system permeated the socio-economic life of the people, either directly or indirectly. A few examples might make the above statement clear. In the first place, the Asante royal court came to control the economy in this part of West Africa. This was done by several means. For example, by the beginning of the 19th century all the major trade routes had been re-routed to converge on Kumase, the capital of Asante; by this measure, all major trade routes came under the political control of Asante. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Asante court dictated the tempo of the coastal and northern trade. Trade on the Gold Coast was disrupted whenever the Asante armies were on the field; but the same quickly revived whenever the Asante made peace.

The next major sector of the economy which the court deliberately controlled was gold mining (refer Chapter 4 on Goldmining). The court also controlled such economic activities as lake fishing and professional hunting. Likewise, major crafts such as kente weaving, wood carving and goldsmithing came to be

controlled in one way or the other by the court.

The political system also affected the growth and distribution of population. Throughout most of the Asante wars, especially among the Akan tribes, the war captives were resettled in parts of Asante, eg. the Denkyira, who were resettled in Atwoma and the Fante and Assen who were resettled at Lake Bosomtwe to teach the Asante the art of fishing. The political system also sought to stabilise the concentration of population around the traditional state capitals, because those centres provided the needed protection in those days. The Asante political power made a conscious effort to encourage other Twi speakers who wanted to settle in Asante to do so. By this means, the population of Asante was augmented. Finally, the system stabilised the political boundaries of the various states within Asante and marked clearly the Asante national boundary with the surrounding vassal states.

#### Military Organisation

One of the hallmarks of the Asante was their reputation as being the bravest and most warlike of probably all the peoples in this part of West Africa.<sup>1</sup> What made the Asante military

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1. Rattray, R. S., Ashanti Law and Constitution, p. 120

giants was not only their bravery but also their military organisation which did not exist anywhere else in Ghana.<sup>1</sup> The Asante military organisation included the following divisions:

- a) The Akwansrafo or the scouts; their duty was to find out the enemy's position.
- b) They were followed by the Twafo, the Advance guard. (Twa means to cut, they cleared a path through the bush). This group usually contained several men whose guns were charged with "medicine". They often advanced in two or three columns. The first line fired, then standing back to re-load, the second line passed through them, they in turn fired; after which the last line passed through both and became the first line. Reinforcements for the Twafo were drawn from the Gyaasefo and Ankobea, and even Kyidom, the rear guard.
- c) Behind the Twafo were the Heralds and Afona soafo (sword bearers) armed with whips, who flogged anyone attempting to retire.

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1. (a) Rattray, R. S., op. cit., p. 120

(b) Reindorf, Rev. C., History of the Gold Coast and Asante, p. 119

- d) Behind these came the Adonten or the main body.
- e) The King (chief) surrounded by his personal body guards, the Gyaase in front and the Ankobeas behind.
- f) The flanks were guarded by the Nifafo and Benkumfo, the right and the left wings respectively.
- g) The rear guard, the Kyidom, in action always faced to the rear (Fig. 1. 7)<sup>1</sup>.

#### The Asante War Formation

- a) Akwansrafo - Scouts
- b) Twafo - Advanced guard
- c) Heralds - 'pushers' of the Twafo
- d) Adonten - Main body
- e) Gyaasefo - King's body guards, (in front).
- f) KING -
- g) Ankobeaso - King's body guards, (behind)
- h) Nifafo - Right flank guards
- i) Benkumfo - Left flank guards
- j) Kyidom - Rear guard

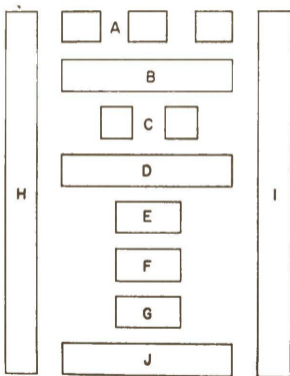
Each of the other states also had similar war formation,

e. g. Kokofu, (Fig. 1. 8)<sup>2</sup>

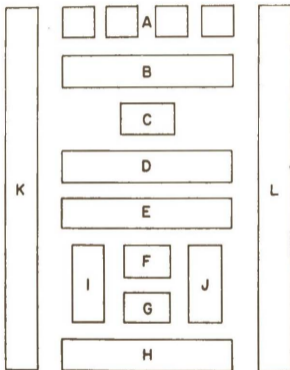
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1. Rattray, R. S., op. cit., pp. 121-122

2. Rattray, R. S. op. cit., p. 207.

ASANTE WAR FORMATION

After Rattray FIG. 1.7

KOKOFU STATE WAR FORMATION

After Rattray

FIG 1-8

The Kokofu State War Formation

- a) Akwansrafo
- b) Twafo
- c) Heir apparent who 'pushes' the Twafo
- d) Akwamu
- e) Kontire
- f) Oyokohene, who pushes the Kontire and Akwamu chiefs
- g) The Chief
- h) Kyidom
- i) Ankobea
- j) Gyaase
- k) Right wing guards
- l) Left wing guards.

In war, the last rallying point was round the chief's stool (which was always carried to war). All members of the aristocracy were expected to lay down their lives rather than allow the stool to fall into the hands of the enemy. The Asante saying "Fedee ne wuo a fayinam wuo" (If it is a choice between dishonour and death, death is preferred) supports the above view.



Furthermore, the Asante war cry: Asante Kotoko kum apem-a-apem beba, (literary, Asante porcupine, kill a thousand and a thousand will reappear) attests to the bravery of the Asante.

Before leaving home to campaign, all captains would swear the solemn oath of Ntam-Kese Mmiensa before the Asantehene to fight without retreating until the head of the enemy's captain was obtained. The ordinary soldiers would also "drink fetish" (nom abosom), to fight to the end. This spiritual and moral preparation before taking the battlefield was probably not only limited to the Asante: other Akan tribes did the same, but the former were known to have used it effectively in their campaigns.

Before the final fall of the Asante in 1900, they were described as "warlike". One would like to find out whether the Asante were only interested in fighting since the Asante army was constantly in the field from 1700 till 1900. It appears the Asante demanded justice and fair play, because they only went to war when they had exhausted the field of diplomacy. In most cases, they took the battlefield to arrest a rebel vassal chief or to punish a chief whose subjects had maltreated the Asante traders and refused to apologise. Often, fighting ceased if the opposing

leader was arrested or killed. Another factor which made the Asante warlike was that it was a landlocked state, completely isolated from the coastal and northern markets. And as a nation whose prosperity depended on trade, it was reasonable that it should have an access to these market centres. As a result, any state which obstructed the Asante traders quickly had a reprisal from the Asante court. The very name Asante has a connotation of a fighting people. It is said when the King of Denkyira heard of the union of the Asante states as Kotoko, he remarked that it had been formed because of war against him, "Osa-nti" (literary, because of war). Thus, the members of the union became known as Sa-nti-fuo<sup>1</sup>, (corrupted to Asantefuo), hence the name Asante.

### Communalistic Spirit<sup>2</sup>

The coming together of the independent states to form the nucleus of the Asante nation was one of the greatest achievements of these people. This feat could not be achieved by other Akan groups such as the Fante who remained fragmented. This

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1. Busia, K. A., The Position of Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti, (O. U. P., 1965), p. 52.

2. This characteristic could be found among the Akan of which Asante is a sub-group.

coming together of the Asante infused in them a rare communalistic spirit, and built a society in which "each was his brother's keeper". In time of war, they rose up as a united group and fought. In time of peace, this spirit was seen at work in many instances. In founding settlements, young men came together and helped each other to build the houses. Villagers communally provided and kept clean places of conveniences and sources of drinking water. It was through the utilisation of this quality by the colonial government that much was achieved in the form of rural development. Today, communal labour is part of the rural life of Asante.

The Asante were pragmatic and were ready to experiment and accept new ideas if the innovation did not undermine their cherished traditions. This is seen in the evolution of their material culture, when they quickly acquired the knowledge of gun warfare, and the use of European goods such as tobacco, tinned foods, cloths: and in modern times, many sophisticated goods such as asbestos sheets, etc.

Lystad, who worked in Asante concluded his work by writing:

" The Ashanti in their history have resisted firmly where possible, yielded reluctantly where necessary and grabbed eagerly where desirable. Whatever have been the social changes Ashanti have retained their identity and integrity as a functioning satisfying society",<sup>1</sup>

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1. Lystad, R. A., The Ashanti: A Proud People,  
(New Brunswick 1958), p. 188.

PART ONE

THE PEOPLING OF ASANTE

The name Asante appeared for the first time in any European literature at the beginning of the eighteenth century. This was the time when some Akan clans had come together to form a kingdom with Kumase as their capital, some few years earlier. This territory was not the original home of the Asante. Originally all the ancestors of the Asante lived at Adanse /Amansie<sup>1</sup>. Adanse is therefore an important ancestral home of many Twi speakers. The area is traditionally known in Akan cosmogony as the place where God (Odomankoma) started the creation of the world<sup>2</sup>. It was the same area bounded by the Pra, the Ofe and the Oda rivers where the Akan<sup>3</sup> developed some of their basic political and social institutions,<sup>4</sup> such as the ideas of the clan and kingship which was personified in Awurade Basa (the first known Adanse Chief) (04, 05, 06).<sup>\*</sup> Furthermore, Adanse was the first of the

1. (a) Claridge, W. W., A History of the Gold Coast & Ashanti, Vol. I, (London), 1915, p. 12.  
(b) Daaku, K. Y., Oral Tradition of Adanse, (Lagon 1969) passim.
2. Reindorf, C. C., The History of the Gold Coast & Ashanti, (Basel 1896) p. 48.
3. The Fante, a section of the Akan do not appear to have connections with the Adanse area.
4. Boahen, A. A., "The Origins of the Akan" Ghana Notes and Queries (G.N.Q.), No. 9, 1966, pp. 9-10.

\* Look at Appendix two for the names of those who were

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five principal Akan (Twi) states (The Akanman Piesic Num) of  
Adanse, Akyem, Assen, Denkyira and Asante in order of  
seniority.

Evidence of the above claim for Adanse is shown by the fact that most of the ruling clans of the Akan forest states trace their origins to Adanse. The Asona who founded Edweso (Ejisu) and Ofeso (Ofinso) in Asante and the Akyem Abuakwa state claim that they originated from Kokobiante, near Sodua, a small village which existed between Akrokyere (Akrokere) and Dompaso. The Assen both of the Assen of Atandansu (Fante Nyankomase) and Asona of Apemanin, also the Afutuakwa of Fosu and the Aboabo of Assen Nyankomase trace their original homes to that stretch of territory between the Pra river and Kusa range. Their most renowned sites were Nimiaso and Apagya for the Atandansu and Ansa for Apemanin. The Agona who founded the kingdom of Denkyira were known to have once occupied that land stretching from Asokwa westward to the neighbourhood of Oboase and Akrofuom to the confluence of the Oda and Ofe rivers, where the capital, Abankesieso, was situated. The Bretuo of Mampon and Kwau trace their home to Ayaase and Ahensan, while Abadwan and Edubiase are known to be

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the early homes of the Oyoko clan (07, 06). Finally, the Ekona of Fomena claim to have originated from Adanse (Fig. 2. 1). This place then could be said to have nurtured most of the important Akan (Twi) clans. It is noteworthy that apart from the tradition of Adanse all stories of migrations and modes of travel tend to be ill-supported, hazy and, by and large, unintelligible.

Adanse area could reasonably be identified on the "Dutch map of the Gold Coast 1629" as Acanij, where "lived the most principal merchants who trade gold with us" (Fig. 2. 2). It is from this place that the clans which later founded the Kingdom of Asante migrated northwards. It must be emphasized that at the time of their movement northwards, the ancestors of the Asante had acquired many of their characteristics that made them identifiable as a people with identical aspirations and mode of life.

There is no written literature to support the time when the clans began to move from Adanse, but it must have been after 1629, because none of the states in Asante appeared on the Dutch map of the Gold Coast. The only place which seemed to have been known at the coast by that time was (Taffoe) Tafo. It is probable



## THE CRADLE OF ASANTE

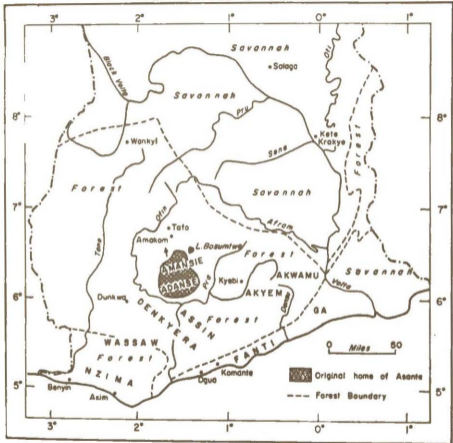


FIG. 2-1

### MAP OF THE GOLD COAST, 1829

Map of the Kingdom of the EC of Sierra Leone and the Kingdom of the EC of Sierra Leone. The map shows the coastline of the Gold Coast, with various regions and towns labeled. The map is oriented vertically, with the coastline on the right side.

This map for the first time so gathered brought together in one engraving all those who take specialisation in the, in by somebody else a better one will be made.

THE KINGDOM OF THE EC OF SIERRA LEONE

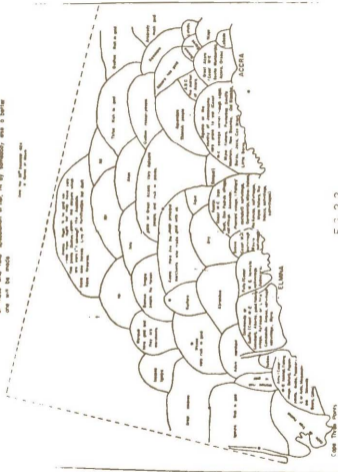


FIG 22

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that the people started to move northwards after the death of the third King of Denkyira, Aha, in about 1632.<sup>1</sup> The reign of the sixth King of Denkyira, Werempe-Ampem, (1640s) who had at his disposal a powerfully organized state army<sup>2</sup>, must have been a decisive period for the mass movement of these clans northwards. Thus the movement of the ancestors of the Asante is associated with the rise of Denkyira because this new power in the neighbourhood of Adanse (Fig. 2, 3) was apparently a threat to the peace of their neighbours.

The reasons for these migrations northwards are complex. The traditions among the Asante appear to attribute the thrust northwards to two basic causes: dynastic disputes and overpopulation. For example, the Bretuo of Mampon were reputed to have left Ahensan because of a disputed succession.<sup>3</sup> Bonwere tradition also claims that they left Adanse because of a disputed succession(23)

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1. Kumah, J. K., "The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Denkyira", Ghana Notes and Queries No. 19, 1966 p. 34
  2. Kumah, J. K., Op. cit. p. 34
  3. Rattray, R. S., Ashanti Law and Constitution(O. U. P. 1929) p. 253.

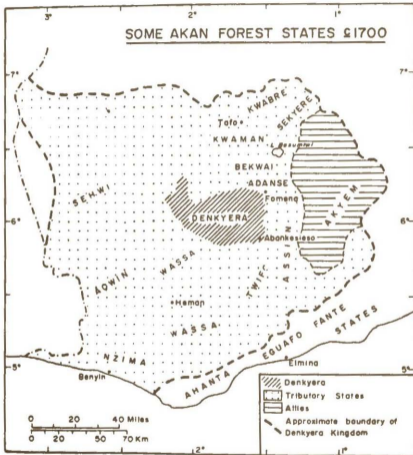


FIG. 2-3

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entered into the calculations of the ancestors of the Asante, for they either had to stay in Adanse and be made slaves by the military states being created in the south or move northwards into comparative freedom. This view seemed to have been emphasized by Fynn while he rejected the economic factor put forth by Wilks. Fynn writes: "this thesis is unsatisfactory because it underestimates the political and economic revolution which had taken place in this part of West Africa".<sup>1</sup> The author believes that such an extreme view is rather unfortunate, and that even though commerce was not the prime factor it did play a part in the movement of the ancestors of the Asante from Adanse area as put forward by Wilks. The ancestors of the Asante knew the importance of trade and their settlement around Tafo should be a significant factor that must not be rejected outright, because Tafo was known to be rich in gold (refer Dutch map) and should be able to attract these people who knew the importance of gold in the then trade to the south. This leads to the second factor of importance, that is, the influence of the European trade. These people might have moved out to a place where conditions were favourable for effective participation in this trade;

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1. Fynn, J. K. ,Op. cit. p. 25.

On the other hand, the Kumawu say that they left Asumenya because of a population explosion which resulted in an acute shortage of farming and hunting land.<sup>1</sup> Some historians<sup>2</sup> have also tried to explain the reasons of the Asante migrations northwards from Adanse/Amansie areas.

In the author's view, the movement of the ancestors of the Asante from Adanse/Amansie northward was the result of the interplay of several factors which were internal and external. The more important factor was the political atmosphere of the Adanse area, as a result of the emergence of the Akwamu, the Akyem and, most important, the Denkyira. It appears that the "numerous enterprising or discontented families",<sup>3</sup> moved northwards because of political pressures emanating from those southern states. Thus a strong element of self-preservation

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1. Rattray, R. S., Op. cit., p. 217.
  2. (a) Wilks, Ivor, "The Northern Factor in Ashanti: Begho & Mande" in Journal of African History, 11, 1, 1961.  
(b) Fynn, J. K., "The Rise of Ashanti" in Ghana Notes & Queries (G. N. Q.) No. 9, 1966, p. 25.
  3. Bowdich, T. E., Mission From Cape Coast Castle to Ashanti, (London 1819), p. 229.

in their home area they were too close to the trade-minded, well-established states of Denkyira, Akwamu and Akyem.<sup>1</sup>

The last important factor which was internal was due to population pressure in Adanse and Amanste. This factor might have led to stool disputes which were rife among the clans in Adanse, because as their numbers increased, the most powerful personalities might have dreamed of building kingdoms that could be as powerful as those of Denkyira and Akwamu. The importance of this hypothesis lies in the fact that when they moved some clan leaders succeeded in building powerful states such as Dwaben, Mampon and Ofeso. This idea of organisation of state might have been copied from the southern states.<sup>2</sup> (22)

These ancestors of the Asante moved to the north because a closer look at the distribution of Akan states in those days (Fig. 2.3) would show that the only chance open to the migrants was the north where there were comparatively less powerful states. The Guan who lived in the environs of Kwabere and Sekyere (where the ancestors of the Asante moved) were not powerful enough to resist the movement of these invaders who used firearms.

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1. Boateng, K., "The Asante Before 1700" in *Research Review* Vol. 8 No. 1 I.A.S. University of Ghana, Legon, 1970
  2. Osei Tutu, the founder of Asante nation, learnt the craft of chiefship from the courts of the Kings of Denkyira and Akwamu.

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There appeared to be two ways by which the people moved: some migrated on a large scale as a whole settlement decamped, en masse, and settled in new areas. This was what occurred with the migration of the people of Mampon, Nsuta and Kumawu<sup>1</sup>. All these groups were led by powerful individuals who later became founders of the various settlements. Others also moved in small numbers but in clans which included the branches of the Ekoona, the Aduana, the Asenee, etc. It appears that the Ekoona, the Aduana, the Asenee, etc. moved first; the last two to move were the Bretuo and the Oyoko in that order. The early Twi speaking states to be established by these clans were Kaase, Amakom, Tafo, Wonoo, etc. all around modern Kumase. It was left to the Oyoko clan to unite them into the Kumase State of Asante.

Up to this time the impression so far created may be that the migrants moved into an empty territory and just took possession of the land. Indeed the land was peopled, however sparsely, and these immigrants from Adanse had to fight with the old inhabitants of the land, to get some land on which to settle. Oral tradition supports the idea that the Asante met some people (13, 33)<sup>2</sup>

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1. Rattray, R.S., Ashanti Law and Constitution, p.27.

2. Agyeman-Dua. J., Stool History of Agogo, I. A. S. ACC:No. AS, 62.



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There is also archaeological evidence to show that modern Asante area had been peopled for a long time, (however scanty the population had been). Dickson<sup>1</sup> in his book vividly discusses the various phases of the cultural history of Ghana as a whole. His map (after O. Davies) showing the distribution of Sangoan sites (Fig. 2. 4) does not preclude the Asante area. Furthermore, the Neolithic culture which was named the "Kintampo Culture"<sup>2</sup> spread through modern Asante with a fair concentration of stone celts in Adanse area<sup>3</sup>. The above archaeological evidence is enough to support the view expressed by Rattray that "The forest belt had probably been their (the Asante) habitat from time immemorial."<sup>4</sup>

If the Asante themselves say that they met the Guan in their new home, then the Guan may probably be associated with the Neolithic people. Dickson suggests that the Guan "in view of their possible countrywide distribution, could have been direct descendants of the Neolithic population".<sup>5</sup> The Guan lived in parts of

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1. Dickson, K.B. Op. cit., pp. 3 - 13.

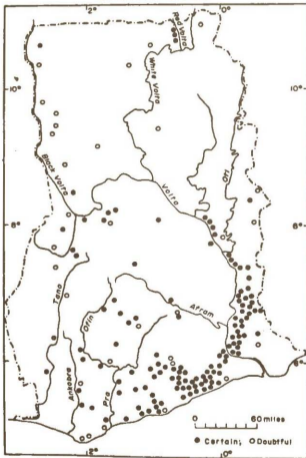
2. Davies, O., "The Invaders of Northern Ghana", Universitas (Legon 1961), IV, 5.

3. Ibid., p. 12

4. Rattray, R.S., The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland, (OUP 1932) I, XX.

5. Dickson, K.B. Op. cit., p. 14

## SANGOAN SITES



After O. Davies

FIG. 2-4

Kwabere and Sekyere, and their tradition claims that before the arrival of the Asante in this area they had established a huge empire stretching from Gongya (Gonja) across the Volta River (Firaw) to the coastal districts (19, 13). Atara Firaw had his capital at Gyanebofo in the Afram plains<sup>1</sup> (19, 13) far to the east of Asante Region and north east of the present Kwau (Kwahu) traditional area.

However fragmentary the archaeological evidence and however patchy the evidence from oral traditional sources may be, Kwabere, Sekyere, Atwoma and Asante Akyem districts were already occupied before the ancestors of the Asante moved in. Aside from the Guan, there had been an advance movement of some Twi speakers either from Adanse or elsewhere from the south to this area. For example, in Atwoma the Dormaa<sup>2</sup> (01, 15) had established a large capital at Suntreso near Kumase.

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1. (a) Ameyaw, K., "Kwahu - An Early Forest State", G.N.Q. No. 9, 1966, p. 44.
  - (b) Painter, C., "The Guan and West African Historical Reconstruction" G.N.Q., No. 9, 1966, p. 62.
  - (c) Rattray, R.S., Ashanti Law and Constitution, p. 218
  - (d) Efa, E. Forsie (Stough 1958), pp. 7-8.
  2. Anarfi, An Historical Geography of Atwoma (Legon 1970) Unpublished, B.A. Dissertation.

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In Asante Akyem, the Akyem Bosome were already there. The Bono at Takyiman had their territory stretching southwards to the environs of present Ofeso.

Invaders from Adanse/Amansie had to fight these people who were already on the land. In Atwoma the Dormaa were defeated after several encounters and were driven beyond the Tano river. The Guan were also routed. Finally the Akyem who lived in modern Asante Akyem district were defeated. In all these encounters the ancestors of the Asante drove some of their enemies away and absorbed others. Commenting on the occupation of the modern Asante area by the Asante, Bowdich<sup>1</sup> wrote that the Asante Kingdom was founded on the ruins of the Inta.

Looking at the successes of the Asante, one would like to explain why they won most of their encounters. Several factors might have contributed to their many successes which led to the effective occupation of their new home. In the first place, these migrants were better armed than those they met. They moved at the time when gun warfare was known by well organized states such as Denkyira and Akwamu, who were their (Asante's) adversaries. Furthermore, as traders to the coast

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1. Bowdich, T. E., Op. cit., p. 228

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they had, no doubt, acquired guns with which they fought against the Guan and the Dormaa who might have been ill-equipped militarily. Asante tradition says that while they (the Asante) used guns, swords and shields and bows/arrows, the Guan only used the last two groups of war implements (01, 03).

Secondly, the temporary military alliances of the invaders helped a great deal. The importance of this factor lies in the fact that when the ancestors of the Asante moved from Adanse they regarded themselves as the Dwaben, the Mampon, the Nsuta, etc., and were bound together by such ties as common origins, customs and language, but politically they only recognised a loose relationship with one another. The basis of their unity later on was the fact that they had to fight for their survival. In time of war against their common enemy, these independent chiefdoms came together temporarily. There are a few examples of such temporary unions. Adu Gyamfi of Wono (from the Bretuo clan) assisted Obiri Yeboah of Kwaman (from the Oyoko clan) to fight the Dormaa in Atwoma(03, 02). Later the combined forces of Dwaben (Oyoko), Kwabere (mixture of clans) and Kwaman (Oyoko) routed the Dormaa and drove them away

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beyond the Tano river. In Sekyere, the combined forces of Kumawu, Beposo, as well as Agogo from Asante Akyem (13, 33) marched against Atara Firaw from the west, while Nkwatia and Pitiko from Kwau (Kwahu) (33) zone fought from the east.

The last relevant factor might have been sheer determination because having abandoned their home, the Asante migrants needed somewhere to stay as a people. They knew what it was like to be homeless. As a result, these migrants grabbed land here and there from those they conquered. The conquered territories later on became Asante.

#### The Early Asante Settlements and Formation of the Amantuo (States)

A close study of the settlements reveals that most of the early settlements did not spring up at their present sites all at once. The general pattern of the movement from Adanse to their new places appeared to have been as follows: as they journeyed northwards, they stopped at certain places on their way, until finally they settled at their modern sites. A few examples will illustrate this point. The people of Ofeso moved from Adanse and first settled in Akyem Abuakwa. From Akyem they journeyed northwards to Edweso where a section stayed. Then leaving Tafo

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behind they pushed northwards to the banks of the river Ofe where they founded Ofeso Tutuase, Ofeso Annaw, Asamankama, etc. (35). The Efidwaase, led by their ancestral leader, Mposon Frempon, started from Ayaase in Adanse and following the ancient trade route to the north, stopped at Asokore Mampon in Kwabere, from where they moved to their present site. In the case of Mampon they started from Ahensan, and stopped at Amoafro-Bogyawe, then at Kodiekrom, Takwa Buoho in Kwabere, then still pressing northwards reached Akrofofo (Old Mampon) (34). The Oyoko clan who lived at Santemanso also moved to found settlements such as Bekwai, Kumase and Dwaben (01). At this early period, there appeared to have been a great deal of movement of people and shifting of settlements.

It seems that by the beginning of the second half of the seventeenth century, the earliest settlements had been founded or were in the process of being formed. Some of the early settlements to be founded were Wonoo, Dwaben, Atwea, Akrofofo, Anyinasu, Agona Akyempem, Kumawu, Kumase, Kaase, Ofeso, etc. (Fig. 2, 5).

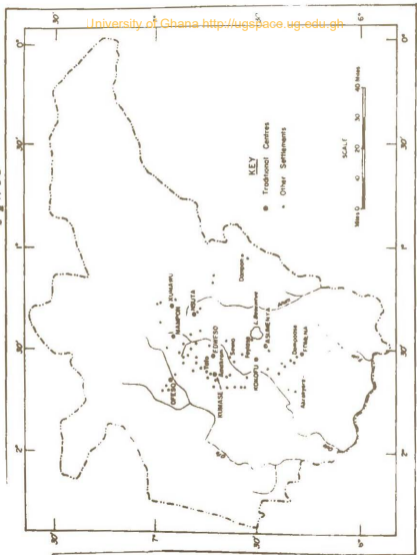


FIG 2.5



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A few of the ancestral leaders were able to build

large settlements because of the large followings they had. As these leaders were Abrempon (Literally lords) their settlements became the logical traditional capitals, eg. Kumase, Mampon, Dwaben and Kumawu. Some of these traditional capitals were reported to be very large and had seventy seven streets, e.g. Kumawu.<sup>1</sup>

There were other settlements of considerable sizes but which were not capitals, especially in Kwabere, such as Wonoo, Mamponten, Antoa, Faobaware, Kenyase,<sup>2</sup> etc. These settlements were small principalities entirely independent of one another.

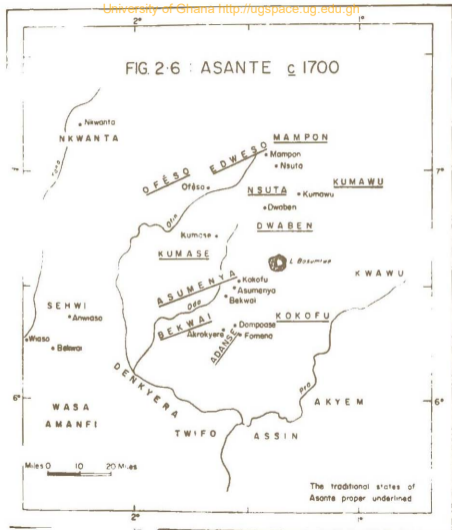
At this period some half dozen tribal units had assumed sufficient size and importance to cause them to be known as Amantuo, i. e. groups of Aman or tribes. These were

1. Rattray, R. S., Ashanti Law and Constitution, Chapter VIII.
2. Boaten, K., An Historical Geography of Kwabere, (Legon 1967). An unpublished B.A. Dissertation, p. 5. Adu Gyamfi, the founder of Wonoo, was so powerful in Kwabere that he was made a regent at Kumase after the death of Obiri Yeboah and was instrumental in crowning Osei Tutu, the founder of Asante nation. But he could not subjugate rulers such as Sarkodie Date Asenso of Antoa and Kagya of Mamponten, all in Kwabere.

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Asumenya, Dwaben, Kumawu, Mampon, Kumase and Ofeso. Nsuta, Kokofu, Bekwai and Agona were all in existence but were unimportant as Amantuo (Fig. 2.6) These states were independent of one another and consisted of the capital town and several small settlements which attached themselves to the capital for protection. The name of the capital settlement became the name of the state, e. g. Mampon-Mman, Dwaben-Mman, Kumawu-Mman, etc. They were both civic and military in outlook. In time of war all the settlements under a particular head fought as a unit. It was the politico-military unification of these states that gave birth to the Asante Kingdom at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

FIG. 2-6 : ASANTE c 1700



CHAPTER THREE  
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EVOLUTION OF SETTLEMENTS AND POPULATION

SETTLEMENT

Evolution of Settlement Pattern

At the inauguration of the Asante Confederacy in about 1702 the primary settlements had been founded. The distribution pattern of these settlements was as follows: there were the state capitals (see Chapter 2) which were situated within a radius of 25-30 miles from Kumase; then around these state capitals were the other settlements. This pattern reveals that there were considerable empty spaces around while the settlements were closely packed together in the core area (see Fig. 2. 5).

Many of the settlements were very small by contemporary standards; but the traditional capitals were considerably large, e. g. people around Mampon-Akroforo near Efidwaase (Efiduase ) claim that the ruin of the old capital covered an area of about three square miles (now most of this area is covered with farms and sacred grooves) (41, 42). Other centres such as Kumase, Kumawu etc. were reputed to consist of seventy-seven streets, (02, 32). This is now known to mean that the settlements were not villages in the modern sense.

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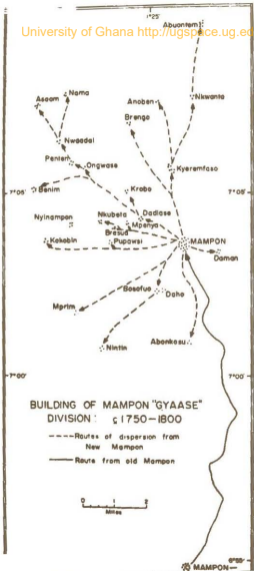
The continued appearance of new settlements took place by several means. In the first place many of the old centres broke up only to result in the founding of several settlements. Secondly, war prisoners were often resettled in empty areas, and their camps became the nuclei of new settlements. Thirdly, some Akan from Denkyira and Akyem also moved into the Asante territory to settle because they wanted the protection that could be obtained in Asante in those days<sup>1</sup> (40, 15, 47).

The break-up of the existing centres occurred either as a result of peaceful movement of the people due to congestion or as a result of civil war. An example of the former cause was the peaceful break up of Old Mampon. Mampon tradition says that there was an acute shortage of farm land due to congestion (34, 41). The Mampon were hemmed in by the people of Sekyere to the east and consequently they moved northwards to a place about eleven miles away (Fig. 3. 1) (48).

Agona Akyempem and Gyamfi Wonoo broke up as a result of civil wars. In the case of the former it was attacked

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1. The Asante always chose a battle ground outside their home area: The only exception was the attack of Kumase by Ebril Moro of Sehwi, but he attacked at the time when the Asante were fighting the Akyem.



by Dwaben and as a result most of its inhabitants fled the town. Later they founded modern Agona and its satellites (Fig. 3. 2) now forming the Agona traditional area (49, 50, 51). The second example was Gyamfi Wonoo in Kwabere which was stormed by Kumase in the early decades of the eighteenth century. The people of Gyamfi Wonoo after their defeat moved to the Mampon and the Apan areas, (16, 58, 59). This movement led to the establishment of Gyamase and its seven settlements.<sup>1</sup> (60, 58). Gyamaase itself was founded at the head of a pass to check any movement of Mampon enemies from the south.

The Asante, realizing that their numbers were small in comparison to their enemies such as the Denkyira and Akyem, decided to settle their prisoners of war in their territory. This official policy led to the establishment of many settlements peopled with the Denkyira, the Akyem, the Assen and the Fante. Many of the Denkyira, after the Feyiase War, were settled around Kumase especially in Atwoma and Kwabere (61, 40).

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1. Wilks, Ivor, "A note on the Traditional History of Mampong" in Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, Vol. IV part II: pp. 27-28.

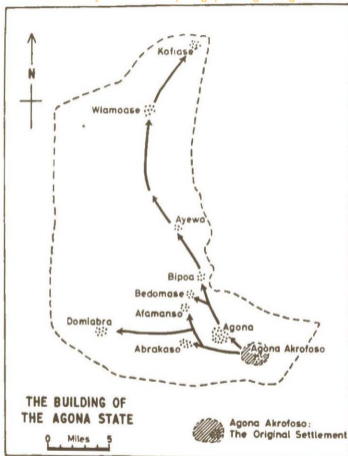


FIG. 3-2

Source: From Field Interviews



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According to oral tradition the craftsmen among the defeated Denkyira were resettled to practise their crafts (01, 30, 63). Such centres as Kentenkronu, for brass casting, and Ahwiaa for wood carving are but two examples. Many Fante and Assen fishermen were resettled around Lake Bosomtwe to do fishing.<sup>1</sup> (09, 10, 64). These new members of the Asante state also promoted crafts or trade in the kingdom.

One cannot tell in detail the distribution of these naturalised aliens or of their settlements in Asante, because as soon as they accepted the Asante nationality they had to swear to forget their origins on pain of death. Their settlements were put under the jurisdiction of some Kumase Abirempon, (Kumase chiefs), that is, they became part of the Kumase state.

In the case of Asante Akyem, some of the Akyem Kotoku who could not escape from the Asante army were allowed to settle in their home areas and were accorded Asante citizenship. The ruling clan of Bompata was one such group of people who have been allowed to retain their royal lineage to this day (32, 65). Part of the depopulated Akyem area was also taken over by the Dwaben who founded such settlements as Dwaso(Juaso),

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1. Dupuis, J., Journal of A Residence in Ashanti (Lond, 1824) section XXXI.

Konongo and Odumase (65, 66, 67). Because of this mixture of the Asante and the Akyem the area became known as Asante-Akyem with a part of it under Dwaben and another under Kumase, e.g. Agogo, Bompata, Patriensa etc. (32, 33, 68).

The founding of the new settlements strengthened the powers of the paramount chiefs as their territories widened. The paramount stools saw to it that the newly founded settlements would continue to pay allegiance to them. In view of this every new settlement was assigned a specific role in the chief's court. Again, the paramount stools generally saw to it that the new settlements were built fairly close to the parent settlements. This close proximity afforded the new settlements opportunity to perform, without much hinderance, their court duties.

Another area of Asante territory which was peopled sporadically was the Ahafo area (44, 45, 69). The owners of Ahafo lands such as Hiahene\*, Hiawuhene\*, Akwaboahene\* (all of Kumase) and Nkawiehene\* allowed their subjects to settle in the forest to hunt for the Asantehene (44, 45, 46, 69) and settlements such as Tapa, Akwasiase, Kunsu, Wioso, Datano and Abesewa were consequently founded. On the whole the settlements were characteristically few.

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\* The word hene means chief eg. Hiahene means chief of Hia.

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These developments resulted in a generalized

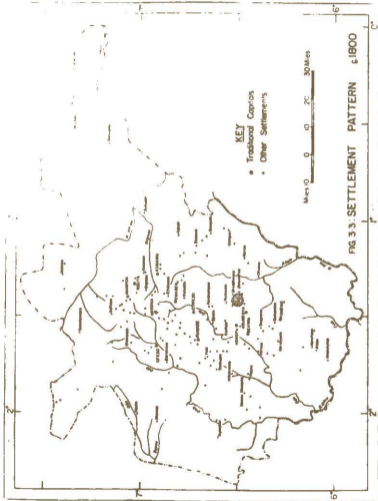
distribution pattern which showed a clearly defined core area which was intensively settled. This core area appeared longitudinal on a line running from Fomena northwards through Kumase to Mampon. Outside this core area there existed only a few and isolated settlements in places such as Eastern Sekyere, Northern Ofeso, Ahafo Ano and southeast/southwest Adanse. This pattern which crystallized at the beginning of the 19th century (Fig. 3. 3) has maintained itself into the 20th century.

#### Characteristics of Settlements:

All the Asante settlements were nucleated. This meant that such settlements had their houses grouped together around a definite core. In most cases the core was either a chief's house or a fetish house, with the houses of the elders and the first settlers encircling the core. It is striking that the Asante (Akan) characteristically lived in nucleated villages and towns.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Dickson, K. B., "Nucleation and Dispersion of Rural Settlements in Ghana" in The Ghana Social Science Journal, Vol. I No. 1, 1971, pp. 117-119.



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tended to be grouped together and around the chief's for the necessary protection.

The Asante settlements had houses whose arrangement could be described as "confused", because it did not conform to the modern concept of town planning in which houses are regularly built with streets set between them. A description by Austin Freeman was typical of all the Asante settlements. "...along each side of the road was a row of houses, and at the back of these, other houses dotted about irregularly, leaving narrow crooked alleys between. At the centre of the street was the inevitable shade tree, a fine wide spreading ficus with a huge mass of contorted roots"<sup>1</sup>.

The arrangement of houses so clustered together conformed to their clan and class system. It was normal practice for the members of a clan to build their houses closely packed together and the picture of the Akan settlement showed that the alleys between the houses were not meant to serve as streets.

In the case of old Kumase some aspects of the morphology can be learnt from Bowdich's sketch map of 1817 (Fig. 3.4).

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1. Freeman, R. A., Travels and life in Ashanti and Jaman  
(Westm. 1898), pp.37-38.



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On the map is found what can be described as "residential segregation", or the grouping of houses according to clan or class e.g. Chief and members of the royal family had their houses very close to the palace. Another example was what can be described as the Muslim quarters inhabited by Baba and his other Muslim friends. Around the core were the small villages, "Croom", with pathways leading to the suburban areas such as Bantama and Asafo.

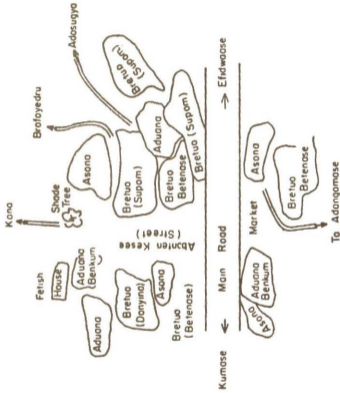
At present there are few preserved settlements built on traditional lines. One such example is the core of Safo, a village sixteen miles north of Kumase in Kwabere. In this section of the settlement, the three prominent clans have their houses closely built together. Here in the centre of the settlement is the fetish house of Takora which is more elegantly built than the other houses around. A broad street divides the settlement (Fig. 3, 5) while the characteristic shade tree is present. Bowdich who saw the traditional Asante settlements wrote of the general morphology: "Each Croom presented one wide street with the gerran or cachon tree at the extremities"<sup>1</sup>. Cardinal also agrees that a broad street and a shade tree were true of all the Asante settlements<sup>2</sup>.

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1. Bowdich, T. E., Mission From Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee (London 1819) p. 30.

2. Cardinal, A. W., In Ashanti and Beyond (London 1927), p. 51

FIG. 3.5 PLAN OF NUCLEUS OF SAFO (According to Clan System)





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The location of settlements in Asante can also

interest the student of Asante and its culture. Location, as a concept, is known to have two aspects, namely situation and site. Situation generally accounts for the existence of a settlement in relation to its surrounding area, whilst the latter refers to the specific spot where a settlement stands<sup>1</sup>.

One major factor that guided the situation of many of the Asante settlements was accessibility. This was so because many settlements, including almost all the traditional capitals, were built along the major routes. The one side effect of this location pattern was that the settlements attracted some amount of trade, especially the big ones, while the small ones sold meat and food to the travelling traders.

A few of the settlements were located strategically e.g. Kwisa, the first Asante settlement on the Cape Coast route, was built to guard the only pass which the route utilized. Another example was Gyamaase (Jamase) which was deliberately built to control the pass leading to Mampon (Fig. 3.6) (60, 34).

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1. Broek, J.O.M., "Progress in Human Geography" In New View Points on Geography (Washington D. C. 1961) edited by Preston James, p. 39.

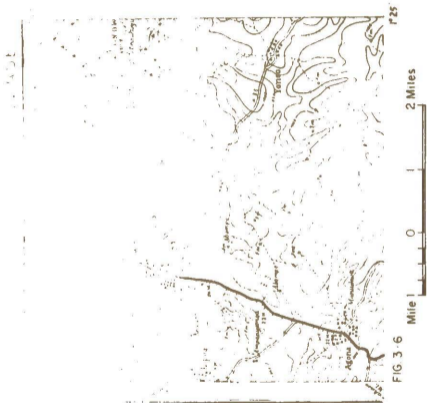


FIG 3-6

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In siting settlements, the founders were often concerned with the availability of good drinking water and enough arable and hunting land. If these requirements were lacking, then there was the likelihood that the people would then go away in search of a better site. For example, the movement of the Mampon from Akofoso to their present site was due to scarcity of arable and hunting land. In general, all the Asante settlements avoided the river valleys and marshes, but were normally built fairly close to streams where water could easily be obtained e.g. Old Asonomaso was built at a site where the people could easily obtain water from four nearby streams (Fig. 3.7).

The Asante house type was what Dickson calls 'rectangular interior compound house'<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 3.8). Normally the walls were either wattle-and-daub or swish.<sup>2</sup> The average household consisted of four rectangular, single-storeyed rooms and an open one facing on to the central yard. Stanley, writing in 1874, described the Asante houses as he saw them.<sup>3</sup>

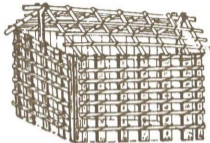
1. Dickson, K. B., A Historical Geography of Ghana (O. U. P. 1969) pp. 282-284.
2. (a) Henty, G. A., March to Kumasi (London 1874), p. 335.  
(b) Macqueen Notes on Africa Box 5G, Furley Collection, Balme Library, University of Ghana, Legon.
3. Stanley, H. M., Coomassie to Magdala (London 1874), p. 166.

### SOURCES OF WATER SUPPLY IN A TYPICAL ASANTE SETTLEMENT (OLD ASONOMASO)

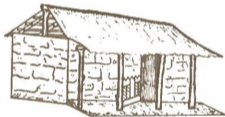


FIG. 3.7

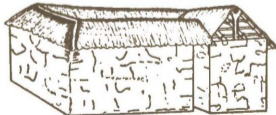
## A RECTANGULAR HOUSE



Wooden Framework



Wattle and Daub

Rectangular Interior Compound House  
(Wattle and Daub)

The houses in the city of Kumase were of better quality than houses elsewhere in Asante. Governor Winniett had this to say: "The walls consist of wattle work plastered with clay and washed with white clay". He further observed that this mode of building gives to the streets a "peculiar aspect of cheerfulness"<sup>1</sup>.

In a typical house, there were no provisions for such conveniences as the bathroom and the lavatory. For the latter the men constructed pit latrines for the general use. In the case of the former, the men often had their bath at the corner of the house set aside for this purpose, while the female inmates had theirs outside the house in a small hut, without a roof, erected for this purpose.

The women had their bath outside for one major reason; it was taboo for a female in her menstrual period to enter the house of men. The man's house was built as any other house but its peculiarity was the fact that it served as a repository for the black stools (ancestral stools) for the clan.

There was always one large opening leading outside, which was either closed with wooden framework or not closed at all.

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1. Adm 1/450 (N.A.G., Accra) Winniett, Governor W.,  
Despatch No. 72 of 15th November 1848.

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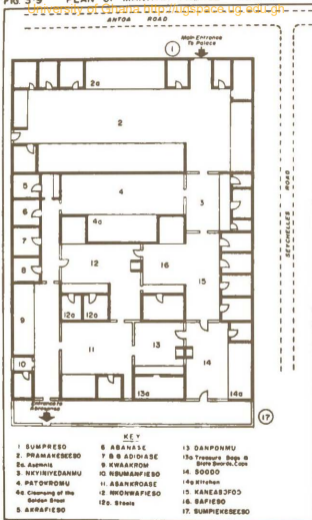
The rooms had doorways which were sealed with raffia mats. The floor of an average room had one half raised to about one and a half feet, which was carefully smoothed, stuccoed and painted red with ochre.<sup>1</sup> Ventilation was generally poor because there were no windows. At times there were small round holes up in the walls probably to allow in some light and fresh air.

The above descriptions mainly refers to houses of people of the lower order. Palaces, fetish houses and houses of the elders were often more elegantly built. There are some descriptions of such houses by the early travellers to Asante<sup>2</sup>.

A living example of this type of architectural design is the palace of Asantehene at Manhyia (Fig. 3, 9). It was built in 1925 on the lines of the palace of Kofi Karikari which was destroyed in 1874. Each of the courts was devoted to a special function e.g. the first and the largest court (Pramaso) was where the chief sat in state to receive all his subjects.

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1. Boyle, F., Fanteland to Coomassie, 1874, (Lond, 1874), p. 287.
  2. (a) Cardinal, A.W., In Ashanti and Beyond (Lond, 1927), p. 51.  
(b) Henty, C. A. op. cit. p. 335  
(c) Skertchly, J. A., Sport in Ashanti (Lond, 1880) pp. 100-101  
(d) Boyle, F., op. cit. (Lond, 1874) p. 347.

FIG 3-9 PLAN OF MANHYIA PALACE - KUMASE

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At the farther end of a palace were the small houses for the chief's wives - Hiaa or the harem. The elaboration in the palaces is a testimony of the status of the chiefs in the hierarchy of the social structure.

In the houses belonging to chiefs and elders were lavatories, a deviation from what obtained for the general populace. Bowdich could not help commenting: "What surprised me most was the discovery that every house had its cloacae, besides the common ones for the lower order. It is often situated at the most retired corner of the house. The holes are of small circumferences, but dug to a surprising depth and boiling water is daily poured down, which effectually prevents the least offence"<sup>1</sup>. In Asante apart from the Asantehene's palace at Kumase, other palaces worthy of mention were those of Dwaben, Mampon, Nsuta, Kokofu, Bekwai, Fomena and Kumawu. Among the well decorated fetish houses were those of Takora at Safo and Asuhyiae, Fagyare at Bepose near Mampon, Biribi of Kassaim and Yentumi of Abirem near Antoa.

The adoption of the compound houses with interior courtyard may be explained by cultural factors. The extended

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1. Bowdich, T. E., op. cit., p. 300

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family system and the idea of belonging to the same clan (abusua) might have generated the building of a large enclosed compound house type where members of the family could live an integrated life. If a member of the clan became individualistic in the family he was more or less ostracised, and this was the worst punishment that a clan could inflict on a member. What made the individualistic way of life impossible was that a father and an uncle had personal interest in the progress of their son and nephew respectively. Again, since the sort of life a particular individual led was supposed to be a reflection on the whole family and clan it was the sacred duty of the father and uncle to see that a youth was properly brought up, and this was better done in that atmosphere where one ate with one's elders, slept with them under the same roof; in short, where one lived an integrated life with other members of the family.

#### T o w n s

The Asante settlements did not all have the same social status: a few of them were regarded as towns (plural: Nkro, singular: Kro) while the rest were villages (plural: Nkuraa: singular: akuraa). Among the towns themselves

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were distinguished the Ahenkro (literally the seat of a paramount chief - state capital), and kro (the seat of a sub-chief). In a sense, traditionally, a town can be defined as the seat of a chief, an Obirempon or a sub-chief (Fig. 3. 10).

Wirth who worked on urbanism defined a town as "a relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals"<sup>1</sup>. This definition may be found to be inappropriate in the case of the Asante towns, because the Asante towns might be large settlements, yet socially the population could only be described as homogenous. The definition that may be applicable is the idea that a town is a place of dominance.<sup>2</sup> The Asante towns were, indeed, the centre of political and religious leadership. Because of this they also became centres of commercial activity. But it was only the capital i. e. Kumase where this hegemony was unchallenged by the other centres. The towns were the seats of political dominance because the chiefs resided there, and they were religious centres because of the religious role of the chiefs.

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1. Quoted by Morris, R. N., Urban Sociology. (Lond. 1968), p. 16.

2. (a) Mumford, L., City Development (Lond. 1946), pp. 7-18.

(b) Sjoberg, G., The Pre-Industrial City (O. U. P. 1966)

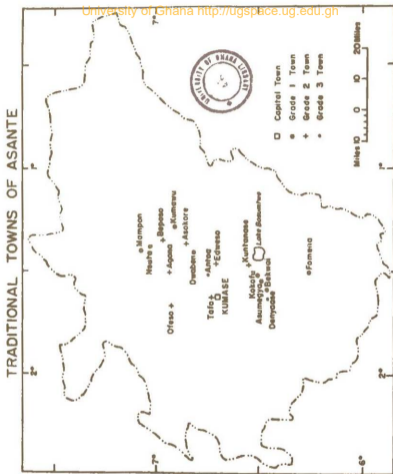


FIG. 3·10

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In his study of pre-industrial cities, Sjöberg

discusses certain characteristics that may be identifiable in those settlements the Asante called towns. For example, in the Asante towns there were the existence of rudimentary technology based on human labour and the presence of a political elite such as the elders of the chief. This class also dominated the religious aspects of the life of the society by serving as the living representatives of the ancestors.<sup>2</sup>

#### Growth of Towns:

The Asante towns like any other towns started as villages. For any settlement to grow into a town it must have the necessary conditions for growth<sup>3</sup>. For example, there should be food surpluses from the countryside to support the urban population. Thus Kwabere and Atwoma villages supplied large quantities of foodstuffs and meat to Kumase, (15, 27, 02). Meat also came to Kumase from Ahafo and Northern Ofeso, (70, 35). According to Dupuis, Dwaben and Bekwai obtained their food supplies from east of Lake Bosomtwe<sup>4</sup>. But the Asante did not store up their

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1. Sjöberg, G., op. cit., p. 39

2. The religious life of the Asante was based on ancestral worship.

3. Morris, R. N., op. cit., pp. 16-17.

4. Dupuis, J., op. cit., p. XXXI

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food surpluses. The foodstuffs known in Asante were the perishable type, except maize which became known around the early decades of the nineteenth century. As a result there were chances of food shortages. With the possible exception of food surpluses, it appears that the conditions of the growth of Pre-Industrial towns as they existed in other parts of the world, for example, Roman Europe, or Middle East were not present in Asante. In the case of transportation for example there were the "high roads"<sup>1</sup> which joined all the principal towns, but these were not effective since transportation depended on head portorage. Again, water supply did not play a major role in the growth of towns in Asante, because some centres developed as towns and yet faced acute water problem during the dry season, as was the case of Kumawu and Mampon.

These shortcomings did not make for the rapid growth of the Asante towns. It seems when the Asante talk about considerable sizes of their old towns they do not mean that the old sizes could be compared with contemporary town sizes such as those of Kumase, Mampon and Bckwai. Kumase which was the largest of all the Asante towns was estimated to be about four

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1. Ibid., XXIX

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miles in circumference<sup>1</sup> while Dwaben was said to be about half of the size of Kumase<sup>2</sup>. There is no record of the sizes of other centres in Asante, but it is likely no other town was larger than Dwaben and Kumase. When the Asante talk about the proverbial "seventy-seven streets or quarters" of their towns<sup>3</sup>, they mean that the towns were large in relation to the sizes of other settlements.

Before 1900 these centres could reasonably be placed in stage two of Lampard's<sup>4</sup> schema for the process of urbanization, for all the towns still possessed definite rural characteristics. This was true of even Kumase which was regarded as the metropolis of Asante.

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1. Bowdich, T. E., *op. cit.*, p. 321.

2. Freeman, Rev., Journal of Various Visits to the Kingdom of Ashanti, Aku and Dahomey (Lond, 1844 p. 158.

3. Kumawu still remembers the names of all the streets.

Ref. Rattray, R. A., Ashanti Law and Constitution, Chap. VII

4. Lampard's divisions are: 1) Primordial stage

2) Definitive stage

3) The Classic stage

4) The Industrial stage

Ref. Lampard, E. E., "Historical Aspect of Urbanization" in Study of Urbanization pp. 528-542 Ed. by Hausser, P. M, and Schmore, L. F.

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The growth and decline of Asante towns coincided

with the growth and decline of Asante political power. For example, Joseph Dupuis<sup>1</sup> saw Dwaben in the 1820s and described it as a large town. The Rev. Freeman who visited Dwaben in 1840, after the first Kumase-Dwaben civil war in 1835, wrote of the extensive nature of the town judging from the extent of its ruin. "I should think, it must have been half as large as Kumase"<sup>2</sup>. Ramseyer and Kuhne saw a rebuilt Dwaben "with a fine wide street with white washed and two storied houses". They asserted in no uncertain terms that Dwaben was "better built and more imposing than Coomassie"<sup>3</sup>. But by 1876 Dwaben had shrunk to an insignificant size as a result of a civil war.

In the case of Kumase the town was started by the present ruling dynasty of Asante some time during the second half of the seventeenth century. Its position was strategic in several respects. Already the area was the converging point of some important old trade routes with Tafo only three miles

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1. Dupuis, op. cit., p. 136

2. Freeman, Rev., op. cit., p. 156.

3. Ramseyer and Kuhne, Four Years In Ashanti (Bonn 1874) p. 88.



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away as an important rest stop for traders. Furthermore,  
around Kumase were the Kwaman states of Kaase, Amakom,  
Tafo and Suntreso, and with the early subjugation of these  
forest 'city' states Kumase, the seat of the conqueror, began  
to grow.

Kumase happened to be ruled by a chief whose  
ingenuity made him King over the Asante and his town as the  
capital of the newly created Kingdom. There is no doubt that  
after this period the town grew fairly rapidly. Bowdich who  
visited Kumase during the end of the second decade of the nine-  
teenth century claimed that the town was built upon the side of  
a large rocky hill or iron stone and was insulated by a marsh.  
He mentioned that the town was beautiful and large, covering  
an area of four miles in circumference without the suburbs of  
Asafo and Bantama.<sup>1</sup> Each of the streets had a shade tree in  
the middle. Bowdich, disagreeing with the Asante that the popu-  
lation of the town was about 100,000, estimated that the average  
population was not more than 15,000 or less than 12,000.

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1. Bowdich, op. cit., pp. 321-324.

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At the time of Bowdich's visit, Kumase had reached the peak of its glory and had all the qualities of an African metropolis, and a political capital. It must be assumed that from the time of Bowdich the town continued to expand, whilst there was considerable improvement in the quality of the buildings.

About three decades after Bowdich Governor William Winniett (in October 1848) described the town of Kumase. He agreed that the town of Kumase was very different in its appearance from any of the native towns that he had seen in this part of West Africa.<sup>1</sup>

The 1848 picture which was by and large an improvement upon that of 1817 continued to be improved. In 1868, for example, an attempt was made by the Asantehene to build a brick palace with the help of Fante builders who worked under the supervision of Ramseyer and Kuhne<sup>2</sup>, the two white missionaries who lived in Asante as prisoners. This was a rare event because the Asante did not previously know the art of building with bricks.

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1. Adm. 1/450 N. A. G. Accra - Governor W. Winniett in Despatch No. 72 of 15th November 1848.

2. Ramseyer and Kuhne, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

The fall of Kumase in 1874 was followed by many years of civil war and uncertainty, and Kumase deteriorated. Austin Freeman<sup>1</sup> who was in Kumase in 1888 was shocked by the sight of the town. At that time the houses were irregular with interrupting bushes; the streets were dirty and ill-kept. He wrote: "these houses once stood in wide and regular streets but since the destruction of the city in 1874, the natives do not seem to have heart to rebuild them."<sup>2</sup> Yet he remarked that the town had a few vestiges to show what it had been in its hey days. "A few broad well kept streets still existed, fine houses, the admirable construction careful artistic finish and excellent repair."<sup>3</sup> Freeman was so impressed by the little that remained in this old city that he remarked: "Indeed amidst the universal ruins and decay were hints of departed prosperity and evidences of a culture far more superior than that seen in the littoral regions."<sup>4</sup>

The damage described by Freeman was visible in 1891 when Hall visited Kumase. He described it as covering a very

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1. Freeman, R. A., Travels and Life in Ashantee and Jaman  
(Westm. 1896) p. 109.

2. Ibid., p. 109.

3. Ibid., p. 110

4. Ibid., p. 110.

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large area and enclosed for the most part a circular road about two and a half miles long. "The ruins of earlier buildings were still standing but were hidden by the bush and grass. They had been replaced by small huts. The King's palace comprised a large block of bamboo and swish buildings though the ruins of the old stone buildings were still seen",<sup>1</sup> At the time of annexation Kumase was a poor town with little hope of its resurrection.

These examples of Dwaben and Kumase are clear case studies of the rise and fall of the Asante towns. The main determinant of the growth of the Asante town was the incentive created by the Asante political system. With the rise to power of the Kingdom of Asante many of the traditional centres quickly grew into considerable townships. The court duties demanded the presence of a large number of people, which led to the concentration of people in the towns. Again, because of political protection which the towns offered many people drifted to the towns and resided there permanently. Since the force upholding the growth of these towns was political, the break down of the

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1. Hall to Governor, 3 April and 27. Quoted by William Tordoff; Ashanti Under the Premph, 1888-1935, p. 39.

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political structure would witness the fall of the towns. And this was exactly what happened. Dwaben was the first town to fall, and its fall was precipitated by internal power struggle within Asante. Then followed the collapse of the Asante political system and the sack of Kumase. Civil war flared up all over the Kingdom and the once large towns with "seventy-seven streets" dwindled to rather insignificant sizes.

#### Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution of Asante Towns:

Not all the towns in Asante had the same political and economic status; the towns could therefore be arranged hierarchically according to the order of dominance. The Asante themselves recognized that all the towns were not on the same level of importance; this is seen from the words Ahenkro and Kro. The main criterion used in this case was politico-religious dominance.

At the apex of the hierarchy of towns was the capital of the Kingdom i.e. Kumase, because it held both political and economic dominance in Asante and its influence extended over all the other towns. It was the home of the Golden Stool which was reputed to hold the spirit of the Asante nation. Kumase

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adopted all means to maintain its suzerainty over the other  
towns in Asante.

The next order of towns consisted of those of the paramount chiefs of the realm. Each town was a centre of politico-religious dominance with its influence felt in the state of which it was head. For example, the influence of Fomena was felt in the Adanse State, while Kokofu was head of the State of Kokofu, etc. The economic dominance of these centres was minimal.

The last tier in the hierarchy were the Kro of the Asante. These were only minor foci politically, while economically they were insignificant. This hierarchical arrangement was in conformity with the political system of the Asante.

A look at the spatial distribution of towns (Fig. 3. 10) reveals an approximately constellar arrangement. At a point which can easily be regarded as the centre was situated Kumase, the capital. The state capitals were situated within a radius of between twenty-five and thirty-five miles from Kumase. This arrangement may not have been a deliberate one because the towns were founded by individual chiefs (who were independent

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of each other) before the creation of the Asante nation. But once these independent states came together in a confederation this distribution came to acquire some significance in that all the towns were within easy reach of Kumase.

The distribution of the state capitals were irregular. Some of them were fairly closely placed together e. g. Mampon and Nsuta (about 3 miles), Bekwai, Kokofu and Asumenya etc. But as places of political dominance there was no competition among them. Each town exercised jurisdiction over its own tribal area. Economically too one did not see much competition since these towns were only minor foci. Economic competition only became meaningful in the twentieth century. As is to be expected in a constellar pattern the Nkro, the smaller towns, were closer to one another than the state capitals.

### POPULATION

Population figures for Asante during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can only be rough estimates. On the basis of social and political history of the people, it appears the population was relatively small. Bowdich was the first European visitor to Asante during the second decade of the nineteenth

century who estimated the population of Asante. His estimates can be of some help since he came at the time when the population itself could be described as fairly stable. Bowdich based his estimates on the military strength of the Asante states:

Kumase (Coomassie) ...	60,000
Dwabon ...	35,000
Mampon ...	15,000
Nsuta (Soota) ...	15,000
Kokofu ...	12,000
Aduaben (Adiabin) ...	12,000
Efidwaase ...	10,000
Denyase ...	8,000
Kontanase ...	8,000
Amofo ...	6,000
Total	<u>204,000</u>

Bowdich did not think that the figures were exaggerated; he even asserted that they probably represented only a fifth of the total population.<sup>1</sup> According to Bowdich, therefore, the population of Asante could have been about one million. He further

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1. Bowdich, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-316. Normally when the Asante went to war, the soldiers included the following men-at-arms contributed by the vassal states: Nkoranza 10,000, Assen 8,000, Takyiman 6,000, Denkyira 5,000, Wassa 7,000, Schwi 4,000, Akuapem, 1,000, Boroon 12,000.



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worked out a sex ratio and claimed that out of the total population of one million, 362, 000 were males and 638, 000 were females. This sex ratio appears to be exaggerated, despite the fact that it was the men who engaged in the numerous Asante wars since 1700.

On the whole the population at the beginning of the nineteenth century must have been larger than that of the eighteenth century since wars were more frequent in the earlier century. Towards the end of the nineteenth century in 1874, another writer came out with an estimate of the population of Asante, also using the number of soldiers each traditional area was able to contribute<sup>1</sup>:

Dwaben	...	2, 000
Mampon	...	2, 000
Nsuga	...	2, 000
Efidwaase	...	1, 000
Kumase	...	1, 000
Kokofu	...	2, 000
Bekwai	...	2, 000
Adanse	...	3, 000
Asumenya	...	100
Amofo	...	300
Asanso	...	200
Adankragya	...	20

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1. Brackenbury, H., *The Ashanti War: A Narrative* (Edin, 1874)  
Vol. II, p. 362.

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The total number of soldiers was 64,800. If this force was about the fifth of the whole population then in 1874 Asante contained about 324,000. Brackenbury himself was very skeptical about the above figures. They are not being used here because they are accurate but it is possible that the population had begun to show a downward trend when these figures are compared with those of Bowdich about half a century earlier.

This downward trend of the population was caused mainly by the wars with the British. These wars were waged intermittently from 1824 till 1900, and the most devastating of these was the Dodowa War, in which the British routed the Asante army. In the final Anglo-Asante military clash, popularly known as the 'Yaa Asantewa War', Adanse, Atwoma Kwabere, and Ofeso fought the British. According to the Asante, their losses in this war amounted to about a thousand men<sup>1</sup>. The number which the Asante lost during this war could be higher, for being unhappy about their defeat they would not like to give the accurate number of deaths.

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1. Fuller, F. C., A Vanished Dynasty - Ashanti, (London 1921)  
p. 211.

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Again, there were numerous civil wars, especially

during the second half of the nineteenth century, among the various stools. When the unifying force of the Asante broke up, various states attacked one another. The most notorious was the Kumase-Dwaben of 1874-75. The effect of this war on the population was not in the number of people who died, but rather in the number of the defeated allies from Dwaben and the surrounding settlements who migrated en masse to Akyem and founded the state of New Dwaben. Some of the settlements involved in this migration were Dwaben, Efidwaase, Asokore, Oyoko, Seniagya, Akuakrom and Ntunkumso. There were other settlements which were never rebuilt. Of the rebuilt settlements the vestiges of the war are still visible, especially if one compares them with their counterparts in the Eastern Region of Ghana. These few examples are enough to show how the political situation in Asante helped in the redistribution of the population, and checked its growth. A side effect of the wars and civil wars that affected population growth was famine. In those hard times, farms were left uncared for, and the result was widespread famine.

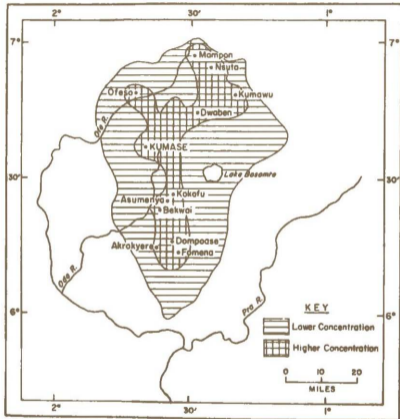
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As well as war, diseases also took their toll of the population. Bowdich wrote that there were too many of them<sup>1</sup>. This does not mean that the Asante were ignorant of the cure of some diseases. The Asante had evolved their own art of caring for the sick, but many of the diseases that are not so dreadful today owing to the knowledge and application of medical science were were endemic in those days. Influcnza and small-pox were reputed to be the most notorious diseases that took fantastic tolls of the lives of the people (mere mention of such incurable diseases as leprosy and small-pox was taboo)<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, a look at the distribution of population shows that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there had developed two major clusters of population. The first included the old areas in Adanse and Amansie. Even though a great number of people migrated northwards, Adanse and Amansie area remained as a major population centre. The second cluster which embraced the traditional centres such as Kumawu, Ofeso, Dwaben etc. was on a radius of about twenty miles from Kumase (Fig. 3. 11).

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1. Bowdich, T. E., *op. cit.*, pp. 337-379.
  2. If you happened to mention any of these in the course of conversation you had to say "Mekuta dua mu" roughly "touch wood", which means that the bad omen should rather go away.

## POPULATION CLUSTERS IN ASANTE c1800



Source: FIELD INTERVIEWS

FIG. 3-11

Outside this area the population was either sparse or non-existent (Fig. 3.12). Areas such as the Afram plains, northern Mampon, northern Ofeso, Ahafo Ano, eastern and Western Adanse areas fell within this group. It appears the Asante did not see the need to spread to all these areas, as the land in the core area was able to supply all their needs.

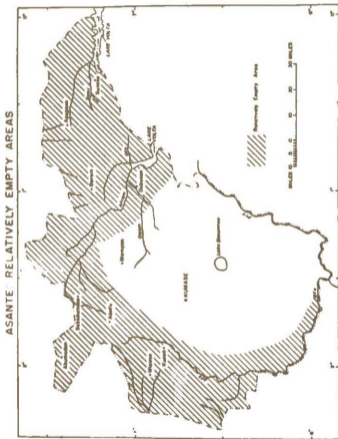


FIG. 3-12

The Asante engaged in hunting, fishing, gathering, farming and gold mining. The first three economic activities pre-dated the last two, but the last two economic activities contributed to make the society more stable. Except gold mining, all the other economic activities mentioned were not regarded as major economic concerns; as a result they did not feature in the deliberations of the Asante Royal Court. Farming, for example was regarded as work for women, so that all attempts by early European visitors to convince the Asante to grow kola<sup>1</sup> and cotton<sup>2</sup> on plantation basis failed because commercial cultivation did not interest the court. Fishing and hunting were also left undeveloped. In the case of hunting, for example, the only apparent improvement that came was the introduction of the gun, but the hunters were not rich enough to acquire the more sophisticated type such as the double barrelled gun until the twentieth century. Fishing also

1. Bowdich, T. F., Mission From Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee, p. 336.
2. Huydecooper's Diary. Journal of His Mission to Coomassie 28th April 1816 to 18th May, 1917, p. 66.

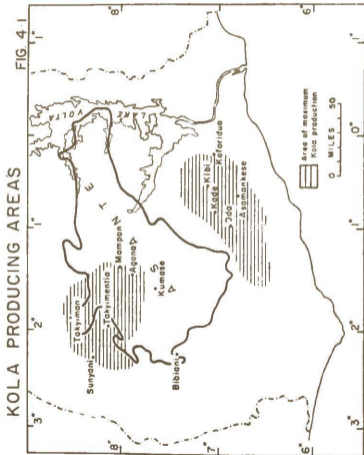


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remained as before, because it was plagued by too many taboos, especially lake (Bosomtwe) fishing which would have become a substantial cash earner if the lake fishermen were prepared to adopt the fishing methods from the coast. Gold mining on the other hand, though a primary economic activity, was one of the major sources of the wealth of Asante. It was therefore regarded as work for men and was carefully controlled by the Asante royal court. Its operation affected other activities in Asante. For example, in areas where gold mining was important it dictated the siting of settlements and the alignment of routes. It took many able-bodied men away and thus helped farming to be relegated to women.

#### Gathering

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, gathering was an important economic activity, the major reason being that it was the basis of the kola industry, the single crop on which hinged the northern trade (see above chapter six). The nuts of the kola tree (*Cola accuminata* and *C. nitida*) which grew profusely in some parts of Asante (Fig. 4. 1) were collected by women and children.



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The kola trees were owned by those individuals on whose land the trees grew: thus there was not a single tree without an owner. Yet people were allowed to collect the nuts which had fallen from the trees. Only the owners of the trees had the right to pick the nuts from the trees. Bowdich urged the Asante to cultivate the kola nut tree<sup>1</sup> but the Asante did not see the need to cultivate it since, according to them, it grew spontaneously in the forest.

Apart from the gathering of kola, the Asante also collected food items including fruits, snails and mushrooms. The most important vegetable items collected were the Akam (Discorea bulbifera), a subterranean tuber, single and round or oblong, and several species of wild yam (Discorea prachensis). They also collected products of the palm tree (Elaeis guineensis) which like the kola tree grew wild in the forest. It produced nuts which served as the main source of cooking oil. At the same time the oil from the kernel was used for making soup, pomade and cooking. The same palm tree was also tapped for a local drink, palm wine, which

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1. Bowdich, T.E., op. cit., p.336

several early writers described as delicious.<sup>1</sup>

### Hunting

The cultural history of the Akan seems to support the hypothesis that the Asante were once mainly hunters. Bowdich appears to support this view<sup>2</sup>. At least, this is true of the older clans whose totems were animals, including the dog which was probably first domesticated to assist in the chase. The legendary leaders of the Fante, Obrumankoma, Odapagyan and Eson, were reported to be hunters. The early Asante leaders such as Obiri Yeboah of Kwaman, Adu Gyamfi of Wonoo, and all the other early great leaders also knew the art of hunting (09, 100). Hunters were mostly responsible for finding suitable places for the founding of many settlements.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, they were

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1. Hutton, W., Voyage to Ashantee (London 1821) p. 158.  
(b) Bosman, W., A New Description of the Guinea Coast (London 1721)
  2. Bowdich, T. E. op. cit. p. 230
  3. This was, because of their knowledge about the physical conditions of the districts where they made their chase.  
Reference: Danquah, J. B., Nana Agyeman Hwehwe (passim).

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reputed to be responsible for the discoveries of useful edible foodstuffs. Hunters used dogs to experiment on the suitability of any new foodstuffs,<sup>1</sup> and it was by this simple method that the hunters helped to widen the knowledge about edible foods in the society. Furthermore, hunters were better equipped militarily and therefore were very powerful in the society. Nevertheless, traditionally they were controlled by the chiefs. In the first place, hunters had to acknowledge the ownership of the land on which they made their chase. They were also obliged to send the thigh of any big game killed to the chief. In the case of Asomofuo, elephant-hunters, they had to send the tusks, the tail and the ears to the Asasewura (literally the owner of the land). In such a case if the Asasewura is directly under the Asantehene or any of the Amanhene then the tusks would go to the latter. If a hunter failed to acknowledge this custom, he was regarded as a rebel and dealt with accordingly. Finally, like any other citizen, the hunter had to perform his official court duties as demanded by tradition (03, 02).

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1. The tradition of the discovery of the plantain - see Boaten, K. An Historical Geography of Kwabere. An unpublished B.A. dissertation, Dept. of Geography, Legon.

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Hunters often had their prescribed territories in which they made their chase, and these boundaries were within the traditional state boundaries. Within their prescribed territories, hunters teamed up and founded hunting camps (nnanso) where they lived with their attendants, (ayawfuo), during hunting expeditions.

Before firearms became widespread, the hunters might have used clubs, spears and arrows in hunting. But hunting became more remunerative with the widespread use of muskets because they could now kill many big animals, including the elephant, the lion and the tiger.

The adept hunters knew the characteristics of all the big game. It needed special techniques to encounter and kill some of these big game (which were reported to have spirits - sasa), and to learn these techniques an apprentice hunter would have to remain in this "school", under the tutorship of a master hunter, preferably Asomofuo (i.e. elephant hunter), for several years.<sup>1</sup>

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1. (a) Efa, Edwin: Aslemire, Accra 1950) passim  
(b) Asare Opoku, K., : "Asommanatu" in Odawuru,  
Vol. 4, 1971, pp. 14-16.

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It must be noted that some settlements in Asante were regarded as traditional hunting settlements, e.g. Abofuo and Akomadan in Ofeso (Ofinso) (36), Drobonso and Sumiso in Sekyere. Also the defeat of Schwi gave the Asante the whole territory up to River Bia, known as Ahafo, which became the game preserve of the Asante<sup>1</sup>(Fig. 4, 2) (44, 45, 46).

In addition to professional hunting was the group hunting (atwee) which was practised throughout Asante. Group hunting expeditions took place during the dry season. Due to the dryness of the forest at this time, it was fairly easy for the people to walk freely in the bush. Group hunting had to be well organized to avoid accidents (tubonc). Often there were two main groups, the gunners who shot at the game, and the unarmed who scouted the vegetation to spring the game. During such an expedition, the people would decide to hunt in a particular bush. The area was then surrounded one half by the gunners and the other half by the bush beaters.

Hunting had one general effect on the Asante political system, in that it served as a training ground for the Asante warriors. The Asante were known not to possess a standing

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1. Fuller, F.C., A Vanished Dynasty: Ashanti (London 1921) pp. 26-27.

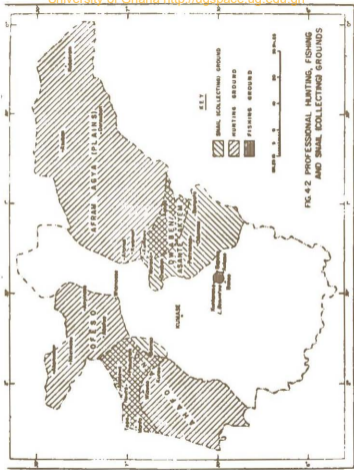


FIG. 4.2 PROFESSIONAL HUNTING, FISHING AND SNAIL COLLECTING GROUNDS



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army, and there was no formal training in gun warfare: it was therefore in such hunting expeditions that they acquired the art of accurate aiming and shooting.

Trapping went with hunting. The hunters also made powerful traps for the big animals. Trapping was a widespread activity and was not limited to hunters. Non-hunters could set their traps, but these went in for traps intended for small animals owing to the dangers involved in setting traps intended for the big game.

#### Fishing

Large scale river fishing did not develop in Asante in spite of the presence of big rivers such as Tano, Bosom Pra and Ofe. In the case of Tano and Pra, it was taboo to fish in them because they were regarded as gods,<sup>1</sup> Throughout this period this ban was doggedly adhered to. There was also small stream fishing known as ahwee. Fish traps were also used. Both men and women engaged in fishing but on the whole it was principally considered to be work for men. The impression created so far could be that all small streams could be

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1. For example, Tano river was regarded as the chief of the gods in Asante and the fishes in them were the daughters of the gods and, therefore, not eaten.

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exploited for their fish, but this was not so in Asante; rather, some streams were regarded as sacred or as gods; therefore the fish in them were not eaten. Nevertheless, the number of such streams was small, but each locality had one or two of such sacred streams.

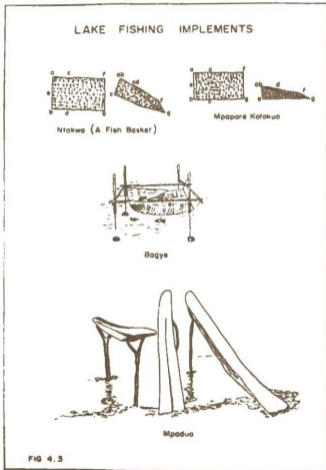
#### Lake Fishing:

Instead of the dugout canoes used at the coast, the lake fishermen used a log of wood with a side roughly hewn, which they called padua. This was made of very light wood called Odwuma fufuo (Musanga smithii) and it measured six feet to ten feet long and about a foot wide and between six to eight inches thick. They could lash two or more of the mpadua together to form mpata or raft <sup>1</sup>.

The appliances used for fishing were as simple as the mpadua. They included various fish traps and nets, such as Ntakwa Mpapare, Kotoku, Kotoku Kese and Bagye (Fig. 4.3). There was yet another way of fishing in the lake which was even more primitive. The method was called Abontuo. A fisherman dived under the water for about thirty seconds and came up holding a fish between his teeth to leave the hands free for

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1. Rattray, R. S., Ashanti (O. U. P. reprinted 1969) p. 62.



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Farming

At the beginning of the history of the Kingdom of Asante the art of farming was known, but cultivation was on small scale. Three factors were responsible for this. In the first place, the Asante were armed with only crude implements, therefore the gigantic trees and the thick vegetation defied their technology. Secondly, the Asante regarded some of the big trees as the abode of gods and therefore were not to be felled. Lastly and most important was the fact that areas which were farther away from settlements were left undisturbed. On his way to Kumase in 1816 Huydecoper noted that farms were more numerous around the larger settlements<sup>1</sup>, because little villages surrounding these large settlements cultivated the land in order to supply the towns with foodstuffs<sup>2</sup>.

During this period farming was practised on a purely subsistence level, and the food produced from the farms was on a very limited scale, as a result of several inhibiting factors, the most important being the relatively small population.

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1. Huydecoper's Diary op.cit. pp.14-15
  2. Dickson, K. B., "The Agricultural Landscape of Southern Ghana and Ashanti/Brong Ahafo, 1800-1850" Bulletin of Ghana Geographical Association Vol. 9 No. 1 January, 1964.

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Secondly, the people could obtain food from other sources such as gathering. Thirdly, at that time, food production was the concern of only the women because men were rather interested in activities such as trading and mining, and these were the very economic activities which received state patronage. Often farming was interrupted when there was unrest in the state or when the Asante were on a punitive campaign outside their own territory. During such hard times wild foodstuffs and fruits featured prominently in the diet of the people.

Perhaps farming in Asante remained on a subsistence level because the court did not care for commercial agriculture. It seems the Asante did not know the importance of commercial farming. For example, all attempts to induce them to cultivate cotton on commercial basis failed.<sup>1</sup> On this score one could not describe the Asante as agricultural people (as today). Consequently, farm sizes were small; they were mere patches of cultivated ground. The average size of a farm might have been less than an acre; however this depended on the size of the family and its ability to work. Furthermore, the farms in Asante did not

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1. See Footnote 2 at page 12 of this Chapter.

develop any significant or clear cut shapes such as the strips of the huza among the Krobo of Eastern Ghana<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 4. 4). The shapes of the farms have been irregular patches of cultivated grounds distributed sporadically over the cultivated areas (Fig. 4. 5). This development was probably due to the nature of land-holding among the people which lacked the rigid control seen among the Krobo. Any member of the landowning group was allowed to cultivate any place within the group's land, each according to his capabilities.

The farms in Asante were characterised by a system of mixed cropping. In 1702; the Asante definitely knew and cultivated the yam, cocoyam, the plantain and banana; these crops, especially the yam and plantain, dominated the farms. It seems undeniable that yam was the first cultivated crop among these people<sup>2</sup> (27, 28, 03). This conclusion derives from the importance of the religious ceremonies attached to the cultivation

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1. Benneh, G. "The Role of Agricultural Geography in the Economic Development of Ghana" Bulletin of Ghana Geographical Association, Vol. 12, 1967, p. 62.
  2. Posnansky, M., "Yams and the Origins of West African Agriculture" in ODU: A Journal of West African Studies No. 1 April, 1969.

## KROBO (HUZA) LANDHOLDING PATTERN

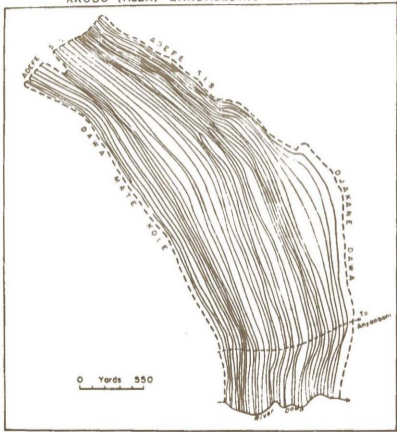


FIG. 4-4

After G. Bennet

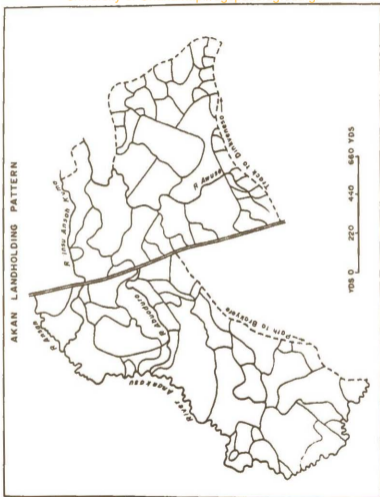


FIG 4 5

After S. B. B. B.



of the crop. <sup>1</sup> Several species of the yam are indigenous to West Africa (Fig. 4.6) e.g. nkamfuo, (Discorea dumerorum) and pona (D. rotundata)<sup>2</sup>. Several species of the old cocoyam, (Colocasia spp) were also cultivated and eaten by the Asante (26, 28). Brobe (C. antiquorum)<sup>3</sup> was also cultivated but it was not very prominent in the farms. It was only cultivated along the banks of streams and, like water yam, did not feature prominently in the diet.<sup>4</sup>

Plantain, Musa sp. (AAB) which was known before 1702 was first cultivated after the yam. Its Asante name boa-ode,<sup>5</sup> i.e. "supplement to yam", shows that the yam was the first to be cultivated and eaten. After the yam, plantain was the next dominant crop on the farms during this period. Another member of the Musa family which was cultivated was Asante Kwadu, (Musa ABB). This type of Banana was as widespread as plantain, yet its use was only secondary to plantain. Finally, there was the efre (Cucubita

1. Coursey, D.G., "The Cultivation and Use of Yams in West Africa" (The Yam Festival) in Ghana Notes and Queries Vol. 9-1966.
2. Dalziel, J. M., The Useful Plants of West Africa (London 1937) pp. 490-492.
3. Ibid. p. 491.
4. It was believed that when a man ate it he lost his masculinity.
5. C. J. Taylor's assertion that it was introduced by the Portuguese is very doubtful. Ref. Synecology and Silviculture in Ghana. Its name boa-ode or bro-ode does not mean the whiteman's yam.

## THE YAM ZONE OF WEST AFRICA



1746

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of the grain might have reached Asante in the eighteenth century. There is no evidence to show where it was first cultivated. But when the Asante had learnt its usefulness as military ration in 1806<sup>1</sup> its cultivation became widespread and attracted the attention of Bowdich.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately the crop did not feature as normal food in the diet of Asante: it was only used during funerals, and also when on active campaigns (it was fried nkyewie or made into powder, kyekyire).

The last two crops whose introduction had a lasting effect were cassava (Manihot utilissima)<sup>3</sup>, and the new cocoyam, (Xanthosomia segetiflorium). Both crops came in during the second half of the nineteenth century. The new cocoyam was first introduced into Ghana by the Basel Missionaries from the West Indies<sup>4</sup>, and was first cultivated and used at Akropong-Akuapem. In Asante cocoyam is called Kukurantumi (which is a town in Eastern Region near Koforidua- New Dwaben). It is very likely that those Dwaben who returned from Akyem (in Eastern Region) introduced this new foodcrop in Asante in 1880s. It was first

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1. Dickson, K.B., "The Agricultural Landscape of Southern Ghana and Ashanti/Brong Ahafo" op.cit. p. 27.
  2. Bowdich, T.E., op.cit. p. 338
  3. Johnson, B.F. op.cit. pp. 25-26.
  4. Ibid. p. 137

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cultivated in Dwaben traditional area. It was from Dwaben area that it spread to Sekyere, Kwabere, Atwoma and Amansie in 1890s. The crop's quick rise to prominence both as a crop and in the diet of the people was due to its palatability.

Cassava also came from the coast, possibly through the Dwaben who were near Accra where the crop was very important (O1, 98). It was introduced to the environs of Dwaben and Efidwaase about the same time as cocoyam. Unlike cocoyam which spread rapidly throughout Asante, cassava's diffusion was rather slow. This was because it could not compete with the yam, plantains and cocoyam. It was in Kwabere where it was accepted not as a staple but as cash crop for the alien population in Kumase, especially the coastal peoples such as the Fante, the Ga and the Ewe. Indeed cassava's eventual spread throughout the core area of Asante (and its role in the diet of the Asante) is only recent when poor soils made the cultivation of yams and cocoyams difficult. Cassava is a crop which does well even in poor soils. That is why it is in Kwabere where (due to long fallow of the soil) cassava cultivation is well established.

Yet another crop which the Asante knew, but which Bowdich and others did not mention as a foodcrop in Asante is rice.

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The foodcrop held a rather unique position in Asante. According to the tradition of Tano Cult <sup>1</sup> rice was used to feed the deity when yam was scarce (the period between April and June) (25, 101). Again during the same lean yam period the paramount chiefs in Asante, when washing their soul (i. e. wodware won kraa), used rice in place of yam <sup>2</sup> (25, 101). This idea was acquired from the Brong, where the Tano Cult originated. The Brong knew and cultivated rice along the Tain and Tano rivers. Since the Asante only needed small quantities of rice for the rituals mentioned above, they did not care to cultivate it, because they obtained their supplies first from Brong area and later probably from Wassa and Nzima areas (25, 101). Its presence in Asante today is only a seventeenth century phenomenon. It is cultivated in Asante-Akyem around Dwaso and Obogu areas and also in Western Asante where there are large rivers with considerable marshes. In the environs of Kumase its cultivation is unknown perhaps because of lack of extensive marshes.

Other food items that were known and cultivated in the nineteenth century were sugar cane<sup>3</sup>, fruit trees, legumes and

1. Tano Deity is the chief traditional Deity for the Asante, whose original shrine is at Tano Boase (in Brong traditional area) near Takyiman.
2. Rice is not a staple in Asante even today.
3. Bowdich, T. E., op. cit., p. 324.

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vegetables. One does not know exactly when the Asante acquired such cultivated fruits as pineapple (Ananas comosa), lemon (Citrus limon), which was frequently used as native medicine, and oranges (Citrus sinensi, and Citrus aurantium). Oral tradition recounts that by 1800 these fruits were known (05, 11, 98). The Basel Missionaries were reputed to have been responsible for the introduction of mango (Mangifera indica), and the avocado pear (Persea americana). These might have reached Asante during the second half of the nineteenth century through Asante traders, soldiers, and the Dwaben who lived in the Eastern Region (65, 67, 102).

The Asante knew and cultivated groundnut (Arachis hypogea). In Asante its home has been in the northern fringes around Adwera. When the Mampon people spread northwards after 1702 they saw the original inhabitants of Adwera cultivating groundnuts on a large scale (90, 91). In the same transitional zone (between the forest of the South and the savanna of the north) legumes such as the bambara (Voandzela subterranea) and cowpea (Vigna unguiculata) were cultivated before the Asante occupied it in the early decades of the eighteenth century (91, 90, 98).

In the forest areas the Asante cultivated vegetables like okro (Hibiscus esculentus). This crop was mentioned by

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Bowdich,<sup>1</sup> Egg plant (Solanum esculentum) and tomato

(Nnankyemono) were also cultivated by the time of Bowdich.

These crops were normally cultivated in back yard gardens near settlements. (03, 27, 98).

They also cultivated spices such as ginger (Zingiber officinale), the malaguettia pepper (Piper nigrum and P. guineense), and pepper (Capsicum spp.) (03, 27, 40). These spices were normally cultivated on food farms except the malaguetta, which was raised separately. Ginger was cultivated on a large scale in Atwoma around Nkawie and Toase<sup>2</sup> (40). Malaguetta was also cultivated in Kwabere around Safo and Asonomaso (27, 24). Both crops entered into commerce. Pepper which was used in the diet of the people as a spice was ubiquitous in Asante.

The food crops which were the principal elements in the farms were raised under the bush fallow system of farming. It is likely that this system developed from the shifting cultivation, but in 1700 this old system of farming, i. e. shifting cultivation was already a thing of the past. The main characteristics of the bush

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1. Bowdich, T. E., op. cit. p. 325

2. Today ginger is produced on commercial scale in and around Nkawie-Toase area.

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fallow system were, firstly, that a single farm contained various kinds of crops with different harvesting periods, and secondly, this system was a means whereby the land was allowed to rest in order to recuperate its lost fertility.

The Asante farmers had a clear idea of the climate throughout the year and they tried to apportion their activities within the framework of the climatic conditions. The farmers knew that climatically the year was divided into four seasons: December to March - the dry season, which they called ope bere or the harmattan season; April-July - the big rainy season called Bampon Suo (the failure of Bampon Suo was always fatal to the farmers); August-mid-September, a short dry period (Ofupe bere) and mid-September to early November - the minor rains which they called Kyikirikyí Suo. Furthermore, some of the seasons were associated with some acknowledged phenomenon, e.g. the dry season - Ope bere, was associated with the shedding of the leaves of Akonkodie tree (Celba pentandra). Again the arrival of Akobonso, a type of butterfly, indicated that the planting season had ended.<sup>1</sup> (03, 27, 28, 98).

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1. This was their conception of the seasons. Today the traditional Asante farmer still counts the seasons in the same way.



The farmers believed that the Creator was responsible for giving rains and therefore prayed through the gods for rain. A little variation in the season could mean that someone in the community had infringed some of the traditional taboos. This called for propitiation of the gods. This belief was so strong that farming activities were full of such customs of appeasing the gods, e.g. the gods had to eat of the new crop, especially maize and yams before the community did.

To make a farm a farmer selected a piece of 'grown up' forest on the basis of indicator plants such as Odwuma, the 'silk cotton tree'. The selected patch was then weeded after a short ceremony. Some of the trees were then felled to allow in sunshine (Onyame anunu afuo mu a nye yie, literally, the farmer believed that without sunshine from God the farm would not be successful). Then late January when the rains were about to commence, the farmer burnt the cut bush, and the final preparation of the patch started. The patch was then cleared of all weeded stuff. This work was done up to the middle or end of March when the rains had started. March-April, the beginning of the rainy season, then coincided with the planting of maize, yam, plantain, and other vegetables. Planting continued throughout April until May.

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In June when the Akobonso, a kind of butterfly, arrived in large numbers, the Asante farmer then knew that there should be no more planting of yam. The planting season had passed.

Harvesting started in late June with young maize. The farmer would leave some to dry in the farm during the short dry period in August-September. This short dry period was utilised to prepare small patches for Apese buro, the quick growing corn. With the commencement of the rains in September, the second maize was planted, and this took only two months to mature for harvesting in late October and early November. By the first half of December, the yam would have matured, so that harvesting continued until late January.

The harvesting of cassava and cocoyam was delayed for a year while plantain normally took one to one-and-a-half years to mature. Such a farm would continue to produce food for subsistence for a couple of years until after three to four years when it would be left to fallow. During the first few years of the fallow the farm's yield of plantain would continue to feed the farmer.

The Asante farmer used very simple tools. The two prominent tools were the cutlass, adre and the hoc, aso.

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They also had an axe<sup>1</sup>, which was used in (felling) the small trees. These locally made tools were not powerful farming implements, and their use was, therefore, tedious. Such poor tools contributed to the preponderance of small farms.

The relatively weak position of farming as an economic activity could also be attributed to the kind of labour employed. The unit of labour was the household, generally excluding the men. Principally, therefore, the tilling of the land was the concern of the women assisted by their children. The men only came in during the early stages of farm-making, especially during the preparation of the land, and sons-in-law were obliged to work on the farms of the parents-in-law especially during the season when new farms were cleared. The son-in-law usually performed this obligatory duty with the help of friends on the nnoboa or co-operative basis. When an in-law became a father he was then released from this duty. This source of labour was said to have been important in the nineteenth century (11, 26, 58).

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1. Hutton, W., Voyage to Ashantee (London 1821), p. 205.

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Gold Mining

Gold is known to exist mainly in the Birimian rocks which cover many places in Asante. But the ancient gold mining did not take place in unweathered rocks, since the people's technology was inadequate for mining in that material. Nevertheless, the Asante won their gold from two of the three geological formations all of which were closely related to the Birimian. These were the alluvium from beds of rivers flowing on the Birimian e. g. the Ofe (Ofin) and its tributaries, and alluvial deposits, sometimes covered by a lateritic crust, occurring on the gentle slopes of old valleys of rivers flowing in Birimian terrain. The important mines were found in Kumsu-Wioso, Manso<sup>1</sup>, Asanse<sup>2</sup> and Odumase-Konongo-Obenimase areas in Asante Akyem (65, 66, 68). Gold was also collected from bed of rivers and from gutters after heavy rains<sup>3</sup>. The collection of gold from river beds, which went on throughout the year, was not so difficult but it was gold digging which yielded better and more gold.<sup>4</sup>

1. Dutch Records - 1707 Vol. II, 1707-1715 p. 37. Richest mines in the part of the 18th Century Furley collection, Balme Library, Legon.
2. Ward, W. E. F. A History of Ghana (London 1958) p. 396.
3. (a) Letter From Gen. Pieter Nuijts at Elmina to Ass. X WIC. Amsterdam, April, 24, 1706.  
(b) Bosman, W. op. cit. p. 71
4. Ibid. p. 71

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The miners sank shafts into the ancient alluvium. Pieces of rock were then broken off the reef and hoisted to the surface. The pieces of rock were then carried to the miners' houses where they are pounded to fine powder in a wooden mortar. The stuff was then washed, hammered once more and washed again. Generally a brass pan containing about 12lbs of this powdered stuff would yield between 5/- and 6/- worth of gold dust. This method of mining and extracting gold, as described by G. E. Ferguson, is confirmed by many authorities<sup>1</sup> (01, 94).

Gold mining was a well organized activity. People went in companies to dig for gold. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the greater part of the underground mining was done by slaves, especially those war captives from Gongya and elsewhere in the north (01, 29, 94). The miners who travelled outside their traditional homes to other stool lands had to seek permission from the chief who owned that land. The two parties entered into an agreement, that the miner would surrender all gold nuggets found and pay a tribute of about half of the gold won to the stool (01, 29). This means that mining was heavily taxed.

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1. a) Freeman, R. A., op. cit. p. 530.
  - b) Hull, H. M., op. cit.
  - c) See 3<sup>rd</sup> page 142.

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Again gold mining was controlled by the state.

In the first place the Asante regarded the sub-soil as belonging to the King. This is supported by an Akan proverb: Brode ase ye obene dea i.e. the soil under the roots of plantain belongs to the King, the Asantehene.<sup>1</sup> For this reason all treasures found in the sub-soil belonged to the King (O1). This then seemed to be the source of state control of gold mining during this period. The King of Asante taxed all the chiefs whose stool lands yielded gold. Secondly, all gold nuggets won during mining operations went eventually to the King. Thirdly, the court itself organized mining expeditions using slaves under the Sanaahene (the keeper of the King's treasure) to seek for gold especially in Manso and Kunsu-Wiaso mining fields. The court's control of gold mining was not only limited to the gold fields in the vassal states such as Akyem, Denkyira, Aowin, Wasa and Twifo where Asante court officials were stationed to collect taxes (O1).

Gold mining had some effects on cultural elements, such as routes, settlements and goldsmithing while it might have affected adversely farming and other primary economic activities.

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1. The proverb was translated by "Krakiye" Denteh of The Language Centre, Legon. Personal interview.

In the case of the routes, some gold fields attracted some major trade routes, e.g. the Begho route to the coast passed through Adanse goldfields.<sup>1</sup> The eastern route i.e. the Kwamu route also passed through the Asante Akyem gold fields.

Some old gold mining centres such as Tutuka (now a suburb of Obuase) Manso-Nkwanta, Kunsu-Wioso and Odumase/Konongo did develop into permanent settlements. Out of these old mining centres Obuase and Konongo/Odumase attracted the European gold miners and have developed into modern centres of economic dominance. Gold mining's adverse effect on farming was like that of trading; it led to the relegation of farming to the background, which thus became the work for women. In mining areas, it was said that foodstuffs were not as plentiful as in non-mining areas, because there the services of the women were required during the washing and panning stages (94, 66, 68). In the mining areas of Konongo-Odumase for example, food was obtained from Dwaso and Patriensa areas (33, 66) while Fomina and Akrokyere were the main sources of food supply for the Obuase gold fields.

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1. Dickson, K.B. A Historical Geography of Ghana, p. 89.

CHAPTER FIVE

CRAFTS

One major index of the culture of a people is their craft industry. Craftsmanship develops when a society has passed through a purely hunting/gathering economic stage and has entered a stage of sedentary agricultural life with possible food surpluses for non-agricultural minority of the society, possibly craftsmen. At such a stage, the society appreciates leisure, a state in which the creative mind is able to fashion new things from conceived ideas.

The section of the Akan who later became known as Asante passed through this state long before they migrated from Adanse. While in Adanse, they knew pottery, wood carving and blacksmithing.<sup>1</sup> No doubt, the origins of these crafts go back into the dim past about which our knowledge is only fragmentary, and our oral tradition does not seem to remember.

In 1702, when the Asante kingdom was in its infancy, the following crafts were known: pottery, wood carving, metal

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1. Agyeman-Dua, J., Antoa Stool History I. A. S. Acc. No. AS. 10  
Ampabame Stool History I. A. S.  
Acc. No. AS. 144  
Asonomaso Stool History I. A. S.  
Acc. No. AS. 155  
Gyamfi-Wonoo Stool History I. A. S.  
Acc. No. AS. 171.



working involving iron, gold, silver and brass, and weaving.<sup>1</sup> But there seemed to have been tremendous improvement in the designs during the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries. This was especially so in weaving, carving and goldsmithing. Whenever possible Asante craftsmen copied from their neighbours mainly from the north,<sup>2</sup> but also fashioned new things in their own way. (23, 18, 61, 95).

In Asante the various crafts were patronised and given royal recognition e.g. the wood-carvers, goldsmiths and potters of Denkyira, the clothweavers of Gongya and Gyaman and brass smiths of Takyiman were encouraged by the Asante royal court. To understand the development of the Asante art two main factors must be considered: the interest of the Asante court in art and Asante's position in relation to other states. As Asante expanded its political control over the surrounding kingdoms, the already established craftsmen were captured and resettled in Asante to continue their craftsmanship, this time for the Asante Royal Court.

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1. (a) Bowdich, T. E., Mission From Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee, p. 319.  
(b) Reindorf, Rev. C. C., The History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti, Second Edition (Basel 1889), p. 30.
  2. Rattray, R. S., Religion and Art in Ashanti (O. U. P. 1927) p. 310.

The arrival of the craftsmen in Asante led to the founding of some craft centres not very far from Kumase (Fig. 5, 1); wood carvers were settled at Ahwiaa (5 miles) goldsmiths in Kumase itself, bronze/brass-smiths at Kentenkrono (6 miles), potters at Tafo (3 miles) and Pankrono (4 miles), and Adinkra cloth-makers at Asokwa (3 miles).

The Asante crafts were not known to have featured in the external trade of the Asante. The crafts were only important in the internal markets, where there did not appear to be any competition between them and the northern goods. Nevertheless, there appeared to have been competition between the European manufactured goods and the Asante crafts, but this was a later development. Thus, despite the influx of goods from the north and the coast, the Asante craftsmen maintained their own until the Colonial era.

All the crafts mentioned, except pottery, were practised by full time craftsmen. In addition the craftsmen had to perform their court duties. Some of the crafts aided other economic activities e.g. blacksmithing supplied farm and gold mining tools.

FIG. 5. ASANTE CPAST CENTRE



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In Asante itself, all the big settlements had their

own smithies where new tools were manufactured and old ones were mended; this was because of the need for farm implements the demands for which were great at centres with high population concentration. Nevertheless the chief iron working centre was Fumesua<sup>1</sup>, where resided the famous blacksmiths from Sehwi and Denkyira (18, 02). The site of Fumesua as centre for blacksmithing cannot be explained in terms of availability of raw material; it was chosen simply for its proximity to Kumase. Fumesua also came to serve the areas of Kwabere and Atwoma. Other important centres for iron working were Mampon (where the name of one of the quarters Tunsoom i. e. smithy, is reminiscent of this craft) Kumawu, Asaman and Atobiase (Fig. 5, 1) (92, 05, 22). These settlements specialized in this craft because their early inhabitants from Adanse knew this craft.

Blacksmiths were considered important in the society because of the significance attached to this craft and because of the role of their artefacts in the day to day life of the people.

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1. Fumesua was known as Atomfo-kro which literally means Town of Blacksmiths. It was most renowned blacksmiths' centre in Asante.

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The blacksmiths manufactured tools such as cutlass, used in farming, as well as sword and spear which were war implements.<sup>1</sup>

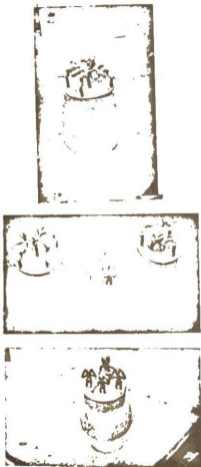
#### Bronze and Brass Casting:

The Asante knew the art of casting in brass and bronze. From these they manufactured the Kuduo<sup>2</sup> caskets and gold weights or abramuo<sup>3</sup> respectively.

The Kuduo caskets were used as containers for gold dust and other precious ornaments. (93, 01). The Asante gold weights are believed to be the best known of Ghana's artefacts.<sup>4</sup> In Asante the gold weights were cast into all sorts of shapes and forms which depicted their socio-economic life (Fig. 5, 2)<sup>5</sup>

1. Kyerematen, A. A. Y., Panoply of Ghana (London 1964). The spear is now hardly found among the regalia of any of the rulers of the Akan as a military weapon. The Asante called the levy raised when preparing for war as apeatuo i. e. The spear toll. The spear, however, is preserved in the cult of Tano, a traditional Asante deity, a fair indication that the Asante knew the spear and manufactured it. Later it was replaced by the gun.
2. Rattray, R. S. Religion and Art in Ashanti, p. 312
3. Bowdich, T. E., op. cit. p. 312.
4. Kyerematen, A. A. Y., op. cit. p. 29
5. It seem to be an undeniable fact that these artefacts could be used as a source-material for the study of the Asante traditional life.

Fig. 5.2: Cire Perdue Method of Casting  
Kuduo Caskets (gold dust containers)



the lids are gold weights

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The method of production of the gold weights and the

Kuduo casket is fully documented by Rattray.<sup>1</sup> The spatial distribution of this craft was very simple because it was only limited to Kentenkrono near Kumase. This was where the Denkyira craftsmen were settled to practise their craft. The craft did not spread probably because the demand was not very great as it was in the case of weaving.

#### Gold and Silver Smithing:

Gold was important not only because it entered into the external trade or because it was regarded as a medium of exchange by the Asante, but because it was used for the manufacture of many kinds of ornaments such as rings, bracelets, breast plate etc. Goldsmithing has a long history and by 1702 the craft had develop to a fairly high standard,<sup>2</sup>(94). This is evidenced by the craftsmanship of the Golden Stool of Asante. The craft in Asante further developed with the arrival of Denkyirahene's goldsmiths, and lastly the arrival of goldsmiths

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1. Rattray, R. S., Religion and Art in Ashanti, Chapter XXVIII

2. Agyeman-Dua, J., Stool History of the Chief Gold Smith  
I. A. S. Acc. No. AS. 13.

Idem

Adanae Paramount Stool History, I. A. S.  
Acc. No. AS. 89.

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from Takyiman in 1730s<sup>1</sup> (01, 94). These renowned craftsmen came to Asante with new ideas and designs and consequently contributed to the development of the craft. Many of the state symbols such as swords, linguist's sticks, etc. were plated with gold during the reign of Opoku Ware<sup>2</sup>. (01, 02, 94). The royal goldsmiths also had a singular privilege of casting the heads of defeated vassal chiefs in gold (01, 02).

Apart from these royal goldsmiths there were others who manufactured rather restricted articles for the ordinary people. This means that not all gold ornaments could either be manufactured or used by the public, especially those designed for the chiefs and elders. The main centre of goldsmithing was Kumase; the other minor centres were Mampon, Dwaben, Nsuta, Bekwai, Fomena etc. (Fig. 5.1) which were traditional capitals. This distribution reflects the association of the craft with royal houses. Later, lesser chiefs sent their sons and nephews to learn the craft so that invariably it was chieftaincy which guided

1. (a) Meyerowitz, E., "A note on the Early History of the Jamasi people" in Transactions of the Gold Coast of Togoland Historical Society Vol. I Part IV 1955, pp. 141-143.  
(b) Nketia, J.H., Funeral Dirges of the Akan People (Achimota 1956) p. 220.
2. Meyerowitz E., Akan Tradition of Origins (London 1950)p. 36.  
Fuller, F.C., A Vanished Dynasty, Ashanti, p. 28.



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the spread of goldsmithing.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries goldsmiths formed an honoured class<sup>1</sup>. This was so because their craft was regarded as the chief of crafts, while at the same time they handled the most precious metal. The goldsmiths formed a guild and any one of them had the singular privilege of calling a fellow goldsmith's wife 'my wife'.<sup>2</sup> They were also allowed to wear certain gold ornaments, which were otherwise rigorously restricted to kings and paramount chiefs. But they were not free to manufacture any kind of ornaments for the public. Only royal goldsmiths were allowed to work such ornaments as were used by the Asantehene and the paramount chiefs.

Certain families retained the art of goldsmithing. If a son did not follow the father's trade, then the nephew was compelled to do so. On the other hand if a son followed his father's trade he had the exclusive right to inherit his father's goldweights and all his stock-in-trade to the exclusion of any member of his father's clan. Nevertheless, if a nephew happened to be in the same trade, then he, rather than the son would inherit the deadman's stock-in-trade.

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1. Rattray, R. S., Ashanti (O. U. P., 1925), p. 301

2. Ibid. p. 301

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An allied industry was silver smithing, which was

invariably taken up by the goldsmiths. One of the outstanding monuments of silver working is the silver stool of Amaniampon, which is a few years younger than the golden stool of Asante. Silver works never became as important as goldsmithing, yet such things as nwerekò, silver chains and breast plates, were extensively used for funeral celebrations, in spite of the fact that such works were as costly as they were rare.

#### Wood Working:

In 1702 wood carving was a specialised craft but not very widespread. It was through the founding of Ahwiaa, a few miles away from Kumase<sup>1</sup> by the stool carvers of Denkyira after their defeat, that carving became important in Asante. Ahwiaa remained the only centre for stool carving. The main reason was that the demand for carved stools was not as great as the demand for either kente cloth or iron tools. Because of this it was not a lucrative job to attract apprentices from other areas.<sup>2</sup>

1. Bosten, K., An Historical Geography of Kwabere. An unpublished B.A. dissertation, Department of Geography, (Legon 1967) p. 2.
2. Today as Kente weaving and Adinkra making are spreading especially throughout Kwabere wood carving is still limited to Ahwiaa for the same reason as above.

By the end of the period the carvers at Ahwiaa had developed many complicated designs in stool carving (Fig. 5.3). All stools for the chiefs and queenmothers<sup>1</sup> and stools for all the other chiefs came from Ahwiaa. The Ahwiaa carvers also carved fertility dolls, and the Oware board. The trees used in carving, in order of preference, were the osese tree(Funtumia sp.), Fruntum (Funtumia elastica), Nyamedua (Alstomia sengensis). Other carvings of domestic importance were wooden sandals, (nkronnua) and combs. The last two items did not demand any great skills; their carving was, therefore, ubiquitous. The trees used in carving were the odwuma or the umbrella tree (Musanga cecropioides) and the silk cotton tree (Ceiba pentandra).

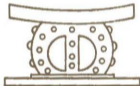
Another object which received attention from wood carvers was the talking drum. It was carved from the tweneboa tree, the cedar of West Africa, (Harrisonia accidentalis)<sup>2</sup>.

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1. The house of Akwasi Yooyoo, one of the ancestors, carved for the Asantehene. Ref. Kyeckemateng, S. (Mrs.) Wood Carving at Ahwiaa, (Legon 1970). Unpublished B.A. dissertation, Department of Geography, Legon.
  2. Rattray, R.S. Religion and Art in Ashanti p.270

## WOOD CARVING: TYPES OF STOOLS



Mma (Dwa) Stool



Kotoko (Dwa) Stool



Mmarima (Dwa) Stool

FIG. 5. 3

Every paramount chief used to have his own drum carvers, the atwenesenfuo so that the spatial distribution of this craft was defined by the distribution of the paramount stools.

This craft was hedged with a number of taboos.<sup>1</sup>

These taboos undoubtedly performed an economic function; for example, the taboo which forbade non carvers to fell the tweneboa tree<sup>2</sup> was to limit the utilization of such trees to only the carvers and also to preserve them for their future use. Again the taboo that women should not carve points to the fact that carving was job for men. This was so because it needed the male strength in all its stages.

#### Cloth Making:

This was a craft which was of great concern to all, because the Asante abhorred the nudity of the adult, especially female; therefore they quickly evolved a kind of cloth known as the kyenkyen, which was made from the bark of a tree, Antiaris toxicana<sup>3</sup>. Though this cloth was coarse and clumsy to wear it was durable. The manufacturing of kyenkyen cloth was simple.

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1. Ibid. p. 271

2. Nketia, J. H. K., Drumming in Akan Communities (London 1963)

3. Busia, K. A., Ashanti (African World), p. 190. p. 5.

The bark of the tree was first stripped off in long narrow pieces, a foot or so wide. These strips were softened in water for about a day. They were then laid over a trunk of a fallen tree and then beaten with wooden mallets with round corrugated heads. This simple process expanded the original width of the cloth considerably.

The Asante never acquired the animal skin cloth of the north for the simple reason that animal rearing never became important in Asante. But the Asante acquired the cotton cloth from the same place. Before weaving became popular in Asante, they knew the northern cotton cloths such as Bomo and Nsaa. It seems this idea of weaving ~~might~~ have been introduced by the Muslim traders to Begho and Gyaman areas, northwest of Kumase, and the idea might have reached the environs of Kumase in the 1650s. It is believed that the man who introduced weaving into Asante brought the art from somewhere in modern Ivory Coast, probably Gyaman, or the Muslim Kingdom of Kong. He first established the industry at Bonwere<sup>1</sup> (23) in about the second half of the seventeenth century. Because of the great demand for cloths, many people from Bonwere learnt the craft and became master weavers. (Fig. 5. 4). For the same reason apprentices

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1. Rattray, R. A., Religion and Art In Ashanti, p. 220

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from the nearby settlements such as Baman, Amape, Adangomase, Sakora Wonoo and Abira flocked to Bonwere to learn the craft (23, 95, 61, 96). So that a century after the establishment of the first loom Bonwere and its satellites were noted for their Kente cloths. It appears there was no royal court restriction on the spread of Kente weaving; perhaps what guided its spread was the distance from Bonwere: settlements closer to Bonwere more easily acquired this craft industry. The master weavers at Bonwere kept close watch over the young kente weavers in and around Bonwere in order that the latter would not manufacture unauthorised cloths i.e. those cloths designed exclusively for the Asantehene and the other chiefs. This restriction affected the lesser kente weavers adversely because the technique of weaving certain designs remained a secret to them.

Apart from kente weaving in Kwabere, cotton weaving was carried on in many homes where the Gongya and Dagomba slaves lived, because many of these domestic slaves from the north knew the art of weaving and therefore wove for their masters. (01, 67, 23). The cloth woven by these northern weavers lacked the complicated designs of kente.<sup>1</sup> The former was simple and coarse,  

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1. The northern cloth woven in Asante was not called kente but kyekye.



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and looked like the strips of the northern smock. In both cases the early fabric woven in Asante was made of cotton obtained from the cotton plant grown and spun in Asante. In the 1750s the kente weavers in and around Bonwere were weaving silk cloths with the thread unpicked from the silk clothes which they purchased from the whites at the coast. Both the cotton and silk cloths were woven on the Asante loom which according to some European observers, operated on the same principles as the English loom.<sup>1</sup>

The other Asante cloths were the Adinkra and the Kuntunkuni whose foundation was a plain fabric of white cotton woven on the same loom. After weaving the cloth was dyed russet brown with the bark of the Kuntunkuni tree (Sapindaceae sp.): this was the Kuntunkuni cloth, normally worn during funerals. In the case of Adinkra cloth, after weaving the desired designs were carefully stamped on the fabric. The idea of this cloth was copied from the Muslims who engraved Koranic designs on the cloths they wore, which the Asante called hyewo-a-enhye. Since the Asante could not write Hyewo-a-enhye,

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1. (a) Bowdich, T. E., *op. cit.*: p. 235.

(b) Hurton, W., *op. cit.*, p. 328.

The similarity in the Asante and northern loom is an indication of probable cultural borrowing with the former borrowing from the latter.

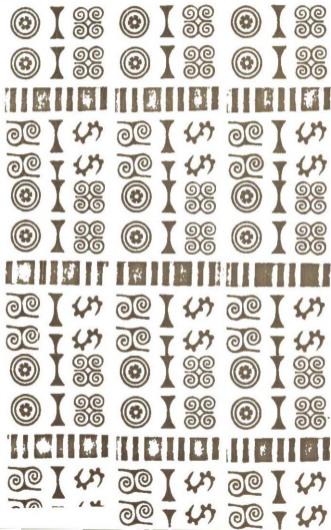
University of Ghana <http://www.ug.edu.gh> and called them made lines and triangles (geometrical shapes) and such cloths nkrakra toma (literally cloth with writing). Later in the first half of the 18th century the Asante copied the use of motifs (Fig. 5, 5) from Takyiman when the latter was defeated. The cloth then became known as adwinkra.<sup>1</sup> Like the other crafts whose centres were very close to Kumase, Asokwa used to be the chief centre because that was the place where both Gyaman and Takyiman adinkra makers were settled for the same reason as the other crafts. (01, 02). But later in the 19th century it spread to Ntonso and Kona, both on Mampon road, where some adinkra makers settled through marriage. (01, 17, 20, 21, 97).

Up to the fall of Prempe I in 1896, the Asante King appeared to hold a copyright of all new Kente and Adinkra designs. (01, 97). He either preserved such designs for his personal use or allocated them to the paramount chiefs and queenmothers in the Kingdom. From this one can infer that there was a considerable measure of state control on cloth making in Asante.

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1. Adwini means designs or motifs. The name Adwinkra later changed to Adinkra after the latter had become a household word with the defeat of Adinkra of Gyaman. This information was given by Barima Owusu Ansah, Kumase. (01).

FIGURE 5.15 ADINKRA DESIGN



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As it was in the other crafts there were varied taboos

on cloth weaving. For example, it was a taboo to start weaving on Friday, since the first loom was brought to Asante on that day. The gods responsible for weaving rested and ate on Fridays. Women were forbidden to weave. A woman in her menstrual period might not even touch a loom and she was expected to speak to a master weaver through the medium of a young child. An old loom must on no account be broken up; if it was broken up accidentally a fowl was sacrificed on it to appease the gods. All these taboos were economically desirable; for example, since it needed a lot of sitting when weaving, the weavers were made to rest at least one day within the week by a taboo. Again it was not regarded as the work for women who incidentally were considered to be inferior to men economically. Perhaps the taboo was to save the women from long hours of sitting on the loom, an important prerequisite for this craft. Lastly, the wooden structure of the loom was protected by a taboo which meant that one loom could last for many years to minimise cost of production.

All the above-mentioned crafts developed guilds among their members, so that one could speak of the gold-smiths guild,

wood carvers guild etc. Every craftsman usually belonged to a particular craft guild. Generally, membership was open to master craftsmen throughout Asante. The various guilds had the traditional brotherly social functions of providing spiritual and financial benefit of a fraternity, lodge or mutual aid society which they called kuo e.g. ntamanwenfuo kuo (literally weavers' guild). When a member died all the members of his guild (kuo) assisted in the settling of the funeral expenses of the deceased brother.<sup>1</sup> When a brother was in debt his guild could help him financially.

Each member of a guild had a right of fixing his own prices. Even though the retail prices were not directly under the guild's control, they could come under the guild's surveillance. An unscrupulous price cutter might encounter difficulties in obtaining suppliers<sup>2</sup> or might even lose his personal relationship with the 'brother' in the guild. This was counted a serious loss in view of the social as well as the economic functions of the group.

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1. Lystad, R.A., The Ashanti: A Proud People (Rutgerst 1958) p. 151.
  2. Rattray, R.S., Ashanti p. 35.

Pottery: University of Ghana <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh>

One of the oldest artefacts of man is pottery. Unlike the other crafts, this one developed as the craft for women and was maintained as hereditary craft handed down from mother to daughter.<sup>1</sup> It must have been a well established craft in Adanse before the Asante moved to their present home. Old Adubiase was a great pottery centre, a single commodity that generated an important weekly market before 1650. Another centre of the craft was Tafo which was an important pottery centre before the Asante came to occupy Kwabere. When the Asante established themselves around Kumase, Pankrono, founded by a resettled Denkyira, also developed as a pottery centre. Other areas which also developed as centres of pottery were Brenhoma, Apaa, Yonso etc. (Fig. 5.1). The fact that this craft had a wide distribution showed the demand which it had to satisfy. Pots were needed in all homes for many purposes, hence its wide distribution.

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1. Rattray, R. S., Religion and Art in Ashanti, p. 301.

It is stated that in ancient times pots were only bartered for food and not for gold dust or currency in use; thus their manufacture was left to women.

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At the end of the period there was some specialization in pottery. Tafo and Pankrono specialized in small pots for palm wine tapping (Aktekyiwa), Brenhoma went in for big earthen pots (Ahina) for storing water; while Apaa and Yonso produced small pots (ayowa) for cooking.

#### Marketing of Products of Craft Industries:

An important aspect of the craft industries was the marketing arrangements of the various crafts. Specialized crafts such as gold and silver products were manufactured on demand. This means that the crafts attracted the consumers to the crafts centres. This might be true of the products, from the brass and bronze casting. This is not to say that the craftsmen did not manufacture some products on their own initiative.

On the other hand those crafts whose products were in great demand such as cloths, pots, stools etc. had a different marketing arrangement. The craftsmen produced them in large quantities, and the finished products were sent to the markets either by the craftsmen or their representatives, say an apprentice or by middlemen. The latter were very important in pottery.

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Middlemen from the large market centres such as Kumase, Mampon etc. flocked to pottery centres and purchased them for sale later on. By such arrangements all these important commodities reached the consumers in the core area of Asante.



TRADE

Among the Asante trade was considered to be the most important economic activity, because it furnished them with wealth not only in goods but also in such valuable possessions as domestic slaves. A careful assessment of the influence of trade on the other aspects of the cultural ecology of Asante shows that it had some effects, positive as well as negative on other spheres of activity. For example, commerce affected the importance and alignment of trade routes, siting of settlements and shifts of population; it also stimulated the gathering of kola nuts. On the other hand it might have affected, negatively, farming which was relegated to women folk. Trading was very important and it received the greatest attention from the Asante court. The very economy of Asante rested on trade.

Trade was the major economic activity as Asante became the greatest middleman state in this part of West Africa. Because of the importance attached to this economic activity, the Asante court controlled it, especially the inter-state trade, as well as

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the major routes along which the trade flowed. The role played by Asante in this carrying trade seemed to have accomplished one thing, i. e. the economic integration of the territory now called Ghana. This was so since such commodities from the then northern territories like the shea butter and slaves were sent in large quantities to the coast, while salt, fish and European goods reached Salaga and Gongya markets through the Asante traders.<sup>2</sup> Internally some families grew rich through trade; such names as Kwaku Akore, Sikahene (chief of gold) of Adanse, (07, 04) and Kwasi Aday of Baman (23, 27) near Bonwere in Kwabere were connected with trade. Finally, through trade Asante had contact with the north and the coast, as well as with the surrounding Akan Kingdoms. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Asante benefited as money and ideas readily reached it through the traders. It is likely that other tribes also gained something from the Asante traders. This period is, therefore, seen as one of consolidation of Asante power through trade.

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1. Bosten, K., "Trade Among the Asante of Ghana Up to the End of 18th Century" I. A. S. Research Review, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1970, p. 40.
  2. Arhin, K., "Aspects of the Ashanti Northern Trade in the Nineteenth Century" in Africa Vol. XL, No. 4 Oct. 1970, p. 363.

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Patterns of Trade

There were three different patterns of trade: the local, district and the inter-state trade. All these patterns of trade have long been with the Asante.

Inter-State Trade:

By far the most important was the inter-state trade<sup>1</sup>, and the economy of Asante until its annexation was based on it. This trade followed two main directions: to the north and to the coast. To the northern markets of the Dagomba, Gongya<sup>2</sup> and Gyaman the Asante carried kola nuts,<sup>3</sup> and from there they took home slaves, livestock, crude iron bars, shea butter and coarse woollen clothes such as Nsaa Kyemetam, Bommo etc.

In the northern markets the chief currency was the cowrie: the Asante traders had to exchange the kola nuts for cowries with which they made purchases<sup>4</sup>. At first the northern traders were not allowed to trade south of Salaga<sup>5</sup>. This measure had both economic and political repercussions. Economically it helped to popularize the northern markets while the Asante traders

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1. Rattray, Ashanti Law and Constitution, p. 109.

2. Goody, J., "The Akan and the North" G. N. Q. No. 9, Nov. 1966, p. 25

3. Dutch Diaries and Correspondence Box 1815-1825, No. 3  
Furley Collection, Legon.

4. Rattray, R. S., op. cit., p. 110

5. Ibid., p. 110.

dictated the tempo of this trade by being the sole carriers of the chief commodity, kola nuts. Politically this measure strengthened Asante's position as it tried to engage the northerners in their native markets.

The Asante's trade to the north could be designated as the 'kola trade'. This forest commodity was so highly prized that it was used as medium of exchange on the slave markets. A slave at Salaga was worth between 10,000 and 14,000 nuts.<sup>1</sup> Bowdich also says that "2,000 cowries or one basket of boosees was the highest price given for a slave".<sup>2</sup> Rattray's suggested price of a slave was either exaggerated or probably it was the price towards the latter part of the 19th century when slaves were gradually becoming a scarce commodity. The price quoted by Bowdich is what seems plausible in oral tradition on the slave trade. (01, 03). A man's full load, called Apakan, was made up of about 2,000 nuts of kola and one Apakan could purchase a strong slave. Weaklings cost something less. Most of these purchased northerners entered into the (Western) Atlantic Slave trade, while a fair proportion were kept as domestic slaves in the homes of the Asante. One cannot tell the numbers of slaves

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1. Rattray, R. S., op. cit., p. 110

2. Bowdich, T. E., op. cit., p. 333

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who were purchased by the Asante traders from the north;  
nevertheless the many domestic slaves found in practically all  
the Asante homes attest to the extent and popularity of the slave  
trade with the north.

This profitable trade was carried on right into the  
beginning of the twentieth century but not without fluctuations.  
The volume of the kola trade reduced with the inception of the  
civil wars that plagued Asante from 1875 onwards. The Asante  
kola trade transformed Kintampo into a large market (1880s),  
but it seems the volume of trade that flowered to Kintampo did  
not compare with that of Salaga a few years earlier.

The Asante also went to the littoral to trade. The  
exports in this trade included gold, ivory, slaves, and shea butter;  
and the imports were gun and gunpowder, European consumer goods  
such as rum, schnapps, clothes and iron bars<sup>1</sup> and other coastal  
commodities such as fish and salt. (In Asante these exotic com-  
modities except gum<sup>1</sup> entered into the local/district trade).

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1. Rattray, R.S. *op. cit.* p.110  
Daaku, K.Y. , Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast 1600-1720  
(Clarendon Press 1970) Chapter 11.

University of Ghana <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh>, in  
Throughout the eighteenth century the Asante had, in

some cases, to sell their goods through the Fante middlemen. This was true at Cape Coast. But the trade was so lucrative that the Asante were determined to have direct access to the European traders, and thus eliminate the Fante middlemen. This idea, vital economically to Asante and desirable politically, had to be effected by force; this led to the Asante-Fante war in 1806<sup>1</sup> and subsequent encounters.<sup>2</sup> From 1807 onwards Asante was the dominant political power and most powerful middleman state and virtually controlled the trade in what is now contemporary Ghana. To maintain this role and make it effective, the Asante purchased at the coast firearms with which they clamped their power on the surrounding kingdoms. Bowdich observes that the Asante never permitted firearms to pass their country to the northern tribes<sup>3</sup>. This was an Asante court decision designed to strengthen the military might of the nation. Huydecoper recorded that the King of Asante could order from the coast in one instalment as many as "a thousand of the best guns".<sup>4</sup>

1. Dickson, K. B., "Trade Patterns in Ghana at the beginning of 18th Century". The Geographical Review Vol. LVI No. 3 July 1960, p. 430.
2. Adm. No. 51/5/17 p. 24 (National Archives of Ghana, Accra).
3. Bowdich, T. E. op. cit. p. 1100
4. Huydecoper's Diary. Journey From Elmina to Kumasi 28th April 1816 - 18th May 1817 (Translated Legon 1962) p. 40.

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The coastal states could not be prevented by the Asante from purchasing firearms because of their nearness to the European Forts and Castles.

Kumase became the chief commercial centre, as all major decisions on commerce were taken there. At the same time it assumed the role of a great inland entrepot and route centre (Fig. 6. 1).

It must be emphasised that both the chiefs and their subjects participated in this trade. In the case of the paramount chiefs they had a special court officer known as Batahene, head of the traders, who was under the Gyaasehene (head of the chief's household). When the chief wanted to trade then people of his household under the Batahene were sent with commodities either to the north or to the littoral. Other subjects freely gave up their services to act as the King's men. This was because such carriers were permitted to carry on their own private trade side by side with their official duties. At the same time such traders enjoyed the protection and the privileges of being in the King's caravan. The King or Chief's caravans were an occasional affair and most of this external trade was carried

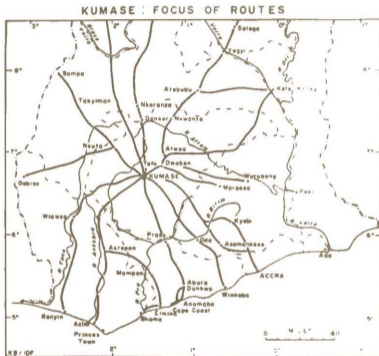


FIG. 6-1

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University of Ghana known as Batafuu. [ug.edu.gh](http://www.ug.edu.gh)

Joining a caravan was so popular that by the 19th century it was a convention that every able-bodied Asante should once in his life time go to trade either in the north (for slaves) or on the coast (for guns). Because of the distances involved the external trade was well organized. Danger from attacks of brigands and wild animals made it unsafe for the traders to travel in singles or even in small numbers. To ensure safety on the routes, therefore, the traders organized themselves into larger groups which could be as large as forty carriers or more.

When the Asantehene's caravan was going to the coast, it was often led by a special court official whom the Dutch called the "Thiethe of the Zaay".<sup>1</sup> This official was the traditional court crier who travelled with the group carrying his insignia of office, which was sometimes a gold-hilted sword. The organisation of the caravan trade as it existed on the Gold Coast was so costly that, by and large, it remained in the hands of mainly the rich and partly the chiefs who according to Rattray had a kind of temporary monopoly.<sup>2</sup> Trading to nearby places such as Kintampo

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1. Letter from Factor Landman at Axim dd. April 11, Vol. 11 p. 36  
Furley collection, Balme Library, University of Ghana, Legon.

2. Rattray, R. S., Ashanti Law and Constitution, p. 109.

University of Ghana <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh>  
and Atebubu where northern commodities and slaves could be obtained could be undertaken by men who were not so rich since such a journey did not involve much cost.

The Asante court was very much interested in this external trade. In the first place, when individuals in the nation are well-to-do, it meant they could pay their occasional taxes such as the apeatuo, war taxes. Secondly, each able-bodied, responsible Asante male had to own a gun, a sign of a person's maturity. For this reason men travelled to the coast to purchase firearms, thus resulting in a saying enye Prasu na yeto otuo.<sup>1</sup> The need for firearms therefore forced many people from Asante to go to the coast as occasional traders specifically to buy them.

The wealth of Asante rested on this external trade; the court, therefore, sought to control it. The court for example established what could be called customs houses at the fringes of Asante proper along the main trade routes. Here the roads were

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1. Literally one does not buy firearms at Prasu, which is the southern post of the Asante territory. The implication is that the Asante traders did away with the middlemen and personally went to the coast to purchase firearms from the White traders in the castles and forts.

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blocked and heavily guarded. All traders reaching these posts were detained until enquiries had been made about them. After they had given a good account of their political activities they were allowed to go on their journey. Even though the primary purpose of these customs houses might have been political<sup>1</sup>, their economic importance must not be lost sight of.

The Asante stools were partly maintained through taxes and tolls. Rattray wrote that the tolls could either be paid in gold dust or kola nuts<sup>2</sup>. It seems the tolls imposed on Asante traders were not a regular feature. Collection of tolls might have been done only during certain emergency cases, when the Asante court needed money. Generally, to encourage people to trade, the court did not saddle them with tolls. No individual had the right to impose tolls on traders except the Asantehene, who did it through those chiefs whose settlements were customs houses.

In the 19th century Adwera (Ejura) on the Salaga route and Donkro-Ntwanta on the Kintampo route (Daboya) were the customs houses on the Northern routes. On the Wenchi and Nsoko

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1. Daaku, K. Y. "Akan Trade in the 17th and 18th Centuries" in The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa (O. U. P. 1971) p. 176 edit. by McIllassoux, C. & Forde, D.

2. Rattray, R. S., Ashanti Law and Constitution, p. 111

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routes, Akomadan and Nsuta served as customs houses respectively. On the Kwawu/Accra route, Ramseyer and Kühne testify that "Sokoree near Afigyase was the customs house"<sup>1</sup>, while Kusa was the customs house on the great Fante route (Fig. 6. 2). Since the Asuo Firaw, i. e. River Volta, was the river of the Asantehene, the court established customs house on it, the purpose of which was both political and economic: political because so far away from the centre, Bono/Guan traders could stealthily send guns to the northern tribes yonder so long as they could get money. This move was also economic, because the volume of trade going up and down the river must be known so that tolls could be collected; here collection was said to have been rigid since it did not involve Asante traders.

Secondly, the royal court of Asante stationed on all major routes, at vantage points such as crossing points of big rivers and important road junctions, court officials (the Adamfo). Some of the known points where these officials were stationed were Yegyí (Yeji) on the Volta, Tanoso on Tano along the Gyaman route, Praso on Pra River on the Fante route, Mamfe on Accra route. (01, 28, 32). These officials had to see that the routes were

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1. Ramseyer and Kühne, Four Years in Ashanti p. 51

## OLD MARKETS AND CUSTOMS HOUSES

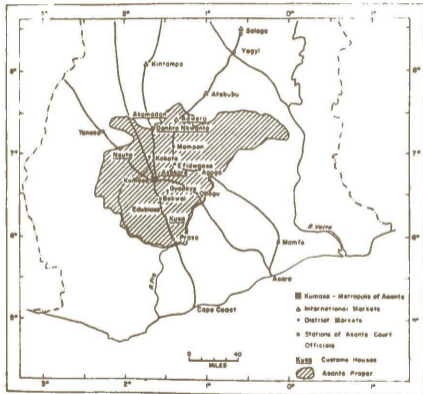


FIG 6 2

University of Ghana <http://reg.onthe.coastal.routes>  
kept open at all times. Furthermore, there were often stationed at known trouble centres Asante armed men<sup>1</sup> to protect the vital trade with the Europeans. The Asante had no standing army to be able to make this a regular feature. The Asante soldiers were only posted to such centres when those vassal states rebelled.

Though the British at the coast did not like the Asante they knew trade could only be effective when the Asante were at peace with the people on the Gold Coast. Reindorf noted in 1833 that when there was peace a single trading house could ship by one vessel more than 1,000 - 10,000 ounces of gold<sup>2</sup>. But any time the Asante were in the field on a punitive campaign, for example, trade along the affected route virtually stopped. It must be emphasized that since the wealth of Asante depended on this external trade, it was the great concern of the Asante court to keep open these "trajectories" along which the vital trade flowed. When the Asante political power was broken in 1874, the British administration provided escorts for the Asante

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1. Letter from Factor Landman at Axim, Vol. 1 p. 199 F. C.

2. Reindorf, C. C., op. cit., p. 13.

University of Ghana through former vassal states.  
traders to the coast passing through former vassal states.  
The British did this as a gesture of encouraging the Asante  
traders to the coast, without whom the volume of trade would  
have diminished.

After 1875 Asante was plagued with civil wars, and  
it was no longer safe for the Asante traders to go to Fanteland  
because traders from Kumase area were molested by the Adanse  
and the Assin.<sup>2</sup> It was not very safe on the Ga route either.  
By the beginning of the 20th century, therefore, the number of  
traders to the coast had diminished markedly. The nature of  
the northern trade had also changed. Traders did not travel  
as far as Salaga to trade because the great northern route was  
not safe throughout. The Bono at Atebubu had rebelled and  
closed the route.<sup>3</sup> The Asante therefore only went to Kintampo  
market which by 1884 was the largest northern market. Just  
north of Mampon, the Adwera market was also gradually growing  
into a large market, because it was a major resort for Asante  
traders.

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1. Adm. 11/1731 - Affairs of the Gold Coast, 1888, p. 5  
(N. A. G. Accra).

2. Ibid.

3. Adm. 11/1733: Note by Brandon Kirby p. 86, (N. A. G. Accra)

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The organisation of the Asante trade after 1874 also changed markedly. Firstly, due to the inability of the central authority to control the trade, it fell into the hands of some Akonkofuo i.e. retailers. These people were interested in making the maximum profit from what they sold. There is no wonder, therefore, that many of the raw materials that were sent to the coast were adulterated e.g. the pure gold dust was adulterated and became the odutu (01, 44, 64). Rubber which became important in Asante as from the last decade of the century also suffered the same fate, (25, 26) which contributed to the decay of the rubber trade. Secondly, the goods carried also changed. The Akonkofuo were not interested in the gun trade, as the chiefs and old traders had been. They were interested in the general European goods such as tinned foods, clothes, and tools for farming to mention only a few.

Trading was both through barter and with currency. But barter was not the usual practice in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the external trade. It was only in the slave markets in Northern Ghana, for example, that slaves could be purchased directly with kola nuts; otherwise cowrie shells or other forms of currency were used.



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On the coast the trade was known as the 'Ounce Trade'.<sup>1</sup>

The ounce trade represented an attempt to introduce a monetary system into what had hitherto been a barter trade. In this trade the price of slaves (or any African commodity) could not be accurately determined except in terms of the trade 'ounce', and this unit account was made up of assorted European goods e. g. cloths, beads, guns, gunpowder, tobacco and iron bars, valued locally in ounces of gold<sup>2</sup> at about 100% over the cost of the price at home. Polanyi agrees that the prices of commodities were 'traditional' and accepted without question.<sup>3</sup>

In Asante itself gold dust was the main currency used<sup>4</sup>. In the large markets such as Kumase, Adwera and Ofeso Kokote, there were always present those who had specialized in weighing gold for traders as well as customers. Not all the Asante knew the weights; therefore money weighing became a specialized activity in the markets.

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1. Polanyi Karl, "Sorting and Ounce Trade in the West African Slave Trade". *Journal of African History* Vol. 3 (1964)pp. 381-393.
  2. Newbury, C. W., The Western Slave Coast & Its Rulers (O. U. P. 1961) p. 22.
  3. Polanyi, K., op. cit. p. 384.
  4. When in the second decade of the 19th century the sand in the Kumase market was collected and washed as much as about 800 ounces of gold was recovered. This shows the extent to which gold dust was used as currency. Ref. Bowdich: op. cit. p. 320.

Local and Intra-State Trade

Throughout the period in question there were the local community market places where most of the local foodstuffs, crafts and a few necessaries were sold. Trading in foodstuffs at this level was left to women, a fact which probably indicated that foodstuffs were not considered to be of major importance in trade. It is not surprising, therefore, that the small local markets were invariably controlled by women. In these small markets barter was practised extensively even as late as the end of the nineteenth century.

In addition to these ubiquitous local markets there grew up districts and regional trading centres, which provided higher order services. In these important markets exotic goods could be obtained. These markets were normally weekly fairs and were more seriously reckoned with. The traditions collected from Efidwaase and Edubiase are full of praises of their chiefs during whose time the markets grew up (39, 38, 06).

Such weekly markets were well organized. It was the responsibility of the local rulers to maintain law and order during market days. One important rule was that no one should attend

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the market armed with any dangerous implement. Market tolls (adwafie) were collected from those who came to sell. Those who had to pay in kind did so while others like cloth or craft merchants had to pay in cash. The collectors were the Nhenkwaa, court servants, who collected for either the queenmother or the Gyaaschene, the head of the chief's household.

The most important market centre in Asante, whose humble beginnings dated as far back as the 17th century was Kumase. By the 18th and 19th centuries Kumase had become the great emporium of Asante. Curiously enough there was no collection of tolls at Kumase market because those who kept the market clean and supervised it, the Dwabisofuo, the Kumase retail traders, wanted it to be so. Gold was used as the medium of exchange. In the Kumase market commodities ranged from foodstuffs to exotic materials such as shea butter and clothes from the north and European goods such as rum, clothes, etc. from the coast. (01, 32).

Surrounding this market were two regional markets and several district markets. The regional markets were Adwera and Kintampo now in the Brong Ahafo Region. Nearer

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Kumase were the district markets of Efidwaase, Mampon and Ofeso. Other market centres in Asante were Agogo and Obogu in Asante-Akyem, Gyaakye near Lake Bosomtwe, Edubiase in Adanse and Bekwai in Amansie (Fig. 6, 3). In these markets, as in Kumase, gold was used as currency.

#### Market Hierarchy

It is possible to arrange the markets in Asante in the order of their importance in the 19th century (Fig. 6, 4). Unfortunately such an arrangement cannot be based on any statistical data since they are not available. Nevertheless, it can be done by using the sphere of influence and such factors as the nature of the predominant goods sold (exotic or local goods), whether market was a slave market and the type of currency used.

The exotic goods in this context were those commodities foreign to Asante, so that all European manufactured goods which entered Asante from the coastal trading centres and those northern goods such as the woven cloths, shea butter and livestock fell under this. The greater the quantities of these goods the more important was the market; the local goods were less valuable since they were readily available in all the markets.

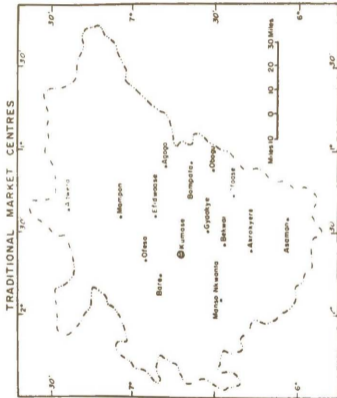


FIG 63

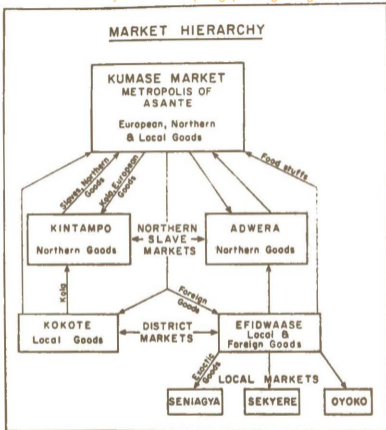


FIG. 6·4

University of Ghana importance was attached to the trade in slaves. Traders travelled to distant slave markets purposely to purchase them. Markets that specialized in this commodity used to be extremely important in those days as the Asante traders flocked there in large numbers to purchase slaves.

In some markets only barter was practised; such markets had not developed the complicated monetary system and were, therefore, economically not important. In those markets where currency was used, one had to measure the sophistications in the various currencies. Two major currencies were predominant in the nineteenth century and these were gold dust and cowrie shells. By far gold dust was more precious and its use more complicated because it demanded a knowledge of weighing, whilst the use of cowrie shells did not demand any complicated computations. The use of gold dust as currency extended to the castles and forts on the coast.

The earliest currency used in Asante was either Nnabuo or Ntweaa (45, 01, 03, 80) made from iron bars. Oral tradition may have forgotten the various denominations of this

currency; nevertheless it is recalled that it has been used before. One cannot tell how widespread the use of this currency was but it seems it was used in purchasing very precious commodities. Then came the Dutu or brass currency. Again one cannot give a precise date when this currency was in use, but it might have preceded the use of gold as currency and later used side by side with gold.

Trading became more sophisticated when gold dust became the medium of exchange. Eva Meyerowitz's<sup>1</sup> assertion that gold was first used as currency in 1660's seems to be justified, because the Asante knew gold before they left Adanse area and might have used it as currency. There were names for the various denominations of money e.g. takufa 6d, takuo 1/- , doma 7/-, Suru 10/- , Dwoa £1 10/-, Predwan £8. The use of gold dust as currency continued in Asante up to about 1926.

Side by side with gold currency was the cowrie. The idea of cowrie as currency came from the north, and it became accepted as currency on any market where there were Northern traders. Later the Asante used this among themselves as currency for the purchase of ordinary goods such as foodstuffs

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1. Meyerowitz, Eva., The sacred State of the Akan (London 1949) p. 203.



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and vegetables. The cowrie currency also had denominations

c. g.:	<u>Nkronkronum</u>	-	5 cowries
	<u>toko</u>	-	20 "
	<u>oban</u>	-	30 cowries - 1 farthing
	<u>mman-nan</u>	-	120 cowries - 1 penny

As late as 1900 cowrie shells were used as currency in parts of Asante. The end of Asante political independence saw the end of these traditional currencies, because the British administration introduced silver coins into the country and officially forbade the use of the traditional currencies.

The sphere of influence of a market could be measured by knowing the home towns of the people buying and selling at the market. This demands a more intimate knowledge of the buyers and sellers in these markets, but because of lack of the requisite data all that could be said is that the more cosmopolitan a market was the greater its importance.

With the above criteria, markets in Asante could be graded in the order of importance. There were three orders of markets. The market that topped the hierarchy was that of Kumase, because its influence was felt all over Asante. The only factor which the Kumase market did not possess was the slave market. Apart from this the market had all the other

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characteristics. In the case of currency, for example, both cowries and gold dust were used at Kumase. It was also the meeting point of European and northern goods.<sup>1</sup>

The next group of markets were the slave markets of Adwera (Ejura) and Kintampo. These markets attracted a large number of people from both Asante and the north. The chief currency in these markets were the cowrie shells,<sup>2</sup> while kola from the forest of Asante was an important commodity which could be used in exchange for the northern goods. The Kintampo market had an unparalleled influence and next to it was the Adwera market (90, 91, 13, 01) which had a fairly wide sphere of influence. These were, by and large, international in outlook. The third in the tier were the district markets. Each market (such as Kokote in Ofeso district, Bekwai in Bekwai District, Obogu in Asante-Akyem south etc.) was important only in its own district. In such markets the main currency was gold dust. The quantity of gold used was relatively small when compared with the quantity of gold dust used as currency in the

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1. Bowdich, T. E. , op. cit. p. 324.

2. Bowdich claims that where Dagomba traders were plentiful cowrie shells were used. Ref. Bowdich, op. cit. p. 345.

Kumase market. The quantity of gold dust used in the district markets was further reduced because of the importance of barter in those markets. All exchanges involving food items took place through barter, something that was rare in Kumase. These district markets were therefore at the bottom of the hierarchy.

### Trade Routes

#### Evolution of the routes:

At the hunting stage of their cultural evolution the Asante developed hunters' trails. Some of these trails joined the various settlements, and gradually, as the Asante learned to exchange goods and ideas, some of these trails developed into open routes. With the ascendancy of trade as the major economic activity, some of these routes developed into highways, Atempon, which were constantly utilized by the traders. Soon there was a network of trade routes joining the major trading centres.

Tafo in the Inta country of Kwabere was one of the early trade centres which was connected by the major trade routes. Ivor Wilks mentions that by the middle of the seventeenth century the trade route from Bogho and the Mandeland passed

through Tafo. Another route from Hausaland in the northeast met the Begho route for the first time in this area, and from there radiated southward to the coast: one going to the Fanteland on the west coast and the other to Ga area in the east. The capital of the kingdom of Asante was built on this already established route pattern. Once established militarily the Asante deliberately stabilized this pattern and forced all the other new routes from the coast to the interior to converge on Kumase.

By the middle of the eighteenth century some routes were well established and used by traders. (Fig. 6. 5). From Kumase northwards some of the known routes were the Kataakye route which passed through Mampon Akrofosu (i. e. Old Mampon), Atwea, then through the Afram plains to Atebubu and Salaga; this was the main Salaga route. Near Atwea a branch went eastward; this branch was the Krakye Dente route. Then there were also the Daboya and Takyiman routes. To the west was the Gyaman route along which the Asante subjugated the Bontuku. Towards the east went a route through Agogo and Kwau to Sokodee in Togo. The coastal routes were many but oral tradition (01, 02, 03, 11, 25) remembers the Ga route which went below the Kwawu Scarp and

1. Wilks, Ivor, The Northern Factor in Ashanti History (Legon 1961), p. 13.



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passed through Akwamu. Another route, the Akyem route,  
passed near lake Bosomtwe,<sup>1</sup> through Akyem to Nkran(Accra)  
and Simpa (Winneba). The last coastal route passed through  
Adanse and Twifo where it sent off a branch to Oguaa (Cape Coast)  
and the other to Appolonia and other western coastal centres.

Our knowledge of the great routes in this part of  
West Africa became more authentic from the works of T. E.  
Bowdich and Joseph Dupuis who were in Kumase during the second  
decade of the 19th century. The major inland routes all com-  
mencing from Kumase were the following:

- (a) the Bontuku route passing through Nsuta and  
crossing the Tano river. This same route  
branched westerly to Suma and Drobo;
- (b) the Takyiman route to Banda and Duipe or Gongya  
route through Nkoranza;
- (c) the great northern route through Adwera and  
Atebubu across the Volta to Salaga, and the  
easterly route through the Afram plains to Krakyi  
on the Volta.

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1. This was the route utilized by the attacking Denkyira army  
which lost to Asante in 1700.

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The coastal routes were the Kwawu route which finally crossed the Volta to Eweland (this route was used by Ramseyer and Khune, the two white missionaries captured by the Asante); the routes to Accra through Akyem and Akuapem, and the route to Elmina and Cape Coast.<sup>1</sup>

A closer look at the two networks of routes shows that some of them were very old, e.g. the great northern and the Begho routes. As much as possible some of these routes maintained their direction and their importance. But there was an old route in the 18th century which lost its importance by the turn of the 19th century so that it was not mentioned at all by Bowdich and Dupuis. This was the Kataakye route (Fig. 6, 6) which was replaced by the 'great' northern route which passed through Adwera. The Kataakye route was the northern route at the time when Mampon was at the old site and when Atwea was an important town. But in about 1800 Kataakye route had lost its importance and was only a minor route owing to the influence of Mampon. When Mampon moved to the new site another route developed through Adwera to Atebubu, so that

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1. Bowdich, T. E., *op. cit.* p. 170





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for a time the two routes ran closely parallel till they joined at Atebubu. The fate of the Kataakyi route similarly befell the Akyem route which passed through the lake area because it was too close to the other coastal route which passed through eastern Akyem.

The Krakye Dente route had one peculiarity about it. From the populated Sekyere area it went through the sparsely populated area of the Afram Plains. Travellers had to walk for long distances before reaching the small hunting settlements. But this route was maintained against all odds because its destination was an important place for the Asante court. The Fetish, Dente, had become the fetish of the Asante court and was to be consulted on all important issues concerning the court.

The fact that these routes were built because of the thriving commerce in those days cannot be denied. Austin Freeman who visited Asante during the last decade of the nineteenth century observed that "these great routes owe their existence to the Ashantei kingdom, which in the days of its power attracted commerce of the greater part of northern and



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central Africa".<sup>1</sup> No doubt it was both the commercial and political power of the Asante Kingdom which maintained these great routes. This point is further strengthened by Dickson's assertion that by the beginning of the nineteenth century practically all the major routes converged on the capital of Asante.<sup>2</sup>

From the above discussion it is clear that the route pattern in Asante in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a result of the interplay of two main factors. Firstly, a route was maintained if the Asante court wished to maintain it, in other words, the routes existed at the dictates of the court. The motivating reason could be economic, military or social. The Krakye route passing through the Afram plains did not generate any commerce nor was it militarily important, yet it was maintained by the court because of the social link between the court and Dente deity. Secondly, the routes persisted with the growing importance of the settlements along them.

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1. Freeman, R.A., Travels and Life in Ashanti and Jaman, (Westminster 1898) p. 180.
  2. Dickson, K.B., "The Development of Road Transport in Southern Ghana and Ashanti since 1850" Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana Vol. V, Pt. 1, 1961.

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These settlements afforded the traders the needed protection. For example, with the building of Mampon at its present site and the opening up of Adwera as a market centre, the Kataakye route to Atebubu gave way to Mampon-Adwera-Atebubu route, because the latter generated more activity, in the form of trade and protection, for travellers. The Kataakye route could not compete because there was no big settlement between Nsuta and Atebubu.

These great routes were bush paths. As much as possible they tried to avoid the difficult terrain by going round objects: hence they were often circuitous. It did not seem comfortable to travel during the rainy season because parts of the routes became muddy and over-grown with weeds. Across the small streams one had to wade one's way but the fairly large streams were carefully spanned by logs of woods or bundles of bamboo which served as bridges for travellers. On the large rivers, such as sections of Tano, Firaw (Volta) and Ofe (Ofin), the dug-out canoes were used in crossing.

The maintenance of the routes was the concern of those chiefs and headmen through whose districts the routes passed.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Huydecoper's Diary, op. cit. pp. 83-86.

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This was accomplished through communal labour. Asante royal court was very particular about the maintenance of these routes. Writing in 1816, Huydecoper affirmed that there was a decision at the Asantehene's court at Kumase to construct a high way from Kumase to Elmina, and that this was to be maintained through communal labour by those areas where it passed.<sup>1</sup> The major routes were made wide enough to be used by hammock carriers and were fore-runners of the 20th century hammock roads,

Asante tradition says that the closure of a major route by any of the dependent states was construed as rebellion which had to be subdued by all means. (01, 06, 29, 58, 98).

It has already been pointed out how the Asante Court tried to regulate the trade by establishing customs houses along the major trade routes. There were also measures to keep the routes open all the time, by stationing court officials at vantage points and by detailing swimmers to ferry traders across the big rivers such as Tano, Pra and Firaw (Volta). These few examples are enough to show how important the trade routes were to the Asante court.

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1. Ibid. pp.61-62.

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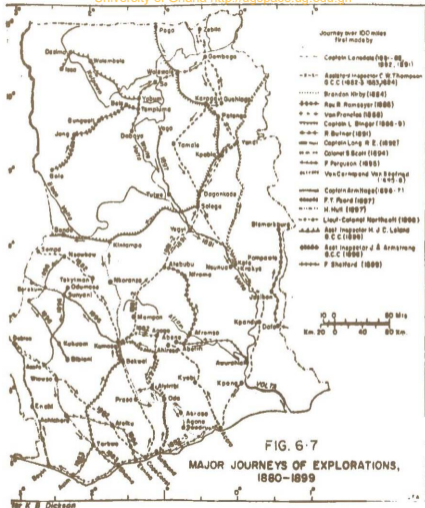
The British administration at the coast for the first time sacked Kumase in 1874 and broke the political supremacy of Asante. After this event the Colonial Government sought to weaken the economic supremacy of Asante by trying to isolate Kumase by means of diverting the trade routes, especially those from the north, from converging on Kumase.<sup>1</sup> Many envoys e.g. H. Gouldsbury, Captain Longdale and Brandon Kinby were sent to Asante and beyond. These were detailed to use routes that did not touch Kumase and then to persuade traders to use those routes.<sup>2</sup> The map (Fig. 6.7) by Dickson shows clearly the routes taken by the envoys.<sup>3</sup> If this move had been successful the route pattern would have changed. The failure of these attempts meant the stabilization of the existing routes with Kumase as the nodal centre. Despite the collapse of Asante political power in 1900 the route pattern remained unchanged, and is reflected to a large extent in the contemporary road pattern.

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1. Dickson, K. B., The Historical Geography of Ghana, p. 214.

2. Ibid. pp. 214-218.

3. Ibid. p. 217.



PART TWO

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTRODUCTION TO PHASE TWO:

ASANTE UNDER THE BRITISH

The dominant force that dictated the pace of the socio-economic development of Asante during the period before 1902 was the Asante political power, the Kotoko Court\*, itself. And as long as the Court functioned, the trend of economic activities continued. Before this date the Asante were not agricultural in outlook. The mainstay of their economy was the carrying trade to the coast.<sup>1</sup> But the defeat of Asante and the imposition of the colonial rule opened a new chapter in the socio-economic development of the area. In this chapter, an attempt is made to trace the effects of the colonial rule: first, on the political situation in Asante and, secondly, on the socio-economic development of the area up to 1945.

In 1874, the British troops for the first time attacked and defeated the Asante in their own territory and sacked their capital, Kumase. With this defeat, all the former provincial

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1. Boateng, K., "Commerce in Northern Asante 1702-1945" in Bulletin of Ghana Geographical Association Vol. 13, 1969.

\* This is the same as the Asante Court or The Asante Royal Court.



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states of Asante quickly threw off the yoke of Kumase, and assumed their independence. Territorially, Asante shrank to its former size (i. e. Asante proper) and in Asante itself, the atmosphere was one of unrest.<sup>1</sup> This was because there was no central authority. Asante became a territory characterised by disorder, because the British Administration politically did not control the Asante territory after the latter's defeat in 1874. Consequently, trade declined and this was a disappointment to the British Administration and merchants. Perhaps, to revive trade with Asante and to have a grip on their territory which possessed mineral resources (e. g. the gold fields around Obuase area), the British annexed the Kingdom of Asante to the British Crown.

For effective occupation of Asante territory, the British removed the Asantehene from the political scene altogether. This action was meant to destroy the unity of the Asante states because the colonial government thought that with the removal of the Asantehene there would be no Asante. To a great extent, this was true, but all the same the sacred Golden Stool continued

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1. Fuller, F., A Vanished Dynasty: Ashanti, (London 1921)p. 144.

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to be the rallying point of the Asante. This was demonstrated clearly by their reaction when the Golden Stool was desecrated by some Asante nationals in 1920. For the first time in over two decades, all the Amanhene met under the presidency of Mamponhene<sup>1</sup> to consider the case. The desecration was described by the Asante as a criminal act, and as a result, the offenders were sentenced to death.<sup>2</sup> This was enough testimony that the Asante still revered the Golden Stool as the soul of the nation, and that its desecration meant "betraying the Asante nation, and laying it open to disgrace and ridicule and debasing the name and fame of Asante".<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps, it was the Asante's respect for the Golden Stool which sustained their loyalty to the colonial government. This statement may be confirmed by the comments made by Rattray in 1923: "The Golden Stool was and is far more than an ordinary stool; it is a shrine of the Sunsum or soul of this people, something for which they have fought and for which, I believe,

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1. Busia, K.A., The Position of Chiefs in the Modern Political System of Ashanti, (O. U. P.) 1951, pp. 113-116.
  2. Ibid, p. 116
  3. Ibid, p. 116

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they would fight again . . . . . I do not think we realise what a power working for us, this Stool has been hidden away as it was, or that we fully grasp the results which I believe might follow were we ever to take it from the people. I believe it would be found to be the case that all the obedience, the respect and the great loyalty we have been given by the Ashanti is given through and by reason of the Golden Stool. I believe, that so far from benefiting, had we ever taken this Stool which would have been little more than a 'trophy' to us - that its powers would have worked against us".<sup>1</sup> So long as they knew that the British had no intention of tampering with this sacred stool the Asante thought there was no need to fight against a superior force. Thus peace prevailed in the territory.

Meanwhile, Asante was unsettled by the divide-and-rule policy which the British adopted, according to which each division was to regulate its own affairs.<sup>2</sup> It is likely that this measure was taken to ensure that the former cohesion which existed among the Asante could not be revived. Each of the Amanhene paid direct allegiance to the British government.

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1. Rattray, R. S., Ashanti (O. U. P. 1969), pp. 292-293.

2. Fuller, F. C., op. cit. pp. 216-217.

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Some attempts were made to revive the unity among the Asante when the chiefs of Kokofu and Mampon were chosen by the paramount chiefs to constitute a provincial Asante government. The committee was to enjoy full control over all the subordinate chiefs in the name of the Golden Stool.<sup>1</sup> If this move had been successful it would probably have fostered national unity even in the absence of an Asantehene. But this was foiled because "it ran directly counter to official policy"<sup>2</sup>.

For effective occupation of the Asante territory, the British divided it into three provinces: Western Province (the Brong-Ahafo region of today, not included in this essay), Central Province and Southern Province. These were further sub-divided into districts: Central Province contained the districts of Kumase, Asante Akyem (Dwaso) and Mampon; while the Southern Province had Bekwai and Obuase as districts. The administrative set up was as follows: at the head was the Chief Commissioner of Asante, then provincial commissioners and lastly district commissioners. The powers of the Chief

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1. Tordoff, W. , Ashanti Under the Prempehs 1888-1935, (O.U.P. 1965), p.89.

2. Ibid., p.89.

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Commissioner were very wide; for example, he could try a case summarily without a jury.<sup>1</sup> The work of the District Commissioner was as interesting as it was varied. He was at once a road-maker, bridge-builder, architect, lawyer, judge, accountant, and even on some occasions a doctor as well.<sup>2</sup>

The colonial rulers invited the chiefs and people to co-operate in the maintenance of peace and order; this was the system which became known as 'indirect rule'. The system of indirect rule had been described by Lord Hailey as "the system by which the tutelary power recognised existing African societies and assisted them to adapt themselves to the functions of local government".<sup>3</sup> The adoption of the system of indirect rule was inevitable because the colonial administration did not have enough personnel to administer effectively the vast territory inhabited by people whose traditions were so new to them. Secondly, it was not wise to abolish the traditional system of chieftaincy completely; this would have created more problems.

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1. Tordoff, W., *op. cit.*, p. 115.

2. Marie Louise, Princess, Letters from the Gold Coast (London 1926), p. 170.  
quoted by Tordoff: *op. cit.*

3. Hailey, Lord., African Survey, (O. U. P. 1938), p. 413.

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They had experienced it before when Hodgson unwarily demanded to sit on the Golden Stool. This was an affront to the sensitive Asante and resulted in the Yaa Asantewaa War.<sup>1</sup> For the sake of peace, therefore, the colonial administrators accepted chieftaincy and used it as an effective instrument of rule.

Initially the Government made the error of filling the vacant stools with persons they called 'loyal', since they supported the Government during the Yaa Asantewaa War. This act in itself would not have been a mistake if the Government in some cases had not appointed non-royalists to the stools and in this way infringed the prerogatives of the Kingmakers. On the whole, this act did not affect the loyalty of the Asante to the Colonial Government; rather it affected the loyalty of the subjects to the chiefs concerned. Some of the affected stools were those of Agona,<sup>2</sup> Edweso, Ahenkro, Dwaben<sup>3</sup>, Kontire Atipim and Bantama of Kumase.<sup>4</sup> In the case of the Ofeso (Ofinso) Paramount Stool, for example, the Government supported a man from the Bretuo

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1. Claridge, The History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti, (London 1915) V, ii, p. 438.

2. UP. No. 45/06 Disturbances at Agona; (N. A. G., Kumase). Often the Chief said "the governor offered me the stool".

3. Busia, K. A., op. cit., p. 106.

4. Tordoff, W., op. cit., p. 148.

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clan of Mampon, a clan different from that of the royal house of Ofeso.<sup>1</sup> Many of these new rulers, with the support of the Government<sup>2</sup>, ruled harshly in the face of local opposition.<sup>3</sup> It was no wonder, therefore, that the system of indirect rule was characterised by many disturbances in some parts of Asante at the initial stages. There is no doubt that if the Government had not behaved unconstitutionally as it did, the Asante who were tired of wars would have settled down quietly earlier than they did, and consequently experienced an earlier acceleration of economic development.

Through indirect rule the Colonial Government stabilized the position of the chiefs, yet their prestige and power declined rapidly. This was evidenced by the desire of some sub-chiefs to serve the Colonial Government directly<sup>4</sup>. For example, Gyamase decided not to serve Mampon again.

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1. Ofeso Native Affairs, Case No. 51/24 (N. A. G. Kumase).  
The royal clan of Ofeso is that of Asona.
  2. UP, No. 45/06 Disturbances at Agona, (N. A. G. Kumase), *op. cit.*
  3. Interview with Mr. I. K. Agyeman (80) formerly of Chieftaincy Secretariat and Barima Yaw Sarhene (86) uncle of Otumfuo Opoku Ware II. Also see Colonial Report, 1915.
  4. Colonial Report on Ashanti, 1920, p. 5.

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Furthermore, there developed a conflict between chieftaincy and the youth. Fuller wrote: "with the spread of Western Civilization and more liberal ideas, the inevitable conflict between the youth and authority has already commenced. The youth at times wanted to throw off the yoke of legitimate authority but the government wished to check that, otherwise, it was believed the traditional system would collapse". For example, the destoolment case at Bekwai in 1920 reflected the rising power of the youth.<sup>1</sup>

A fundamental reason for this state of affairs was that before the commencement of the British Administration the chief was the military leader of his people. This role enhanced his prestige and importance. But with the establishment of the colonial rule, the chief lost that leadership. The second factor was the apparent loss of the chief's religious role. Formerly, the chiefs unquestionably stood as intermediaries between their subjects and the ancestors. But with the introduction of western education and christianity some of the educated citizens and Christian converts refused to accept the chiefs' religious role,

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1. Colonial Report on Ashanti, 1920, p.7.



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which meant for the chiefs the loss of some prestige and authority.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the new influences which came into Asante after the exile of the king, there were many who still looked up to the Golden Stool as the rallying point. It was in the light of this that some individual chiefs<sup>2</sup> and the Asante Kotoko Society<sup>3</sup> worked relentlessly to bring him back from Seychelles by petitioning the British Government. Prempeh was allowed to come back to Kumase, but he was not restored to his former position. The Government only regarded him as the chief of Kumase but the Asante knew he was their king.<sup>4</sup>

It took the colonial administration some time to realize that the growth and prosperity of Asante depended, by and large, on traditional leadership of the Asantehene and his court.<sup>5</sup>

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1. One of the aims of the Asante Kotoko Society was to restore the respect of the chiefs as far as the educated citizens of Asante were concerned. Information given by I. K. Agyeman (103).
  2. "Legislative Council Debate, 18th Oct. 1921, 20th March, 1922" and *The Gold Coast Leader*, May 1924. All quoted by Tordoff, W. *op. cit.* pp. 182-183.
  3. *Ibid.*, p. 175-176.
  4. *Ibid.*, Chapter IX.
  5. Letter No. 416/C 11/34 dated 9/2/35 in File No. 6/35 (N. A. G. Kumase).

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It was in 1935 when the Asante Confederacy was restored, that national integration was achieved under Agyeman Prempeh II.<sup>1</sup> After the restoration of the confederacy the traditional administration quickly adjusted itself and accepted the leadership of the colonial government, both in political and economic matters.<sup>2</sup> In its turn the colonial government paid particular attention to the development of Asante as is evidenced by the introduction of medical services with the establishment of African hospitals at Kumase in 1905, and at Obuase in 1908. Government medical officers also worked at Mampon and Kumase. Other services provided were: sanitary services in the major towns, eg. Kumase had new wells, streets, latrines and incinerators in 1905.

Many of the towns and villages were rebuilt under the direction of the administrative officers, e.g. Adwera (Ejura) was rebuilt in 1913. (The numerous roads seen in Asante today had their beginnings during this period when the government road overseers went about helping the villages to build their

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1. (a) No. 6/35 Restoration of Asante Confederacy, Ashanti Research Project, (ARP/IAS Kumase).
  - (b) Tordoff, W., op.cit. Chapter XV.
  2. Letter No. 416/C 11/34 dated 9/2/35 in File No. 6/35 (N. A. G. Kumase).

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own roads). In the field of agriculture, the government encouraged the people to extend the area under cocoa cultivation.

These activities gave enough evidence of the desire of the colonial government to develop Asante. The Asante themselves were just as eager to develop their territory; in the words of Busia, "only little encouragement was needed because the people were eager for modern economic development."<sup>1</sup>

The process of improvement started with commercial agriculture. The first phase of the development of commercial agriculture was the collecting of rubber and gum copal in addition to kola, a commercial crop of long standing. The second phase was the cultivation of cocoa. It was cocoa which gave the greatest impetus to the economic development of Asante. With the growing importance of the cocoa growing industry, the Asante embarked on intensive road building: this was because they realized that easy accessibility to the cocoa growing areas was a necessary condition for the new industry. When farmers acquired wealth as a result of the cocoa growing industry, they started to plan their villages and towns on the "chessboard plan"

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1. Busia, K. A. , op. cit. , p.118.

and also built better and modern houses. The cocoa growing industry also affected the distribution of the population, when the former empty areas of Ahafo Ano northern section of Ofeso (Ofinso) were gradually filled. Lastly, this industry stabilized the present economic regions of Asante when the core area became more marked with its planned villages and roads, as against the pioneer cocoa region of Ahafo Ano with its scattered cocoa villages,<sup>1</sup> and the empty Afram plains which failed to attract the Asante because of its savanna vegetation.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Boaten, K., "Rural Settlements in Asante: A Reflection of Economic Growth", A Paper presented at First West African Regional Conference, Legon, 1970.
  2. Idem, "Geographical Inertia in a Traditional Core Area in Ghana", A Paper presented at the East African Universities Social Science Conference, Dar-es-Salaam 1970.

POPULATION

The colonial rule in Asante created a peaceful atmosphere within which population growth became a reality. The civil wars which had plagued Asante for over two decades prior to the colonial era were discontinued. The colonial government set up conditions for healthy living by appointing health inspectors to advise the people on the need to live in healthy surroundings; hospitals and clinics were opened at places where the sick could be treated, drugs became available in shops, settlements were planned with a view to making them airy and healthy; and, finally roads were built along which impulses of the new order reached remote areas. Thus three decades after the colonial rule, there was clear evidence of rapid population growth in Asante (and for that matter Ghana as a whole).

Its Growth:

The official record of the population of Asante showed that the 1902 estimates was lower than Bowdich's estimate which was put at about one million. This situation developed because of the downward trend which started during the second half of the 19th

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century and reached its peak in the period 1874-1900. The trend was reversed from 1911 onwards. On the other hand, the distribution pattern of the population did not change significantly until about the late 'thirties and early 'forties when the spread of cocoa to the relatively empty areas of Ahafo Ano and the north of Ofeso also meant the spread of population <sup>1</sup>.

The first official report on the population of Asante was in 1901, followed by subsequent censuses in 1911, 1921, 1931 and 1948. From these censuses the steady growth of the population can be seen as in the following table:

Population Growth

Year	1901	1911	1921	1931	1948
Male	100,000	138,390	148,322	180,855	325,432
Female	140,700	149,424	144,122	173,387	310,366
Total	240,700	287,814	292,444	354,444	653,793

- (a) The same thing happened in Akuapem area during the cocoa boom Ref. Ofori, L. F., Koko Yi O: (Basel 1926) Chapters 1 & 2.
- (b) Hilton made the same point in his population studies when he wrote: "Nowadays 'Ahafo' means 'cocoa' in Ashanti; it is the cocoa boom area" Ref. Hilton, T. E., Ghana Population Atlas (Edinburgh 1960) p.30. An abridged Ph. D. thesis presented to University of London.

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The annual rates of population increases were as follows:

<u>Annual Average</u>	<u>Percentage Increase</u> <sup>1</sup>
<u>Period</u>	<u>Increase %</u>
1901 - 1911	1.68%
1911 - 1921	4.12%
1921 - 1931	4.23%
1931 - 1948	2.44%

The large increases recorded between 1911 and 1921 may largely be due to the cessation of wars and the return to peaceful conditions a decade or two earlier. The Chief Commissioner commenting on the increase wrote that it was not necessarily a natural one, rather it was probably due to a more extensive acquaintance with the country, to the opening up by roads of the various districts hitherto remote and to less suspicion on the part of the inhabitants as to the object of the census.<sup>2</sup> The Chief Commissioner might be justified in giving the above factors as those which contributed to the population growth, but the idea of natural increase cannot be dismissed outright. Sir Francis Fuller

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1. 1948 Gold Coast Population Census Report (Accra 1950) p. 10.

2. The Gold Coast Census Report 1921 p. 16.

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had observed the "prolific" nature of the Asante<sup>1</sup>. This assertion has been confirmed and proved statistically by Gaisie<sup>2</sup>.

The increases recorded between 1921 and 1948 might be due to three main factors, one being the fact that the Asante were no longer afraid to be counted and that the enumerators were more cordially received than the previous censuses. A more important factor was the role played by the extensive spread of cocoa. This brought in significant immigrants from the Northern Territories (Northern Ghana) and Upper Volta. Over 8% of the entire population of Asante was made up of these immigrants who settled mostly in the new cocoa areas of Ahafo-Ano and Ofeso. Many of the immigrants married Asante women and added to the already growing population. The last and most important factor was natural increase which was obvious during this period. There was evidence of high birth rate with a reduced death rate<sup>3</sup> as a result of the availability of medical facilities. The hospitals and health centres in Asante included those at Kumase, Agogo, Bekwai, Obuase (Mines), Konongo (Mines), Mampon, Effidwaase, Kumawu,

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1. Fuller F. C., *op. cit.* p. 228

2. Gaisie, S. K., *Dynamics of Population Growth in Ghana*  
*Ghana Population Studies No. 1* p. 74.

3. Ibid. p. 75



Adwera, Ofeso and Dwaso etc. In addition there were the drug houses in Kumase, the drug peddlers (the "closed men")<sup>1</sup> and the ubiquitous Bodwua-Bodwua stores (i. e. small African retail shops ) stocked some of the common medicines to enable the man in the street to have easy access.

The increases recorded for the Asante region were not uniform throughout Asante: there were spatial variations as seen in the figures below: (also Fig. 8.1 & 8.2).

1931 Population By Districts

District	Male	Female	Total
Kumase	68,509	67,858	172,196
Mampon	25,637	24,658	50,295
Obuase	21,547	18,171	39,718
Bekwai	36,046	36,581	72,366
Dwaso	29,116	26,119	55,235

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1. Some of them were called "closed men" because of their dectieful nature. Often some of them issued out dangerous drugs to their ignorant clients.

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 1948 Population By Districts



District	Male	Female	Total
Kumase	151,964	147,824	299,788
Mampon	49,560	46,658	96,218
Obuase	26,770	24,089	50,859
Bekwai	42,461	44,180	86,641
Dwaso	25,333	22,784	48,117

1931-1948 Population Growth: Increase/Decrease Percentage (%)

District	Increase %	Decrease %
Kumase	74.41	-
Mampon	92	-
Obuase	27.5	-
Bekwai	19.44	-
Dwaso	-	3.09

The above table shows that each district had its own trend of growth. It must be emphasized here that the determinants of population growth might have operated in the same way in all the districts. The differences seen in the population might be the result of local conditions. For example, the decrease recorded in Dwaso district might be due to understatement, since there is



FIG 8 1

Map 1.2.1



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no evidence to explain such decrease. The rather high percentage in Mampon District is explained mainly by more extensive acquaintance with the vast Mampon District. A study of the two censuses shows that many of the remote localities, which were not covered in 1931 census, were recorded in that of 1948. Furthermore, this period saw a large influx of the Gongya and the Dagomba in the Adwera-Kwame Danso area for the cultivation of yams.<sup>1</sup> These immigrants might have contributed to the high increase in the population. In the case of the increase recorded in Kumase District two factors are dominant. Firstly, the attraction of Kumase town as the capital of Asante led to the influx of people and a very rapid growth from 35,829 in 1931 to 58,626 in 1948. The second reason is the fact that the new cocoa areas of Ahafo-Ano and northern section of Ofeso traditional area were included in this district. These two pioneer areas saw influx of cocoa farmers into the relatively empty forest areas to make new cocoa farms.<sup>2</sup> These immigrant farmers came from all over Asante and even from beyond Asante. Such influx of people

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1. Hilton, T. E. ,op.cit. p. 30

2. Ibid. p. 30

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definitely influenced the trend of the population growth.

Another feature of the population which reflected the changed socio-economic conditions was the sex ratio:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Males</u>
1901	71
1911	92
1921	108
1931	105
1948	106

The figures show that from 1901 to 1911 there was a higher female population as against that of the males. The reverse became true as from 1921. A simple explanation that may be offered for the change in sex ratio was that the latter part of the 19th century was characterized by many wars in which large numbers of men were killed. The wars ceased at the turn of the century, hence the increase in the male population at the time of the 1921 census. Perhaps a more tangible reason was the fact that Asante was at the receiving end of many immigrants who

came to participate in the economic activities. Normally the immigrants showed a preponderance of the male sex and this might have influenced the sex ratio of Asante since 1921.

Growth of the population is also evidenced by the changing age structure:

1931: Age Structure In Percentage (%)

Male				Female			
Under 15	15 - 45	45 - 60	Over 60	Under 15	15-45	45-60	Over 60
40	48	9	3	43	46	7	3

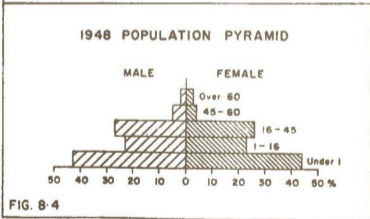
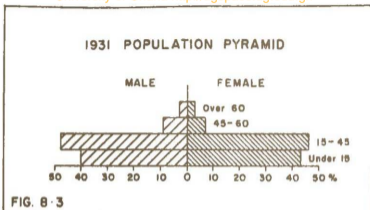
The 1931 population (Fig. 8.3) recorded about 88% of the male population under 45 years, and the female population of 89% under 45 years. This meant that there were more young people than old ones. This trend is typical of a growing population<sup>1</sup>.

The 1948 (Fig. 8.4) population figures showed more youthfulness of the population as indicated by the following table:

1948: Age Structure In Percentages (%)

Male					Female				
Under 1	1-16	16-45	45-60	Over 60	Under 1	1-16	16-45	45-60	Over 60
43	23	27	5	2	44	23	26	4	3

1. Gaisle, S. K., op. cit. p. 78





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The population pyramid for 1948 showed a broad base with over 40% of both male and female population under one year old. Furthermore, the productive age group 16 - 45 had increased in size, a feature which was maintained in the 1960<sup>1</sup> and 1972 censuses<sup>2</sup>.

Another parameter worthy of mention is the calculated crude birth rate for the whole country in 1948. The rate was calculated at 43 per thousand of the total population<sup>3</sup>. Gaisie<sup>4</sup>, in his population studies, put the crude birth rate of Ghana at 50 per thousand, using the 1960 population census data. Both figures, quoted above, generalized for the whole country might not be different from that of Asante. While one cannot be sure of the correctness of the 1948 figure, Gaisie's figure for 1960 may be an approximation close to the truth. These estimates show that the fertility in Ghana is sustained at a very high level,<sup>5</sup> and also show the dynamic nature of the population.

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1. Ghana Census Report 1960 Vol. 2

2. Ghana Census Provisional Figures 1970.

3. "Census Commissioner's Report" - 1948 Census Report p. 36.

4. Gaisie, S. K., op. cit., p. 19.

5. Ibid. p. 19.

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The growth of the populations of individual settlement

also reflects, in a large measure, the trend of growth of the general population. In 1921 there were only twenty-six settlements with over a thousand people (Fig. 8. 5). This number grew so fast that in a little over two-and-a-half decades the number of such settlements had risen to seventy-five, (Figs. 8. 6 & 8. 7). As more and more settlements of over a thousand joined the existing ones, the latter had their population growing higher and higher. This was especially seen in settlements such as Kumase, Obuase, Konongo and Agogo. There were also district variations which showed growth all the same, e. g.

Settlements of 1000 & Over

District	1931	1948
Kumase	14	30
Mampon	10	18
Bekwal	6	7
Obuase	4	9
Dwaso	7	13



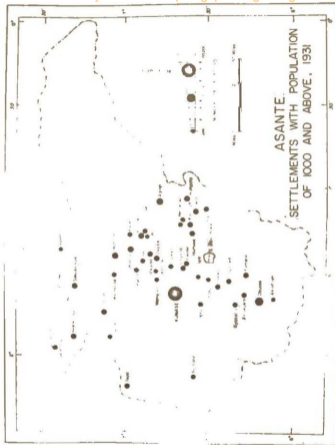


FIG 8-6



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(Figures 8.6 & 8.7 clearly show these district variations.)

In all, only three settlements had population of over 5000 in 1948: Kumase 58,626, Konongo/Odumase 11,098 and Obuase 15,742. The last two were mining centres. This meant that about 87% of the Asante population was rural.

In conclusion it must be emphasized that the establishment of the so-called Pax-Britanica was responsible for the substantial growth that the population of Asante experienced. With improved sanitation and considerable increase in the use of very simple curative drugs, the population was bound to increase.

### Population Distribution

#### Introduction

The population cluster in the traditional core area of Asante persisted. The population thickened in some places such as Kwabere, Atwoma, Sekyere (around Mampon, Nsuta and Efidwaase areas), Amansie (around Bekwai and Kokofu) and Adanse (around Obuase and Fomena). The rest of Asante was either sparsely populated as in Ahafo-Ano (west of Kumase), the northern fringes of Asante (Adwera-Akomadan areas) or the uninhabited areas of the Afram plains.

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The traditional population concentration around Kumase

maintained itself because Kumase had also become the centre of the cocoa growing industry as well as the seat of colonial administration. The traditional centres such as Mampon, Bekwai, Kumawu etc. also served as minor foci of trade and local politics. These areas also maintained their old population concentrations. The sparsely populated areas of Northern Ofeso, Ahafo-Ano and South-east Asante were and until the cocoa era of not much use agriculturally, except for hunting. The relatively empty Afram plains, with savanna vegetation, were also utilized for hunting purposes.

#### Densely and Semi-densely Settled Areas

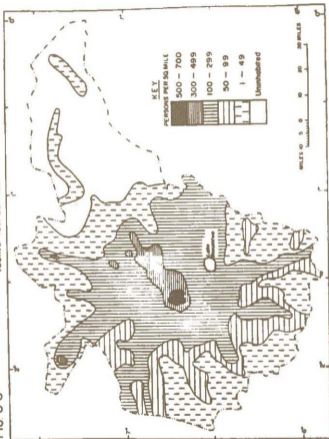
These areas must be differentiated from the relatively empty Afram plains because by about 1948 the former sparsely settled forest areas of Asante had changed in population density. By that time those areas, namely, Ahafo-Ano, Northern Ofeso, and parts of southern Asante could no longer be described as relatively empty areas, rather they had become semi-densely settled areas as a result of the cocoa boom in the 'twenties and 'thirties.

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The distribution of the population densities in 1948

(Fig. 8. 8) showed a high concentration in Kumase locality. Just around Kumase and running northwest to include Kwabere, and parts of Sekyere (Efidwaase-Kumawu areas) was an area with a high concentration of over three hundred persons per square mile. Other areas within this same group were the localities of Nsuta, Mampon, Adwera and Akomadan (in the northern tip of Ofeso traditional area). Around this area there was a huge portion of over two hundred persons per square mile, which embraced parts of Amansele, Asante-Akyem, and a long line along the Kumase-Akomadan road, north of Kumase. Further away the concentration tapered off on all sides. In the semi-densely settled areas with not more than ninety-nine persons per square mile, there were bands of comparatively higher densities ( of over 100 persons per square mile ) along the main trunk roads between Kumase and Cape Coast which ran south of Kumase, and the Kumase-Adwera road etc. The distribution of settlements with over a thousand inhabitants for 1948 (Fig. 8. 7) also confirmed the spatial pattern of the population density.

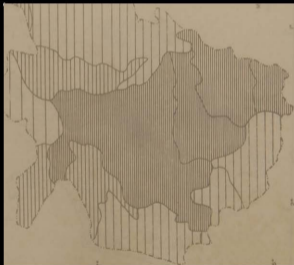


FIG 8.8  
ASANTE: POPULATION DENSITY 1948  
(USING ISOPLETHS)



ASANTE DENSITY OF POPULATION, 1948  
(AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ASANTE KINGDOM)

FIG. 8-9

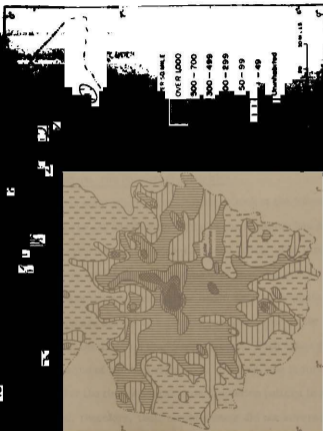


PERSONS PER SQ. M.



0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

ASANTE POPULATION DENSITY 1960  
(USING ISOPLATHS)



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affect the population distribution pattern. There is no evidence in Asante to prove that some people were asked to move from their traditional areas to other areas, as a result of the establishment of forest reserves. A look at the distribution of forest reserves (Fig. 8.11) and the population density of 1948 (Fig. 8.8) shows that the area around Kumase which had the highest density did not have any forest reserves.

#### Sparsely Settled And Empty Areas

While the forest areas were attracting the population from the core area of Asante the Afram plains remained relatively empty. Perhaps the plains did not attract the Asante because of the savanna vegetation. In the late thirties and forties it was the forest vegetation which the Asante needed for making cocoa farms. Some attempts were made to cultivate cocoa at the western fringes of the plains where vegetation was more woody, but these failed. The farmers attributed the failure to poor soils and occasional wild fires which raged from the savanna section of the area. In the Agogo section of the plains i. e. the southern part,



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some cocoa farms have been made in the more forested areas <sup>1</sup>.

Efforts were also made as early as 1923 by the Colonial District Commissioner at Dwaso to utilize the savanna of the Afram plains <sup>2</sup>, especially the section of the plains that fell under the jurisdiction of the Agogo and Bompata traditional areas (Fig. 8. 12). The plan was to move people from Bompata and Agogo traditional areas to the plains to undertake the rearing of cattle <sup>3</sup>. The area was not only considered to be suitable for cattle breeding, it also had a variety of foodstuffs <sup>4</sup> on which, it was thought, the cattle herders could live. Three years after the commencement of the scheme the report indicated a clear progress. <sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, in 1932 there were moves to abandon the scheme altogether since the experimental farm at Dukusen was not showing profits. If this move had been successful, it would have opened up the area, and the demographic pattern of the plains would have been different; but the plan failed so the area remained

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1. Akwabi-Ameyaw, K., "Rural Research, Policy Issues and the Future of Cocoa in South-Eastern Ashanti". A paper presented at Cocoa Economic Research Conference, Legon 9th - 12th April, 1973.
  2. D 480 Case No. EP. /248/23 Development of Afram Plains (N. A. G. Kumase).
  3. Ibid., Letter No. 251/39/1923 (N. A. G. Kumase).
  4. D. 840 Letter No. 358/13/1924 April 1932 (N. A. G. Kumase)
  5. Ibid., Letter No. 840/57C/1920 - 7th May 1932 (N. A. G. Kumase).



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relatively empty. The major cause of the failure of the scheme was officially thought to be sociological. The Principal Veterinary Officer of the Northern Territories claimed that: "The herders were forest people and therefore not too keen in the project".<sup>1</sup> In August of the same year (1932) another Principal Veterinary Officer of the Northern Territories, Mr. Stewart, wrote on the abandonment of the Afram plains venture: "My opinion is that the area would be most suitable for cattle if there was an appreciable increase in population".<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, there could not be increase in population because the savanna vegetation and all its potentialities did not attract the forest dwellers, whose main pre-occupation at that time was the cultivation of cocoa. Thus Afram plains remained in parts sparsely settled and in other areas empty even into the contemporary as the 1960 population density map shows (Fig. 8, 10).

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.



CHAPTER NINE  
University of Ghana <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh>  
DEVELOPMENT OF SETTLEMENTS

Rural Settlements:

Two factors were responsible for the development of settlements in Asante, namely, the colonial administration and the cocoa growing industry. The colonial government provided the framework for the development while the cocoa growing industry provided the necessary capital for the replanning and re-building of the settlements.

The Asante Administrative Ordinance of 1905<sup>1</sup> envisaged that the programme of community development should press on as rapidly and efficiently as possible. Community Development has been defined as "covering all forms of development activity in the field" and has been described as "a movement to secure the active co-operation of the people of each community in programmes designed to raise the standard of living and to promote development in all forms."<sup>2</sup>

For effective rural development there must be attention focused on both economic and social needs.

1. Adm. 1970 UP. No. 39/06 Ashanti Administrative Ordinance 1107 of 1905 (N. A. G. Kumase).

2. File No. J. B. 136 Memo in Definition of Community Development (N. A. G. Kumase).

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On the economic side the field included agriculture (chapter 9) and communication, on the social side it included health, housing etc. The rural development programme was designed to use a great deal of voluntary effort in order to achieve the desired results with a minimum of government assistance.

The implementation of the programme was to turn the 'sick' Asante territory to a land where progress and development could be seen. At the beginning of the twentieth century most of the settlements in Asante were in utter ruin. Kumase, the traditional capital, was the epitome of chaos found in the Asante settlements i. e. it was made up of ruined houses (01, 02, 32). On the other hand, the distribution pattern of the settlements was the same as 1800. The settlements also remained the old compact villages with ill-ventilated houses.

The onus of changing this poor condition for the better fell on the District Commissioners who went about exhorting the people to adopt a better system of housing.<sup>1</sup> Change was slow at the beginning, in 1910 the District Commissioner of Adwera remarked that: "It is, however, useless to expect an immediate

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1. D. 148 Case 680/10 7/2/10 - 20/2/10 D. C. of Ejura's Diary.

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rapid improvement in the habits of the people and to inflict pains and penalties where no response at all is shown to friendly exhortation is in my opinion, a great mistake."<sup>1</sup> Change was slow at the beginning and the reason appeared to have been the fact that the people could not perceive what the District Commissioners were trying to teach them, perhaps due to the level of their technology. Also, they did not have enough money to adopt the new system of house planning which needed the use of materials which they had to purchase; like nails and shingles for roofing. The District Commissioners might have been aware of the above problems which the Asante were facing and that was why they adopted a friendly attitude towards the issue. Nevertheless, on a few occasions, some Commissioners had to threaten the chiefs to keep their villages clean. For example the Commissioner of Adwera threatened the chief of Mampon in 1910 because the town was dirty and full of ruined house<sup>2</sup>.

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1. Ibid.

2. D.148 Case 680/00, 7/2/10-20/2/10 D.C. of Ejura's Diary.

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The conditions seen at Mampon could be seen in all the traditional centres. For example Dwaben was described as being full of ruined houses with bush as the most prominent feature.<sup>1</sup>

The rural development programme became accepted in 1918, because the Annual Report for that year claimed: "It is satisfactory to record that a genuine wish for the village improvement is noticeable among the Ashantis, especially in connection with streets, plotting out, and building of better houses on which they are beginning to take great pride".<sup>2</sup> The significance of this year (1918) was the influenza which broke out in Ghana. In Asante the more congested villages suffered most. The epidemic was an eye opener for the people to live under more hygienic conditions. Sir Francis Fuller's remarks that tremendous strides were made after the influenza of 1918<sup>3</sup> should be expected of a people who had paid dearly for being slow to accept an innovation. The 1920 Annual Report on Asante stated that "many villages had requested the District Commissioners to replan their villages, and are quite prepared to pull down houses, dig drains etc. in the cause of sanitation".<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. G. I/1918 A Report on Ashanti 1918 (N. A. G. Kumase)

3. Fuller, F. C., A Vanished Dynasty - Ashanti p. 288

4. Adm. 5/299 A Report on Ashanti - 1920.

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From this time onward, government surveyors were constantly engaged in the field helping the townsmen and the villagers to plan their settlements. There is evidence to show that from 1925 many settlements were replanned and rebuilt.<sup>1</sup> Most of the large settlements in Asante were affected. For example between 1925 and 1935 Atwedie, Dwaso, Agogo, Patriensa, and Obogu in Asante-Akyem; Efidwaase, Asokore, Oyoko, Kumawu, Sekyere, Banko, Nsuta, Mampon, Adwera in Mampon District; Ofeso, Ahenkro, Akropon, Nkawic, Toase Aboaso, Mamponten, Kona, Agona, Edweso, Kwaaso in Kumase District and Bekwai, Kokofu Akrokyere, Adubiase in Amansie Adanse were all rebuilt. In this first stage the change only affected the big villages in the core area of Asante. In 1935 for example, the affected settlements could be checked off against those on the map showing settlements having population of over a thousand inhabitants for 1931 (Fig. 8.6).

In 1944 the Asanteman Council passed the Native Authority Sanitation Orders,<sup>2</sup> These Orders legalized what

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1. D. 467 Afidwaase Township E.P. 86/1925

.. D. 486 Nsuta Township E.P. 90/1925.

2. Asante.

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the Asante themselves started in the 1920s. The relevant sections under these orders were: "Any inhabitant of a village who wilfully disobeys the order of a chief or headman with regard to: "cleaning the vicinity of his house, cleaning market sites, demolishing ruined houses, digging latrine and filling up unused water holes shall be liable to penalties provided by section 11 of Cap. 79"<sup>1</sup>.

On buildings, the Orders gave a detailed regulation which meant that in all villages and towns in Asante houses must conform to plan, for example: (i) A space not less than 20 clear feet will intervene between the buildings on one plot and the nearest of any adjacent plots. (ii) Each building plot shall be not less than 60' x 80' in size and (iii) The building should not block or abut upon any roadway and will be in line with other buildings. (iv) No room may be constructed of a less horizontal dimension than 120 sq. ft. or an average height of less than 10ft. (v) All buildings conform to the layout of the village as approved by the Native Authority and (vi) Windows or louvres in any room must provide a total ventilating areas of not less

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1. Ashanti Confederacy Council Digest 1935-1949  
(Ashanti Research Project I.A.S. Kumase).

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than one-tenth of the floor space. The Council also gave full authority to the Health Officer or his accredited representative to "enter any premises at any time between the hours of 6.00 a. m. and 6.00 p. m. for the purpose of carrying out an inspection".<sup>1</sup>

In view of the above regulations, it is no wonder that by 1945 most of the Asante towns and villages had layouts and many of them were growing according to plan. The 1931-32 Annual Report testifies to the great efforts of the Asante in village planning: "especially good work has been done in Ashanti and very many villages and townships have been laid out on modern lines with ample provisions for lanes, open spaces, sanitary sites and recreational fields"<sup>2</sup>. The planned settlements assumed modern shapes and thus lost their indigenous outlook.<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 9.1).

As the rebuilding of settlements was going on in Asante, there also occurred the building of roads which affected the former. Those settlements which were isolated

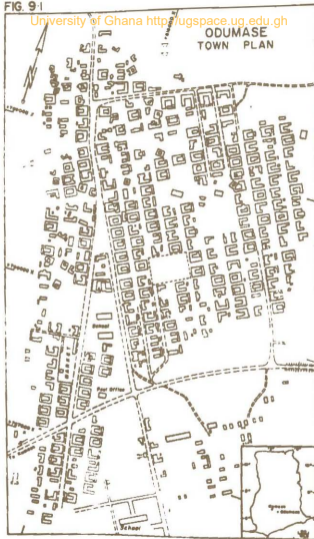
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1. Ibid. p. 73

2. The Gold Coast Annual Report 1931-32 Section 87 p. 16.

3. Ibid. p. 16

FIG. 9-1

University of Ghana <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh>ODUMASE  
TOWN PLAN



University of Ghana <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh>

by the roads moved to the roadside to share the benefits of easy accessibility. Such settlements are found along the Kumase-Tamale road e.g. Mmedoma, Tano-Odumase, Fawobaware etc. In some few cases, instead of the old settlement breaking up, the new township developed along the road e.g. Abofuo and New Ofeso on the Takyiman road. In such situations the planners were not satisfied with the relief of the old sites.

In the case of Abofuo, for example, the old settlement was founded in a valley which was rather muddy during the rainy season, (70). The modern planners, therefore, chose a site which was higher and more healthy. Since a new site was chosen the old houses were not demolished at once, rather as those who were capable built their houses at the new site, others continued to live at the old site until they were capable of building new houses.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Old Abofuo, which is about half-a-mile away from the New Township, is now deserted as all the inhabitants have accommodations at the new settlement.

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In 1945 there were some settlements which were unplanned. In Kwabere examples of unplanned settlements were Safo, Asonomaso, Akitibomo, Bampanase, Ahodwo etc. Perhaps that the inhabitants of these small settlements were not capable of rebuilding new townships.<sup>1</sup> One common thing about all the unplanned settlements, except Safo, was that they were not served by any of the trunk roads in Asante; they were, therefore, not influenced by the civilizing effect of easy accessibility. Aside from these unplanned settlements in the core area of Asante, the cocoa settlements in Ahafo Ano and parts of Northern Ofeso were unplanned and in most cases dirty. These cocoa settlements were built hurriedly by the farmers and are reminiscent of the traditional villages of Asante by the beginning of this period.

#### Types of Rural Settlements:

The characteristic type of rural settlement in Asante was nucleated (refer chapter 3) because strictly speaking, dispersed settlements did not exist in Asante. The single

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1. In many of such settlements some people obstructed the pulling down of the old houses until quite recently; today all settlements are planned in the core area of Asante.

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farmsteads found in the new cocoa growing areas cannot be described as dispersed since each had a name and is capable of growing into a hamlet or a small village.<sup>1</sup> Rural settlements in Asante can be graded according to sizes: hamlet up to ten houses, small villages of between twenty and forty houses, and large villages of over forty houses (Fig. 9.2 a & b).

The presence of many hamlets in the pioneer cocoa areas was the result of the movement of people from the core area. Once in the pioneer cocoa areas, nobody was prepared to lease out several acres of his 'purchased' land for the building of large settlements. Farmers, therefore, tended to live in their farms, or often two or three farmers (at times relatives or people from the same village in the core area of Asante) joined together to found small villages. "This phenomenon cuts across the Akan traditional spirit of living in large groups, but they arose in response to the dictates of contemporary economic activity, namely, commercial agriculture"<sup>2</sup>.

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1. Boateng, K., "Rural Settlement in Asante: A Reflection of Economic Growth". Paper presented to the First Commonwealth West African Regional Conference, 1970 Legon.
  2. Ibid.

FIG 9 2 AHAFO ANO: TYPES OF RURAL SETTLEMENT

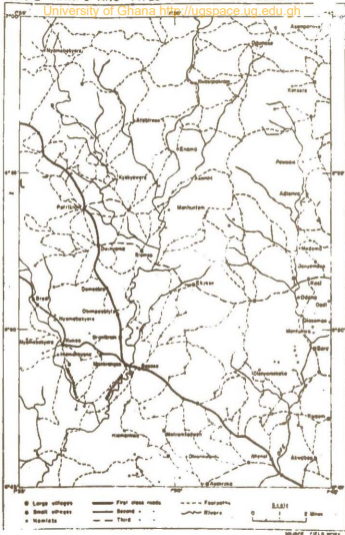
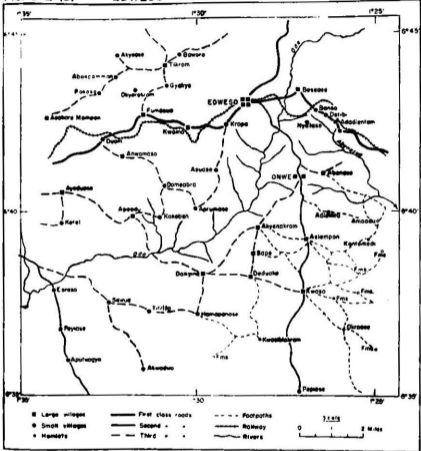


FIG. 9-2 (b) EDWESO TRADITIONAL AREA



SOURCE: FIELD WORK

House Types:

As late as 1921, a typical Asante house type was described as "a rough quadrilateral built of swish or sticks and swish and had for the most part a thatch of grass".<sup>1</sup> Cardinal, writing in 1927, also described the Asante houses as "consisting of four rectangular single storeyed rooms, either with verandah or quite open facing on to the central yard".<sup>2</sup> But the changes that occurred in the socio-economic life of the area also affected the houses in which people lived, so that by 1921, there was a clear manifestation of change: "the old Asante house was tending to disappear, while new buildings with exotic building materials were gradually appearing".<sup>3</sup>

The changes were possible because of several factors: there were available in Asante durable and exotic building materials from the big European firms, which established depots at Kumase, Konongo, Bekwai, Obuase and Mampon.

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1. Census Report 1921, pp. 120-121.

2. Cardinal, A. W., In Ashanti and beyond (London 1927), p. 51.

3. Census Report 1921, p. 121.

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Secondly, people could buy these imported building materials because they had amassed wealth through the newly introduced cocoa growing industry. Finally, new impulses reached Asante from the coast where the European influence was great. Some of the new ideas were those of using shingles carved from (Terminalia ivorensis) and the umbrella tree (Musanga cecropioides), corrugated iron sheets, fired bricks and cement.<sup>1</sup> The idea of making cement block and building double storey houses with open verandah came from the coast.

In 1936 the dominant Asante house was the plan 'A' house (Fig. 9.3). This house was generally built with swish plastered or unplastered with cement and roofed with corrugated iron sheets. Others were the double storey houses with burnt bricks and many swish double storeys generally plastered.

From this time on more and more improvement was seen in the house type. By the end of the period the dominant type in vogue was the plan 'B' (Fig. 9.4), which was a sophisticated form of the 'A' plan. In the rural settlements these were plastered

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1. Annual Report on Ashanti 1927-28, p.8

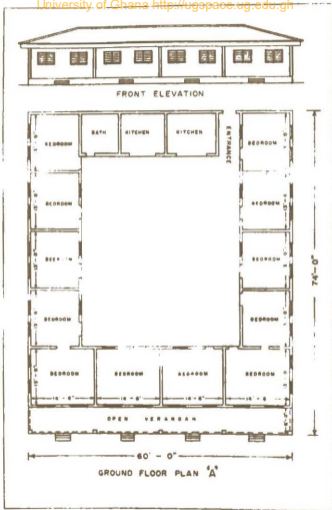


FIG. 9-3



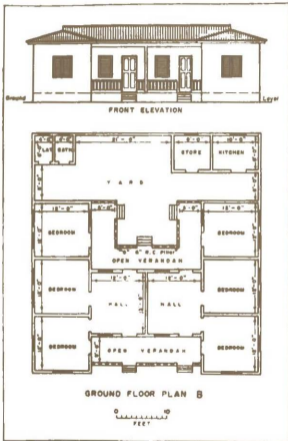


FIG. 9-4

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or unplastered with cement. The evolution of house types in Asante reflected the extent of the success of rural development scheme which was started earlier in the century.

In conclusion it must be remarked that these changes did not affect the whole of Asante equally. It was mainly the core area where the changes were uniform leaving the pioneer fringe of Ahafo-Ano and Northern Ofeso. In these areas except the old established settlements which were affected e. g. Kunsu, Wioso, Tapa, and Akwasiasse in Ahafo-Ano and Abofuo and Nkenkasu in Northern Ofe, the typical cocoa settlement had wattle and daub houses (Fig. 9.8).

#### Towns:

As central places some of the Asante towns seen in the first socio-economic phase (refer chapter three) maintained their own, while a few other rural settlements were metamorphosed into towns. The main criterion on which centres were identified as towns in the first phase was the political leadership. But this criterion seemed to have receded to the background in the twentieth century when economic dominance became the main

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factor. The political leadership appeared a weak criterion because during this period the traditional states as they were known before the twentieth century were no longer significant; the colonial government centred all governmental activities in Kumase with a few district headquarters, the choice of which did not, in all cases, conform to the traditional political dominance. These sub-political centres were Mampon, Bekwai, Obuase and Dwaso. The first two towns had been important in the previous phase, because they held political leaderships in their various states, while the last two were mere villages.

With the introduction of cocoa, and the opening up of the core area of Asante by motor roads, the former towns and other villages struggled to become the new centres. Two economic activities influenced the growth of the settlements, and these were the cocoa growing industry and gold mining. The former economic activity gave a general impetus to the growth of settlements in Asante. Nevertheless, some former traditional centres such as Mampon and Bekwai gained considerably in terms of development, and carved for themselves large hinterlands.

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The second economic activity, which was gold mining, appeared to be the one whose effect on development of towns was most dramatic. Both Obuase and Konongo/Odumase had been old fields of the Asante gold miners. Then in the twentieth century, more sophisticated methods of mining were introduced by the European miners to these two gold fields. It was because of the mining activities in Obuase that the railway line was extended to Asante (Obuase). Thus the two gold fields became centres of attraction to both miners and merchants. This meant concentration of population, and the more important intensive economic activities. Since the population that congregated at these centres had purchasing power higher than the average for Asante rural dwellers, these centres acquired dominance which was greater than all other centres in their local environment. Thus these two centres acquired their own spheres of economic dominance. In addition to this Obuase was made a district headquarters to look after the southern section of Asante i. e. Adanse traditional area.

Also the establishment, by the cocoa buying firms, of depots in the cocoa growing areas coincided with the concentration

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of the other activities mentioned. The main criteria that probably influenced the choices were accessibility and centrality. For example, Nsuta which used to be a traditional centre before the twentieth century lost its dominance completely to Mampon because of the greater accessibility of the latter. Because of this same accessibility Mampon was made a collecting centre for cocoa where many firms built their depots yet Mampon traditional area, in fact, had fewer cocoa farms than Nsuta. Another example of the significance of accessibility in the development of towns was the economic "struggle" between two closely spaced traditional centres Bekwai and Kokofu. The latter was by-passed by both the major road and the railway. So that as the former grew rapidly the latter declined in importance.

The last criterion to be considered was the establishment of the zongos<sup>1</sup> in Asante which commenced with the founding of Kumase zongo, which was flourishing by the time of Bowdich, whose map clearly shows the Muslim quarters marked Baba's house (Fig. 3, 4). Thereafter and especially in the twentieth century (during the cocoa boom) many of the large settlements

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1. The zongo is an appendage of a town where strangers, especially Northern migrants, reside.

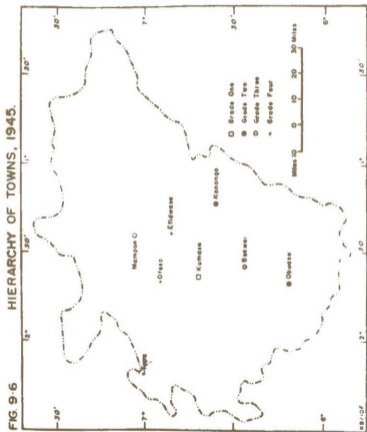
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in Asante had zongos. The significance of this criterion in arranging the Asante towns hierarchically was that about 1930 the size of a zongo was a clear index to a settlement's growth and importance. This is evidenced by the fact that the zongos are found in all the big centres and along the main roads (Fig. 9.5). Such distribution points to the economic importance of the zongos. Furthermore, the zongos were deliberately founded along the major roads in order to benefit from the good and fast transportation system which had developed in Asante.

In Asante the zongos that mattered were found in Kumase, Obuase (which had its zongo in 1903), Konongo, Mampon, Adwera, Bekwai etc. Apart from these major zongos, others developed in most villages of Asante especially in the kola growing areas where the zongo inhabitants were the kola merchants.

Thus the settlements which emerged as towns in Asante by 1945 were Kumase, Obuase, Bekwai, Mampon and Konongo/Odumase (Fig. 9.6). The former central places whose centrality depended on political dominance of the Asante political







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system (Fig. 3. 10) lost their places in the era where economic dominance was the main factor.

The Asante towns did not all have the same influence; some were more important than others. This makes it imperative that the towns should be ordered in a hierarchy. The hierarchical arrangement of towns is necessary because it indicates which centres had the greatest or the least concentration of economic activities. This may also help us to draw conclusion on areal variations within Asante.

Kumase did not lose its leading position; rather, its importance was re-emphasised when it was made the largest inland centre. (Refer chapter 12). All the major trading companies established their wholesale and retail stores there. In the field of commerce its influence extended beyond the borders of Asante to the former Northern Territories (Northern Ghana). Furthermore, until the middle of the second decade of this century it was the only cocoa buying centre. When, later, cocoa brokers took up the buying of cocoa in Asante, Kumase became the chief collecting centre from where cocoa

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was railed to Takoradi for export. What made this possible was accessibility. The town was connected to all other centres, and indeed most parts of Asante, by either good first class roads or secondary and feeder roads (Fig. 9.7). At the same time Kumase had the largest zongo, where trade in kola and other northern goods was very brisk. As a result of this Kumase was able to play its role as the economic capital of Asante and indeed the northern half of Ghana.

The second tier of towns after Kumase were the two mining centres of Obuase and Konongo/Odumase. Because of the congregation of industrial workers trading developed there. Many European trading companies opened retail stores at the two centres. As Konongo catered for the commercial needs of Asante-Akyem, Obuase also supplied the needs of Adanse and parts of Amansie.

The last tier of towns were Bekwai and Mampon. These had the least concentration of central place functions. They had their European firms and were also cocoa collecting centres, as well as sizeable zongos. None of these centres competed with Kumase. They only served as secondary centres



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of economic dominance. In other words, they supplemented the efforts of Kumase and carried the services nearer to the rural folk who lived in the outlying areas. Perhaps what strengthened these centres economically was the secondary function they acquired as cocoa collecting centres in the cocoa growing districts.

An interesting feature about these central places was their spatial distribution. Kumase was situated at the centre with the other centres within the radius of twenty-four to thirty six miles. The pattern was not different from the former distribution pattern of centres which also featured concentration of major settlements within the core area around Kumase.

The spacing of the towns minimized serious competition among some of the centres, e.g. Konongo and Mampong had well defined boundaries and the distances between them were long. But some competition seemed to have existed between Obuase and Bekwai. The latter was too close to both Obuase (18 miles ) and Kumase (24 miles) which thus took

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over some of its central place functions. The effect of this competition especially between Bekwai and Obuase resulted in the former becoming less important than before.

House Types:

The evolution of types of houses at Bekwai, Mampon, Obuase and Konongo/Odumase was the same as the rural areas. So that by the end of the period the most dominant house type was the single storey plan 'B' type. In these towns there were plenty of double storey houses with open verandahs. The main reason being that there was more accumulation of wealth in these towns than in the rural areas.

In the case of Kumase the story was different. On July 1st, 1925 the Public Health Board Ordinance came into force<sup>1</sup> and under it the Board ruled that new buildings erected in the town must be of concrete and not swish. This led to the building of many cement block houses. But because of the expense involved in the building of cement

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1. D.102 Case No.14/25 of 1925 N.A.G. (Kumase).

block houses many of the people built in swish and plastered the walls with cement.<sup>1</sup> This type of house continued to be built up to about 1936 (01, 02, 32). Thereafter the rich cocoa farmers built monolithic double storey houses and big single storey compound houses all with cement blocks and plastered.

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1. Minutes of the Kumase Public Health Board, 10th November, 1925, City Council.

COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE

As trade and goldmining played a great role in the economy of Asante before the twentieth century, so did commercial agriculture in the present century. Commercial agriculture first flourished within the peaceful atmosphere created by the colonial government after the pacification of Asante. Then it became the single economic activity which affected the other elements in varying degrees. It first changed the face of the countryside by turning the forest in the core area into "economic" bush i. e. cocoa farms. When the Asante farmers accumulated some capital they began to look further afield for exotic and sophisticated goods. The wealth of the cocoa farmers was manifested in the building of better houses (by using more durable building materials such as cement and corrugated iron sheets), the building of motorable roads with concrete bridges and the use of more European consumer goods.

The twentieth century commercial agriculture was preceded by the collecting of kola nuts, gum copal and rubber.

Collecting of kola nuts was not a new economic activity because it was the basis of the old kola trade to the north. The kola industry in the twentieth century was not different from that of the nineteenth century.

### RUBBER

The second product collected was rubber. In October 1882 when Moloney published a letter in The Lagos Times and drew attention to the possibilities of rubber cultivation in Ghana, many people especially the coastal peoples such as the Krepi, the Fante and the Wassa became enthusiastic about the rubber collecting industry.<sup>1</sup> By 1890s the forests of Asante were being combed for their rubber trees. It is interesting to note that this business was introduced to Asante by the people of Southern Ghana such as the Fante and the Akyem.<sup>2</sup> But after the pacification of Asante, the Asante themselves became interested in the industry and this led to the growth of the industry, in Asante, so that by 1905 rubber was by all standards the chief export product from the region.

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1. Dickson, K. B. A Historical Geography of Ghana p. 162.

2. Ibid. p. 162.



The latex was collected from wild stands of Funumia elastica and Landlophia owariensis. In Asante the industry grew so quickly that by 1905, rubber was by all standards the chief export product, followed by kola, cocoa and gum copal in that order.<sup>1</sup> In 1906 £172,000 worth of rubber was exported from Asante.<sup>2</sup> The rubber came from the forest area of Asante (Fig. 10. 1). It appears that almost every village and town in the forest area of Asante was involved in the rubber industry. Collecting centres such as Mampon, Agona, Nsuta, Efidwaase, Ofeso and Abofuo were important in Northern Asante. In this area Akosa of Mampon (42, 35), Kwame Mintah of Abofuo (36), and Kofi Akyeaw of Ofeso (35) are some of the great names of rubber traders. Adusei of Serwua, eight miles east of Kumase<sup>3</sup>, Akomea of Agogo (33, 65) and Yaw Amoako of Obogu (65, 66) established themselves as rubber brokers at Kumase, Agogo and Konongo respectively. Informants in Amansie stated that the rubber

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1. Annual Report on Ashanti 1905 No. 483 p. 22.

2. Fuller, F. C., A Vanished Dynasty, Ashanti (London 1921) p. 225.

3. Arhin, K., "The Ashanti Rubber Trade with the Gold Coast in the Eighteen-Nineties" in Africa Vol. XLII No. 1 January, 1972 p. 35.



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collecting was an economic activity in which most villages were involved. The chief collecting centres were Bekwai, Gyakobu, Kokofu, Akrokyere and Dompsoase (04, 05, 104, 106, 108).

The organization of the rubber industry could be divided into two sections: the production section and the purchasing section. Under the production section a rubber tapper who operated in his own traditional area did not need much initial capital, since such a person did not have to rent a piece of forest land on which to operate. On the other hand some initial capital was necessary for a tapper who operated in another traditional area where he is regarded as an "alien". In a letter to the Colonial Secretary of the Gold Coast, Hull noted that "anyone wishing to collect rubber in Sefwi and Gaman (Dormaa) had to pay the owner of the land £2 before commencing operations. This entitled him to work for 3 to 4 months"<sup>1</sup>. By "anyone" Hull certainly meant anybody who did not owe political allegiance to the chiefs of the districts in which he was operating. In Adanse it is said that strangers sometimes obtained access to land for rubber collection and shared the produce with

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1. Acc. No. 1297/58 (N. A. G., Accra).

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the land owner, usually the chief with the tapper receiving a third. (105, 04, 05). Since the tappers wanted much money trees that were already exhausted were sometimes tapped, a practice which killed many of the rubber trees.

Under the purchasing section three types of traders could be distinguished by the manner in which they obtained rubber. The first were those who contracted with local producers to whom they left the responsibility of collection and transporting the product to the market centre. The second were itinerant traders who visited bush settlements and collected rubber from the tappers. The third were the local tappers who carried their rubber to the coast for sale. Each of the first two groups had their own peculiar devices and practices for obtaining rubber, but they all aimed at maximizing their profits by reducing the 'producer' price as much as possible.

According to Hull the first group consisted of "unscrupulous brokers of the 'scholar' class as well as Ashanti pure and simple"<sup>1</sup>. These visited the collecting centres and made advances of money to agents, stipulating that they were

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1. Acc. No. 2154/58 (N. A. G., Accra.)

to receive so many bags or loads of rubber at a certain date. To maximize the difference between the producer and the re-sale prices the broker used his own scale which weighed generally up to 90 lb<sup>1</sup>. Hull claimed that because of the faulty scales used by the brokers, they could make as high as £5 profit from a load of rubber.

It appears Asante's contribution to the rubber industry more than doubled the volume of exports for the whole country.

<sup>1</sup> Colonial Report gave the following figures on the rubber trade<sup>2</sup>.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Value in (£)</u>	<u>Export in (lbs.)</u>
1902	88,602	
1904	360,644	
1905	323,774	
1906	334,505	3,649,668
1907	333,120	3,549,548
1909	263,694	2,764,190
1910	358,876	3,223,265
1911	219,447	2,668,667
1912	168,729	1,990,699
1913	87,915	1,317,369
1914	21,631	654,133

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

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One cannot estimate exactly Asante's share of these exports, but officials of the Gold Coast were in no doubt that a much larger proportion of them came from Asante. For example, Sir Francis Fuller's (The Chief Commissioner of Ashanti) estimate of £172,000 in 1906 was well over half of the national figure of £334,505. Kwame Arhin claims that the rubber trade increased the wealth of Asante in the form of goods worth over £200,000 per year.<sup>1</sup>

The rubber industry did not flourish forever; indeed when Sir Francis Fuller reviewed the economy of Asante in 1918 he did not mention it at all. Two important factors contributed to the collapse of the rubber industry. The more important of the two factors was the fact that in 1918 the Hevea fields of South East Asia, which served as a better source of rubber, were available for rubber buyers from Europe. The second factor was that rubber tapping had to compete with cocoa cultivation which was far more lucrative. It is doubtful whether rubber industry could have competed with cocoa growing industry effectively if the European traders had not looked at South East Asia

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1. Arhin, K., op. cit., p. 34.

for their rubber needs.

### GUM COPAL

The last forest product that entered into commerce was gum copal. Its collection became an important economic venture from 1902 onwards. The collecting centres of gum copal coincided with the rubber collecting centres (Fig. 10.1). One cannot assess the quantities sold but production fluctuated as much as the prices which ranged between 8/- and 18/- per load.<sup>1</sup> In 1910, the importance of gum copal industry dwindled, because it was not at all lucrative. It was soon abandoned by the Asante farmers.

### COCOA

Cocoa (Cacao theobroma) is the one crop which has had the greatest impact on the economy of Asante. As early as 1905 it was observed that prices of food and other items were closely related to prices paid to cocoa producers<sup>2</sup>. Cocoa cultivation was responsible for the rebuilding of towns and villages as well as roads in the 'thirties and the early' forties.

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1. Fuller, F.C. op.cit. p. 226.

2. Poleman, J., "The Food Economies of Urban-Middle Africa"  
F. R. I. Stanford University May 1961 p. 72.

Spread of Cocoa

The cocoa tree which first got to Bompata in Asante Akyem towards the end of the nineteenth century had earlier in the century been introduced to southern Ghana. The history of the introduction and survival of cocoa is well elaborated by Dickson<sup>1</sup>. The farmer who brought the crop to Asante Akyem had lived in Akuapem where he had worked as a farm labourer (43, 113). Bompata's role as a source of diffusion of cocoa to Asante was fortuitous, for Bompata happened to be the hometown of the innovator, a place where it was not difficult for him to obtain a parcel of land for the cultivation of the new crop. The second centre which also developed as a result of mere chance was the environs of Dwaben - Efidwaase-Seniagya or the Sekyere centre. The crop was brought to this centre by those Asante nationals who lived in Koforidua, New Dwaben State, where cocoa cultivation had been adopted (102, 109, 67, 38). The Sekyere centre developed about the same time as the Bompata centre. There was yet a third centre which developed around Aboaso in Kwabere in 1900. (Aboaso is about eleven miles north of Kumase).

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1. Dickson, K. B., Ibid., pp. 165-167.



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The crop was introduced there from Aburi by an Asante who had worked at Aburi as a farm labourer (109, 30). These innovative farmers may be described as progressive farmers amidst their kinsmen, and because of the respect normally given to travellers (01, 02, 109) the introduction of this new crop by such people made an impact in the three centres which in 1904 were clearly marked, (Fig. 10. 2).

Out of the three centres it was the Kwabere centre which made the greatest impact on the spread of cocoa in Asante, thanks to the influence of Kumase as a marketing centre. During the first decade of the twentieth century Kumase was the only buying centre and cocoa produced elsewhere had to be headloaded and later rolled in casks to Kumase for sale. Thus areas further away from Kumase were slow in adopting the new crop. Kwabere centre also expanded to Atwoma so that in 1910 the area on about sixteen miles radius from Kumase had been taken up by cocoa farms.

From 1910 onwards the process of the spread of cocoa was accelerated by the construction of motor roads, all of which

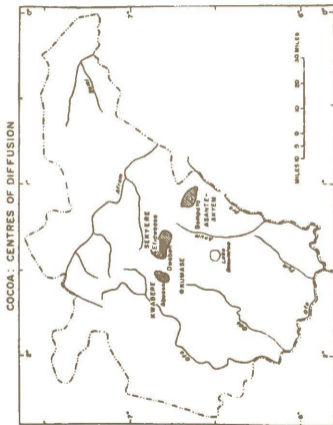


FIG. 10 · 2

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radiated from Kumase. For example, with the construction of Kumase-Adwera road, cocoa spread northwards right up to Mampon, about thirty-five miles away. The cultivation of cocoa also spread along the Kumase-Ofeso road. In Atwoma cocoa farms spread along the Kumase-Sunyani road up to Mankran river, about twenty miles away. In the eastern part of Asante, the Asante-Akyem centre merged with the Sekyere centre around Akuakrom (ten miles east of Efidwaase) and also merged with the Kwabere centre along the Kumase-Dwaso road. In the southern section of Asante it was the railway which accelerated the spread of cocoa, which again was an expansion of the Kwabere centre. The early cocoa farms could be traced along the railway line and settlements such as Bekwai, Akrokyere and Obuase became collecting centres. By the 1920s there were numerous collecting centres for cocoa in Asante, and their distribution (Fig. 10.3 a&b) show the extent of spread of the crop. Kumase, the chief collecting centre, was in the middle of a densely planted cocoa area. In northern Asante the main centres were Aboaso, Efidwaase, Asokore, Mampon and Ofeso. In Asante-Akyem the following

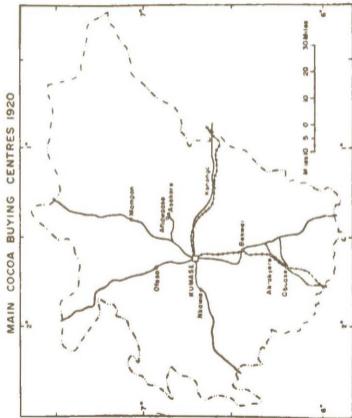


FIG. 10 3(e)



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settlements served as collecting centres: Dwaso, and Konongo. In Eastern Asante, Nkawie was the main centre while in Amansie and Adanse to the south the main centres were Bekwai, Akrokyere, and Obuase.

The eagerness with which the Asante made cocoa farms resulted in the continuing spread of cocoa throughout the core area of Asante. The areas to which the crop spread during the period 1920 and 1930 were: northwest of Agona traditional area around Wiamaase and Kofiase, the western section of Ofeso traditional area around Barekese and most parts of Amansie around Gyakobu and Manso Nkwanta (Fig. 10.4). Thus this period saw the infilling and consolidation of the core area of Asante as an important cocoa producing area.

By 1940 there was every indication that there was no virgin land in the core area of Asante and that farmers had begun to move out to the peripheries, especially to western part of Asante beyond the Mankran river i.e. Ahafo-Ano. In this area the centres that received the migrant Asante cocoa farmers were Kunsu-Wioso, Datano and Tapa areas. Another centre was northern Ofeso where Abofuo, Nkenkasu and Kobreso areas were



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opened up for cocoa farms.

A careful look at the process of diffusion of cocoa in Asante reveals that it does not exactly fit into Torsten Hagestrand's model of spatial diffusion<sup>1</sup>. In the case of Asante one can see the development of the primary stage of diffusion process, as found in Hagestrand's model. The only remark was that these centres developed by mere chance.<sup>2</sup> The second stage of the model did not function in Asante, where the centres rather expanded with the spread of the innovation. The third stage of the spread of cocoa, 1930-1940, was not the condensing stage of the type three of the model, rather this was the proper diffusing stage (type two) when the entire core area of Asante could be seen to have accepted the crop. The process of the spread of cocoa in Asante extends to type four i.e. after 1940, the condensing stage during which the whole of Asante could be described as having accepted the innovation. When the diffusion process of cocoa in Asante is critically compared with Hagestrand's model the Asante one appears like the following:

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1. Hagestrand, T., "The Propagation of Innovation Waves" In Readings in Cultural Geography Edit. Wagner, P. L. C., Mikesell, M. W., (University of Chicago press 1962 pp. 355-368.
  2. Ibid. p. 368.



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<u>Hagestrand's Model</u> <sup>1</sup>		<u>The Asante Model</u>	
Type I	Primary Stage	Type I	Primary Stage
Type II	Retardation of Primary Centrediffusion stage	Type II	Centrifugal expansion Primary Centres.
Type III	Condensing Stage	Type III	Diffusion Stage
		Type IV	Condensing Stage.

From the way in which cocoa spread throughout Asante one can discern regional variations in the farms. The criteria used are the age of the farms and the farm sizes. There were clearly two main regions: the old cocoa growing areas and the new cocoa growing areas. The first region was found in the core area of Asante where the farms were made between 1902 and 1940, and where the farms were characterized by small acreages<sup>2</sup>. Region two included the new cocoa growing areas where the farms were relatively younger. In a survey conducted by the author at Kwagyanso near Kunsu, the average size of the twenty farmers living in the village was found to be about thirty acres. (Appendix II).

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1. Ibid. pp. 366-368.

2. The average size of cocoa farms in the core area was less than 10 acres.

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The rapid spread of cocoa in Asante was possible because of several factors but the two major ones were: the influence of kola industry and the encouragement of the colonial government. There appear to be three ways in which one can see the significance of the 19th century kola production and trade on the cocoa industry at the beginning of this century. Firstly, the capitalistic outlook and methods which operated in the kola industry were adapted to cocoa production and marketing. For example farmers knew that investment in the cocoa venture would yield regular and increasing returns in the form of cash. Secondly, the equipment and tools used in kola production such as asrene (big mat for drying kola nuts) and soso for plucking kola were brought over into cocoa production. Lastly, farmers acquired some resources (agyapadie) in the form of capital (dwetire) and labour (domestic slaves - nnonkofuo) through their participation in the kola trade. These served as bases in the cocoa industry.<sup>1</sup>

In this respect names such as Okonfo Kwaku of Domakwae, Okyeame Kwasi Anane and Nana Kwaku Anane of Asonomaso and

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1. Arhin, K., "Aspects of Ashanti Northern Trade in the Nineteenth Century" in Africa Vol. XL, No. 4 October 1970,

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Safo respectively, Agya Takyi of Adwumakese Kese and Opanin Dakwa of Agyeimpra (114) near Ofeso can be cited as examples of those who switched from kola industry to the cocoa growing because it was found to be more lucrative than the former industry. Agya Kofi Takyi claimed that in 1940 alone he was able to make well over one thousand pounds from his two cocoa farms near Nkunkasu (115), and Opanin Kwabena Opon (25) claimed that he was able to build a house in Kumase ten years after he had entered the cocoa growing industry.

The colonial government was aware that peace which was vital to economic development could only be achieved if the Asante had a gainful employment, and avenues for gainful employment were opened in the field of commercial agriculture. This was a measure to anchor the Asante to the land. It was accomplished by several means: for example, the government made it possible for the farmers to get cocoa beans for propagation. Also, satisfactory arrangements were made for buying the produce from the farmers.

The 1905 Annual Report on Ashanti noted that the Asante were turning their attention to the cultivation of the soil for economic purposes<sup>1</sup>; and that was the cultivation of cocoa. A year later, the Chief Commissioner recorded that an amount of £700 worth of cocoa was exported from Asante<sup>2</sup>. If this is compared with the value of rubber, £172,000, during that year, then one can appreciate the humble position of cocoa in the economy of Asante at the time. But two years later the story was different, because the 1908 Annual Report noted with satisfaction the spread of cocoa: "The extraordinary spread of the cultivation of economic products throughout Ashanti is all the more gratifying as the Ashanti cannot be said to have been an agricultural people in the past"<sup>3</sup>. One contributing factor to this rapid spread of cocoa in Asante was the opening of agricultural stations in southern and eastern Asante, at Bekwai and Dwaso especially from where cocoa seedlings were readily distributed to Asante farmers<sup>4</sup>.

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1. Annual Report on Ashanti; 1905, No. 483, p. 25

2. Fuller, F. C., op. cit., p. 225.

3. The Annual Report on Ashanti; 1908, p. 13

4. Dickson, K. B. op. cit., p. 167.

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The government also organized agricultural shows in Asante, with the principal object of encouraging the Asante in the field of commercial agriculture. One such show which gave a healthy stimulus to the farmers was held in 1908 at Kumase. The Annual Report for that year noted that the show was a big success because competition was keen among producers and a surprisingly high standard was attained by the many exhibitors<sup>1</sup>. The increasing yields of cocoa in Asante is a testimony of the acceptance of the crop as shown by the figures below:

EXPORTS IN TONS

1906	:	148	1931/32	:	71,000
1907	:	551	1934/35	:	86,000
1908	:	751	1936/37	:	91,000
1910	:	1,914	1940/41	:	82,000
1911	:	4,170	1943/44	:	80,000
1912	:	5,337	1944/45	:	92,000
1918	:	18,000			

The spread of cocoa in Asante affected the total export tonnage of cocoa for Ghana which is clearly illustrated by this diagram by Dickson (Fig. 10. 5)<sup>2</sup>. Fig. 10.6 which shows the main buying

1. The Annual Report on Ashanti; 1908 p. 18.

2. Dickson, K. B. , op. cit. p. 167.

## COCOA EXPORTS, 1891 - 1936

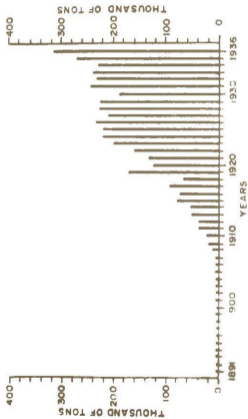
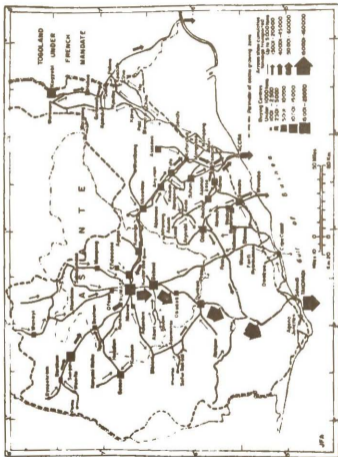


FIG. 10-5

AFTER K. B. DICKSON

# MAIN COCOA BUYING CENTRES & EXPORT ROUTES



centres and the export route in 1953 is also indicative of the trend of the evolution of cocoa growing industry in Asante and other cocoa growing areas of Ghana. And as far as Asante was concerned by 1945 the main buying centres shown on the map were in operation.

#### Problems of Cocoa Cultivation:

Cocoa farmers in Asante have been faced with several problems but the most important has been that of diseases and pests.<sup>1</sup> Known cocoa diseases and pests in this area were Black-pod, swollen shoot and capsids. All of these have caused considerable headache to the farmers because of their effects on the cocoa farms.

Black-pod disease<sup>2</sup> had been with the farmers right from the beginning of the industry. Quartey-Papafio claimed that in a severe case a loss of about 18% of the crop was not uncommon<sup>3</sup>.

1. Dale, W.T., "Diseases and Pests of Cocoa, A Virus Disease" in Agricultural and Land Use in Ghana (O. U. P. 1962) p.286 Edif. Wills, J. B.
2. Wharton, A. W., Black-pod Disease (Accra 1955) passim.
3. Quartey-Papafio's Contribution to "Discussion on Extension Work on Cocoa in Western Nigeria" by J. O. Akinwolemiwa at VIII Inter-American Cocoa Conference Trinidad, Tobago June 1960.



The farmers realised that when a farm was over-shaded with trees or had a high density of cocoa trees, or when the soil was badly drained, the farm was likely to be attacked by the black-pod disease (117, 116, 116, 114, 111, 25). The farmers adopted their own traditional control measures which included reducing the density of the farm through the cutting of some of the cocoa trees, reducing the shade on the farm by killing the big trees, and avoiding badly drained areas. The above control measures were different from those recommended by the scientists, which included : crop sanitation, chemical control, biological control and breeding of resistant varieties.<sup>1</sup>

It was nevertheless the swollen-shoot disease which caused the greatest problem to the farmers not only in Asante but the whole cocoa growing region of Ghana<sup>2</sup>. In a severe case of a swollen shoot attack a farmer might loose twenty to thirty percent of the yield<sup>3</sup>. Because of the reduction in the yields of the diseased farms the possible reaction of the farmers was to

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1. Gregory, P. H., Black-pod Disease Project Report (1969  
Edinburgh) passim
  2. Anon, W., Golden Harvest: The Story of the Gold Coast Cocoa  
Industry (1953 Accra) p. 32.
  3. Quartey-Papafio, op.cit. p. 41.

neglect those farms. In the core area of Asante around Mamponen and Kona there was early evidence in 1917 that some farmers had neglected their farms which had been affected by diseases<sup>1</sup>. By 1938 the dangers of the swollen shoot had become apparent in Asante and it covered the farms in the core area of Asante. This led the Asanteman Council to order the "cutting of any tree or trees believed to be affected"<sup>2</sup>. This measure was in accordance with an order from the Department of Agriculture since that time there had been conscious effort on the part of the Cocoa Division to salvage the diseased farms (Figs. 10, 7 a&b). Normally the affected tree was uprooted and the stems and leaves chopped and neatly packed about four paces from any healthy cocoa tree. And to check further spread of the disease the pods should neither be allowed out of the infected area or the seeds propagated at all<sup>3</sup>. Even though this was the only known method to combat

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1. Annual Report on Ashanti 1917 p. 13.

2. Asanteman Council Digest 1935-1943 (Kumase 1943) p. 15  
Asante Research Project, Institute of African Studies, Kumase.

3. Cadbury, J., "History of the Swollen Shoot Disease on Cocoa up to 1949". The Cocoa, Chocolate and Confectionery Conference August-September, 1950.



## COCOA SWOLLEN SHOOT DISEASE CAMPAIGN

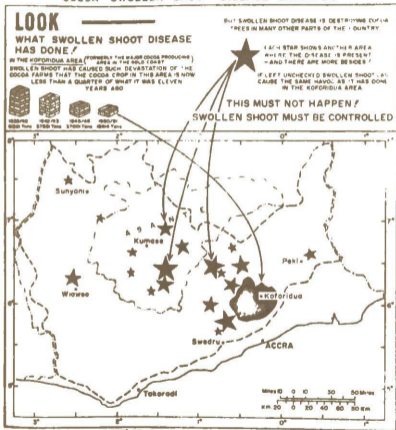


FIG. 10 7(b)

the disease many farmers did not accept it, thus allowing the greater spread of the disease. In 1945 the areas which had severe attacks of the disease were Bompata and Krofa areas in Asante Akyem, Faobaware-Aboaso areas in Kwabere and Fomena area in Adanse all in the core area of Asante. Elsewhere in the core area the disease was not unknown. On the other hand the pioneer cocoa growing areas were free of the swollen shoot disease. This was because the disease had not spread so far.

In addition to the swollen shoot disease, capsid pests (Akate) had caused a great deal of concern to the farmers in Asante. A cocoa tree attacked by capsids experienced between thirty and forty percent reduction in yields<sup>1</sup>. As in the case of the swollen shoot disease the farmers had no traditional remedy for the capsids. But farmers were prepared to accept any cure that would not mean further loss of cocoa trees. It appears by 1945 the old cocoa growing areas of Asante had the capsid pests so that when a nationwide campaign was mounted in the late 'forties and early 'fifties it covered the entire core area of Asante, (118, 119, 120).

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1. Quartey-Papafio, op. cit., p. 41.

In addition to the diseases discussed above, other diseases such as die-back, brown rot, and leaf curl<sup>1</sup> spread from the old cocoa farms of southern Ghana to the core area of Asante and took heavy toll of the cocoa crop or reduced its quality. Dickson's<sup>2</sup> assertion that white ants, rats, and other rodents also proved to be dangerous was confirmed by cocoa farmers, (109, 111, 112, 117).

Apart from the physical problems discussed above there were social and economic problems, included in which were those of fluctuation and low level of cocoa prices. The figures below show the trend of cocoa prices up to 1945.

Prices of Cocoa Per Load of 60lbs.

	1902	..	..	17/6
Before	1914	..	..	8/-
	1916	..	..	30/-
	1918	..	..	5/-
	1920	..	..	22/-
Early	1930s	..	..	6/-
	1937	..	..	25/-
	1938/44	..	..	6/6

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1. Dickson, K. B. op.cit., p.169

2. Ibid., p.170.

The rapid fluctuations and low prices affected the farmers economically because they were unable to budget for the ensuing year. Besides, income from cocoa came in seasonally between the months of October and January. This meant that the farmers received practically all their income during this period<sup>1</sup>. The fluctuating cocoa prices had often led to abandonment of some farms. This was experienced very much before 1920s around Kwabere and Sekyere (21, 24, 113). Nevertheless, farmers hopefully returned to clear the farms when prices rose again<sup>2</sup>. Despite this problem cocoa spread throughout Asante because of the regular nature of the income however small.

The last problem which arose in Asante because of the acceptance of cocoa was the problem of food shortages.

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1. Hoad, W. M., (of Cadbury Bros. Ltd.) "Raw Cocoa Marketing in British West Africa" Paper presented at Conference International du Cacao, London 1 - 4 Octobre.
  2. Broatch, J. D., "Cocoa Rehabilitation on the Gold Coast up to 1949", The Cocoa, Chocolate and Confectionery Alliance Ltd. Cocoa Conference London 30th August 4th September, 1949.

The cultivation of cocoa introduced into this area what can be called permanent cultivation. Apart from the first two or three years when food-crops served as cover crop for the young cocoa trees, arable land devoted to cocoa cultivation became alienated to foodcrop farming. This meant that during the early stages of cocoa cultivation there was always plenty of food but as soon as the cocoa farms became mature food production on the farms virtually disappeared.

The problem of food shortages was tackled as early as 1938 when the Asanteman Council discussed the side effect of cocoa cultivation on food farming. The chiefs, who were not happy about the way cocoa cultivation had encroached upon the arable land for food farming, came out with the following resolution: "Almost all the forests in Ashanti have been converted into cocoa farms on the pretext that there is not much money in food farms as compared with cocoa farms, and therefore, it is not worthwhile wasting one's time and energy over them. Unless farmers disabuse their minds of this wrong notion, it is feared that in less than five years from now the country (Asante) may suffer considerably



from famine. To avoid this eventuality, it is absolutely necessary that the Council should pass a resolution making it an offence for any person to make new cocoa farms in Ashanti<sup>1</sup>. The problem was more acute again in the core area where cocoa cultivation had taken most of the arable land. Perhaps the reason why this envisaged famine never occurred was that the core area especially the towns continued to have adequate food supplies from the new cocoa areas after 1940. In 1945 the main food producing centres in Asante were the peripheral areas, Kumasi Urban Centre received its food supplies from Ahafo-Ano and Northern Ofeso. Konongo/Odumase urban area also got its supplies from north of Agogo and Obogu, while Obuase received its food supplies from as far away as Manso-Nkwanta and southern end of Asante. The small towns such as Mampon/ and Bekwai obtained their food supplies from their hinterlands.

It must be noted here that the technique of cultivation of food crops remained as before despite the introduction of commercial agriculture. Food farming continued to be the

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1. Asanteman Council Digest, pp.21-22.

pre-occupation of the women folk. This meant that as the men owned the cocoa trees, the women controlled the food crops on the farms.

#### The Nature of Farm Labour During the Cocoa Era

The need to make larger cocoa farms especially in the new cocoa areas led to a change in the farm labour after 1940. In the new cocoa areas hired labour in addition to household unit became a necessity. The commonest form of labour was the 'by-day' type. After the day's work the labourer received his wages which in 1945 were about 2/-. In addition the farmer had to give the labourer some foodstuffs. The second type of labour was the annual one. Such a labourer was hired for a whole year on a fixed sum of money ranging from twenty pounds to thirty pounds in 1945. In such an agreement the farmer was expected to provide accommodation, clothing and tools. In addition the health needs of the labourer were the concern of the landlord. In return for these benefits, the labourer was expected to render services to the employer not only by working on the farm but also

by performing such other services as the farmer might demand (26, 117, 114, 115). These two types of labour brought in many migrants from Northern Ghana and the Haute Volta.

More elaborate systems of contractual labour which operated in the new cocoa areas were the share tenancies, namely: the abusa (tripartite) and the abunu (equal share). Under the abusa labour a prospective farmer was granted a cocoa farm by the owner. The tenant was responsible for the weeding of the undergrowth and the harvesting of the crops. The net income from the farm was then divided into three equal parts with a third going to the tenant. The tenant held the farm so long as he honoured his obligations to the farm owner. The former had no right to assign his right on the farm by sale, gift or pledge; these rights were vested only in the owner.

The other share tenancy was the abunu, under which the usufruct was shared equally between the labourer and the landlord. This tenancy was contracted especially when the farms were young, i. e. between the ages of 5-10. This is the period

when the yields are low and the farm work difficult, so that the tenancy must be attractive hence the "50-50" sharing system. But when a farmer had nurtured his farm to maturity, with high yields, he desired to take a larger share of the proceeds. The abusa labourers were, therefore, found mainly in the mature farms in the pioneer cocoa areas. These types of labour became important after 1940.

CHAPTER ELEVEN  
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EVOLUTION OF ROADS

For effective economic development, road building was made one of the priorities in Asante at the beginning of this century, and as a result of an accelerated programme much of the core area of Asante was opened up; and along these roads impulses from the coast and Kumase reached the countryside. Before the building of motor roads during the second decade of this century, there were only footpaths which at the instruction of the District Commissioners were widened into what became known as the 'hammock roads'. The European administrators travelled in hammocks, therefore they saw to it that paths should be wide enough to accommodate their hammocks. One other reason why the colonial administrators insisted on the hammock roads was that, along those roads the administrators could travel faster to administer justice. From this angle, therefore, the development of hammock roads could be regarded as an instrument of colonization. At the same time, its second and greater importance was economic.

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Even though the 'hammock road' was a great step forward towards modern road building, it had several short-comings. For example, there were no bridges and travellers had to wade through the streams. In some cases, dangerous improvised bridges were provided; this was nothing but a log spanning the stream.

By the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century, there had been a change in the old order. The cocoa industry and other economic activities which demanded high mobility started to demand quick and better transportation facilities. For example, there was the road to carry bulky goods, especially cocoa, to the rail head at Kumase with the minimum effort yet with maximum efficiency.

The first motor roads to be constructed were the trunk roads. The roads were built to serve those areas that were economically viable, i. e. areas that were important in the new export trade. So that apart from the Mampon road which was aimed to join Kumase to Tamale in the Northern Territories, all other areas only had trunk roads when the government became aware that there was an abundance of cocoa farms and that

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products from those areas would easily pay for the cost and maintenance of the roads. The histories behind some of the roads may make the above point clear.

Secondly, the motor roads which were constructed followed, by and large, the old trade routes. The reasons for this were obvious. In the first place, all the routes had been developed into 'hammock roads', so that surveying was made easy. Furthermore, except the construction of bridges the main constructional work was made relatively cheaper to finance. Lastly, all the major centres were being served by the 'hammock roads': they could, therefore, serve as the basis for the motor road construction.

The first motor road to be constructed in Asante started in 1909 from Kumase northward towards Adwera<sup>1</sup>. In part, this road followed the 19th century Great Northern Route. In 1913 the construction had reached Mampon, about thirty-five miles away. In October of the same year, the report said that twenty vehicles were plying the new road up to Mampon.<sup>2</sup> By the middle of 1914, five years after the commencement of road building in Asante, the only motorable road was the Kumase-

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1. Roads 709/09 (N. A. G., Kumase).

2. A. C. 2039(16/13) No. 324/1913. (N. A. G. Kumase).

Mampon road.<sup>1</sup>

There is an example of how the government was urged to construct a road to serve an important cocoa growing area. The Kumase Chamber of Commerce requested the government to construct a feeder road from mile fourteen on Mampon road to join Effidwaase-Asokore cocoa growing area. The large quantities of cocoa which were produced in the area, a distance of about twenty-four miles, had to be cask-rolled down to Kumase. Cocoa farmers were therefore not very enthusiastic about expanding their farms. This situation was remedied when the Chief Commissioner, who agreed with the Kumase Chamber of Commerce, explained the urgent need for this road and emphasized that when the road was constructed, it would tap an important cocoa growing centre<sup>2</sup>. The construction of the road was completed in late 1914 at the cost of £5, 500<sup>3</sup>. As a result of the construction of this road, Effidwaase and Asokore became important cocoa buying centres. All the major cocoa agents in the Asante opened their depots either at Effidwaase or Asokore.

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1. Dickson, K.B., "The Development of Road Transport in Southern Ghana and Ashanti since 1850" in Transactions of Historical Society of Ghana, Vol. V 1961.

2. AC. 2039/(16/13) - (N. A. G., Kumase).

3. AC. 2039(16/13) No. 324/1913 (N. A. G. Kumase).



From 1915 onwards, the other former major routes or 'hammock roads' began to be constructed. For example, in 1916 Ofeso Traditional Area had become an important cocoa growing area, so that the modern Kumase-Ofeso-Takyiman motor road commenced to tap cocoa from the area. In the same year the Kumase-Sunyani 'hammock road' was resurfaced to accommodate motor vehicles.<sup>1</sup> Other major roads which were constructed before 1927 were: Kumase-Dwaso roads (i. e. the Kumase-Accra road), Kumase-Obuase (i. e. Kumase-Cape Coast) road. In addition to these roads were also the construction of some feeder roads to join the main roads<sup>2</sup>. For example, a sixteen mile stretch was built from Konongo to Agogo; Efidwaase was joined to Kumawu by a eleven mile road etc. (Fig. 11. 1). In 1924 the road net-work showed that there were more roads in Kwabere Sekyere and Asante-Akyem (i. e. areas east of Kumase) than in any part of Asante. Indeed, these areas were the first cocoa producing areas, and therefore, there was the early need for the construction of motor roads to tap the resources in those areas.

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1. Adm. 569 Report on the Sunyani-Commassie Road and Bridges (s. 23/12) 4. L. 15-3, 8, 15.

2. Adm. 614 Motor Road Commassie-Nkawie (R. 17/1915)30. 7, 17.



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Furthermore, in 1924 the total mileage of motor roads in Asante was about 332 miles.

Apart from the main arteries which were constructed by the Public Works Department (the P. W. D. ), many of the feeder roads were constructed by the people themselves, e. g. Dwaso-Obogu, Nsuta-Mampon, Mampon-Kofiase, Asokore-Seniagya etc. (Fig. 9.7). As early as 1917 there was official awareness of road building mania among the Asante: "The people in this district and indeed any part of Ashanti are anxious to make better roads suitable for motor traffic and are perfectly prepared to undertake their upkeep without remuneration. They expect, however, that the government will take over bridging and draining where necessary as such work is beyond their power"<sup>1</sup>. Many of the feeder roads were, therefore, built through the initiative of the inhabitants led by their chiefs,

For the purposes of motor road building and maintenance, the government categorized the roads in the country into trunk roads and district roads.<sup>2</sup> On the trunk roads the government insisted that they should be maintained by the Public Works

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1. Adm. D. 651 (R. 7/1917) No. 118/1/1917  
Motor Roads Constructed by Chiefs.

2. Adm. 65 CR. 7/1917) M. P. 7/1917.

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Department. This order was made because "the danger of making use of communal labour on a good road is obvious to any person who has witnessed the irresponsible hoeing work of the native females. It becomes much cheaper in the long run besides being a great deal more satisfactory to maintain a good motor road by skilled labour alone"<sup>1</sup>. For these reasons, the government undertook the responsibility to maintain the main trunk roads. Nevertheless, the government desired that communal labour should be employed in the construction of the main trunk roads, especially the rough work which did not require a trained eye or hand.<sup>2</sup> The order said: "On the main roads, get them constructed under expert supervision with both communal and paid labour, but once constructed let them be taken over by the department for maintenance"<sup>3</sup>.

On the other hand the government order also said:  
"Build your District Roads with communal labour (encouraged with the assistance of expert engineer whenever available) and let the maintenance of these Roads form part of the duties of the

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1. No. 79/16/1917 M. P. R. 71917 (N. A. G. -Kumase).

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

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people who primarily benefit by them, that is the villagers concerned"<sup>1</sup>.

The period between 1924 and 1936 saw the construction of more roads in Asante. This period coincided with the spread of cocoa in the core area. The Ofeso-Akomadan road was completed by the P.W.D. During the same period the Tewa road was completed by the P.W.D. Many more feeder roads or district roads were constructed (Fig. 9. 7). In short during this period road construction was the top priority in the general Rural Development programme in Asante. Villages constituted themselves into Asafo Companies and worked on the roads to link their villages to the existing trunk roads. Some chiefs went in for hired labour to supplement the communal labour in the upkeep of roads. The individual labourers were paid 1/6d each per day.<sup>2</sup> The chiefs had to settle the maintenance cost of roads by imposing levy on the inhabitants e. g. the Chief of Asonomaso levied the inhabitants of Safo and Asonomaso for the construction and maintenance of Safo-Asonomaso road (27, 28, 25, 30).

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1. Ibid.

2. D. 658 EP. 1/1931 No. 4 Conf. 2/29 Upkeep of Political Roads by Chiefs Jan. 1931.

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There is evidence from the P. W. D. Report of 1927 which claimed that there was steady progress in the consolidation of roads with permanent culverts and bridges, while general improvement of the existing roads were well marked.

The result of this persistent effort in the building of roads was the road network of 1936 which could be described as the basic pattern for the contemporary road network in Asante. By 1936 all the major roads and the main feeder roads had been constructed (Fig. 11. 2) and out of the total of 798 miles the P. W. D. maintained 370 miles. This means that about fifty-nine per cent of the roads in Asante was built and maintained through communal labour. This was a clear indication of the part the inhabitants of Asante played in the opening up of the territory.

The process of road building continued, and by 1945 the motor road network showed a considerable improvement on those of 1936 and 1924 (Fig. 11. 3). The total mileage had increased from 798 miles to 1096 miles. The additional 298 miles were constructed by the inhabitants themselves, with technical assistance from the government. This confirms the idea that much that was achieved in the construction of motor roads was







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the result of the communal labour which the Asante employed.

A closer look at the road network of 1945 shows that most of the roads could be found in Kwabere, the Asante-Akyem district and parts of Sekyere ( around Mampon and Efidwaase). There were a few feeder roads built in Southern Asante (Amansie and Adanse Districts) to connect a few formerly isolated settlements, which were cocoa farming areas to the main roads e. g. Obuase-Sikaman road, Fomena-Bodwesango road and Obuase-Nyamebekyere road, to mention only a few. In Western Asante, a few feeder roads were constructed to join the interior to Kumase-Tepa road, e. g. Kunsu-Dotiem-Wioso-Dotiem road, Wioso-Mantukwa road (a distance of about 32 miles) etc. These roads were constructed to tap the resources of this pioneer cocoa area. (The resources were timber and cocoa).

The area which did not experience any road construction throughout this period was the north-eastern part of Asante i. e. The Afram Plains. The main reason was that the savanna vegetation did not attract the migrant Asante cocoa farmers whose main interest was forest. And since the roads were constructed to tap forest resources such as cocoa and timber

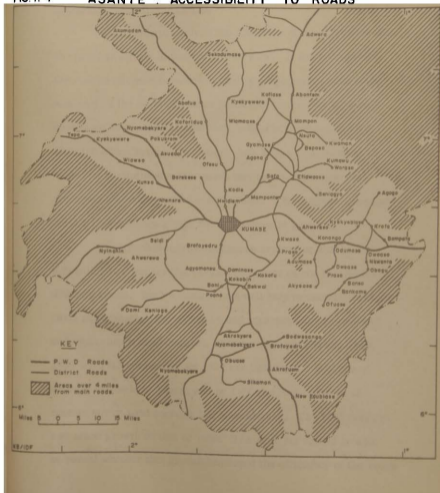
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the Afram plains did not have a single road constructed during this period. Furthermore, most of the plains remained uninhabited and therefore failed to attract roads.

The district variations discussed above becomes clearer when the road accessibility map of Asante is studied, (Fig. 11.4). The map was obtained by marking along the existing motorable roads a distance of four miles on either side of the roads. This figure of four miles was taken on the assumption that this was the distance a farmer was prepared to walk with a headload of farm products e.g. cocoa and foodstuffs to sell. The result of this exercise i.e. Fig. 11.4 confirmed the regional variations. The peripheries of the Asante territory were mainly inaccessible, especially the Afram plains and Western Asante. Much of the core area of Asante including Southern Ofeso, parts of Sekyere ( around Efidwaase and Mampon), Asante-Akyem (around Konongo) Amansie, (around Bekwal), Adanse (around Obuase) and the areas immediately around Kumase (Kwabere, to the north and north-east, Mponua to the south and Atwoma to the west were well served by motor roads, and the inhabitants took advantage of that.

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**ASANTE : ACCESSIBILITY TO ROADS**

FIG. II-4



### Structure of the Road Network

To be able to analyse the structure of the road network the graph theoretic measures can be used. It is assumed that the results of these measures could be employed to assess the adequacy of the networks from which the level of the economy could also be assessed. The main points to consider in this exercise are: 'vertex' or 'node' and 'edges'. A 'vertex' or 'node' is a point where two roads intersect. This may not necessarily be the locus of a settlement. The 'edges' represent the road connections which link one vertex to another.

The graph theoretic measures arrived at should make it possible to compare the various structure of road networks at different times. Such a comparison will help to establish conclusions as to whether the networks had witnessed any growth and undergone any transformation. The periods chosen are 1924, 1936 and 1945 networks. By 1924 one could see a skeleton of network of roads in Asante and by 1936 the basic pattern of contemporary road network had been formed. The 1945 network saw some growth on that of 1936. The analysis should be able to reveal whether this growth improved the efficiency of the roads

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with reference to circuits<sup>1</sup>. (A complete road circuit is one in which the connectivity is such one can travel from a point (say 'A') through several points ('B', 'C' etc.) and come back to the starting point ('A') without having to retrace ones steps). Or, according to Kansky, a circuit is "a finite path in which the initial vertex  $V_1$  coincides with the terminal vertex  $V_2$  of the path"<sup>1</sup>.

By using the graph theoretic analysis the road networks of 1924, 1936, and 1945 have been subjected to test. The various indices arrived at are shown below:<sup>2</sup>

	Alpha Index	Beta Index	Gama	Pi
1924	0.021 or 1.21%	1.1515	0.0719 or 7.2%	2.5
1936	0.0131 or 1.31%	1.2941	0.518 or 5.2%	6.28
1945	0.008 or 0.08%	1.347	0.029 or 2.9%	8.5

The interpretation of the above computation is that in the 1924 network the 'alpha' measure yielded 0.0121 or 1.21%.

1. Kansky, K.J., Structure of Transport Networks Department of Geography Research Paper No.84 University of Chicago 1963.
2. The computational procedures are shown in Appendix L.

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This meant that the network had only 1.21% of its possible connectivity. When this is compared with that of 1936: 0.0131 or 1.31% only a slight increase is seen; this is confirmed by both the 'Beta' index: 1924 = 1.1515; 1936 = 1.2941 and the 'Pi' measure which rather doubled itself: 1924 = 2.5; 1936 = 6.28. On the other hand the 'Gamma' index which shows the extent of circuits fell from 0.0719 or 7.2 in 1924 to 0.0518 or 5.2 in 1936. The possible explanation of this decrease will be explained later when the overall network of 1945 is compared with the rest.

In the 1945 network despite an increase in the 'Pi' measure of 8.5 which is 400% of that of 1924 there was a surprising decrease in both the 'Alpha' and 'Gamma' indices: 0.008 or 0.8% and 0.286 or 2.9 respectively. This meant that although there was substantial increase in the mileage or a considerable extension of the network, the connectivity (indicated by the 'Alpha' measure) and circuits (indicated by the 'Gamma' measure) were poorer in 1945. The most likely explanation of this state of affairs is that the increase recorded in the 'Pi' measure reflects the large number of feeder roads

constructed to connect isolated villages with the main trunk roads. That is why there is also a slight increase in the 'Beta' index: 1.1515 in 1924, 1.2941 in 1936, and 1.347 in 1945 indicating slight growth of edges and vertices. But the accelerated feeder road building programme after 1936 resulted in a considerable number of dead ends in the road network (Fig. 11.3). It means, therefore, that the alpha and gamma measures, indicating network efficiency as regards quick movement from one node or vertex to the other without retracing one's steps, were higher in that of either 1936 or 1924 than the 1945 network. This indicates a decline in the efficiency of the network. Furthermore, it means the network of 1945 was no more complex than that of 1936 or even 1924, because the higher the 'Alpha' (measure showing high rate of connectivity) and the 'Gamma' index (showing a high number of circuits) the more complex and the more efficient the road network will be.

This is the result of lack of planning during the period of road building. Because the main interest of the village communities which constructed the roads was accessibility to the nearest trunk

or secondary road, no serious thought was given to point of intersections. In graph theoretic analysis, one expects in a planned road network a decrease in intersections or vertices with increasing extent of complexity of the network. It is only when this happens that higher connectivity and circuit indices are obtained.

From the above discussion what happened in reality was that by 1945 there were several roads in the peripheries of Asante which were described as 'one way' by their users. This means that the roads had dead ends and, therefore, transportation from those areas to the core area became rather difficult. Invariably villagers in such areas had to walk several miles to points of intersection on the main roads to obtain the services of a motor vehicle.

#### Asante's link with other parts of Ghana

Apart from the internal roads the major roads constructed by the government had a far reaching effect on Asante and its neighbours. The most important of these roads were; Kumase-Mampon-Tamale road, Kumase-Ofeso-Wankyi-Wa-Lawra road,



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Kumase-Konongo-Kibi-Accra road, Kumase-Sunyani-Berekum-Sampa/Dormaa Ahenkro road, and Kumase-Fomena-Cape Coast-Takoradi road. When Asante was linked to the coast by the Cape Coast/Takoradi and Accra roads, ideas from the coast quickly got into Asante. One reference to this is seen in 1921 Census Report which says: "the old Asante house was tending to disappear, while new buildings with exotic building materials were gradually appearing along the main roads"<sup>1</sup>. Among the settlements where development was rapid were: Kumase, Mampɔn, Obuase, Bekwai and Konongo. These settlements were along the major roads and served as nodal points in the road network (Fig. 11.3). Kumase as the centre of all the major routes became the main focus of socio-economic growth while the other mentioned settlements served as minor foci thanks to the roads.

The impulses that went from Asante to the Northern Territories (Northern Ghana) and vice versa also need comment. Because of the availability of road transport Asante's trade links with the North became more pronounced. Kumase thus became the collecting centre for the northern-bound trucks, which carried

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1. Census Report 1921, pp.120-121.

European manufactured goods and forest foodstuffs. From the North also came labour to work in the mines and in cocoa farms. The labour movement was easy because of availability of road transport. In effect, like a two way traffic the northern immigrants supplied the needed farm labour in Asante and helped the spread of cocoa cultivation, while they in turn carried some innovations to their home areas. One significant effect of their contact with Asante is the invasion of the Asante or Guinea forest house type in the savanna area. Thus Asante appeared more closely linked to its both southern and northern neighbours than it used to be, thanks to the evolution of motor roads in Ghana as a whole.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

TRADE

With the introduction of cocoa into Asante the pattern of trade as it was known before this century changed. Asante traders no longer headloaded goods either to the coast or to the north. Thanks to accessibility and better transportation system both European goods from the coast and the northern goods reached Asante.

During this period cocoa growing industry was the single factor which controlled the Asante trade: "Trade is governed almost entirely by the cacao market as everyone is directly or indirectly connected with cacao business"<sup>1</sup>. Thus a good year for trade in Asante was one when the cocoa price was high. For example the 1927-28 Colonial Report on Asante said: "Generally speaking the year has been a good one for trade and in cocoa areas, evidence that the people have plenty of money is furnished by the lavish way in which they spend it"<sup>2</sup>. Another Report on 1929-30<sup>3</sup> commended the increase in the spending power of the

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1. Report on Ashanti 1929-30 (Accra 1930) p. 15.

2. Annual Report on Ashanti 1927-28 (Accra 1928) p. 12.

3. See reference 1 above, p. 16.

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Asante as they went in for more sophisticated goods such as fired bricks, cement and corrugated iron sheets. The media through which goods were distributed in Asante were: the European shops, the Bodwua-Bodwua (or small petty-trading shops) and the markets. Each of these had a distinct role to play in the trading economy.

#### The Big European Firms

The European firms followed the colonial administrators into Asante and established wholesale and retail shops first at Kumase and later at the large cocoa centres such as Bekwai, Konongo, Mampon and Efidwaase. The first company to establish a shop at Kumase was the Basel Trading Company<sup>1</sup> (later on the Union Trading Company) in 1910. This was followed in 1915 by Swanzy & Co. (a cocoa buying agent as well as distributor of goods) and the United African Company (U. A. C.). In the 'twenties many European firms were established in Kumase to take part in the lucrative trade, e. g. S. C. O. A. (1922), C. F. A. O. (1925), and Kingsway (1929).

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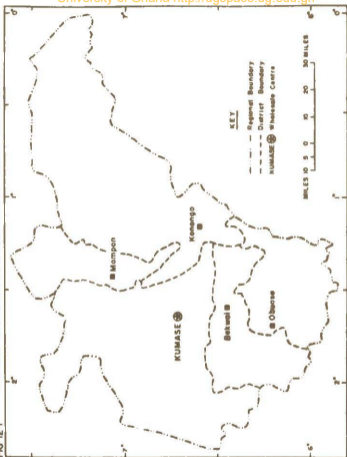
1. This was opened in the service of the Basel Mission to use the profits in the operation of the Mission.

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The activities of these trading firms were not limited to Kumase alone. Some of the firms established retail stores in other major towns in Asante. For example Mampon had its U, A, C. store in 1929, S, A, T. in 1930 and S, C, O, A. in 1932. Bekwai had its three European retail stores between 1924 and 1932 (106, 108) other settlements which had some European retail shops were: Obuase and Konongo. Each of these towns developed into a service centre serving its own hinterland. Kumase remained as the wholesale centre for the whole of Asante. Fig. 12. 1 shows that most of the western side of Asante had no service centre. This was because apart from Atwoma and southern Ofeso the rest of the area was the pioneer cocoa area and had no considerable town. (Tepa, the Ahafo-Ano district centre is only a modern creation and does not belong to the period under discussion). Therefore the whole of that area as well as areas within a radius of twenty four miles had to rely on Kumase for retail services.

The function of these European firms was the distribution of European consumer goods, which included building materials (such as cement, nails and corrugated iron sheets), drinkables

FIG 12.1 SERVICE CENTRES: DISTRIBUTION OF EUROPEAN SHOPS



such as beer, whisky and schnapps, tinned foods, clothing and farm implements such as cutlass and axe.

The European firms also issued what was known as 'Passbook' to some customers. These were given goods in bulk to retail in the rural areas. (See below).

#### Indigenous Retail Shops

The abundant supply of the European consumer goods resulted in the development of small-scale indigenous trading concerns throughout Asante. This is confirmed by the 1927-28 Annual Report on Asante: "There is hardly a village without its store where articles arð might describe as luxuries are ever increasing both in number and assortment".<sup>1</sup>

By about 1930 there had developed two types of indigenous trading concerns, namely, the 'Passbook' holders and the small scale retail traders - the Bodwua-Bodwua stores. The 'Passbook' holders were those who deposited sums of money ranging from £100 to £400 with the European firms and were therefore allowed to take goods either to the tune of the deposit or a little over the deposit (122, 123, 124, 125). Those who had the capital to invest

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1. Annual Report on Ashanti 1927-28 p. 8.

in trade by this way became known as the Akonkofuo (literally great indigenous retailers.) First it was Kumase which attracted the merchant class because of its unique role as the economic heart of the region. Most of these traders obtained market stalls in the newly built market of Kumase (124, 125).

The other big centres of Asante also had stores manned by members of this merchant class e.g. at Mampon one Opanin Adwetoa and Agya Kofi Boateng were well known traders. At Efidwaase Mr. Kwabena Pie was an important trader in the early nineteen-thirties. Bekwai also had its share of the Akonkofuo, for example Osikani (Richman) Yaw Boakye and Mr. Adu-Kyei who had big stores at Bekwai by 1931. (123, 126). The distribution of the shops belonging to these indigenous traders showed they were found in Kumase, Bekwai, Obuase, Konongo, Mampon, Efidwaase in that order of importance. These were the settlements which had comparatively large markets because of their populations. They also had large dependent regions or hinterlands. These retail centres were again confined to the core area, leaving out the peripheries,



Aside from the Akonkofuo shop, there were the small scale retail traders. These merchants purchased a few items of European goods either from the big European firms or from the shops belonging to the Akonkofuo. These traders were known as the Bodwua-Bodwua traders. They conducted their business on part-time basis, for they were also cocoa farmers and regarded their trading activities as secondary to the cultivation of cocoa.

The predominant ownership of the system of petty-trading changed before the second World War when small-scale traders from Nigeria, especially from the Yoruba area, flocked to Asante and gradually took over this aspect of trade from the Asante. The success of the Nigerians was the result of their own trading ingenuity and the cocoa growing industry which had captured the attention of the Asante. The contents of an average Nigerian shop were as varied as they were interesting. Normally the commodities ranged from preserved parts of animals<sup>1</sup> and herbs to European consumer goods and drugs. The Yoruba shops, like the Asante Bodwua-Bodwua shops, were found in

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1. These old parts of animals such as lions, leopards, vultures, chameleons are important in indigenous medicine.

practically every village in Asante, (Fig. 12, 2) except the very remote villages in the pioneer cocoa fringe. In 1945, farmers living in the Kunsu-Wioso pioneer cocoa fringe had to travel to settlements such as Dotiem, Kunsu and Wioso for their needs. But invariably farmers who needed provisions such as meat, soap, salt and other household needs had to travel to Kumase for them. Furthermore, during holidays when farmers did not go to their farms, some itinerant traders visited the small and scattered cocoa villages and sold to them such commodities as sugar, milk, tinned fish, bar soap, salt, dried fish etc.

The organization of the retail structure in Asante can be seen in the schematic diagram below (Fig. 12, 3). The diagram shows the hierarchy of retail shops. This hierarchical arrangement coincides with the hierarchy of towns.

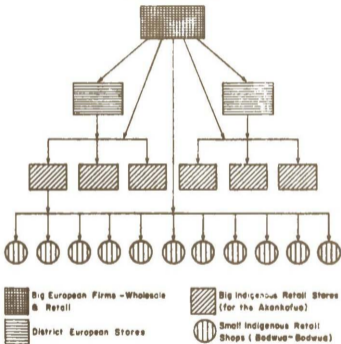
### Markets

The idea of market was not an innovation of the twentieth century; rather it was carried over from the previous



FIG. 12.3

SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF  
RETAIL SHOPS



centuries (refer chapter Four). But the internal trade in Asante appeared to have been disrupted as a result of the political turmoil which occurred in Asante for about over twenty years preceding this period. This state of affairs did not continue for long as a result of some factors. The most significant factor which brought an immediate change in this aspect of the economy was the establishment of peace by the Colonial Administration. The itinerant traders who had to visit the various fairs were sure of their safety. Second in importance was the cocoa growing industry which brought in a great deal of money with which the rural folk could purchase the essential goods. Lastly, the building of motor roads made traders more mobile and led to an accelerated circulation of goods.

Markets could not be regarded as outmoded institutions since undoubtedly the market was the most important institution which affected the bulk of the population as far as trade was concerned. This was because it was through the local markets that foreign and local goods were absorbed;

and it was through the same markets that most local agricultural and cottage industrial products entered the economy<sup>1</sup>. A simple working definition of a market is : "An authorized concourse of buyers and sellers of commodities, meeting at a place more or less strictly limited or defined, at an appointed time"<sup>2</sup>. If this definition excluded wayside gathering of women and children foodstuff vendors then in about 1925 Asante had about thirty-eight recognised markets (Fig. 12. 4). This figure increased to about fifty-five at the end of the period (Fig. 12. 5). The distribution of markets in 1945 showed in-filling of that of 1930. The basic pattern, however, was the same. It showed the preponderance of markets in the core area of Asante. On both 1930 and 1945 distribution maps one observes that Western Asante was not fully served. This was the pioneer cocoa area. Also the north-eastern section was devoid of markets because this was the Asante section of the empty Afram plains.

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1. Hodder, B. W., "The Yoruba Rural Market" in *Markets in Africa* (N. V. P. 1962) Edit. Bohannan, P. W., Dalton, G. Chapter 7.
  2. Hill, Polly, "Notes on Traditional Market Authority and Market Periodicity in West Africa" in *Journal of African History*, VII, 2 (1966) p. 295.



## PERIODIC &amp; DAILY MARKET DAYS 1945

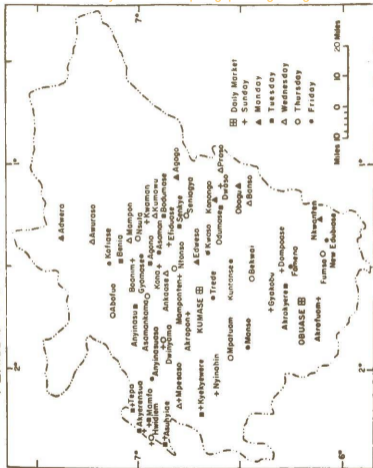


FIG 12.5



### Classification of Markets

Markets could be classified according to either the functions or periodicity. Since rural markets catered for the distribution of local foodstuffs, cottage industrial products as well as imported goods only a superficial analysis can be made with the functional aspects of markets. What many writers<sup>1</sup> have used in classifying rural markets is periodicity of the markets. In the concept of market periodicity, markets could be classified into three: the urban daily market, the rural daily market and the rural periodic market. In 1945 when the contemporary pattern of markets could be said to have crystallized there were two urban daily markets found in Kumase and Obuase and several rural periodic markets<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 12. 4 & 12. 5).

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1. Apeldoorn, G. J. Van., "Market Location and Market Periodicity in Ghana" Seminar Paper I, S. S. E. R. Legon 1970/71.

Hodder, B. W., op. cit. passim.

Hodder, B. W., "Periodic and Daily Markets in West Africa" in The Development of Indigenous Trade & Markets in West Africa (O. U. P. 1971) XVII Edit. Met.

2. There was no well developed rural daily market in Asante. The large settlements had foodstuffs and meat vendors, but this did not conform to the definition of a market.

It is believed that most daily markets were originally periodic markets.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately the histories of the two daily markets showed contrary developments of the markets. It appears the two evolved as daily markets. For example, Bowdich saw a daily market in Kumase in 1817.<sup>2</sup> And Polly Hill agrees that this (i. e. Kumase daily market) was a rather rare institution.<sup>3</sup> The daily market at Obuase also started as a well organized market during the second decade of the twentieth century to serve the needs of the urbanized miners of the town.

The distinctive feature of the daily markets was their relatively high proportion of full time vendors. In the case of the Kumase market the full time vendors were known as the Dwebisofuo i. e. the retailers of indigenous commodities, such as salt, meat, shea butter, yam, etc. Because of the size of the population which this market served, the Dwebisofuo were many.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Hill, Polly; *op. cit.* p. 298.

2. Bowdich, T. E., Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashanti  
p. 324.

3. Hill, P., *op. cit.* p. 308.

4. When the Kumase market was constructed about 900 stalls were created beside those who sold on open tables.

Functionally the daily markets were not distinct from the periodic markets. Both of them have been engaged in the selling of local foodstuffs and rural industrial products as their main business.

Periodic markets evolved into daily markets. As settlements grew larger and larger their periodic markets were gradually transformed into daily markets. Factors that might hinder the development of periodic markets into daily markets are the following: relatively low population densities, long distances between settlements and vigorously competing periodic markets.

The majority of Asante markets were of the periodic variety. Periodic markets could be defined as those that had fixed market days, during which the volume and variety of goods sold were noticeably much greater than on other days. That is to say, there were fixed market days within the week whereas the other days were dormant.

In the big settlements such as Mampon, Bekwai and Konongo, their periodic markets showed some level of activity

everyday. Nevertheless they could not be regarded as daily markets because these daily activities could not be compared with the daily activities of say the Obuase market. Secondly, they have fixed market days during which marketing activities appeared reactivated.

Periodicity of markets was not limited only to Asante, it was seen throughout West Africa. Polly Hill<sup>1</sup> claims that the standard market week was nearly always of three, four, five, six, seven or eight days in length. This was arranged such that all the periodic markets in a locality were based on the same market cycle. Hodder<sup>2</sup> also claims that in Ghana seven, three, five and six days market periodicity could be found. Asante fell within the seven-day market week.

In trying to account for the preponderance of periodicity of markets in Ghana van Apeldoorn<sup>3</sup> summarizes the various arguments that have been put forth by writers on this topic.

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1. Hill, P., *op. cit.* p. 301

2. Hodder, B. W., "Periodicity And Daily Markets in West Africa" Meillassoux & Forde; *op. cit.* 345.

3. Apeldoorn, G. J. van., *op. cit.* pp. 10-11.

The present author thinks that Polly Hill's argument that "The basic reason for periodicity of West African Markets is that most local produce is brought to market by those who have had a hand in producing or processing it;"<sup>1</sup> may be the best explanation. Periodicity did not only favour the producer/seller; it was also in the interest of the consumer, because, for the latter, periodic markets reduced the distance he had to travel to obtain certain items that could not be offered to him in the same place on a permanent basis.

Like periodic markets elsewhere in Ghana or West Africa, the rural markets in Asante operated on a system that can be described as a ring system.<sup>2</sup> Within each ring, markets occurred in such a way that, in most cases, each market took place on a day on which it was the only market operating within the ring. For example, in the Mampon ring there were six big periodic markets each with its market day. The markets were Adwera with Monday as its market day, Agona - Tuesday,

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1. Quoted by Hodder, B. W., "Periodicity and Daily Markets in West Africa" Meillassoux & Forde op.cit. p. 348.
  2. Idem. "The Yoruba Rural Markets" in Markets In Africa Edit. Bohannon & Dalton p. 101.

Mampon - Wednesday, Nsuta - Thursday, Kofiase - Friday and Efidwaase - Sunday. Again in the small Ntonso ring the market days were staggered among the markets thus: Monday - Adangomase, Tuesday - Asonomaso, Wednesday - Kassiem, Thursday - Ntonso, Friday - Safo and Sunday - Kona (Fig. 12.6). These rings were by no means self-contained, for each rural market ring impinged upon and was itself impinged upon by adjacent market rings. For example, the Mamponten ring which lay south of the Ntonso ring with the following markets and their days: Monday - Adweratia, Tuesday - Aboaso, Wednesday - Dumanafa, Thursday - Ankaase, Friday - Fawoade and Sunday - Mamponten (Fig. 12.6) had this conflict with the former ring. For example, Ntonso which lay half-way between the two Sunday markets of Kona and Mamponten had some of its buyers and sellers attending the Kona market and others going to the Mamponten market. This reduced the possible number of people who could attend market if there were only one market in the area.

## NTONSO, MAMPONTEN PERIODIC MARKET RINGS

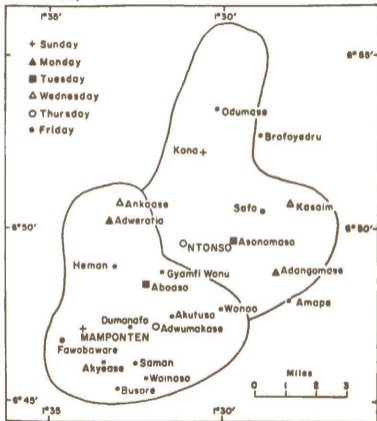


FIG. 12.6

### A Case Study of Mampon Market

For the internal market operation a case study was made of the Mampon market. The information concerning the survey was collected from informants from Mampon (121, 42, 31). Mampon market was an old market whose beginnings date back to early nineteenth century. Like all other markets in Asante, it collapsed with the fall of Asante politico-economic supremacy. The contemporary market was revived in the 1920s when Mampon became a cocoa collecting centre with Wednesday as its market day. The market was built near the chief's palace at the heart of the settlement perhaps for protection. For the sake of accessibility the market was built close to Kumase-Tamale road (Fig. 12, 7).

The participants were mainly women because they were more concerned in the rural market than men. Hodder<sup>1</sup> claims that rarely would the percentage of male traders in a rural market exceed five. The only exception was during the kola season when the male population at the market increased.

1. Hodder, B. W., "The Yoruba Rural Market" ed. Bohannon & Dalton, o.p. cit. p. 110.



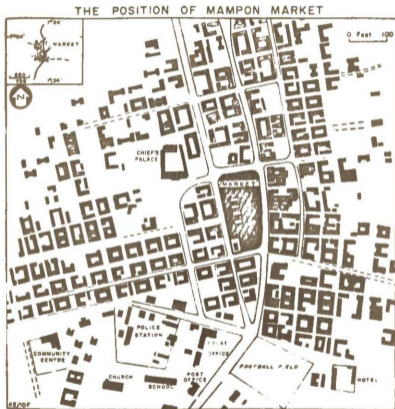


FIG. 12 7

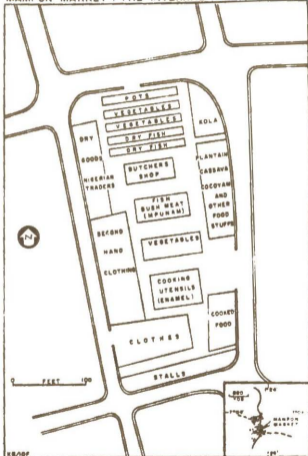
Trade at the market appeared brisk during the kola season, in the months of September to early November, because the local buyers could buy many things after selling their kola to the kola merchants.

Participants could be grouped into sellers and buyers. The majority of the sellers were casual traders who earned their living by other means, mainly farming. Farmers brought to the market their surplus foodstuffs to sell. Craftmakers also came to the market to sell their products. Other full time traders such as Yoruba traders came from Kumase and Mampon itself to sell their European manufactured goods to buyers.

Because of the size of the market it attracted traders from distant places. Buyers came to purchase goods especially foodstuffs (and meat) in large quantities to sell at places like Kumase, Tamale, Wa, Accra, Cape Coast and Takoradi. In a way, therefore, Mampon market acted as wholesale for the middlemen who purchased food in bulk to retail in the Urban centres mentioned above.

Within the market itself commodities were grouped according to their kind (Fig. 12.8). The commodities could be

## MAMPON MARKET : THE INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS



CB/HP  
Source: Field Work

FIG. 12 B

grouped broadly into imported and local goods. Among the imported goods were cloths, shoes, farm implements, drugs and tinned foods. Included in the local goods were foodstuffs such as yams, plantains, cocoyam; meat and fish; locally manufacturers goods such as mats, soap and pots. Mention must also be made of the Yoruba traders who sold goods that could be designated dry goods or nniema-nniema<sup>1</sup>.

Most of the commodities which were sold at the market did not originate from Mampon itself but from outside, sometimes outside Mampon traditional area.

Commodities	Place of Origin
<u>Foodstuffs:</u>	
Yams	Amantin, Adwera, Atebubu, Kwame Danso
Cocoyam	Adidwan, Kofiase, Benin, Mampon, Penten, Nintim, Mprim, Bosofuo etc.
Plantain	As under Cocoyam
Corn	Sekyedomase, Mampon, Addidwan, Adwera.
Vegetables	Mampon, Bosofuo, Daman, Bonkron
<u>Fruits</u>	
Pineapples	Krobo, Nyinampon, Assam, Nintin, Aframsa, Penten.
Oranges	Krobo, Nyinampon, Bresua.
Kola	Krobo, Penten, Botoku, Bresua.

1. McCall, D.F., "The Koforidua Market" in Bohannon and Dalton op.cit. Chapter 27.

Commodities	Place of Origin
<u>Fish/Meat</u>	
Fish	Cape Coast, Accra, Elmina, Yagyi
Bush Meat	Adwera, Atebubu, Amantin
Pots	Apaah, Brenhoma, Mo, Ahwiaa, Mpraeso.
<u>Northern Goods</u>	
Shea Butter, Smock, <u>Dawadawa, Oil</u>	Salaga, Tamale, Bolgatanga, Bawku
European Manufactured Goods	Kumase, Mampon

The above table shows the extent of the sphere of influence of Mampon market as far back as 1945.

By 1945, law and order was maintained at the market by the Nhenkwaa (i. e. Royal attendants) from the chief's Court. If someone misbehaved he was quickly arrested by these attendants and sent to the palace where the Gyaasehene (the Chief of the Royal Household) would punish the offender. The punishment was often a fine which was promptly paid. It was the duty of the same attendants to collect market tolls from sellers. Those who sold foodstuffs and meat paid in kind while those who sold

European manufactured goods as well as crafts had to pay in cash ranging from three pence to six pence. The Mampon market was typical of markets in Asante.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

POSTSCRIPT

The year 1945 which marks the end of this work is significant because during that time the broad patterns of contemporary human geography of Asante had been sketched. At the same time there had begun new determinants of change, such as large scale emigration from the old areas to new cocoa areas, which had largely accounted for a change in the contemporary population distribution pattern (Fig. 13. 1). Apart from this there has not been any significant change, but rather a continuing trend in some of the major aspects of cultural geography of the area.

The change in the attitude of the people towards their environment which became apparent with the introduction of the British rule and christianity went a long way to revolutionize some aspects of their socio-economic life. This was especially seen in the spread of cocoa. The prevailing attitude of the people is not likely to change, (even political independence could not change it) unless there is a social revolution which should be

**POPULATION DENSITY 1970**  
(USING ISOPLETHS)





as profound as the one initiated by the colonial rule,

The backbone of the economy of Asante and, for that matter, the whole country has been commercial agriculture, that is to say the cocoa growing industry. Today it is still the dominant economic activity (Fig. 13.2) which dictates the tempo of other economic activities. For example, the commercial nature of Kumase has been growing as a result of the growing acreages of cocoa farms in Asante. In the forest areas all other economic activities are subordinate to the cultivation of cocoa and even the Kente weaving industry has not been able to be on its own. Government's attempts to encourage the people to diversify the economy by cultivating other cash crops such as the palm tree, kola, pine apples etc. all of which could form the basis of new local industries have not met with any significant success. At the same time food production has not grown with the growing acreages of cocoa farms and the human population, thus giving rise to food shortages. Despite this experience the Afram plains are still sparsely populated and starkly under-utilized except the northern fringes of the Agogo traditional area,



where there have been some cocoa farms but not food farms. The Adwera-Sekodumase section of the savanna has since 1945 been producing large quantities of maize, being the chief maize producing area in Asante today. The maize is produced for commercial purposes because the Asante are by nature not maize eaters. Tobacco production has also been on the increase in this area, where the tobacco produced find ready market in the tobacco companies.

There have been some attempts to mechanize farming in the northern fringes of Asante, i.e. the savanna areas - especially Adwera area. But the drive towards mechanization has been rather slow, except on a few foreign owned farms such as the Adwera Farm Ltd.<sup>1</sup> The failure on the indigenous farms has been due to several factors, the most important being: the costs of using machines such as tractors for ploughing and fertilizers on the farms have been prohibitive for the peasant farmers. Secondly, social factors such as illiteracy have played a no mean role in this failure. This leads on to the last factor, namely that the work of the Agricultural Extension

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1. This farm is an American concern.

Officers has been rather too piecemeal to have any marked effect on the traditional system of farming.

Settlements and roads on the other hand have seen a lot of improvement. Since 1945 many settlements in the core area have seen tremendous growth. Kumase, Mampon, Bekwai, Obuase, Agogo, Tepa, Ofeso to mention only a few may be used as examples of the growing phenomenon of settlements. Within the settlements one could see better and more sophisticated houses and quarters. Mention must be made of Kumase which has acted as a catalyst for the evolution of the cultural geography of Asante.

But the development of Asante has not been even throughout the territory. It could, therefore, be divided into socio-economic regions (Fig. 13.3) namely, the core area, the Afram plains and the cocoa areas of Western and Southern Asante.

There has been concentration of efforts in the core area of Asante and one may be right to suggest that this concen-

SOCIO-ECONOMIC REGIONS OF ASANTE

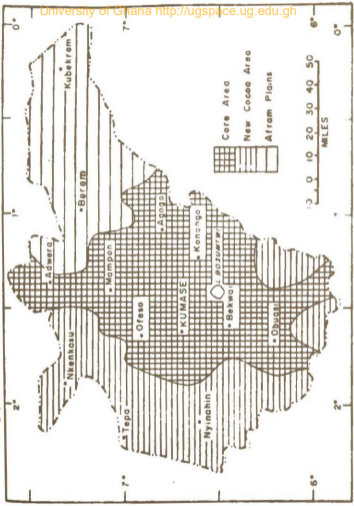


FIG. 13.3

tration has been the outcome of geographical inertia<sup>1</sup>. The area contains the hub of socio-economic life of the Asante: all the important settlements, all the good roads, the mature cocoa farms, the highest population concentration, and the like. Indeed, the spread of cocoa growing industry outside this area into Western Asante has only benefited the core area in terms of economic development since the cocoa farmers do not regard their cocoa villages as their permanent homes; therefore, the money they obtain from the farms is sent to the core area to the disadvantage of the pioneer cocoa areas<sup>2</sup>.

Thus Western and Southern Asante may be described as new cocoa areas, where there has been a tremendous change in the agricultural environment. These areas are yet to see much economic development of the order of the core area of Asante. This may only happen when there occurs a revolution in the thinking of the Asante farmers, who are traditionally tied

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1. Boateng, K., "Geographical Inertia in a Traditional Core Area in Ghana" A paper presented to E. African Universities Soc. Science Conf. Dar es Salaam 1970.
  2. Boateng, K., "Rural Settlement in Asante: A Reflection of Economic Growth" Paper presented to First Commonwealth West African Regional Geographers Conference 1970.

to their homes. At present the new cocoa villages do not have cemeteries; one important social factor which denotes that these settlements are only temporary ones. Indeed, these areas are problem areas whose development depends on the change of attitude of the Asante farmers who inhabit these formerly empty areas.

The last problem area is the section of the Afram plains which falls within the Asante territory. This area has been a negative area in terms of economic development until now. It lacks roads, settlements and adequate human population. It appears that it holds a great potential if this would be tapped but one major problem has been inaccessibility. Nevertheless, one cannot be sure that if the place is opened people from the core area would move there to develop it economically; maybe it would draw some population if the area is made accessible. Now that the Asante farmer is learning gradually to diversify agriculture, the savanna of the Afram plains may be utilized, but this may be a slow process. Furthermore, it would appear that the future of this area would depend on the reappraisal of

the resources of the area. With the Volta Lake, cattle rearing on a large scale could be undertaken in the savanna areas of the plains, if the owners of the land (Asante) would be encouraged to undertake animal rearing.

From all that has gone before, it is clear that the spatial inequalities in development in Asante that developed prior to 1945, the terminal date for this study, will persist in the foreseeable future. Any attempt to alter this spatial pattern will have to reckon with the very way in which the pattern evolved. The present determinants of a spatial pattern and of spatial relationships, which would have evolved through time, must guide any effort to forecast the future and, therefore, any strategy to shape a future pattern.



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	<u>Akwaboa Stool History</u>	" " " 17
	<u>Ohwim Stool History</u>	" " " 18
	<u>Antoa Stool History</u>	" " " 34
	<u>Kokofu Stool History</u>	" " " 44
	<u>Obogu Stool History</u>	" " " 55
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	<u>Odumase Stool History</u>	" " " 63
	<u>Mamponten Stool History</u>	" " " 64
	<u>Amakom Stool History</u>	" " " 77
	<u>Fumesua Stool History</u>	" " " 85
	<u>Adanse Paramount Stool History</u>	" " " 89
	<u>Hiawu Stool History</u>	" " " 97
	<u>Kronko Stool History</u>	" " " 100
	<u>Sekodumase Stool History</u>	" " " 115
	<u>Toase Stool History</u>	" " " 128
	<u>Nkwantakese Stool History</u>	" " " 136
	<u>Atwima Agogo Stool History</u>	" " " 135

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<u>Ampatame Stool History</u>	I. A. S. Acc. No.	AS.	144
<u>Bonwire Stool History</u>	"	"	" 148
<u>Adankragya Stool History</u>	"	"	" 153
<u>Hia Stool History</u>	"	"	" 154
<u>Asonomaso Stool History</u>	"	"	" 155
<u>Gyamfi-Wonoo Stool History</u>	"	"	" 162
<u>Ntonso Stool History</u>	"	"	" 171
<u>Ahensan Stool History</u>	"	"	" 164

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APPENDIX 1

NETWORK ANALYSIS

1924 NETWORK

9 (i) Alpha Index =  $\frac{e - V + P}{\frac{V(V - 17) - (V - 1)}{2}}$  where e is no. of edges  
V is no. of vertices  
P no. of sub-graphs.

$$= \frac{(38 - 33) + 1}{\frac{33(33 - 1) - (33 - 1)}{2}} \quad (e = 38) \\ (V = 33)$$

$$= \frac{6}{\frac{1056 - 32}{2}}$$

$$= \frac{6}{528 - 32}$$

$$= \frac{6}{496}$$

$$= \frac{0.01209}{\underline{0.0121}} \quad \text{or} \quad \underline{1.21\%}$$

(ii) Gamma Index =  $\frac{V - e}{\frac{V(V - 17)}{2}}$  e is edges  
v is vertices

$$= \frac{38 - 66}{\frac{33(33 - 1)}{2}}$$

$$= \frac{38}{528}$$

$$= 0.07197$$

$$\underline{0.0719} \quad \text{or} \quad \underline{7.2\%}$$

$$\text{Beta Index} = \frac{e}{v} \quad \begin{array}{l} e \text{ is edges} \\ v \text{ is vertices} \end{array}$$

$$= \frac{38}{33}$$

$$= \underline{1.1515}$$

$$\text{'Pi' Index} = \frac{\text{Total mileage}}{\text{network's diameter}} = \frac{332}{127}$$

$$= \underline{2.5}$$

#### 1936 NETWORK

$$(i) \text{ Alpha Index} = \frac{(66 - 51) + 1}{\frac{51(51 - 1) - (51 - 1)}{2}} \quad \begin{array}{l} (e = 66) \\ (v = 51) \end{array}$$

$$= \frac{16}{\frac{2550 - 50}{2}}$$

$$= \frac{16}{1275 - 50}$$

$$= \frac{16}{1225}$$

$$= 0.01306$$

$$= \underline{0.0131} \quad \text{or} \quad \underline{1.31\%}$$

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$$\begin{aligned} \text{(ii) Beta Index} &= \frac{128}{95} \\ &= \underline{1.347} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(iii) Gamma Index} &= \frac{128}{\frac{95(95-1)}{2}} \\ &= \frac{128}{\frac{8930}{2}} \\ &= \frac{128}{4465} \\ &= 0.0286 \\ &= \underline{0.029} \quad \text{or} \quad \underline{2.9\%} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{'P1' Index} &= \frac{1096}{127} \\ &= \underline{8.5} \end{aligned}$$

$$(ii) \text{ Gamma Index} = \frac{66}{51(51+1)} \text{ http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh}$$

$$= \frac{66}{1275}$$

$$= 0.5176$$

$$= \underline{0.518} \quad \text{or} \quad \underline{5.2\%}$$

$$(iii) \text{ Beta Index} = \frac{66}{51}$$

$$= 1.29411$$

$$= \underline{1.2941}$$

$$(iv) \text{ 'Pi' Index} = \frac{798}{127}$$

$$= \underline{6.28}$$

#### 1945 NETWORK

$$(i) \text{ Alpha Index} = \frac{(128 - 95) + 1}{95(95 - 1) - (95 - 1)} \quad \begin{matrix} (e = 128) \\ (v = 95) \end{matrix}$$

$$= \frac{33}{8930 - 94}$$

$$= \frac{33}{4465 - 94}$$

$$= \frac{33}{4371}$$

$$= 0.0075 = \underline{\underline{0.008}} = \underline{\underline{0.8\%}}$$

APPENDIX IINAMES OF INFORMANTS - ORAL TRADITION

Code No.	Name	Station	Status
01	Barima Owusu-Ansah	Kumase	Cultural Advisor - National Cultural Centre - Kumase
02	Barima Yaw Sarhene	Kumase	An elder of the Asante Royal House - Uncle of Otumfuo Opoku Ware II
03	Nana Prempeh	Antoa (Kwabere)	An elder of Antoa near Kumase.
04	Opanin Abu Beker	Fomena	An elder of Benkumhene Fomena
05	Opanin Bio	Fomena	An elder
06	Nana Apia-Dankwa	Edubiase (Adanse)1	Ex-Adubiase Hene (Ex-Chief)
07	Nana Kwadwo Boateng	Minedoma (Adanse)	Chief of Minedoma
08	Osei Kwaku	Kaase (Kwabere)	A grandson of Kaase Stool
09	Opanin Akyampon	Asaman (Lake side)	Abontendomhene of Asaman.
10	Opanin Asare-Bediako	"	Elder of the Stool
11	Kwabena Yamoah	Kassem (Kwabere)	Oyokohene of Kassem
12	Kyeame Kwame Gyantse	Kaase	A Kaase Linguist
13	Nana Buama Kwabi II	Beposo (Sakyere)	Ex-chief of Beposo

14	Kyeame Kwabena Gyamra	Asankare (Asante- Akyem)	A linguist
15	Opanin Atenka	Atwoma	An elder
16	Madam Amma Ampon	Gyamfi- Wonoo (Kwabere)	From Royal House
17	Opanin Akwasi Wusu	Ahensan (Kumase)	An elder
18	Otomfuo Kofi Donkor	Fumesua	An old Blacksmith
19	Okyeame Yaw Dabo	Kwaman (Sekyere)	A linguist
20	Eno Akosua Buo	Ntonso (Kwabere)	An Oyoko royal of Dwaben.
21	Osei Bekwai	Ntonso	An elder
22	Kwaku Baa	Asaman (Sekyere)	Stool Carrier
23	Nana Yaw Antobre	Bonwere	An old Weaver
24	Nana Opon Mensa-Ababio	Safo	Ex-chief
25	Opanin Kwabena Pon	Asonomaso	A son of Asonomaso Stool
26	Nana Kwakwa III	"	Ex-chief
27	Obaa Panin Aponsaa II	Safo	Queen Mother Safo/Asonomaso
28	Nana Akwasi Mensa	Safo	Ex-Kontihene of Safo
29	Opanin Kwame Panin	Asonomaso	Elder
30	Nana Owusu-Agyeman	Mamponen	Ex-cheif

31	Mr Kwate	Mampon	A son of Botaare-Royal House Mampon
32	Mr. Kobina Kessie	Kumase	A Lawyer
33	Opanin Oben-Amoako	Agogo (Asante-Akyem)	An elder
34	Nana	Mampon	Ex-Akwamuhene Mampon
35	Opanin Kofi Boaten	Ofeso	An elder
36	Opanin Kwame Minta	Akomadan	An old farmer
37	Agya Kofi Takyi	Nkenkasu/ Adwumakase Kese	An old cocoa farmer
38	Kwame Agyei	Efidwaase	An elder
39	Madam Adwoa Adai	Efidwaase	An old cocoa farmer
40	Opanin Kwame Ofori	Toase	An elder
41	Opanin Sei-Akwasi	Mampon-Akrofosu	An elder
42	Madam Kyew	Mampon	An old woman
43	Eno Yaa Adamu	Bompata	An elderly woman
44	Nana Akwaboahene	Kumase	Owner of Ahafo land
45	Nana Hiawuhene	Kumase	Owner of Ahafo land
46	Nana Hia-bene	Kumase	Owner of Ahafo land
47	Kramo Dapaa	Apatriapa	An elder
48	Opanin Yaw Boaten	Sekyeri	Chief linguist



49	Opanin Amoiten	Agona	An elder
50	Agya Yaw Nimo	Abipoa	An elder
51	Opanin Kwadwo Berko	Agona	An elder
52	Nana Kwabena Yeboa	Apaá	An old cocoa farmer
53	Mr. Osei Bonsu	Gyamaase	An elder
54	Nana Brefo-Kese	Gyamaase	Ex-chief of Gyamaase
55	Opanin Akwasi Adai	Abira	An elder
56	Opanin Yaw Mensuo	Aboaso	An old cocoa broker
57	Opanin Yaw Nsia	Pankrono	a Carver
58	Agya Kwame Karkari	Pramso	Chief's linguist
59	Opanin Kwadwo Apea	Dwaso	An elder
60	Opanin Kofe Hemen	Odumase	An elder
61	Nana Kwadwo Adai	Dwaben	Gyaasewahene
62	Agya Dapaa	Patriensa	A linguist
63	Agya Kofi Manu	Tepa (Ahafo-Ano)	An elder
64	Yaw Fosuhene	Abofuo	An elder
65	Nana Bremanhene	Breman Kumase	Chief of Breman
66	Nana Kwaku Pepra	Adwera	Chief of Adwera
67	Nana Boaten Ababio	Adwera	Ex-chief of Adwera
68	Mr. Forson	Kumawu	State Secretary

69	Opanin Mensa Kofi	Kentendrono	An elder
70	Opanin Kwaku Agyeibi	New Asonomaso	The Odikro of Asonomaso
71	Akwasi Frempon	Sakorawonoo	An elder
72	Kwadwo Fodwo	Adangomase	An elder
73	Kwame Amankwaa	Kona	Adinkra cloth maker
74	Nana Kwaku Datano	Dowakwae Dwaben	Odikro of Dowakwae
75	Nana Akwasi Ten	Drobonso	Old hunter
76	Agya Anowuo	Nkudwua	Old hunter
77	Nana Kofi Brobe	Tano Dumase	Elder of Dumase Tano cult
78	Obaapanin Durowaa	Efidwaase	Old woman
79	Mr. I. K. Agyeman	Kumase	Formerly of Chieftaincy Secretariat
80	Nana Akwasi Ampadu	Abrokyere	Elder
81	Agya Efa	Dompoase	Elder
82	Osei Akwasi	Bekwai	An elder of the Chief's Court
83	Kofi Pepra	Gyakobu	Elder
84	Barima Andoh	Bekwai	Elder
85	Kwaku Poku	Seniagya	A farmer
86	Malam Sulemana	Aboaso	Zarikin Zongo Aboaso
87	Agya Amoapim	Biemso	A member of the founders of the Village

88	Opanin Adokwaabo	Bimso	Member of the founders of the village
89	Mr. Du-Agyei	Bompata	Headteacher of Kumawu
90	Osei Yaw	Ofeso	farmer
91	Kwadwo Wae	Nkenkasu	farmer
92	Yaw Ntim	Adiempra	farmer
93	Agya Aboaa	Adanse Kokobra	farmer
94	Mr. Quarshie	Efidwaase Cocoa Station	Field Assistant
95	Mr. Yeboa Kodie	Mampon Cocoa Station	Drawing Office Assistant
96	Mr. Gyamfi	Gyamaase Cocoa Station	Regional Cocoa Officer
97	Opanin Kwaku Abebrese	Mampon	A prince of Mampon Stool
98	Mr. Akosa	Mampon	Storekeeper
99	Mr. Abosi	Konongo	Storekeeper
100	Nana Yaw Boateng	Kumase	Storekeeper
101	Kofi Nkora	Kumase	Storekeeper
102	Mr. Adu-Kye	Bekwai	Storekeeper
103	Adum Asamoah	Kumase	Chief Adum Royal Musoleum

APPENDIX III  
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HOLDINGS OF MIGRANT FARMERS AT KWAGYANSO  
NEAR KUNSU, AHAFO-ANO

<u>Name</u>	<u>Home Town</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Nana Akwasi Akohene	Asonomaso	62
Kofi Ten	Asonomaso	31
Kwaku Ntiama	Asonomaso	40
Kwame Ti	Asonomaso	13
Akwasi Mensa (Opia)	Asonomaso	28
Afia Buo	Asonomaso	10
Kwadwo Pepra	Safo	20
Eno Adwoa Kwatemala	Safo	30
Agya Akyampon	Fumesua	28
Akwasi Adai	Fumesua	25
Opanin Ntinanku	Fumesua	55
Kofi Kyei	Safo	15
Nana Akwasi Mensah	Safo	40
Kwame Tenten	Safo	30
Agya Duro	Kassem	44
Akwasi Apea	Kassem	25

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Kwadwo Boadu	Kassem	32
Agya Aboaa	Kokobra	33
Kwaku Buo	Kokobra	31
Kwadwo Tenkoran	Safo	18

