

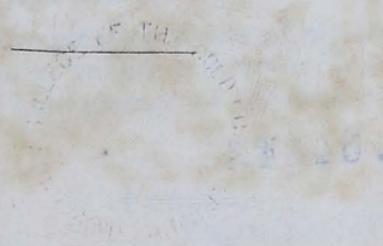
A BRIEF HISTORY  
OF THE  
DAGBAMBA PEOPLE

BY

Emmanuel Forster Tamakloe,  
*Ex 3rd Class Clerk.*

Respectfully Dedicated to

Captain Cecil Hamilton Armitage,  
*Late Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories.*



GOLD COAST:

Printed at the Government Printing Office,  
Accra.

—  
1931.

## THE FRONTISPIECE.

My dearest friends in the Northern Territories.

SIRS,

The brief history of the Dagbambas as written down by me, contains the plain facts as narrated to me by the traditionists. These traditionists, you know, are the drummers to the kings, and to all the kindred chiefs of Dagbon. These men have no other occupation than drumming, reciting, and extolling the deeds of the former kings and chiefs, with much flattery, by means of which they obtain their substance and living. But, perhaps, one would ask me: How do you manage to get such ample informations from them? My answer would be that to use such frightening and bullying words as "My friend; Don't you know who I am?" to which we have probably been accustomed, in a mistaken belief that, by such means, we shall be respected, is an absurdity. We can never win the affection and confidence of foreign peoples, save we are conversant, liberal, kind, unbullying, affable, patient and neither freinds nor foes to anyone. By the help of such qualities we shall hope for something worth knowing."

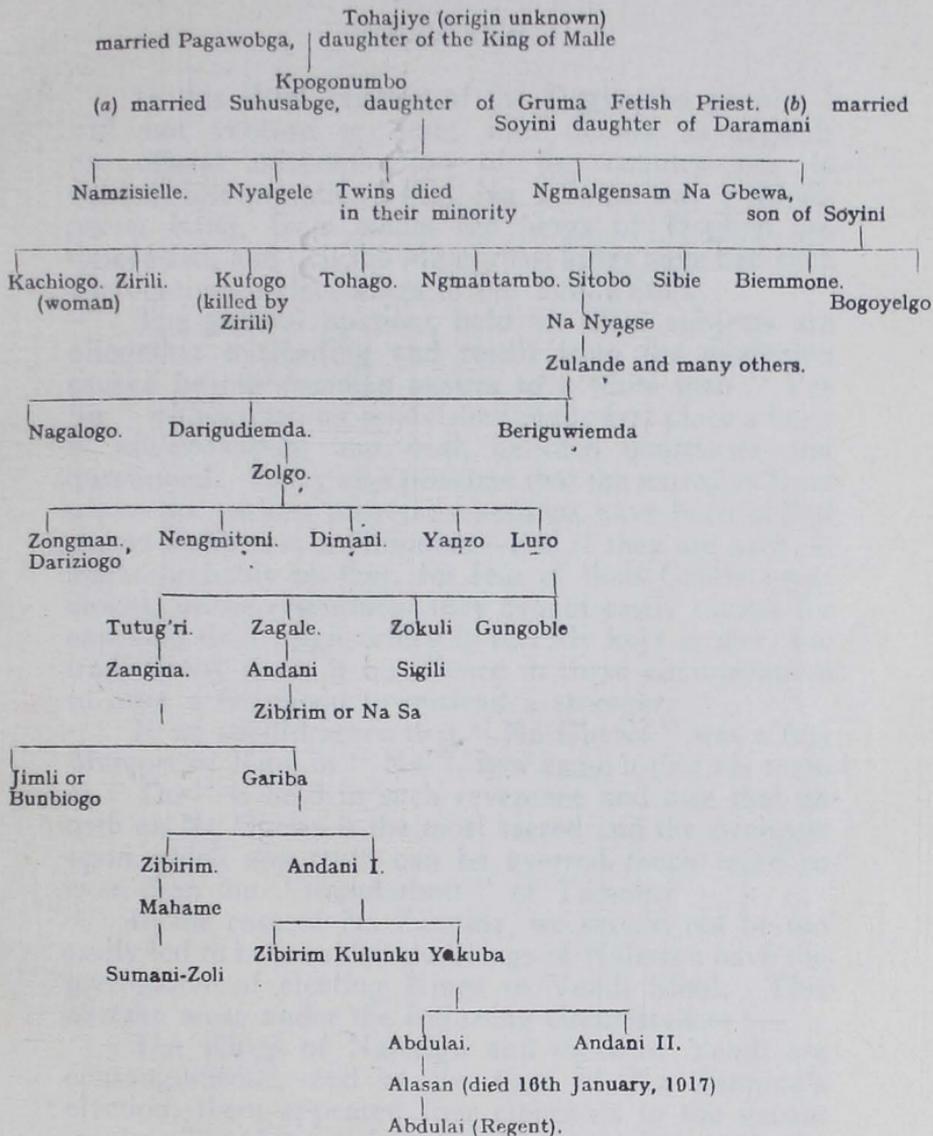
To eschew pedantry and egotism which would have created criticism, the history is charily written, and no "big" English words have been applied to render my writings meaningless and chaotic.

It will be more pleasing if any of my friends in the Northern Territories would endeavour to collect more materials for the enlargement of this first edition.

I remain,  
Yours faithfully,

EML. FORSTER TAMAKLOE,  
*Ex-3rd Class Clerk.*

## GENEALOGY OF THE KINGS OF THE DAGBAMBA PEOPLE.



## PREFACE.

In this Brief History of the Dagbamba people, I will not venture to enter into details as regards the official misnomination of the country nor to dubious interpretations that Na Gbewa was a Mamprussi King, from whom the kings of Dagbon are descended, and that the Mamprussi kings have had such prerogative to elect kings to the Yendi Stool.

The general opinions held on these subjects are altogether misleading and result from the confusion caused by our common answer to a white man "Yes Sir" without having established in the first place a basis of understanding and truth between questioner and questioned. I may also presume that the narrators from whom the various misrepresentations have been culled are no competent traditionists—and if they are such, it might probably be that, for fear of their Chiefs paramount, whose resentment they cannot easily escape for exposing their origin which is secretly kept in awe, the traditionists deem it no offence in these circumstances to utter a falsehood to mislead a stranger.

If we should agree that "Na Gbewa" was a first Mamprussi King or "Na", how came it that his tomb at "Du" is held in such reverence and awe that an oath on Na Gbewa is the most sacred and the strongest upon which any truth can be averred much more so even than the "thunderbolt" of Tamale?

In the case of Na Zangina, we should not be too easily led to believe that the Kings of Nalerigu have the prerogative of electing Kings to Yendi Stool. This mistake arose under the following circumstances:—

The Kings of Nalerigu and those of Yendi are consanguineous, and at the time of Na Zangina's election, there appeared four claimants to the vacant stool. The king-makers, and the majority of the elders and the commons were in favour of Zangina, who was the youngest of them; but foreseeing the bloodshed which would ensue on their choice and in order to prevent this, they clandestinely prevailed on the King of Nalerigu to act as an arbitrator, but in favour of the one they wanted, to wit Zangina.

With much flattery and guile, they persuaded the other three claimants to defer their claims to him, but Zangina to hold his peace. The proceedings at the subsequent meeting were very funny, as the King of Nalerigu, owing to the different titles and sobriquets of the claimants, had confirmed the election of Zangina to the Stool without any further dispute.

The history of the Dagbambas has been so effected by that of Kagbanye,\* and the Zabarmas in the Grunshi country, that its elucidation has taken up a very considerable portion of my work. How far this has been satisfactory, I must leave the reader to judge.

EML. FORSTER TAMAKLOE.

---

\* That is Gonia people.

## PREFATORY NOTES.

The author of this little work had, in his early days, been employed as an Interpreter in Kete Krachi, Togoland, for nearly ten years (1897-1907) where he had the opportunity of collecting information on the "Emigration of the Kagbanye people" for Julius Graf von Zech, and the histories of the Dagbambas, Moshis and the Hausas for Adam Mischlich. But as these histories had been written down by an Hausa Mallam, there had been a formidable amount of discrepancy and many defects in the writings of that Mallam who only gathered his information from the wandering Dagbambas and so forth.

In 1910, the author was employed in the Northern Territories Administration as a Census Clerk in the Eastern and Western Dagbon where he had the chance of studying that language. After some investigations into the traditions of the Dagbamba people, his interest was further stimulated by a perusal of "Morals and Manners of the Dagombas" by Major R. A. Irvine, C.M.G., which led him to make an accurate research for the publication of the present volume. But the emergencies of the service resulted in the author being unexpectedly transferred to Tumu as a District Clerk, 1912, and his being transferred again 1916 to Yendi where the work has been compared and corrected by the Chief Drummer; and owing to lack of time, this history is briefly written in the most accepted opinion and authority of the traditionists in Yendi. It remains with the author to render his sincere indebtedness to Captain Cecil Hamilton Armitage, C.M.G., D.S.O., the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, to whom this work is respectfully dedicated, for the interest he took in the work and the arrangements he kindly made for the publication of same.

EML. FORSTER TAMAKLOE.

Names of Kings.	Duration of Reign (years.)	From. To.
King Nyagse ... ..	16	1416-1432
King Zulande ... ..	10	1432-1442
King Beriguwiemda ... ..	12	1442-1454
King Beriguwiemda ... ..	15	1454-1469
King Zolgo ... ..	17	1469-1486
King Zongman ... ..	20	1486-1506
King Nengmitoni ... ..	8	1506-1514
King Dimani ... ..	13	1514-1527
King Yanzo ... ..	16	1527-1543
King Dariziogo ... ..	11	1543-1554
King Luro ... ..	16	1554-1570
King Tutugri ... ..	19	1570-1589
King Zagale ... ..	20	1589-1609
King Zokuli ... ..	18	1609-1627
King Gungoble ... ..	21	1627-1648
King Zangina ... ..	29	1648-1677
King Andani Sigili ... ..	10	1677-1687
King Jimli ... ..	13	1687-1700
King Gariba ... ..	20	1700-1720
King Zibirim Na-Sa ... ..	15	1720-1735
King Zibirim ... ..	14	1735-1749
King Mahame ... ..	16	1749-1765
King Sumani ... ..	18	1765-1783
King Andani I. ... ..	23	1783-1806
King Zibirim Kulunku ... ..	18	1806-1824
King Yakuba ... ..	25	1824-1849
King Abdulai ... ..	27	1849-1876
King Andani II ... ..	23	1876-1899
King Alasan ... ..	18	1899-(1917 Jan., 16).
King Abdulai II ... ..	Regent—August, 1917	

## CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

The ancestors of the Dagbambas—The forefathers of the Kings of Dagbon—Usurpation of the paramount fetish priesthood by Kpogonumbo—Emigration of Na Gbewa into Bawku District and his residency in Pusugu—Na Gbewa's death—His eldest son Zirili's short reign—Quarrel between the three surviving sons of Na Gbewa—Foundation of Nalerigu, capital town of Mamprussi—Sitobo's residency in Gambaga and in Nabare. His travel to Bagale. Page 21.

## CHAPTER II.

Conquest of Dagbon by Na Nyagse in or about the year 1416 A.D.—Building of Na-Ya (Yendi)—His death—Zulande succeeds his father Na Nyagse—Nagalogo's expedition and his death in Murugu—Darigudiemda's expedition into Wongara and his death in Gbungburi. Page 24.

## CHAPTER III.

Reign of Dariziogo—Emigration and settlement of the Ngbanye (Gonja) people under the leadership of Prince Sumaila Jakpa—Dagbamba people dispossessed of Tampruma—Death of Dariziogo—Foundation of Kpembi (Kombi)—Jakpa's expedition into Kpamkpamba—Plantation of Naori—Fighting in Brumase and Jakpa's death. Page 31.

## CHAPTER IV.

The abandonment of the old and the building of the New Yendi in the Kpamkpamba country—The four claimants to the vacant stool of Yendi—Na Zangina's election and his embracing the Mohammedanism—The defeat of Mahamman Wari at San—Two peaceful reigns—Reign of Na Gariba and his nephew's ambition and the implore of the Ashanti King Osei Tutu to destool Gariba—The demand of 2,000 slaves by the Ashantis—Two claimants to the vacant stool—One of them inviting Wasope-wura Tikpiri to help him driving the other—Tikpiri's defeat at Kumbungu.; Page 40.

## CHAPTER V.

Na Yakuba's reign and the Civil War—Reign of Na Abdulai and the expeditions to Basari and Grunshi—Na Andani's II reign—Fighting in Kumbungu—German expedition in 1896—Disturbances as to the election of a King and the interference of Dr. Rigler, a German Resident in Sansanne Mangu. Page 51.

## CHAPTER VI.

The Zabarmas in Grunshi, 1858-1898. Page 67.

## CHAPTER VII.

Division of Dagbon—Orders of Chiefs and Prices of Chieftainships and Titles—Enstoolment ceremony—Death and Funeral Customs of a King of Dagbon. Page 84.

---

## CHAPTER I.

The ancestors of the Dagbambas—The forefathers of the Kings of Dagbon—Usurpation of the paramount Fetish priesthood by Kpogonumba—Emigration of Na Gbewa into Bawku District and his residency in Pusuga—Na Gbewa's death—His eldest son Zirili's short reign—Quarrel between the three surviving sons of Na Gbewa—Foundation of Nalerigu, capital town of Mamprussi—Sitobo's residency in Gambaga and in Nabare. His travel to Bagale.

There is an almost forgotten tradition among the present Dagbamba people that their country was formerly inhabited by giants whom they call "Kon-dor" or "Tiawomya." This extinct race of giants was said to have been of so extraordinary a stature that if hawks swooped down on their chickens, they simply had to rise up and snatch them back,—so tall and large were they that their voices when singing to their drums, could be heard some twenty miles off; their armlets\* were so large that the biggest man of modern times would easily go through them.

The Adites

It is said that, after the confusion of tongues, the tribe of Ad, who were descended from Ad, the son of Uz, the son of Aram, son of Shem, son of Noah, settled in the Province of Hadramaut, where their posterity greatly multiplied. This tribe continued to worship God; but in process of time, they fell from the worship of the true God into idolatry. God seeing this sent the prophet Heber to preach and reclaim them. But when they refused to acknowledge his mission, God sent a hot and suffocating wind, which blew seven nights and eight days together and which, entering into their nostrils passed through their bodies and destroyed them all save the very few who had believed in Heber. This tribe we learned, were of prodigious stature, the tallest of them being said to be a hundred cubits or a hundred and fifty feet in height and the least of them sixty cubits or ninety feet. This tribe, it is said, wandered towards the East and the West, settling in

---

\* It has been understood that two of such rings are kept to this day as fetishes; one in San and one at Dekpelewu (Adele).

uninhabited countries, till, they arrived in the country which is to-day called "Dagbon"; and their progeny were called "Dagbamba." The first towns built by them were said to be Gunayiri in Karaga District, and Yoggo in Toma or Safulugu District, and those of them who settled beyond the Oti river were the progenitors of the Kpamkpamba (Konkomba) races. Tradition has it that some of these giants, namely 3 men and women from Yoggo and 7 men and women from Gunayiri, emigrated again from their settlements and founded Nanuba and Adele, and others again became the progenitors of the Akebus, Bowiris etc. etc.

#### Industry

The industry of the Adites settled in this country was iron-smelting and smithing. As the iron-stones were not to be found in a limited locality, these people found it necessary to wander about from place to place, and interspersed themselves in the country between the Kulkpini River,\* the White Volta and the Nyamalga Rivers and the Kpalba country. Large kitchen middens, refuse of iron-stones, aged baobab and Kapok trees which mark the sites of one time flourishing and populous towns, are sufficient proofs that the Dagbamba country was once occupied and inhabited by some huge and industrious people. Many of them also possessed large herds of cattle. Owing to the aridity of the country many water holes had been dug in most parts of the country.

#### Religion

The Adites brought no religion with them other than paganism; perhaps the only religious customs observed by them which have been copied by their posterity are (1) Celebration of fire torches (Muharram) on the 10th or 12th October, to commemorate the day, when the Ark of Noah was said to have rested on Mount Ararat and the people in the Ark came and made fires; and (2) Dambabila and Damba (i.e. small and big Damba) or the celebration of the birth and circumcision of the Arabian prophet Muhammed.

#### Dagbon and Dagbamba

The Chiefs or the Fetish Priests amongst these settlers sat on cow skins and used the various ornamented lion and tiger† skins as their authority which they called "Ada gbon" meaning Ada's skin, hence the name of the country now corrupted to Dagbon and the inhabitants "Dagbamba." The giants gradually

\* That is the Dakar River also written Kulpene.

† (Sic) Leopard.

became extinct but their progeny continues to the present generation.

The Adites multiplied greatly and were known as the Dagbambas. They had no kings save the fetish priests who exercised more or less sway over their fellow subjects. In some cases, a headman of a compound who had plenty of followers and wealth in herds of big or small cattle, was considered the head or headman of a town. But the Head Fetish of them all was that of Yoggo, and its priest was the head of the Dagbamba people, especially when supplication was to be made to the big fetish for the welfare of the country. They remained in this deplorable condition till Na Nyagse, the great grandson of Kpogonumbo, made war against them, killed the entire body of fetish priests of the Dagbambas, and appointed his sons, brothers and nephews chiefs in their stead about the year 1416 A.D.

The Legend tells us as follows concerning the origin of the present rulers of the Dagbamba people:—

In the Wilderness of Malle—a country adjacent to Hausaland—among circular hills, about four days from Malle, there lived in a cave a certain superhuman being whose name was “Tohajiye” or the “Red Hunter.” This man was a great hunter in the wilderness. Once, in a time of drought, he came out and went into Malle and lodged with a certain old woman whom the traditionists call “Malle Pakurugu.” He asked the old woman for some water to drink. The old woman said: “Don’t you see all my children and grandchildren lying down half dead for want of Water? But listen to me” continued the old woman, “there is a lake in the suburb whence we fetch water in the dry season; but now, for a long time we have been dispossessed of the lake by a one-horned wild bull which attacks and kills everyone who dares to go there to fetch water.”\* On hearing this Tohajiye asked where was the road to the lake. Upon being shown, he took his bow and quiver, and with four calabash pots hanging from

Fetish  
Priests  
rulers of the  
country

Origin of  
the Kings  
of Dagbon

\* Owing to the scarcity of water, the whole of Malle seemed as if under a curse and there was even no laughing in any house.

his shoulders, he went into the lake to fetch water; no sooner had he dipped the calabash pots into the water than the wild bull dashed upon him so as to gore him to death. Tohajiye immediately took his bow and arrows and shot it dead; he then cut off its tail and taking the water, he returned to the old woman and informed her that he had killed the troublesome beast. The landlady doubted; but upon being shown the tail she was exceedingly glad, and instantly sent off the inmates of her compound, led in person by Tohajiye, to fetch water. The old woman then ordered drums to be made for her children which, being played upon sounded thus: "Ngun zo wayo, onkpi" meaning that One who is grown up foolish, he will die.

The revelry was kept on in the old woman's house for some days until the King of Malle heard of it and inquired what the drumming meant. The old woman was summoned to the presence of the King, and related to him in detail all that had occurred. The King then invited Tohajiye into his compound and having entertained him for two days, sent him away with valuable presents. After a further few days' stay, Tohajiye begged leave of the old woman to return to to his abode in the wilderness.

For some unknown reason some few hours after the departure of Tohajiye, the old woman sent away three of her sons\* with seeds of the pumpkin with instructions to follow Tohajiye secretly to his home and to plant the seeds there. They did so without being seen by him and on the fourth day, they arrived at his destination, and saw him enter the cave, when they forthwith planted the seeds around the edge of the souterrain and returned home. A few weeks after this, the pumpkin plants grew and stretched their branches over the bush track which led into Malle as far as the gate of the old woman's house.

Some months after the departure of Tohajiye there was fighting between the Malles and the neighbouring tribes; the Malles had been several times

Tohajiye's  
Invitation  
into the  
king's house

Seeds of  
pumpkin  
planted

Fighting  
in Malle

---

\* I.e. her grandsons.

discomfited, and were driven back with a great amount of slaughter. The king of Malle then remembered and inquired into the whereabouts of Tohajiye. The old woman was asked to send for him to come to their help. The same three grandsons of the old woman were sent. They followed the branches of the pumpkin to the cave. They called to him and informed him of the reason of their mission. He prepared himself and went along with them to the presence of the King. It was just the time when the enemy were about to attack Malle; therefore having had an interview with him, Tohajiye went out alone to meet the foe. His appearance in the field alone caused a great panic among the enemies who ran in disorder away from his presence—however, he followed them and killed plenty of them. The King of Malle was very glad and proposed to give one of his daughters to the conqueror. He therefore called and lined up his daughters for the conqueror to choose a wife for himself. To the surprise of the King and the spectators around him, Tohajiye chose as his wife, a lame, cripple and a crawling girl and carried her on his shoulders into his cave in the wilderness. This woman the traditionists call “Pagawolga, Malle Na bipunga” i.e. “Lame woman, the daughter of the King of Malle.”

Tohajiye having taken his wife into the cavern, knew her, and she gave birth to a male child which was named Kpogonumbo.\* The mother died just after his birth, and a few weeks after, his father also died. Kpogonumbo remained alone in his father's souterrain till his manhood. As to the natural description of Kpogonumbo, the traditionists differ greatly in some points; but the authorised opinion is that Kpogonumbo was of a gigantic stature; blood incessantly trickled from one of his eyes, and matter from the other;† lazy-flies accumulated in one of his nostrils and bees in the other. Kpogonumbo, although bereft of his parents during his childhood knew that he was a grandson of the King of Malle.

The legend goes on to say that on one occasion, the King of Malle again had to defend himself against the neighbouring tribes. He again asked the old woman

Birth of  
Kpogonumbo

Another  
Malle war

\* Very often called “Numbo” by the traditionists in their recitations.

† Some say Kpogonumbo had only one arm and one leg.

to send for his son-in-law Tohajiye to come to his succour. The messengers arrived at the souterrain and called out Tohajiye. Kpogonumbo came out and told them that both his father Tohajiye and his mother Pagawobga had died when he was but a child; but anything that was required of his father, he would do. He then departed with the messengers and was brought into the presence of the King. During their interview, the King said that there was war between himself and the neighbouring tribes; that he was very sorry for the loss of Kpogonumbo's parents and sympathised with him, but he was sure that he (Kpogonumbo) had inherited the intrepidity and valour of his father. Kpogonumbo then undertook to fight for his grandfather. His appearance alone caused panic amongst the enemy, and he totally routed them. After this Kpogonumbo neither stayed in Malle nor returned to his subterranean home, but went off immediately towards the West.

Kpogonumbo in Gruma

The legend further informs us that after many days travel, Kpogonumbo arrived at Biun in Gruma, and hid himself in the bulrushes and the thickets on the banks of the rivulet Yilinga, out of which the Biun people used to drink in the dry season. During this time the high fetish priest of Gruma in Biun had hired youngmen to make him a farm for the current year under the supervision of his two brothers, Tindanjiye and Tindanbila. On one occasion the men went into the farm, and the sun was very hot. As the men would have no water to drink, Tindanna\* sent off his eldest daughter who was called Suhusabga or Sisabge to fetch water for the men in the field. When† she came to the stream the sun was over-head. When she was about to dip the pot into the stream where water was to be fetched, Kpogonumbo appeared from his hiding-place and stepped toward her. The woman was so frightened that she stuck to the ground. Kpogonumbo then asked her if her father was in the town. Having been told he was, he told her to go and call him. The Tindan-na and some of the Elders in the town, when they had heard this strange story from their daughter‡ went off to the stream and saw for themselves

\* Tindan na-Chief of the fetish priest. (Tindana-fetish priest).

† She was alone.

‡ Suhusagbe the daughter of the High Fetish Priest,

what had been related to them. Kpogonumbo performed some miracles\* in their presence, and went with them into the town. The Tindan-na having consulted with his Elders, gave his same daughter to Kpogonumbo to marry.

When the nuptial ceremony was concluded, Kpogonumbo remained in Biun, and a son was born to him. This son he called Namzisielle. During his minority, Namzisielle used to accompany his young uncles the sons of Tindan-na into the neighbouring bush where they used to hunt wild pigeons. His young uncles who actually hated him, used to give him the feet and the pinions of the wild pigeons when roasted in fire, and used to say to him: "Were it not on account of our sister, we would not even have given you these, for we do not know from where your father is come." The boy Namzisielle used to report all this to his father—For a long time, it had been the desire of Kpogonumbo to seize the High Fetish Priesthood by some means, and he now decided to avail himself of the opportunity to avenge the ill-treatment of his son.

Now the time to observe the customs of the big fetish was at hand, and preparations were being made; pito was brewed and a huge bull ox slaughtered for the feast. One leg of the animal was sent to Kpogonumbo who refused it and made a demand for the feet and the head. The feast was well and truly kept up and everyone became intoxicated. During the day, Suhusabge struttingly went into her husband's room. Kpogonumbo exclaimed: "Oi Tindan-na biya!" i.e. "Alas! daughter of the High Fetish Priest."

The woman then said:

"Mani m-be la,  
 "Ti nim m-bara bunga,  
 "N-Kare dore n-wolge piyinga,  
 "N-duhuru nam  
 "Mani Tindan-na pakpon."

meaning:—

"Here am I  
 "We are those that ride donkeys  
 "And number the locust-trees†  
 "And rend asunder the flat topped houses

Kpogonumbo atrociously murders the Tindan-na and usurps the fetish priestdom

\* He caused millet to grow, be reaped and brewed into pito (at one and the same moment).

† I.e. Dawa tree.

“ And ascend the Chieftainship (stool)  
 “ I am the first-born daughter of the  
 “ High Fetish Priest.”

Kpogonumbo, seeing his wife was intoxicated, took the opportunity to obtain the whole secret concerning the fetish, its priest and where the Tindan-na would be found during the night on this occasion. In the night of the same day, Kpogonumbo took up his wooden spear, mounted his donkey,\* and with his son Namzisielle, playing upon the pumpkin drum which his father had made, went into the High Fetish Priest's residence and called him out. No sooner had the Tindan-na come out than he was stabbed to death by Kpogonumbo who cut off and threw the head away into the 'lavatory' of Tindanjiye, the younger brother of the murdered high priest. Kpogonumbo then took and put on the fetish cap, three strings of costly aggrey beads, and the fetish gown,† which things were the insignia of the highest order.‡ At dawn when the people called round to pay their respects to the Tindan-na, they saw his body lying naked, and mutilated, and could not comprehend who had done this. Great consternation reigned among the people, and they began to ask one another: “ who has done this!” At the same time, they saw the blood leading from the dead body into the compound of Tindanjiye. They followed it and found the head in his washing place. Kpogonumbo, observing this, came out immediately from his compound, attired in the high fetish priest's regalia, and shouted: “ I killed him! I killed him!” He then went into the fetish hut—during the silence of the people—and seated himself on the stool, and thus assumed the paramountcy of the country. During his reign as a high fetish priest, a powerful prince of Gruma, named Daramani, tried to light and to destool him; but being unable to do so peace was restored, and Daramani gave his daughter named Soyini or Solyini to Kpogonumbo as his wife, who bore him Na Gbewa.

\* The custom of mounting a donkey on the day a new king is elected to the Yendi stool is observed till to-day.

† These things are preserved unto the present day.

‡ When kings are elected for Yendi stool, they wear these things once in their lifetime.

We have heard no record of Kpogonumbo's death; but after the death of his sons by Suhusabge—who were supposed to have succeeded their father as high fetish priests,—his youngest son Na Gbewa succeeded to the fetish stool. Na Gbewa after having stayed for a very short time in Gruma, migrated, with a huge following, into the Kusanshi and the Busanga countries, and made Pusuga\* his capital town from where he used to fight the Kusanshis and the Busangas with a view to bringing them under his rule. The head chiefs among his followers were: Chief of Gushiago, Chief of Gukpiogo, Tugurunam, Gomle and others who were also fetish priests in the service of the King fetish priest. Na Gbewa had the following issues:—

- Kachiogo (female)
- Zirili (male)
- Kufogo† (male)
- Tohago (male)
- Ngmantambo (male)
- Sitobo (male)
- Sibie (male)
- Biemmone (male) and
- Bogoyelgo (male)

Na Gbewa was now very old and blind; but as the Kusanshis and Busangas, who, very often used to attack the capital town, were not entirely crushed, Zirili and Kufogo took the field against them, and remained a long time in their camp. Na Gbewa considering Zirili to be too wicked in his manners, and quite unfit to reign, proposed to leave the kingdom to Kufogo. Having fixed up things with the elders around him, he sent for his front-sitter to call to him Kufogo's mother, to instruct her, and to put her in the confidence of the elders who would assist her in wresting the Chieftainship from Zirili. For what reason nobody could tell the messenger went and called Zirili's mother.‡ Na Gbewa, not knowing what was done, began to tell the woman all that he had arranged with the elders. Zirili's mother did not utter a word; but leaving the presence of her husband the King, she went directly into the camp and informed her son Zirili what his

Emigration  
of Na  
Gbewa

Death of  
Kufogo and  
of Na  
Gbewa

\* About nine miles to the East of Bawku.

† or Fogo.

‡ It is stated that Zirili's mother was too kind and that Kufogo's mother too wicked. This was the reason that the front-sitter did so.

father had said. During the night Zirili ordered a big hole to be dug and covered with grass reeds. Before dawn, he ordered skins and decorated pillows to be put over the hole and sent for all the elders in the camp to come to him for an interview. When the men came, Zirili seated himself near the trap and ordered his younger brother Kufogo to sit on the pillows over the hole by his side. Nobody knew that a trap had been set for Kufogo, and no sooner had he sat on the pillows than he dropped into the hole and was buried alive by Zirili's orders. A great terror seized the camp and none dare leave it. Men remained in the camp in such a manner until Gushiag Na, i.e. Chief of Gushiago broke away with his party and went to Pusuga to inform Na Gbewa of the events that had occurred in the camp. When they came near to the town, the Chief of Gushiago ordered a halt, so as to consider how Na Gbewa could be best informed of the murder of Kufogo; for according to the custom of those days, he could not inform him (Na Gbewa) verbally. In the end, it came into his mind to make a fife, a drum and a horn of an elephant tusk. Having begun to enter into the town, he ordered the instruments\* to be played.

Drums  
and Horns  
of the  
Chief of  
Gusdiago

The fife sounds :—

“ Gbewa! Gbewa!

“ Zirili ku Fogo!

“ Zirili ku Fogo!

The drum answers :—

“ M-ba ye! M-ba ye!

The horn then sounds :—

“ U-uhu! U-uhu! ”

Meaning :— Gbewa! Gbewa!

Zirili killed Fogo!

The fife.

Zirili killed Fogo!

Oh! Father, Oh! Father

The drum.

U-uhu! U-uhu!

The horn.

At this time, Na Gbewa was sitting in the front of his compound, and when he understood the message, he began to rub his buttock on the spot where he sat, till the ground opened and swallowed him.

\* These instruments, viz : the fife, the drum and the horn as made by that Chief are preserved unto this day, and if a Chief of Gushiago visits Yendi, these instruments are carried and played when he enters Yendi.

Zirili was still in his camp when he heard of the death of his father, and that his elder sister Kachiogo had seized the stool, saying that she was the elder. Now, when Zirili left the camp and was moving homeward, he proposed to enter the town of Pusuga by night so as to frighten the people; he therefore ordered a halt, and told all the men who were with him to make pieces of boards (about 18 inches long and eight inches broad) and fix them one end to a piece of string—each man to have one—which, when twisted† in the air give a tremendous humming sound. When night came on he moved into the town with his party, and terrorised the town folk, and even the Chieftainess ran and hid herself in the cavity of a large Kapok tree in the town. She was found by her brother Zirili who told her to renounce the stool that same night. When the cutsom of “making King” was finished, Kachiogo was appointed as first woman Chief of Gundogo,—a Chieftainship which the first born daughter of Yendi Kings, holds to the present day.

Foundation of Gundog Na or the woman Chieftainship of Gundogo\*

When Zirili became King, and the elders and their followers came to pay him their respects, he asked about the people who were the attendants on the person of the late King his father. These men were ordered into his presence. One of them was called “Kpoyo,” who when asked what his duty was, said that he drove “flies” from the King, Zirili told him that he was to be Chief of the flies, i.e. Zohe—flies, and Na Chief, to wit Zohe-na. Another one said his duty was to lull the King to sleep; he was told to be the Chief of the lullers, i.e. Balona. Another one said his duty was to find cooking pots for cooking the King’s food when on trek. He was told to be called “Dogo” i.e. cooking pot. Another one said he soothed the King’s anger; he was ordered to be called “Malli” i.e. make it (i.e. the palaver) good. Another one said his duty was not to leave the King alone. He also was ordered to be called “Dewalge-na” i.e. don’t leave the King.‡

Creation of Zohena Balona, and aogo, Mali and Walgena

During the reign of Na Zirili, there was no trouble with the aborigines of the Kusanshi country; but when

Foundation of Nalerigu and events in Gambaga

\* Gunga—Kapok tree, dogo—a cavity or big hollow in a tree hence the chieftainness of the cavity of Kapok tree.

† I.e. played, etc.

‡ All these appointments are held by eunuchs except that of Walgena which is filled by mallams of that rank.

Zirili died there arose a dispute between his three younger brothers to wit Tohago, Ngmantambo and Sitobo. The last two joined against the first and fighting took place. Tohago and his adherents were driven and chased by his antagonists. The legend informs us that Tohago possessed some magic which really saved him from his atrocious brothers. In the first place when he saw his brothers' party pressing on him he performed a miracle (with what, it was not known) so that the large space between his brothers and himself became covered with trees—this forest still exists and is known by the name of "Sunba." Sitobo and his party then hewed their way through the forest and went on chasing him. Tohago then picked up a stone and knocked it on the ground and the space between them became mountain ranges, and he built his town which he called Nalerigu amongst the Mamprussi—thus Tohago became the first Mamprussi King, and his posterity rule that country unto this day—yet Sitobo and his party tried to go over the mountains to search and kill Tohago. When he heard of this, he took an egg and struck it on the ground and it became a large river so that it impeded their advance. This frustrated Sitobo's wicked design and he went round into Gambaga. Such an unprecedented visit by a mighty foreigner made the entire inhabitants of Gambaga to run away save an old wealthy woman who possessed a large herd of cattle which Sitobo very cunningly got rid of. For no sooner had Sitobo settled in Gambaga than he sent to the old woman for a goat to make a fetish custom. The old woman complied with the orders; so Sitobo continued to squeeze from her goat after goat and sheep after sheep till all the goats and sheep were finished, and then he commenced to devour her cows. Whenever he slaughtered anything that was taken from the old woman, he used to send her a leg of the slaughtered animal; therefore, the old woman did not feel so much the ill-treatment until only one cow remained. Sitobo at last sent for the only remaining cow, slaughtered it, but failed to send a leg to the old woman. She then came to him and asked the reason why he did not send her her portion as he had heretofore done. Sitobo said to her that she was not to ask anything about that. The old woman said to him;—"A kunko pun dira" i.e. Did you use to eat

(meat) alone before this time?" Thereupon Sitobo ordered her to be killed on the spot.

The legend tells us that, after this old woman of Gambaga was murdered in cold blood, her ghost used always to stand before Sitobo,—whether he was eating, drinking, or sleeping,—and used to ask him:—“A kunko pun dira?” This state of things so alarmed Sitobo that he left Gambaga for Nabare, a very flourishing town at the time near Walewale. Still, the old woman’s ghost followed him there, and used to ask him:—“A kunko pun dira.” But, here, Sitobo made a charm and cast the ghost away from himself, and it fell into Safulugu (Savelugu). This ghost was then called “YO.” Therefore until the present day, the chieftainship of Safulugu is called “YO,” and a chief to the Stool “Yo-na,” by the Dagbambas.

After some years’ stay in Nabare, Na Nyagse, the eldest son of Sitobo asked of his father for some fighting men to wage war against the neighbouring tribes, to the East.\* His father agreed and Na Nyagse began to fight and subdue his opposers on his way, until he came and settled in Bagale,—a Dagbamba village on the Mampruso-Dagbamba frontier. He stayed a long time in this place, and his father in order to prevent disputes to the stool, was desirous to see and make him King in the presence of his brothers. He (Sitobo) then proposed to his brothers and followers, that as his son Na Nyagse had kept so long abroad, and he had heard nothing of him, he should go in search of him. But his followers told him that he was too old and weak for the enterprise. Sitobo then gave his people an example of a sheep and her lamb. That was on a certain Friday when all the elders, etc. would, as the custom was, come round to pay him their respects. He ordered a small lamb to be caught from its mother and hidden in a room near-by. When the people had collected together they saw a mother-sheep running about and baaing all the time; the people began to look at the mother sheep in wonder and Sitobo asked them what was the reason of the sheep’s baaing and running about. They said they did not know. He then ordered the little lamb to be let out. The mother sheep

Sitobo  
leaving  
Gambaga  
for Nabare

Na Nyagse's  
settlement  
in Bagale  
and his  
father  
Sitobo's  
travel to  
Bagale

\* It was stated that Na Nyagse made this application through his uncle Kuga-na Sibie, Sitobo's younger brother, three times before his father agreed.

on seeing her wee lamb, ran to it and began to fondle it. By this example he demonstrated to them how necessary it was that parents should love their children. Then all his men agreed that he should go to find where his son Na Nyagse was. It was in the rainy season that Sitobo (with all his brothers and a great following) travelled to Bagale. On the way he sent a secret messenger to Na Nyagse to acquaint him with the reason of his coming. On hearing this Na Nyagse bought one red and white striped gown, and a walking stick to exchange for that of his father's. Two days after his arrival in Bagale Sitobo summoned a meeting of his peers, and in their presence rose and ordered a grassmat to be given him; he then invested his son with the royal insignia and seated him on the stool; and, having thus acted, he seated himself on the grass-mat, and began to address the congregation, and explained the reason for his having done so. This of course annoyed his (Sitobo's) brothers and they went away in anger from him. First of these was Biemmone who went and established himself in Gunayiri. During this time there was a fetish priestess in Binduli (Karaga) who became Biemmone's sweet-heart, and used to send him presents of okros and other vegetables. Biemmone was so pleased at these presents that he went to visit the fetish priestess in Binduli. Enamoured by her beauty, and also with the intention of usurping this Kingdomship, he purposely married the fetish priestess and waited patiently until she died, and thus Biemmone became the founder of the big chieftainship of Karaga. Second of these was Bogoyelgo who with his party went away from Sitobo in Bagale. He went and established himself in Sunson amongst the Kpamkpamba\* people. He gradually subdued these barbarians and became their chief. The second chief of Sunson removed from this place and settled in the far north to properly control his Kpamkpamba subjects. There is only one compound in the ruins of the old Sunson which is now called "Sunson-ghon" between Sekpiogo and Pion.

The third was Ngmantam who was also called Ngmantambo. He went far to the east, and settling amongst the Nanumbas,† he founded the kingdom of

\* I.e. Kõnkomba.

† They were called also Nanus.

the Nanumbas in Bimbila after having killed the fetish priest of that place.

But Kuga-na Sibie who followed his nephew Na Nyagse to Bagale in the expedition, and acted as a fetish consultant, and burner of sin offering, etc., was appointed chief of Gbalga, Tannyeli, Nandukpalgo Nanluo, etc., by Sitobo.

## CHAPTER II.

Na Nyagse  
conquers  
Dagbon,  
and the  
extirpation  
of fetish  
priest

Conquest of Dagbon by Na Nyagse in or about the year 1416—Building of Na-ya (Yendi)—His death—Zulande succeeds his father Na Nyagse—Nagalogo's expedition and his death in Murugu—Darigudiemda's expedition into Wongara and his death in Gbungburi.

After the enstoolment of Na Nyagse, his father Sitobo remained in Bagale as chief of that place; he died and was buried there. His tomb was encircled by a compound and a house was built on it. Into this house all the departed souls of the Kings of Yendi are said to resort even unto this day. Na Nyagse now took the field against the Dagbamba people; first he went to the West and then to the East, fought with and massacred all the Dagbamba fetish priests, and appointed his sons, brothers and uncles as chiefs in their stead:—

1. He\* fought with and killed the fetish priest of Pigu, and appointed his eldest son Zolkpaba chief.
2. He killed the fetish priest of Nyinbunu and made his son Mogonyona chief.
3. He killed the fetish priest of Didogge and made his son Wombolga chief.
5. He killed the fetish priest of Zosalle and made his son Frinyanga chief.
5. He killed the fetish priest of Zosalle and made his son Wunliele chief.
6. He killed that of Diare and made his son Shallon chief.
7. He killed that of Gushiye and made his son Kapoziem chief.
8. He killed the fetish priest of Safulugu (Saveługu) and made his brother Biyo chief.
9. He killed the fetish priest of Dapale and made his son Danzie chief.

1416 to  
1432 A.D.

---

\* N.B.—“ He ” and “ His ” always refer to Na Nyagse.

10. He killed the fetish priest of Namogo and made his son Bizunga chief.
11. He killed the fetish priest of Singa and made his son Lalyago chief.
12. He killed the fetish priest of Dalong and made his son Busubunamkapa chief.
13. He killed the fetish priest of Kumbungu and made his son Bimbiem chief.
14. He killed the fetish priest of Zangbalon and made his son Buruzambo chief.
15. He killed that of Gbolon and made his son Lokpa chief.
16. He killed the fetish priest of Vogo and made his son Bambilie chief.
17. He killed the fetish priest of Timbungu and made his son Lundu chief.
18. He killed the fetish priest of Lungbun ga and made his son Suzable chief.
19. He killed the fetish priest of Tamale and made his son Tulebi chief. Though having been made chief of Tamale, Tulebi did not reside in Tamale; he appointed a new fetish priest whom he named Dekpema or Tamale-Dakpema, and created a new chieftainship for himself near Safulugu (Savelugu) whence he exercised the jurisdiction of Tamale District.
20. Na Nyagse killed the fetish priest of Nantong and made his brother Batanga chief.
21. Owing to the valour of the fetish priest of Tampien, Na Nyagse spared him to live until his death, when Bilyanga the son of Dimani was made to succeed him.
22. He killed the fetish priest of Tujo (Tudjo) and made his son Ngunawi chief.
23. He killed the fetish priest of Tugu and made his son Sangmani chief.
24. He killed the fetish priest of Galwie and made his uncle Zogga chief.
25. He killed the fetish priest of San and made his uncle Sibie- bila chief.

26. He killed the fetish priest of Zakole and made his son Bembale chief.
27. He killed the fetish priest of Kunkon and made his son Zontulibi chief.
28. He killed the fetish priest of Ngani (Gnani) and made his son Korigenili chief.
29. He killed the fetish priest of Nakpari and made his son Kayimbagaya chief.

Na Nyagse believing that he had now finished his task, went and settled in Yogo, whence he selected a site between Yogo Depale and Diare, and built the capital town of the Dagbambas, and called it Na-ya, i.e. the King's home.

“ Tandogo lie mor'le

“ Ka Tankpa lie Zoya ”

meaning : “ The swish hole became a river

“ And the swish balls (bricks) became  
“ mountains.”

It was stated that the swish hole out of which the swish was dug for the building became a river\* and the pieces of swish which fell off from the hands of the carriers became mountains (hillocks). Owing to the determination of the Gonjas to conquer Dagbon, Na Luro abandoned it about 1560, one and a half centuries† after its building, and the site of its ruin which is called Yendi Dabare (Ruins of Yendi) is still visible. Na Nyagse died in Yogo when invited by his mother to attend her sin-sacrifice, and was succeeded by his son Zulande.

## NA ZULANDE.

The desire to be masters of other countries was ever in the minds of the princes who ruled the Dagbamba country. Therefore when Zulande became King, his son Nagalogo, at the head of an adequate army, waged war against the Tampruma people. He burnt Kulumbuso and Zantani. He went through the whole Tampruma country as far as Murugu where he heard of the death of his father the King. Having prepared himself to return, he died suddenly at Murugu. These

\* It is a deep and a very long lake which in the rainy season, overflows into the White Volta near Depale.

† 1420-1560=140 years.

two funeral customs were burdensome on Galbanga Fatu the first wife of Na Zulande and the mother of Nagalogo, hence the song:—

“ Murugu yalem ngmaya  
Galabanga Fatu n-kumda  
O-yidana Zugu  
N-kumda o-bi zugu.”

*Meaning:*

“ The salt of Murugu came to naught  
Galbanga\* Fatuma  
Bewails her husband  
Bewails her son ”.

After the completion of the funeral of Na Zulande† the royal insignia were taken into Murugu and placed over the tomb of Nagalogo, indicating that though he died he was made King after death. The Tampruma country then remained under the sway of the Dagbamba Kings, until about the year 1554 when Jakpa wrested the place from them.

#### DARIGUDIEMDA.

Darigudiemda surnamed “ Shelbema Datolle ” the second son of Zulande became King of Dagbon. Early in his reign he took the field against the Wongara people. He stormed and took Gbona the capital, and married the princess of that place. Having remained in Gbona for some years and received the paramountcy of the Wongara, he appointed a representative in his own stead and left for Dagbon; on arrival at Gbungburi‡ on his way he died there unexpectedly. His brother Bariguiemda who was to succeed him came to Gbungburi and performed the funeral customs and visited Gbona. It was during this time that Darigudiemda's wife in Agbona advanced in pregnancy. Barigudiemda had given an ample present to the woman and made all necessary preparations for the child before it was born. A few days after his departure, messengers were sent to announce to him that his brother's wife had given

1442-1454  
A.D  
Conquest of  
Wongara  
about 1452

\* Galbanga—Titles of the first wives of Yendi Kings.

† Zulande killed Kpalgbanga Mbahe ti yuni ba, the high fetish priest of Yogo.

‡ Gbungburi is called by the Dagbambas “ Binduliya ”; a house was said to be built over this tomb where the Gbona Kings used to make an annual visit, and sacrificed a black cow to the soul of their Great Grandfather. This town Gbungburi is not far from Bole.

birth to a male child. Bariguwiemda then exclaimed :—  
 “ Bun bo nkane ”? Meaning : “ What is wanting ”?  
 When the messengers returned home, they said the  
 child’s name was to be called—as they heard from his  
 uncle—“ Bonkane ”. In process of time, Bonkane  
 then became King of Gbona and had three sons.—These  
 were Gago, Kunga and Banaguri. The present  
 successors to the stool of Gbona are the offspring of  
 Gago the eldest son of Bonkane. Since then the  
 Dagbamba Kings never again turned their mind to the  
 conquered land, as they were busy with their own affairs  
 at home.

Darigudiemda was succeeded by his brother Bari-  
 guwiemda who was succeeded by Na Zolgo son of  
 Darigudiemda, who was succeeded by Zongmang\* son  
 of Zolgo, who was succeeded by his brother Nengmitoni  
 who was succeeded by his brother Diwani who was  
 succeeded by Yanzo who was succeeded by his nephew  
 Dariziogo.

---

\* Zongmang kun-she miya, da wata n-nabera, i.e., Broken hall cannot  
 be sewn with strings, firewood split becomes plenty.

## CHAPTER III.

Reign of Na Dariziogo—Emigration and Settlement of the Ngbanye\* people under the leadership of Prince Smaila Jakpa—Dagbamba people dispossessed of Tampruma—Death of Dariziogo—Foundation of Kpambi—Jakpa's expedition into Kpamkpamba—Plantation of Naori—Fighting in Brumase and Jakpa's death. Page 31.

1543-1554  
A.D.

It was during the reign of Na Dariziogo that the Ngbanye people under their leader Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa came and settled in the Wala country, whence they began to conquer the countries between the Black and the White Volta, and as far as that of the Kpamkpamba.† These emigrants are said to have come from Gizi and not from Mendi as the present descendants of that race claim. We shall now have the opportunity to describe the settlement of Ngbanye people and their efforts to conquer the Dagbambas which in the end proved a failure. Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa was one of the mightiest princes that ever lived in those countries to the north of Mendi. On one occasion he interviewed a certain Mallam who told him—after consulting his oracle books—that, he Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa would never be a king in his own country; his fortune was rather in foreign lands, where he would acquire riches, and would establish a kingdom for himself, his heirs and successors. The Mallam's prophecy made so deep an impression on Jakpa that he took steps and set out with seventy thousand men—men unfit and useless for fighting purposes—women and children were not counted. The captains of this host were Manwura and Bonwura. A few days after his departure he arrived in a town called Jah, and made friends with a certain Mallam named Fati Morukpe‡ and told him the reason for his migration, and solicited him to take service with him (Jakpa) and make prayers for him unto God, so as to divert mishaps and evils

The Ngbanye  
people

\* This is the plural form, singular form is "Kagbanye" which Hausa tongue turned into Gonja-Kagonja for the singular.

† I.e. Konkomba.

‡ Morukpe—Moru the albino.

which might tend to bar his advance, and promised him the following articles if he were successful in his adventure:—

1. A hundred slaves (men and women);
2. Hundred cattle (oxen and cows);
3. Hundred (pairs) of donkeys;
4. Hundred (pairs) of sheep;
5. Hundred (pairs) of goats;
6. Hundred (pairs) of fowls;
7. Hundred horses;
8. Hundred gowns;
9. Hundred pairs of trousers.

Fati Morukpe refused the proposal, and Jakpa went on his way. Jakpa, arrived in the country of the Biegas, and was opposed. Fighting took place with heavy carnage on both sides, and neither side could win. Jakpa was so baffled that he sent messengers with presents to invite Fati Morukpe to come to him. He\* sent back the message that he could not come without the consent of his elder brother. Thereupon, Jakpa sent other messengers and the Mallam obeyed and came into the camp. On his arrival he scolded Jakpa for his frailty and foibles. The fighting again was commenced, and Fati Morukpe, with a faith in the mysteries of the Koran, stretched out his arms with his sceptre† in his hand, pointed it to the Biegas and exclaimed:—“Run away ye Kafirs”. The enemies suddenly gave way, everyone running away to the place where he came from, and Jakpa remained victor on the field. It was from this time that the glorious star of the Ngbanye people began to ascend.

Jakpa then showed his hospitality by presenting 10 cows, 10 sheep, 10 goats and fowls to Fati Morukpe who now consented to the former propositions, and an oath was taken on the Koran, and the following agreement was made:—

1. Mallam Fati Morukpe should go with Jakpa, and implore God for his success.
2. That the articles of reward mentioned before should be paid to Fati Morukpe when

\* Fati Morukpe.

† “Kandiri” which is always carried by the Imams.

Jakpa had established himself as conqueror and King over the countries of the far East.

3. That if either or both\* were to die before the acquisition of new countries, the oath and the promises should be honourably fulfilled, and that the reward should be paid† by the heirs and successors of Jakpa to the heirs and successors of Fati Morupke, and that the two families, i.e. that of Fati Morupke and Jakpa, should live side by side with each other, and regard themselves as brothers.

Things having been thus arranged, Jakpa then resumed his eastward march with pomp and vigour. Nature favoured Jakpa through the prayers of the Mallam: he met with no opposition, and the petty kingdoms in the eastern Soudan‡ fell before him and acknowledged his superiority. Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa continued in the enterprise, came and occupied the Wala country, and chose the town Nyanga§ as the capital of the conquered lands, and named it Gbinipowura-pe; and took steps to appoint his sons chiefs in the different countries.

Jakpa then turned against the Tampruma people on the western banks of the White Volta river. These Tamprumas, we have seen, were the subjects of the Dagbamba Kings who hitherto appointed their representatives to control the salt-making by the natives in Burugu.|| Jakpa fought with and compelled the Dagbambas to leave that country. He then crossed the river to its eastern bank, where Na Dariziogo the King of the Dagbambas gave him battle. The fighting was fierce on both sides and the carnage formidable. The Dagbambas gave way and their King was slain on the battle-field. Jakpa then took possession of the Dagbamba towns along the eastern bank of the White Volta and penetrated far inland and took Gbirimani (Birimani) which was afterwards put under the jurisdiction of the Chief of Kpembu (Kombi) and Kasoriyiri under the Chief of Wasope. Having

\* Jakpa and Fati Morupke.

† Jakpa and the mallam, died and the reward was never paid.

‡ Or Sudan.

§ Nyanga in Bole District.

|| I.e. Daboya, where the Dagbamba kings were supplied with salt.

thus taken possession of Tampruma and some parts of the Dagbamba country, Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa removed his son, who was the chief of Wasope, to Daboya to control the salt-making\* and was called not Daboya chief but Wasope-wura, i.e. Chief of Wasope. All chiefs of Daboya are entitled "Wasope-chief" to the present day. Jakpa then equipped his fifth son who went and took Kawsaw from the Dagbamba people.

Having secured chieftainships for five of his sons, Jakpa then crossed the Black Volta. All towns and villages submitted to him freely; and while still on the western side of that river, Kafabas crossed and met him with porridge, water and honey—a sign of immediate submission to the powers of Jakpa. He went over and established kola-trade in Kafaba. From this place Jakpa travelled as far as Salaga. In those days Salaga was a very small village of two compounds belonging to the Nanumba people. The Nanumbas were driven away, and the place was given by Jakpa to the hundreds of aliens who followed and fought under him. Jakpa transferred the kola trade from Kafaba to Salaga, which then became a most flourishing town and an emporium for the slave trade and all sorts of products of the world. The Ngbanye people went a little further away from the town of Salaga and built the town of Kpembé.

The insatiable spirit of Jakpa was dissatisfied with the kingdoms and chieftainships he had hitherto won, and the conquest of the eastern countries became his ambition. And as Jakpa had put things in order and appointed one of his sons as chief in the newly made kingdom he took the field against the Kpamkpamba people. He raided on his way Bo, Tashi and the Bassari people who took refuge in their mountain-passes but left their flocks of cattle for the raider. The Kpamkpambas were then attacked; the fighting was very furious indeed, but the tactics of the Ngbanye were superior to those of the savages who were routed and taken prisoners, with thousands of oxen, sheep and goats. Jakpa then returned to Salaga by the same route. He planted the captives taken from

\* In the Eastern bank of the river White Volta, there is a saltish valley opposite the ferry, the ground is scraped with hoes and packed into small baskets which are filled to the brim with water; this being carried into the town, is to be boiled until the reddish salt of Daboya is obtained after evaporation,

Jakpa in  
Salaga

Jakpa in  
Kpamkpam-  
ba and plan-  
tation of  
Nauri

Kpamkpaba, between Nchumuru, Salaga and Nanumba, to cultivate the soil, and to supply the Kpembiwura\* with food-stuff. They multiplied greatly, and built many towns such as:—

Kpandai  
 Bayim  
 Beladjai  
 Kotiko  
 Nkanchina  
 Belai  
 Katiageli†

The War-chief of Kpembiwura then built his residence named Alfae (Alfayiri) near Kpandai which from that time became the residence of all the War-chiefs in succession until 1896 when war broke out between Kabachi and Lempo, and this residence became a ruin unto this day.

After some years' rest in Kpembu, Jakpa resolved on the conquest of Asanti; but being told that the Asanti were anthropophagi, and owing to the fatigue of war which caused his principal men to murmur, he desisted from that horrible attempt. But after a time, despite the warning given him, he crossed the Volta river in the direction of Yegi to Brumase where he encountered the Asanti. A formidable battle took place in which Jakpa was mortally wounded and carried to Suruminchu‡ where he breathed his last. Before his death, Jakpa gave orders that his body should be entombed in Nyanga. His orders were obeyed, but when the corpse was conveyed in a bier through Mpaha to Gbipe (Bupe) it became putrid and was interred in the latter town.

It was decided that a prince or chief who had a large household and plenty of followers should be his successor. The chief of Kungu was elected—hence the town Nyanga is called "Yagbon" i.e. "big house-hold" till the present day.

On account of the entombment of the body of Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa in Gbipe, it became the custom that no other kings of Yagbon should be buried in that town, therefore Mankuma was chosen as the burial-place of the kings of Yagbon.

Some  
 customs of  
 Yagbon  
 King

\* Kpembiwura—Chief of Kpembu.

† The people of Ketiageli claim that their forefathers came from Tekiman in Ashanti.

‡ I.e. Sumusi.

The principal chiefs whose duty it is to decide the enstoolment of kings to the stool of Yagbon are :—

Gbipe-wura and Kagbape-wura.

Other influential chiefs who are to be consulted are :—

Mantam-wura, Busunu-wura, Dumangu-wura, Sanyon-wura and Janton-wura.

When a new king is made, the custom is that he has to give to the chief of Gbipe, one horse, one cow and six pounds sterling. To the chiefs of Kagbape, who is the head amongst the king-makers and who also resides in Gbipe, he gives the horse which the new king rides during the ceremony together with the gown, the trousers, the cap and the turban, and five pounds sterling. The chief of Kpembí and Wasope-wura (Daboya chief) are excluded from being kings of Yagbon owing to the extensive provinces they rule. The chiefs of Kungu, Kandia, Kawsaw and Turugu (Turuwe) are by turns made kings of Yagbon, and the regalia of that paramountcy was the fetish "Aliti" which was lost during the raid of Samori. In the case of Kpembí (in Salaga) the four chiefs quartering themselves in Kpembí are made paramount chiefs by turns when the stool is vacant. These are :—

Kalankule-wura, Lempo-wura, Sungbunu-wura and Kanyase-wura.

## CHAPTER IV.

The abandonment of the old and the building of the new Yendi in the Kpamkpamba country—The four claimants to the vacant stool of Yendi—Na Zangina's election and his embracing Mohammedanism—The defeat of Mahamman Wari at San—Two peaceful reigns—Reign of Na Gariba and his nephew's ambition and the demand of the Ashanti King "Osei Tutu" to destool Gariba—The request of 2000 slaves by the Ashanti—Two claimants to the vacant stool—One of them invites Wasope-wura Tikpiri to help him drive the other away—Tikpiri's defeat at Kumbungu.

1554-1570  
A.D.

## NA LURO (KING LURO).

The Ngbanye people still held parts of the Dagbamba country adjacent to the eastern side of the White Volta, and had encroached so far as to threaten the capital town Yendi. To avoid this incessant fighting with the Ngbanye, Na Luro deemed it expedient to abandon the capital and to build a new one in the Kpamkpamba country. Na Luro occupied the Kpamkpamba town Chare, the people of which went and built Wangbun on the Demon road. Chare became Yendi from that time. From here, Na Luro found it easy to drive the Ngbanye away from some of the Dagbamba towns occupied by them. He died abroad when engaged in war with the Ngbanye people, and was succeeded by his four sons, viz: Tutugu'ri, Zagale Zokuli and Gungoble. After the death of Gungoble there appeared four claimants to the vacant stool of Yendi. These were:—Timani, Chief of Sunson; Gumachiogo, Chief of Yalzori; Bengahem, Chief of Kpoge, and Zangina son of Tutugu'ri. Zangina was preferred to the former three chiefs, but to appoint him king of Dagbon would have caused bloodshed. The elders having secretly sent messengers to the King of the Mamprussis in Nalerigu to inform him of their opinion, begged him to act in their favour, and advised the contending claimants to defer their claims to the king of Mamprussi. But to appeal to a foreign arbitrator required money; therefore, the three rival chiefs, consi-

dering Zangina to be too young to fight for the Yendi stool, began to borrow cowries from Zangina to bribe the Mamprussi king. They all borrowed 20,000\* cowries each from Zangina. But before they could bribe the arbitrator, Zangina had already, secretly given 40,000 cowries, a bangle and a costly gown to the umpire. A general meeting of the principal men of both Dagbamba and Mamprussi, was summoned and a day fixed for the final decision. When the day came, and the principal men had again assembled, the King of Mamprussi addressed the assembly and began to ask the three rival chiefs to tell him their nicknames and titles, commencing with Timani, the chief of Sunson.

1. Timani said:—

“ N-yuli bona Timani, Sunson dana,  
Mani Chirigi biogo ni sagam Kurugu,  
Tikum-pielgo no zale sa ”.

That is:—

“ My name is Timani, Chief of Sunson,  
I am (the) evil punch that spoils the iron,  
The dried (white) standing wood  
That prevents the raining ”.

The king of Mamprussi then said to Timani:—

“ I see that you cannot be made king over the Dagbamba people, because you will cause scarcity of water, and there will be a famine in the two countries and people will die of hunger and thirst—you are not fit to be king.”

2. Gumachiogo, the chief of Yalzori (i.e. Zabzugu) stepped forward and said:—

“ N-yuli bona Gumachiogo, Yalzori dana,  
Mani Shiogo ni bu-bila zogom kun kpi,  
Barga ban soge dje  
Ben-ti zan n-wuhi Kpamba ”.

That is:—

“ My name is Gumachiogo, chief of Yalzori,  
A little goat in the rainy season ~~it~~ deteriorates but it  
Cannot lose its hairs, never dies  
Syphilis when impossible to be hidden,  
Must be shown to the elders.”

Then the king of the Mamprussis told him:—

“ You cannot be a king over the Dagbambas,

\* 20,000 cowries—20 shillings or £1.

because you have a bold face, and will not give any respect to the elders ”.

3. Bengahem or Ben-nyahem came forward and said :—

“ N-yuli bona Bengahem, Kpoge dana  
Mani Tole-ngmanjie ni yirigi no  
Biliere tugsu doya kun ban Zolgo\*  
Gungumagumde tegse yiliya  
Kun ban Kpemma.

That is :—

“ My name is Bengahem, chief of Kpoge  
I am the wild-pigeon (that feeds) by the mortar† (side) threatens the fowls  
Babies lying together you will not know (which of them) is the fool  
Fruits of the silk-cotton tree that hang down, you will not know (which of them) is the first ”.

The king of Mamprussi then said :—“ My good friend. It is impossible for you to be a king of Dagbon, because you will deride the warnings of the elders, and cannot maintain the peace of the country.”

He (the Mamprussi king) now turned round and called Zangina who pretended to have nothing to do with the matter, to stand up. “ Tell me your name and titles ”.

Zangina  
made king

Zangina said :—

“ N-yuli bona Zangina  
Mani-Singa kun kpe du-noli  
Zan tiri goni nan gare  
Muni kun nani.”

That is :—

“ My name is Zangina  
The big pot that cannot be pushed  
Through the door-way  
Must be leaned against the wall *It must be passed over.*  
Then it will pass (through)  
Habits (of men) cannot easily be discerned.‡

The Mamprussi King then congratulated him and said :—“ Bravo! my young lad, thou art the right man to be king over the Dagbambas, and to maintain the

1648-1677  
A.D.

\*Zolgo is a Mamprussi word; its Dagbamba equivalent is Djar'go—a fool.

†Wooden mortar for pounding foo-foo and cereals.

‡We cannot always rely upon others' promise.

peace of the country". This was the only true instance in which we have seen that a king of Dagbon was made by a Mamprussi king, and we must note this that it was done by the wish and at the request of the Dagbamba elders themselves, and there is no evidence, even in the foregoing matters, that the kings of the Mamprussis have any predominance over the kings of the Dagbambas.

## NA ZANGINA.

If there is no outside trouble, the kings of Yendi are satisfied with sitting in idleness either under the shady trees near their compound, or under the sheds raised for the purpose of receiving guests, or in the halls built in front of their compounds, where they settle palavers, land matters and differences between their people. They never go visiting any town or village in the country. This sort of travelling in the country, they say, is not compatible with the customs of the country; because people outside Yendi, even the paramount chiefs of Karaga, Mion and Safulugu will not stay to receive them\*—they will all run away into the bush, and leave the town for him. So we have seen that the reign of Na Zangina, as there was no trouble with the Ngbanye people, was the most peaceful one in the annals of the Dagbambas. His first act was to embrace† Mohammedanism. His elders and himself were taught to pray five times a day and the ablution was made by Yamusa, the Iman of Sabare, a town near Nakpari. The Imam Yamusa and the other Mallams who formed his retinue, had come from Wongara and settled in this place in the previous reign. The example of Na Zangina, of being a Mohammedan and a Pagan at the same time has been followed by his successors until the present day.

But suddenly towards the latter years of Na Zangina's reign, a very powerful prince of the Ngbanyes named Mahamman Wari who is known by the name of "Kumpati" by both the present Ngbanye people and the Dagbambas, waged war against the Dagbamba people. During his expedition, "Kumpati" built fortifications, the swish of which had been

Kumpati  
against  
the  
Dagbambas  
His defeat  
at San

\*Because they are the "Lions" of Dagbon—that is, their title.

†From Na Nyagse to the time of Gungoble they were all real pagans.

mixed with honey instead of water,\* at the various places where he encamped. All the Toma Dagbambas fled headlong to Yendi. The King, finding himself too old and physically unfit to lead any forces against the foe, sent for Andani Sigili, the chief of Kpoge, who was surnamed "Bangumanga", the son of Na Zagale, and told him to muster and organise the Dagbamba forces against the enemy. Kumpati led his army a round-about way from Daboya through Singa, to Tamale, sacking every town, and came and encamped in Kurizan. The Dagbambas also encamped in San so as to stop the advance of the foe into Yendi. The two armies met in the hillocks of Sanso where the fighting took place and lasted several days; Kumpati was unable to break through his opposers, and the carnage was enormous on both sides. The Ngbanye were discomfited when their great and dauntless leader was killed at the hands of the Kumbungu sharp-shooters. Kumpati's body was mutilated and the parts distributed in the following manner as trophies in remembrance of the war:—

1. His head was cut off and was given to the Chief of Diari Bukare Suruguf.
2. His right arm to the Chief of Tolon Mahame.
3. His left arm to the Chief of Kumbungu Sulemani.

His daughter Mariam who had accompanied her father became a prisoner of war, and was married by Andani Sigili the victor of that memorable battle. Since then, the desire to be masters of the Dagbambas, was obliterated from the minds of the kings and chiefs of the Ngbanye, excepting a case of rivalry between Kaiaga and Safulugu, when the Yendi Stool was vacant after the death of Mahame King of Dagbon. Na Zangina died in his old age and was succeeded by Andani Sigili, who was succeeded by Na Jimli.

1677-1687  
A.D.

Na Jimli† surname Na Bunbiogo. Customarily, all the children of the royal family when weened, are entrusted to the hands of the important eunuchs to be

\* An example of these fortifications is still to be seen in "Duni", a village of Singa.

† Kumbunga is the right wing, Diari the left wing and Tolon the advance guard of the army of the kings of Yendi.

He was made King by women.

gared for until their manhood. These eunuchs were the Ministers and the members of the Advisory Board of the King. They are:—

Zoh-na, the Chief Minister  
 Balo-na, the 2nd Minister  
 Male  
 Mba Dogo  
 Kumlana and  
 Mba Bunga.

When Jimli, the son of Zangina was a boy under the care of Zoh-na, he became infected with yaws and was entirely neglected by that Minister.

1687-1700  
 A.D.

Jimli then fled away to Kpatinga where he stayed with a mallam who cured him. During Jimli's manhood Andani Sigili died. He attended the funeral custom; and, while the funeral custom was being observed, he entered the compound of the deceased king, where the old women of the royal blood were gathered and performing their rites. They saw and called him saying: "Bumbiogo ngo, kamna," i.e. "you ugly man, come here." When he went in unto them, they invested him with the royal gown, and turban, and placed a sceptre in his hand and sandals on his feet and ordered him to walk in the yard to see if the apparels fitted him as a king. Having strutted about in the yard, Jimli hastened out at once to the crowds sitting without the compound, and the drummers instantly began to beat the applause and dignities of king, and thus he became a king.

Punishments  
 of Eunuchs

To wreak his wrath on the eunuchs, he gave them all orders, without distinction—at the time there were over two hundred eunuchs in Yendi, the best of whom were to be chosen for vacant positions of eunuchs—to carry big stones on their bare heads from Kulkpini\* to Yendi. Many of them preferred death to such unprecedented treatment save a few of them who remained and endured the trouble to the end.

#### NA GARBA.

1700-1720  
 A.D.

Na Jimli was succeeded by his younger brother Gar'ba, the second son of Zangina. Unfortunately he had a rival in the person of Zibirim, a son of Na

\* I.e. Kupene (on the map).

Zangina's daughter\* and of Andani Sigili, who secretly sent messengers to Osei Tutu, the then King of Ashanti, who reigned from about the year 1697 to 1731, imploring him to assist in the destoolment and deportation of his uncle Na Gar'ba to Kumasi, so that he might be king. Strong forces had been sent into Yendi with instructions either to deport Gar'ba or fine him 2,000 slaves, but if the Dagbambas showed any resistance, the country must be taken by force of arms. The Ashantis arrived in Yendi without opposition, and arrested Na Gar'ba with the firm determination to take him to Kumasi. But owing to the intercession of the chiefs and the princes, 2,000 slaves were demanded by the Ashantis for his ransom. As the 2,000 slaves could not readily be paid, the Dagbambas agreed to pay 200 slaves annually to Ashantis posted in Yendi for the special purpose of receiving them for despatch to Kumasi.

*Kumbungu*

We should observe in this chapter, that it was by this unnecessary rivalry that Dagbon became a vassal state of the Ashantis, who in about the year 1732—during the reign of Opoku Wari—had extended their power to and over the Volta River, thus making the countries of the Dagbambas, Nanumbas, Walas, etc. their tributary states, where they exacted great numbers of men for their warfare.†

1720-1824  
A.D.

Na Gar'ba died and was succeeded by his nephew Zibirim Na-Sa, who was succeeded by Zibirim son of Gar'ba, who was succeeded by Andani I son of Gar'ba who was succeeded by Mahame, son of Zibirim.

When Mahame died, the vacant stool of Yendi was again in dispute. The two rival chiefs were:—

1. Zibirim Kulunku the chief of Karaga who had been already elected king.
2. Sumani Zoli the chief of Safulugu.

1749-65

The latter sent and implored the help of the Wasope-wura‡ Sabunyalung, who was only known by the name Tikpiri by the Dagbambas, to fight against the former. The Wasope-wura determined to lead his army through Kumbungu to Safulugu where he should arrange matters with the Safulugu chief. Zakare Yao the chief of Kumbungu barred the road and gave him

*checked a*

\* Her name was Ziwoyo Naba Aminara.

† This covered the space 142 years; i.e. from the year 1732-1874.

‡ Wasope-wura—Chief of Daboya.

battle near Kpiogo, a village of Kumbungu. The Ngbanyes were completely humiliated; a state drum taken from them—which is still in use by the chiefs of Kumbungu—was one of the trophies of that bloody battle. Zibirim Kulunku, the king in whose favour the battle was fought, gave one of his daughters to Zakare Yao, and their issue is Isa the present chief of Kumbungu since 1912. ✓

1812

## CHAPTER V.

Na Yakuba's reign and the Civil War—Reign of Na Abdulai and the expeditions to Basari and Grunshi—Na Andani II's reign—Fighting in Kumbungu—Fighting in Karaga—German expedition in 1896—Disturbances as to the elector of a king and the interference of Dr. Rigler, a German Resident in Sansanne-Mangu.

1824-1849  
A.D.

## NA YAKUBA.

Belief in absolutism, selfishness, disregard of customary laws of a country, and neglect of the advice of Ministers of States, very often result in disaster and even the death of a king. Such was the case with Na Yakuba in the early years of his reign, when his own sons joined together and fought against him; but he was fortunate enough to overcome the trouble and continued to reign.

When Bukare Gufire, the Chief of Safulugu, was about to take his last sleep, although he knew that his nephew Zibirim Idantogma Lagafu, the Chief of Zabzugu, who was the son of his sister Ashetu and a mallam, had a better claim to the Safulugu stool, he bequeathed on oath the Safulugu stool to his brother\* Mahama Nubila, an act which he had no right to do.

The Civil  
War

Now, Bukare Gufire† died. But when it was time for Mahama Nubila to observe the funeral customs, Zibirim Idantogma Lagafu, the chief of Zabzugu despatched his elders with cowries and other presents to Safulugu to perform the customs on his behalf. These representatives were driven back from Safulugu by the former with abusive words to their master. The Chief of Zabzugu held his peace, but secretly prepared to obtain the stool of Safulugu by force of arms, and awaited the opportunity. The funeral custom was then finished, and Mahama Nubila proceeded to Yendi to be

\*Bukare Gufire and Mahama Nubila were of the same mother.

†Bukare Gufire, Mahama Nubila, Ashetu the mother of Zibirim Idantogma Lagafu, were children of one mother; while Mahama and Adama were children of another, their father was Na Andani I.

confirmed in his new office. As he was about to enter Yendi, Zibirim Idantogma Lagafu met and defied him, and a skirmish took place in the vicinity of the town in which the Chief of Zabzugu fell. Mahama Nubila was then confirmed in the chieftainship of Safulugu by Na Yakuba.

Safulugu's example was at once followed by Karaga. For, when Mahame the chief of Karaga expired, his half brother on his mother's side, Adama, wrested the stool and wished to be confirmed in the chieftainship; but his hopes were not entertained by Na Yakuba, who appointed Yahaya Sunson in preference to him. Yahaya was sent to Safulugu so that his brother Mahama Nubila, the chief of that place might assist him to get the stool.

Na Yakuba's own sons who were chiefs of some important towns found fault with their father and sided with Adama. These were:—

1. Abdulai\*, son of Na Yakuba, Chief of Tam-pieng.
2. Mahame, son of Na Yakuba, Chief of Nakpari.
3. Andani, son of Na Yakuba, Chief of Pishigu.
4. Bukare Shiog-ba, son of Na Yakuba, Chief of Nyong.
5. Adama, son of Na Yakuba, Chief of Pigu.
6. Sulemanu, son of Na Yakuba, Chief of Saganerigu.

The escort from Safulugu was routed before it could reach the neighbourhood of Karaga.

The chiefs who were on the side of Na Yakuba were:—

1. Mahama Nubila, Chief of Safulugu.
2. Isa, Chief of Mion.
3. Yahaya Sunson, Chief of Sunson.
4. Kabonna Kpema, the War Chief.

The king mustered his forces in Gamanji, a small village about 15 minutes distant from Yendi. Adama of Karaga attacked him; but was repulsed and the king took the offensive. Adama and his party were gradually driven and pursued. He fell and Abdulai took the

---

\*All these chiefs would muster from 200 to 500 fighting men in the twinkling of an eye.

leadership. The battle continued, but as Abdulai was unable to withstand the triumphant army of his father, he retreated and took his last stand at Vetin, a village about half-an-hour's distance from Tamale. The night before the final day, Abdulai convened all the mallams in his camp, and told them to consult oracles to find out what would be the result of the morrow's engagement. They told him that the battle would be fatal to him, that he himself would fall, and the result would be that all those princes who had taken up arms against their father would be boycotted, and their sons would have no room in the kingdom. For this reason, it was found necessary miraculously to transfer his death to his younger brother on his mother's side, Sulemanu, the Chief of Saganerigu. This the latter agreed to; but he first requested all the princes in arms against their father the king, and the principal mallams to solemnly swear on a written oath and on the Koran that when his children (sons) grew up, they might be taken for princes of Dagbamba kings, and be eligible for the Yendi stool. As there was no time to lose, the whole camp agreed and the oath was sealed hurriedly. At dawn, the fighting was resumed with vigour, and it was not till noon that Abdulai's army began to retreat towards Bamvem. They were pursued by the king's forces, and the battle came to an end when Sulemanu fell in Dohene, a small village under Bamvem. Sulemanu's body was interred at the front of his compound in Saganerigu. It was after this battle that the Dagbambas, who were in favour of the insurgent princes, began to migrate into Salaga, Yegi, Kintampo, Ejura and Kratchi. Mahama Nubila, the Chief of Safulugu, abandoned his chieftainship, and died miserably in Kumbungu his mother's town.

### NA ABDULAI.

Na Yakuba was succeeded by his eldest son Abdulai the leader of the insurgent party. As during the previous reigns\* very little had been done to meet the payment of the two thousand slaves, the Ashantis posted in Yendi now began to threaten the king that

\*During the previous reigns, raiding parties were sent in all directions; sometimes they were very unlucky—these raiding parties reached even Tumu itself and two men were killed.

the non-fulfilment of their promise would result in the destruction of their capital, and that all the royal family and the principal men of the country, would be carried away to Kumasi as slaves and they would never again see their country. Therefore to make war against the Grunshis and the Basaris, now became the sole object of the Dagbambas, and preparations were made for the purpose :—

1. The king with his army to Basari.
2. The chiefs of Karaga and Kumbungu to Grunshi.

The king was successful and brought into Yendi some hundreds of Basari captives while Karaga and Kumbungu were less successful. To complete the enormous payment in slaves, the authorities began to catch their own people on big market days in the bush and on principal trade routes; and thus, gradually, the two thousand slaves were paid off.

#### NA ANDANI.

Na Andani II, was the most tyrannical of all the kings of Dagbon; but it has been suggested that his successor Alasan, who died on the 16th January, 1917, would have surpassed him in cruelty, had not the Germans who came from Sansanne Mangu, and called him from Karaga to be made king, afterwards deprived him of all the offices of a king, degraded him, and left him as a bird plucked of its feathers.

In the early years of Andani's reign, a trifling palaver which resulted in open fighting between the king, the Kumbungus and the Karagas, had its cause and origin in Kasoriyiri, in the following manner :—

A certain Salufu, one of the headmen in Kasoriyiri, was afflicted with a whitlow, and a man from Kangbogo\* was engaged to cure him. This being done Salufu despatched the man empty handed. The man went and kept company with Yakobu, a vagabond prince† for some time, and then lodged complaints with his associate, and instructed him with a conjuration to receive £25 from Salufu. Yakobu was pleased

\*A village under Kasoriyiri.

†Nabi Yonga.

with the offer,\* but as he could not openly demand the sum mentioned, he proposed to infest the Kumbungu-Kasoriyiri main road. So, it happened that on a certain weekly market day of Kasoriyiri, he hid himself in the bush, and, having seen women from Kumbungu villages going to Kasoriyiri to attend the market, he attacked them and caught the wife of one Adu, of Chisiogo, an important follower of the chief of Kumbungu, and sold her to Mariama, the sister of Aduna the chief of Zangbalon. The matter was reported to the chief of Kumbungu who sent and requested Aduna to free the woman from her thralldom, on the plea that a native of Kumbungu could never be sold for the offence of a Kasoriyiri man. The messengers were sent back with defying words to Kumbungu. Others were sent but were driven away with whips by the order of the Wulana.† By this time, the chief of Zangbalon had gathered his forces on the left bank of the lake between them and the Kumbungus and some even commenced to cross it where it was knee-deep. The Kumbungus asked them: "shall we fight?" The answer was "Yes." The Zangbalons first attacked, but they found that they were too weak to fight the Kumbungus, so their chief, Aduna, fled to seek the protection of the paramount chief of Safulugu who, thinking it an easy task to defeat the Kumbungus, took the field against them. The fighting took place on the Safulugu-Kumbungu road, and the Safulugus were repulsed and driven back into their homes. Kumbungu was now accused before king Andani of taking up arms against his superiors, and that he even contemplated fighting the king in Yendi. Na Andani on hearing this did not inquire into what was the cause of the fighting, but at once summoned the War Chief (Kabon-na Kpema) and his captains, and distributed gun-powder. On account of his mother being a native of Kumbungu, Alasan, the paramount chief of Karaga, joined with the

\*Princes who have had no chieftainships lived on robbery, and are called "Nabiyonga" vagabond princes.

†Wulana—chief of the Equestrian order, is an important man of a town, and acts during the chief's absence,

Kumbungus against the king. The two armies met about an hour's journey from Kumbunguu, in the direction of Zugu and Tarkpa. The fighting was very fierce and lasted the whole day. The Kumbungus did not tremble even in the presence of the Lion of Dagbon who led his army in person against them, and they did not give way until their dauntless leader, chief Abdulai was killed. For a further punishment the king dispossessed the Kumbungus of the important town of Zugu, and allowed his army to remain in the vicinities of Kumbungu, robbing and carrying away their cattle.

The king now resolved on punishing the paramount chief of Karaga who had already known what steps the king was going to take after the fighting in Kumbungu. The king led his army through Tampieng; Karaga also mustered his forces and awaited the king in the neighbourhood of Karaga. The fighting took place quite near Karaga and it was disastrous to the king during the first engagements. But gradually after much difficulty, the king got the upper hand, and Alasan was killed. His body was buried just at the entrance into Karaga, and a young deleb-palm stands on the tomb.

King Andani now began to reign despotically in his kingdom—his anger knew no bound, and it was in his time that Dagbon began to become a depopulated country.—

During the reigns of Andani's predecessors, a lonely baobab-tree\* was selected far in the bush, under which any person and any wife of the kings, who fornicated together, were led and killed, by an executioner (Cheri-lana) whose duty it was to execute such prostitutes. This spot and the baobab were named "Na-Data" or "The Kings rival." Now the kings of Dagbon usually keep over a hundred wives, but to feed and clothe them all is a matter of impossibility. Some of them who are more fortunate, privately get means from their parents through the agency of the King's servants in the compound. But since they are allowed to attend the weekly market in Yendi they easily find a way to accept the advances of anyone, whose

\*This baobab still exists, and the Target of the Northern Territories Constabulary in Yendi is near to it,

Fighting in  
Karaga

Depopulation of  
Dagbon

wish it is to make them sweethearts. Then they are wont to climb over the walls in the stillness of the night to their lovers.

The depopulation of Dagbon was alleged to be due to the following facts:—As Na Andani was causing his wives and their sweethearts to be executed under the Na-Data, he once got an opportunity to give an order for executing a certain Mallam—in that quarter of Yendi called “Balogo”—who was accused, on suspicion, of having fornicated with one of the king’s wives. The mallam was brought before the assemblage which failed to produce the woman in question; but the king’s voice prevailed in spite of the mallam’s defence, and he was led to be killed in his quarters. When his head was caught off, instead of blood, milk was seen to fall. It was from this time that the Dagbamba country began to decrease in population till to-day.

The blindness of king Andani, which has been inherited by all his sons, was alleged to be due to one of his fairest and most beloved wives, who was accused of having been put in child by her sweetheart. She was brought before the assembly but she swore that the pregnancy was of the king. In spite of all her defence, she was condemned and led to Na Data together with her sweetheart, there to be executed. The executioner first killed the man, and then the woman, who was mutilated before the final blow. Customarily, he came back into the presence of the king, dancing with the right arm of the woman between his teeth. A week after her execution, her ghost appeared in the presence of the executioner and demanded her arm saying:—

“Cherilana, timma m-bogo,  
M-bi kumda  
Ka n-kuli ka o-ti mogo.”

meaning:—

“Executioner give me my arm,  
My child is weeping  
That I may return to let it suck.”

The executioner at once became mad and remained so till his death, and no one has been appointed since to his office. The woman’s ghost was said to have driven her fingers into the eyes of Na Andani

Blindness  
of Andani  
inherited  
by his  
sons

so that he became blind in both eyes. The blindness of the father has been transmitted to the sons (daughters excepted) so that in their old age, they must all become blind.

The day of  
Adibo

Adibo-dale, i.e. "The day of Adibo" is the title given to that memorable day on which the Dagbambas defied the soldiers' carbines saying "Anasare malfa cherebo kane," i.e. "White man's gun has no flint stone," and "Sereminga yi-la kuom na, o-nye la zaham," i.e. "The white man is come from the water, he is a fish". These were the words of encouragement from the War Chief to the captains under him. About one year or so after the settlement of the Germans in Kratchi, they, in 1896, organised an expedition under Baron von Massow, Graf Zech, Dr. Gruner and a certain young officer; this expedition was intended for Sansanne-Mangu. *En route*, it was to pass through Bimbila and Yendi. The Nanumbas collected large forces in both Wulenshi and Bimbila to impede the advance of the expedition. The fighting took place in a small village near Wulenshi, and the Nanumbas were driven towards Bimbila. On the same day, the expedition arrived at Bimbila where the fighting was again resumed by the natives. They were mown down with heavy slaughter, and the rest fled with their blind king to Chamba. Next day the expedition broke camp and resumed its journey toward Yendi. On hearing that the white men (the fish) were advancing toward Yendi, Na Andani summoned the War Chief and all men who were intrepid, to go and bring these fish in ropes into his presence. Some few hundreds of men equipped themselves with Dane guns, bows and arrows and spears; and the rest of them took ropes\* and sacks with them to meet and catch the whitemen, and to put them in their bags for the king. Spies had been sent out to Langadja, who returned and said that the whitemen were coming with their short guns without flint stones. The War Chief arrayed his men according to custom, and he and his chief captains seated themselves on their war chairs, and fettered their feet. Servants stood behind them to load their guns. It was in Adibo where the fighting took place. The Dagbambas were killed in great numbers; heaps of dead bodies were to be found

\*Especially, men from Sunson and its surrounding villages brought no weapons other than ropes in their hands,

in all directions, with horses that fell under their riders. The War Chief with all his captains died on the battle-field. A few of the men who escaped in the heat of the fighting, ran and informed the king saying:—"Na, tobo sagamya, kabonna kpema kpalemya," i.e. "Oh king, the battle is spoiled; " the War Chief is dead." The King was then led on horseback to a place of safety. Before the Germans entered Yendi, it was dark, and a very heavy rain has fell, and it has been noted that since that time no rain has ever fallen on that day. The Germans burned the whole of Yendi durin the same night, and left for Sansanne-Mangu. On the return of the king from his retirement he prophesied that " while he lives, no whiteman shall ever set his foot in Dagbon." This prognostication was and is believed by the Dagbambas namely—that, had Andani lived, no whiteman would have come to Dagbon to settle, and they still maintain that a time will come when the whitemen now in Dagbon, i.e. the English and the Germans will leave their country.\* King Andani then gave cattle and plenty of cowries to the Mahammedan community in all parts of his kingdom to make charms to prevent the whitemen coming any more into his country. These charms were said to be hung on the branches of the Kapok and the boabab trees in Yendi, and some were buried on the Yendi-Bassari roads, Yendi-Demon road, Yendi-Sansanne-Mangu road, Yendi-Salaga road, Karaga-Gambaga road, Safulugu-Diari road, Tamale-Daboya road, and Kumbungu-Yagaba road. Na Andani died three years after the battle of Adibo.

After the funeral custom, Idi, the eldest son of Andini, who was then the chief of Tugu, but was blind,† wanted to be chief of Safulugu; he therefore prevailed on the elders to make Kukra Adjei the insane chief of Safulugu, king. During this time, Alasan, the chief of Karaga, was the rightful heir to the Yendi stool. The elders reluctantly did what was asked of them. Karaga did not agree and the country was in a state of strife. At the same time, Bukare, the son of the deceased king Andani, headed the Zabarmas, who were finally driven into Yendi by Captain (late Sir) Donald Stewart, and defied the authority of the British in Gambaga; therefore an expedition was organised

Yendi stool  
in dispute

\*While employed, as a Census Clerk in the Southern Province of the Northern Territories, Western Dagbon, this question was variously put to me i.e. "Did I know when the whitemen will quit their country." The answer was "there is no time."

†Blind in one of the eyes,

against them under Major Morris, accompanied by Moshi levies, who had been recently driven by the French from Wagadugu. The insurgents were pursued into Karaga, and thus caused the sacking and demolition of Karaga by the Moshis who carried away with them, young men and women, with plenty of cattle. The news was brought to Alasan of Karaga who then withdrew himself from the fighting for the Yendi stool and went to interview the English who were encamped in Gunayiri. Idi, who now considered himself the paramount chief of Safulugu, went with his Safulugus into San where he was revelling for some time. Dr. Rigler, the German Resident in Sansanne-Mangu, was informed of the disturbances in Yendi relative to the election of a king to the stool. Although the Dagbamba country was a neutral zone at the time, Dr. Rigler came down with his Infantry and foot soldiers, and fell upon the Safulugus in San, and Idi was killed. On his return from San, Dr. Rigler interviewed the elders upon the question of electing king. They all unanimously told him that Alasan of Karaga was the rightful heir. Alasan, therefore, was sent for to be made king. During the reign of Alasan, there was nothing important in native affairs, but we should observe that in the early part of his reign the Germans settled in Yendi in 1900. Though the Germans were his benefactors, their settlement in Yendi did him no good. For he was deprived of all his authority as a king, and was caused to be utterly rejected and despised by his own people, and the country was, after its partition by the Anglo-German Boundary Commission in 1900-1901, ruled directly by the Germans first, and sometimes through the agency of the king's own ministers to whom only the German talked. Fortunately at the outbreak of the Great War of Europe, the Anglo-French occupation of Togoland has ameliorated many an ill-treatment under which the natives and their chiefs have sunk; and in those parts the people heartily thanked God that they have come under the British sphere of influence, where the enormous taxes of the Germans have been abolished. King Alasan was again invested with his privileges which the Germans deprived him of. He died on 16th January, 1917, and his son Abdulai was made Regent in the same year, and is the present Na of Dagbon.\*

---

\*The French Government in Togo maintains the "Wege gebuhr" of the Germans, and the Steuer gebuher.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE ZABARMAS IN GRUNSHI, 1858-1898.

“A little fire quickly trodden out, but when suffered rivers cannot quench.”

It was during the reign of Abdulai, king of Dagbon, Adama, the paramount chief of Karaga, and Abdulai, the chief of Kumbungu, that some poor and miserable Zabarmas came into Dagbon and were taken into the services of the chiefs of Karaga and Kumbungu. Those of Karaga were:—

1. Alfa Heno, son of Tadano.
2. Kazari, son of Mahaman.
3. Babuta, son of Goru.
4. Isaka, son of Aljima.

Those of Kumbungu were:—

1. Hamma Bruntaka.
2. Hamma Gabre.
3. Maiso.
4. Madugu.
5. Maigizo, an Hausaman.

Owing to their horsemanship, they accompanied the Dagbamba-Grunshi expedition of 1856, the non-success of which made them remain in the Grunshi country with one Nyagama, the chief of Nyakare.\* Within two years their numbers had been increased by others of the same stock. Dolbezon, the son of the chief of Kpon† employed these Zabarmas against Navarro‡ people for the following palaver:—On a certain day the young men of Navarro attended the weekly Market of Kpon, and Dolbezon, a son of the chief of the place, with his attendants, picked a quarrel with the Navarro young men, and insulted them. It now happened that a headman in Navarro died; Dolbezon, when attending the funeral customs, had been well beaten by the same youngmen whom he had offended in his town. Enraged by a scurrilous song, which commemorated this assault, Dolbezon

---

\*Nyakare remained a ruin since Babatu's raid; but a compound was built on its ruins by a Gwosi man in 1913, and will probably be re-occupied.

†Is now officially called "Dolbizan".

‡Navarro between Tumu and Pien or Pina.

engaged these Zabarmas to help him and assisted by some of his townsmen, fell upon and plundered Navarro. Some few men died in a skirmish which took place afterwards, and the Navarros were unable to withstand the Zabarmas. The complete success of these Zabarmas encouraged Nabiowalle to hire them against one Baga, who disputed the chieftainship of Jana\* with him, and Baga's quarters were levelled to the ground. The fame of the Zabarma people soon spread over the entire Grunshi world; and at once the Grunshi chiefs began to remember old vendettas, and reprisals for the injuries done to their grandfathers, fathers or themselves were undertaken. Gradually strengthened by their Grunshi adherents whom they armed against their own countrymen, these once pauper Zabarmas, formed a large and impregnable camp in Kasana,† and became the terror of those disunited countries.

Pien V.  
Kwapo

Soon after the palaver of Jana (Nabiowalle) Badunadau, the chief of Pien (in French territory) fell in love with a certain woman with whom Bachappon, the chief of Kwapo (now British) also was enamoured. The question as to which of these two chiefs the woman should belong to being impossible to decide, Badunadau called the Zabarmas from Kpon, (Dolbizan) and fought against Bachappon who was killed in the engagement.

Prata V.  
Tasia

The chief of Prata now remembered an old quarrel between his grandfather and the grandfather of the chief of Tasia, probably on account of a bush-cow killed by a hunter from Tasia, on the border between them and the Tasia people. The chief of Prata therefore called over the Zabarmas against the Tasia, who were vanquished and the conquerors took many captives, a herd of cattle and a large quantity of cowries away. The Zabarmas then decided to remain in Prata; and it was here that Alfa Heno died after a leadership of six years.

Kazari, the son of Mahaman, was then made chief. After two months, the Dagbamba people, thinking that the Zabarmas who had been their servants some years previously, would easily be deprived of their wealth, waged war against them led by the paramount chief of Sifulugu.‡ During the first engagements the

\*Jana is now officially called "Nabiowalle" after that chief.

†Officially written "Kasano."

‡Andani who afterwards became king of Dagbon as Andani II.

Dagbambas were successful, and drove the Zabarmas from Prata to Naviri. Here Kasari sent to Musa of Seti, who was then acting as chief for his senile father Boi, for help. The request was responded to by Musa who collected all his forces to assist the Zabarmas. The fighting was renewed next morning; the Zabarmas were driven from Naviri through Bong to Seti. Here, the Seti lent their aid to them and the Dagbambas were driven back into the Issala country. In their attempt to attack Chalo (Chellaw), the Zabarmas were called over against them; the losses of the Dagbambas were enormous, so Andani with only a few of his men took a precipitate flight to Nangruma where they rested two days, and left for Dagbon via Yagaba. Owing to the faithful assistance rendered by Musa, Kazari solemnly swore an oath on the Koran that neither Seti nor any of its towns should be raided or molested by the Zabarmas.\*

There were thousands of petty raids made by the Zabarmas, but owing to lack of space, I am compelled to limit myself to the more important raids, and I hope my readers will concur with me.

Having found himself thus backed by the Zabarmas, Musa of Seti picked a quarrel with Muna, the chief of Najong, on the plea that that chief, having acquired some wealth, had, for some years disputed the paramountcy with his (Musa's) father Boi; secondly that Badiyiri, the son of Muna, the Chief of Najong, had assisted the Dagbambas against the Zabarmas during the last fighting in which the Zabarmas were driven into Seti. The last of the two reports enraged the Zabarmas who prepared to wreak their wrath on the people of Najong. The whole forces of Seti accompanied the Zabarmas and Najong was discomfited; their king was slain and hundreds of them were captured and sold into slavery.

Raid of  
Najong

After the conquest of Najong, the Zabarmas made Kasana† their home. From that time Kasana grew very large, and the emporium there was the largest the world had ever seen. Men from the four quarters made their abode in Kasana for the purpose of

Residency in  
Kasana

\*This oath was nullified when Babatu became chief.

†Officially written "Kasano."

the slave trade, and every kind of commodity was to be found there. The slave dealers provided themselves with long heavy iron chains, in which the miserable folk were led into Salaga, another centre of all trades, there to be sold to the people who were unable to travel to Kasana, such as the Addahs, Anglos,\* Accras, Crepis, Popos, etc., etc.

Orders

Though they unanimously used to choose one as their chief, every Zabarma headman in his quarters was a chief, and all captives taken in a raid by his servants and men belonged to their headman; therefore it became necessary for the lords to form companies, each company having its master, who appointed a Grunshi chief over it, and captains under the chief.

1. The master :—Kazari.  
 Chief :—Amaria (Grunshi).  
 Captains :—Takatu (Grunshi).  
     Dogo Nyimawere (Grunshi).  
     Ganyon (Grunshi).  
     Balaiya (Grunshi).  
     Fembefaw (Grunshi).  
     Jikpie (Grunshi).  
     Hamma (Zabarma).  
     Yalli (Zabarma).  
     Musa (Zabarma).
2. The master :—Babatu.  
 Captains :—Tia Luami (Grunshi).  
     Bellu (Grunshi).  
     Napera (Grunshi).  
     Sappoga (Grunshi).  
     Bayeri-foaru (Grunshi).  
     Tato (Grunshi).  
     Nala (Grunshi).
3. Master :—Hamma Bruntaka.  
 Captains :—Bawci Chakele (Grunshi).  
     Sulle (Grunshi).  
     Shere (Grunshi).
4. Master :—Isaka.  
 Captains :—Bavaru (Grunshi).  
     Bayaga (Grunshi).  
     Bakolo (Grunshi).

---

\*Ang-los, primitively Anlo.

1



Kazari's facial marks as invented

2



Babatu's facial marks as invented

3



Isaka's facial marks as invented

4



Tuni's marks as invented

5. Master :—Tuni.  
     Captain :—Ika guma (Grunshi).  
     Batia (Grunshi).  
     Wonkoi (Zabarma).  
     Fariga (Grunshi).
6. Master :—Baba.  
     Captain :—Barikadiribakalo (Grunshi).
7. Master :—Buhari mai lafia.  
     Captains :—nil.
8. Master :—Zaza.  
     Captains :—nil.

With the exception of the Issalas who have two parallel cuttings from the ridge of the mouth on both sides up to the middle of the cheeks as their tribal marks, the Grunshi who are called A-wu-na,\* have neither tribal nor other marks on the faces. The clipping of the front teeth in the lower and the upper jaws are merely a matter of ornament which—they allege—adds beauty to their body. Therefore, on account of the number of slaves in the camp of the Zabarmas, it was expedient to invent facial marks so as to avoid disputes.

Facial Mark

Kazari, Babatu and Isaka were the men who owned plenty of slaves, therefore importance is attached to the facial marks they invented.

1. Kazari's Facial Marks :—Three parallel cuttings from the temple down to the cheeks (both sides), and three cuttings across them opposite the ears.
2. Babatu's :—Two parallel dotted cuttings from the temple down to the cheeks (both sides), with one cutting from the middle of nose on the right.
3. Isaka's :—The same as Babatus, but the cutting from the middle of the nose was on the left.
4. Tuni's mark is indescribable and would be better shown in a diagram.

Having thus found himself at the head of such enormous and strong fighting men from diverse provinces of the countries of Issala and Grunshi, Kazari proposed to lay waste the whole Grunshi and Issala countries. The atrocity and the treachery of the chiefs of these countries made easy their ruin, and Kazari

Petty raids  
and Kazari's  
death

\*Not "Aulo" which name is officially written "Awuna."

proposed to carry his raids into Wongara; but this proved impossible. The petty raids were commenced with Koroborro, Tona, Chiri-Toni, Pura and Lepoma. On account of the rainy season being at its height, Kazari discontinued his raids, came back and stayed on the ruins of Koroborro; being forced by hunger, his people went a-looting in Galo, but they were driven back with losses. Kazari then despatched horsemen, fully armed to wreak his wrath on the people, who were found to escape into Ya. Kazari then withdrew from Koroborro to Kasana; but when the rainy season was over, he went to Ya where he encountered the Grunshis. Despite help from Sadon, the Grunshis were totally vanquished, and they made their way for refuge to Sadon. They were followed thither, and a desperate fight took place in which the Grunshis were again beaten. The conquerors stayed 20 days in Sadon, and then removed to Dio, an fought with Letu, Vila, and the Buri people who dwelt on the border of Chaparisi. The raiders went back to Kasana for a rest. After two months, Kazari came back from Kasana to fight the Chaparisis; *en route*, he raided Pano, and Dabun, but when he came to raid Goworu, he received a deadly arrow wound during the forenoon, and died in the middle of the night. At daybreak, a bullock was slaughtered, flayed and Kazari's corpse was rolled in the raw skin so as to carry and entomb it at Kasana. But on arrival at Dio, it was entirely putrid and stinking; therefore the corpse was deposited in a tomb, and a house was erected on it in order to annually commemorate the gallant leader, who led them on many a victorious raid for twelve years.

Babatu  
chosen

One year after the death of Kazari the Zabarmas, according to their customs, made sacrifices to the departed soul of Kazari, and then appointed Babatu chief. His first act was to separate Musa of Seti from Ali Giwa, the successor of Kazari, and to get him into his own favour. This being refused, Babatu proposed to raid Seti; but his elders objected, and Yaro was destroyed in Seti's stead.

Siege of  
Wutoma

Ulu in Dagarti was then raided. So as to raid the Sekai district completely, and prevent the people from running away into Wa, Babatu then trekked round between Wallemebele and Bendj. All the people in the

Sekai district climbed up the hill of Wutoma,\* with all their belongings consisting of cows, sheep, goats, cowries and all sorts of cereals, and hid in caves on this hill. The Zabarmas laid seige to Wutoma for four months, means of living was exhausted, and scarcity of water prevailed; therefore, the Sekai people, on a certain day, vehemently and with one accord rushed on and attacked the Zabarmas, but they were relentlessly carried at the point of spears and arrows.

Babatu then raided Samoa, Nyaburi and Tegelembia, Lobi towns on the Black Volta River. The Lobis ran away to their kinsmen on the other side of the River. Despite the resistance of the Lobis, the Zabarmas succeeded in crossing the river one morning and, dispersing the Lobis, they went as far as Pa on the same day. At Buchare, Iman Mogtare who was the son of Mamadu Alhaji of Wahabu, called over the Zabarmas against the Chafeni people. On their way they raided Kalemburi and Wula; but when they encountered the Chafenis (in Wongara), the Zabarmas were severely beaten, and they took a precipitate flight to Kasana within four days, a journey which would ordinarily have taken them twelve days.

The Lobis  
and the  
Wongaras

Four days after his arrival in Kasana, Babatu invited all the Issala chiefs to come and pay him their respects, but they refused. He was preparing to punish the Issalas for their disobedience, when it was reported to him that a certain sheriff who was coming with a great wealth in gunpowder, etc., had been robbed† by the Chalo (Chellaw) people. After these two incidents he fought the Chalos who escaped to Dolbizan.‡ The refusal to surrender the Chalo refugees brought on open hostility between the Chief of Dolbizan and the Zabarma people. The former being tired of the fighting but hating submission, sought the assistance of Mahaman Akwasi Kokroko, the paramount chief of Safulugu. The cause of the Chief of Dolbizan was supported by the Dagbambas,

Second  
Dagbamba-  
Grunshi  
War

\*Wutoma was a town built at the foot of the hill bearing the same name between Pulma and Lilixia; its highest part westward is about 200 feet, and sloped eastward till it seltevl with the ground. Its breadth about 150 feet. The men of Wutoma, after this raid, went and founded Lilixia.

†He was robbed and killed by the people of Chalo.

‡Called by the natives "Kpon."

After nine months preparation, the Dagbambas made a hasty march into the Issala country, accompanied by their wives, children, etc., as if for a permanent abode in a strange land. The Safulugu Chief arrived at Basisan (or Batiasan) and took a compound where he stored a part of his warlike stores. Leaving all the women here, the Dagbambas left for Dolbizan. Next day the fighting began, and the Dagbambas were dispersed, about 400 of them being slain on the battle-field, and the Safulugu's state-drum captured. The fighting was not renewed for nearly a month, when the Dagbambas seeing that no assistance on the part of the Issalas was forthcoming, consulted with their Chief to leave Dolbizan for Basisan under cover of night, and thence to Dagbon. No sooner had the Dagbambas left than Dolbizan ran away to Pudon. The Zabarmas followed the Dagbambas to Basisan, where the most sanguinary fighting took place for four days. The Dagbambas first seemed to be successful but were eventually routed in all directions. Their Chief and his Mallam took flight on white steeds, but were overtaken and killed at the hands of Babatu. Their bodies were entombed under a Dawa Dawa tree just between the Rest House and the compound on the Nakong road, wherein their warlike stores had been stored—about 3 or 5 minutes from the Rest House. The eldest wife of the chief, with a few others who preferred death to falling into the hands of the Zabarmas, gathered themselves in the magazine, and setting fire to the gunpowder, died by that terrible explosion. Dolbizan again ran away from Pudo to Varo. The Zabarmas sent for him to come for peace. He, mistrusting the Zabarmas sent his son Bio with a hundred armed men, who remained with the Zabarmas without returning to Dolbizan.

#### Raid of Wa

Bazori, the prince of Wa, had, for a considerable length of time, made friendship with Tuni, a Zabarma headman. Through the agency of Bazori, the Zabarmas now turned against the Dagarti people, and swore that they would not leave one stone upon another in their towns. *En route* to Savulu, a dispute arose between Bazori and Babatu and it afterwards became an open quarrel in which opprobrious epithets were used; Babatu then resolved to raid Wa as soon as

Dagarti was finished with. Secondly, when Kasi, Savulu and Nuaro had been raided, the inhabitants of the last ran and took refuge in Wa; Babatu sent to Bazori for the surrender of the Nuaro refugees, but his demand was not complied with. After this the chief of the Zabarmas sent one Ali Mori (Imoru) to Wa for the same purpose, but seven of his men were captured and three killed. Babatu was enraged and prepared to raid Wa. On his way to Wa, he requested Nange, the chief of Walembele, to accompany him. Nange not only objected, but refused also to supply him men. At this time Bazori was encamped at Nasa eagerly awaiting the raiders. No sooner had Babatu arrived than sanguinary and relentless fighting took place; the contending armies held their ground for a long time, but unexpectedly, and to the astonishment of his fighting men, Bazori took to flight. The elders were cowed, and there was no one who could encourage the Was, and thus the day ended in favour of the Zabarmas, who captured hundreds of Wa people, men and women and sold them into slavery. Countless cattle and cowries were taken away through Tumu to Kasana.

On Babatu's return from Wa, he exerted himself against the Walembele people. Having encamped in the vicinity of that town, he demanded 200 able-bodied men whom he pretended to enlist but sold into slavery. He then demanded 500 men which were not supplied. Babatu then threatened them, but he was disappointed by the flight of the whole of the Walembeles secretly to Kundugu, in the mountains near Bebele.\* However, the Zabarmas persued them, but were repulsed with a heavy loss. The Walembeles enjoyed seven years tranquillity, and flourished in their industries. This made Takora, the then chief of Daboya, have a grudge against them, and he seized upon 220 of them and sold them into slavery, on the plea that it was he that afforded shelter, and protected them from the Zabarmas. Adama, the brother of Takora, was very chagrined at this; so, he revolted, and fought with and drove Takora from Daboya. Zakariyao, the son of Takora, who was chief of Nyankpan called over the Zabarmas to fight with his uncle; but the former were defeated and driven back into their Grunshi homes.

Raid of  
Walembele

\*Both towns under Daboya.

There arose again a dispute between Babatu and Ali Giwa; the former determined to have Musa and his elder brother Tinchuga under his control. Musa having refused to leave the successor of his late friend Kazari, fighting then took place between the Zabarmas and the Seti people and lasted two years.\* Four years after the conquest of Seti, the Zabarmas began to tax their Grunshi chiefs who had for such a long time been the cause for raiding their own countries. The taxes levied by the Zabarmas were 1,000,000 cowries (£50 or £25) of modern cowries, with a hundred slaves, to purchase their freedom. After many considerations, these taxes they decided to levy on those Grunshi towns which had so far been left untouched. Bokolo, the chief of Sapoi, was the first who was requested to pay these taxes to avoid his town being raided. Bokolo refused and a fight took place between them; Bokolo was killed and the Sapoi people were captured and sold into slavery. Tumu and the Goru people paid the taxes, and were left unmolested. Many other Grunshi towns were thus taxed and were not raided.

During the commencement of the fifth year's residence in Seti, the Grunshis, who were the real strength of the Zabarmas had revolted on account of a certain Kagbanye woman named Mariama, who was engaged to one of the Grunshi captains but had been taken to wife by Buhari Mailafia, a Zabarma headman. In these circumstances, and on account of the ill-treatment which the Zabarmas now adopted toward their captains, the Grunshis began to see their folly. The fighting took place from Seti to Kasana, and from there to Mandarnu where the battle was pitched, with a little stream called Leporile between them and the Zabarmas. Amaria, the leader of the Grunshis against the Zabarmas sent for the help of the French in Wagadugu. It was not long after this message that the Samoris came and made peace between them. The Zabarmas, then, with some of the Grunshi captains who were in their favour, went to raid Kanjarga, which raid was their last. A Kanjarga headman named Kangmanate, with his people, for some reason or other, invited the Zabarmas against their countrymen. They had raided the Kanjargas for some months with good

\*During this fighting, Tumu people led by one Jogga and Amadu of Leo went to assist the Setis, but were all killed by the Zabarmas. †

success. But to their surprise, they saw the French come to fight them. Of course, the French would not stand their nonsense, so, Babatu, being unable to interview the former to discuss terms, was driven into Yagaba. But unfortunately, he had been driven from Yagaba into Zantani by the English who pursued him thither. Here, he was warned to go to his own native land with his Zabarma followers, and to leave the Grunshis alone; but Babatu said that he had no other country than Grunshi, therefore he implored captain (late Sir) Donald Stewart, to allow him to stay in the Grunshi country. His request was not entertained, and he was driven into Dagbon. Tia Luami, with a great multitude of the Grunshis who were Babatu's fighting men, were enlisted in the Gold Coast Regiment. Babatu then concluded a friendship with Bukare\* a prince of Dagbon, who vowed to assist the Zabarmas in dislodging the English from Gambaga. As a result of their attempts to defy the English on several occasions, an expeditionary force of the Second Battalion (with some Moshi Contingents) under Major Morris, was sent against them. The Zabarmas with their gallant Dagbambas were driven from place to place until they entered into Karaga where the Moshis who are general free-booters, sacked the town, and took away many properties which were within their reach. Many young men and women, boys and girls also were said to have been captured by them. The insurgents then ran away through some Gushiago villages into Yendi, the capital town of the Dagbambas, where the Zabarmas now settled peacefully, built houses and farmed for their maintenance. Babatu, Tuni, and many other notable men died in Yendi. At present, in Yendi, there are now but few Zabarmas, with Zaza as their chief.

---

\*He (Bukare) is the son of Na Andani II, he was first chief of Pigu then Chief of Tugu, then chief of Saganerigu, and now paramount chief of Savelugu.

## CHAPTER VII.

Division of Dagbon—Orders of Chiefs and Prices of Chieftainships and Titles—Enstoolment Ceremony—Death and Funeral Customs of a King—The eunuchs.

---

## A. DIVISION OF DAGBON.

Irrespective of the partition of the Dagbamba country by the Anglo-German Boundary Commission in 1901, the country of the Dagbambas is practically divided into three great Provinces:—

## I. THE YENDI PROVINCE.

The Yendi Province is comprised of the sub-districts of Sambo, Gushiago, Gbogo, Yalzori (Zabzugu), Kor'le (Nakpari), Sunson, Demon, Ngani (Gnani), Gundogo, Gbangbar'ga (Bunbalga), Dasuyiri, and certain towns and villages beyond Oti River to the borders of Basari and Sansanne-Mangu, and a small quarter containing three or five compounds in the independent town of Jarikpanga.

*a.* The chiefs of Gushiago who receive their appointment as such from the King, are entitled "Tinkpema," i.e. "The eldest of the country rule over the Kpamkpamba tribe known as the 'Komba' people. The women of the Komba tribe wear leaves as do those of the Issalas.

*b.* The chiefs of the Sunson whose presence is necessary before the entombment of a deceased king of Dagbon, rule over the Kpamkpamba tribes of Gbimba and Nafieba. These tribes have no tribal marks of their own, but have largely imitated those of their masters. The ancient Chiefs of Sunson were said to be eligible for the Kingship of Dagbon, but we have not yet heard of any of them being made a king. For in those days, a certain chief of Sunson was said to be very powerful, and declared war against the then king of Dagbon; but his plans were frustrated and the right of the Sunson Chiefs to the Kingship was disowned forever

under a curse. Queer stories are extant, and are well known, that after that chief was cursed, he became an imbecile and idiot; and on one occasion he went a-strolling in the bush with his attendants, and came to a pool of stagnant water where, on hearing the frogs quacking in the grasses near by, he asked his followers what was the reason of the frogs crying so. They said: "because they are hungry." And why, said he, is yonder tree so dry? They said "Oh Chief, because of the cold by nights." Roaming a little further into the bush he saw a young kob\* and ordered it to be caught. On his return home he ordered a large cow to be slaughtered for his wives to prepare a feast for the frogs quacking by the said stagnant water, and a gown for the dry tree standing by it. These things were carried to the water and eaten by the gang, and the gown kept by the elder of the gang. When these men came back, they said to the Chief: "The frogs and the dry wood send their compliments to you." "Are they pleased?" asked he. "Yes, they all thank you," was the answer. Now, the kob was well fed and it grew up. The chief then ordered it to be saddled and bridled for him to ride. No sooner had he mounted it than the untamed animal ran with him into the bush through thick woods and bushy thorns and tore him into pieces. The elders followed the footprints of the animal, and collected the pieces of the chief's body, and buried them. Hence the nickname of the Sunson chiefs: "Zagse woho ka ba kore" "Refusing a horse and mounting (riding) a kob." For this reason the progeny of the Sunson chiefs never eat the venison of this animal and much less is its skin used for sandals.

## II. KARAGA PROVINCE.

The Province of Karaga includes the sub-districts of Karaga, San, Gimle, Kpatinga, Sampiemo, Bagale, Sun, Pigu, Nyon, Gunayiri, Tudjo, Zailogo, Gbalga, Sakulo, Ga and Galwie.

In the Province of Karaga there are certain fetish towns and villages which serve as refuges for delinquents; these localities are called in their language "Tindan'yiri." Such delinquents are especially

---

\*The animal is called by the Dagbambas "Kogo" and in the Hausa language "Mariya". It has long curved horns bending forward.

women who wish no longer to continue in the marriage state with their husbands. But persons committing the highest crimes should run away to Tamale for a refuge. In this Province again we find many water holes excavated through strata of rocks, which works had been attributed to one of those Giants whose name was Zodebi.

### III. THE TOMA PROVINCE.

The Toma Province is by far the largest of all the Dagbamba Provinces, and has Safulugu as its capital. It is comprised of the following sub-districts:—

Safulugu\*, Zugu† Bogo†, Kumbungu†, Saganerigu†, Zangbalon†, Zogo†, Gbolon†, Kasoriyiri†, Nyankpala†, Worbogo†, Lungbunga†, Timbungu†, Singa†, Dalon†, Depale† Tolon†, Gbirimani†, Bamvem†, Tampieng†, Nantong†, Diari†, Tamale§, Tugu†, Zogo†, Namashiogo†. Zantani is under Safulugu, but its chief is always a Mamprussi prince.

Owing to the extensiveness of this Province, and the luxury and pomp of its capital, Safulugu is very often called by the Dagbambas "Toma-Naya" that is Yendi of Tomas, and for this reason very few of the Safulugu paramount chiefs have yet ascended the Yendi stool.

### IV. THE PROVINCE OF MIONG—ZU-NAM||.

On account of the absurd superstitions of the Dagbambas, this Province, though very small, is yet an important one and has been, by a mistake, included in the Yendi Province under the name of Sambo. The former residency of the Miong paramount chiefs is Tamalgo, a village near Kpabia. But when Dimani, an elderly prince of Yendi died suddenly in this place on being appointed a first Miong chief, his successor removed his headquarters to Sambo. The people of this village, being Kpampkambas, deserted with their fetish which was then a young baobab tree,

\* I.e. Safulugu Province.

† Chieftainships for only the Royal Blood.

‡ Chieftainships for Non-princes.

§ Fetish priestdoms.

|| Chieftainship for first-born of the Dagbamba princes.

and settled among their kinsmen on the other side of the river Oti. They remained there for a considerable length of time; but, owing to the fruitlessness of the place, they were compelled by a continuous famine to quit that place for the present site which they called "Sambul," and they left their fetish which had grown into a big baobab tree. Afterward, another detachment of a blood-thirsty and most fearful tribe of the same stock called Kanjocks came from the north and settled first half-way between Kungani (Kugnan) and Sambul; but as they were unable to get on equally with the Sambuls and the Kunganis, they crossed the Oti river and occupied the ruins of the Sambuls, who were refused the right of serving their own fetish by the Kanjocks, and thus arose perpetual hatred and never-ending fighting between the Kanjocks and the Sambulis. These people and many other Kpamkpambas who were in the habit of taking part in these affrays, had been very often punished lightly by the Germans by way of "Labour with hunger" in the plantations around Yendi. When this sort of punishment was of no effect, a certain Resident at Sansanne-Mangu, came with his soldiers and prevailed on the elders of all the different towns and villages to gather all the men, old and young, for a liberal distributon of salt which the Kpamkpambas like best. During an assembly of a vast multitude, the soldiers were ordered to surround and to arrest these defenceless and miserable folks who were led into Yendi for imprisonment. On the way to Yendi, the old men fatigued by the journey, were it is said knocked down dead with the butt-end of the soldiers' carbines, and the rest—numbers of whom were not known—died in prison and were buried in heaps in a big hole dug to receive their bodies. From that time till this day, the Kpamkpambas put no faith in a white man's promise. This was a great check to the Kpakpambas, and they remained tranquil, but they were still treated harshly under the "Labour with hunger" system till the Anglo-French Occupation of Togoland, when the Kpamkpambas again retorted to their old barbarism. While the English keep their Kpamkpambas in peace, the French ones became very truculent, and troublesome and used to challenge those of the English to fight. One of the most serious cases of this sort of thing took place between the Kanjocks and the Sambulis

when the former were assisted by Kunkunzori (English) and Tschare (French) against the Sambulis. This was in January, 1917, when Major B. M. Read\* visited Yendi, and went a-touring accompanied by Mr. A. W. Cardinall, the then District Political Officer, to the north. At Wapuli, Major B. M. Read was to go to Karaga *via* Gushiago, and then to the headquarters. But as soon as they arrived at Gbimba (Bimba), the palaver was reported to them, so Major Read was compelled to change his plans and to go hastily with Mr. Cardinall to Kunkunzori. It was found the inhabitants had deserted this place, so Major Read left Mr. Cardinall with instructions, and went back to Karaga. After many desperate efforts, Mr. Cardinall reported this serious situation to the French Resident in Basari and a punitive expedition was organised against the Komkombas† by the French, whereby they were brought to their senses.

#### B. ORDERS OF CHIEFS, ETC.

The officiating and the Advisory Board of the Kings of Dagbon—with the exception of Kuga chief—consists of eunuchs, all of whom reside in Yendi and hold important offices. These are according to their rank :—

1. Zohe-na
2. Balogo (or Balo-na)
3. Male
4. Mba-Dogo
5. Kumlana
6. Bunga and
7. Gub-lana

When the king invites the paramount and all other minor chiefs to assemble for a discussion on some essential palavers, whether such chiefs visit the king personally or through their representatives they have to lodge with these eunuchs according to their rank as has been arranged. These administrators then charge the chiefs certain fees which are probably left to the judgment of the visitors, before leading them to king, who would then listen to their remonstrances; without

\* Major B. M. Read was then Acting Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories.

† Properly, Kpamkpambas.

them, no chiefs—whoever they are— can approach the king, and an attempt to defy these orders results in a severe mulct or even a destoolment of a chief. The following is the “order” of the chiefs according to their rank :—

### I. ZOHE-NA.

The presence of Zohe-na, who is the chief minister and a very important man in the realm, is necessary in all cases in which the king has to deal with the paramount chiefs, such as Karaga, Safulugu and Miong, and the following important chiefs, such as:—Kumbungu, Vogo, Bamvem, Lungbunga, Zugu, Langa, Bogo, Namashiago, Sunson, Zosali, Zabzugu\*, Napkari\* Demon, Gushiago and Tugu. These have to approach the king with their grievances by paying first of all fees to Zohena.

### II. BALOGO OR BALONA.

The following chiefs have to approach the king through Balo-na :—San, Timbung, Diari, Saganerigu, Gbolon, Gbirimani (Birimani) Kpatinga, Sampiemo, Kutun, Piegu, Sun, and Pion—Kabon-na Kpemat† with all the captains‡ in Yendi district.

### III. MALE.

Male has very few visitors who approach the king through him. These are Sakpiego, Gbirimani (near Yendi) Gbambaya, and other small villages all lying north of Yendi. It is Male that fills vacancies of Balogo, Ga and one other eunuch's chieftainship in Safulugu.

### IV. MBA-DOGO.

Mba-Dogo is the intermediary between the king and his elders and all visitors; he has the charge of the king's compound. It is his duty to inform the king to come out if people have gathered together outside his compound—in a word, anyone that wants to interview the king must first see Mba-Dogo.

---

\* The chieftainships of these two towns are called Yalzori and Korile respectively.

† The War Chief of Dagbon who resides in Gbangbariga (Bunbalga).

‡ These are called “Kabon-na”; “Kabonsi.”

The following Chiefs also approach the king through him:—The Chiefs of Ngani (Gnani), Nasa, Danyo, Kushebihi, Zagbanga, Zanga, Zakole, Kamshiogo and Gundogo.

#### V. KUMLANA.

The following chiefs visit or call upon the king through Kumlana:—Zangbalon, Zogo, Galwie, Sakpe, Dalon, Sangule, Taganamo, Bago, Bagon, Imahago, Zanduli, Kpunkpano, and Gbangbarga (Bunbalga); also the representative of foreign kings, such as the king of the Nanumbas.

#### VI. BUNGA.

Bunga has the following chiefs:— Nanton, Tolon, Kalebila and two other small villages to the East of Yendi.

#### VII. GUL-LANA.

As his title represents, Gul-lana is a waiter on the king, and has no particular distinction as the other eunuchs.

#### VIII. CHIEF OF KUGA.

In the old times, the chiefs of Kuga were known as the uncles of the kings, because Sitobo—the father of king Nyagse—and Sibie the first chief of Kuga, were sons of King Gbewa, Sitobo being the elder. But on account of their quarrels when the Kuga chiefs would have striven for the kingship, they are now termed “Grandfathers” of the kings. A Kuga chief has an equal right with the eunuchs and he is so much honoured by the king that, even in the case of a grave offence which Zohe-na the chief minister would have failed to persuade the king to pardon, when the chief of Kuga intercedes, the king must of necessity pardon the delinquent. The following chiefs approach the king through him:— Singa, Gbarga, Tanyeli, Nanduli, Taloli, Gbetobo and Bagale.

The fetish priest of Tamale and all the sub-chiefs there under him have their head in Gukpiogo.

It is noteworthy to point out that all the sub-chiefs under the paramount chiefs of Safulugu, Karaga, and Miong are appointed as such by their respective lords and the money obtained from the transactions are given

to the king who then would give a portion of it to the paramount chief concerned and also to his ministers. The minor chiefs are made by their respective sub-chiefs and the moneys received are paid out to the paramount chiefs who must of course also send this to the king and report all the matters in detail to him. But the kingship being of the highest order is not to be sold; it is a chance (as they express it); God bestows on whom He pleases, from among the three paramount chiefs.

The following are the prices of the chieftainships and the titles.

	<i>Chieftainship.</i>	<i>Price.</i>	<i>From whom bought</i>
Safulugu	... ..	£50*	King.
Karaga	... ..	£50	King
Miong	... ..	£50	King
Sunson	... ..	£25	King
Yalzori (Zabzugu)	... ..	£25	King.
Kor'le (Nakpari)	... ..	£25	King.
Kumbungu	... ..	£25	Safulugu
Gushiago	... ..	£25	King
Tolon	... ..	£25	Safulugu
Diari	... ..	£25	Safulugu
Zugu	... ..	£25	Safulugu
Bambem	... ..	£25	Safulugu
Yogo	... ..	£25	Safulugu
Zangbalon	... ..	£20	Safulugu
Saganerigu	... ..	£25	Safulugu
Tugu	... ..	£20	Safulugu
Tanyieng	... ..	£25	Safulugu
Zogo	... ..	£25	Safulugu
Gbolong	... ..	£20	Safulugu
Bogo	... ..	£20	Safulugu
San	... ..	£20	Karaga
Galwie	... ..	£10	Karaga
Kutun	... ..	£10	Karaga
Sampiemo	... ..	£15	Karaga
Zakpalsi	... ..	£10	Karaga
Kpatinga	... ..	£15	Karaga
Kpabia	... ..	£20	Miong
Bagale	... ..	£15	Karaga
Demon	... ..	£20	King.
Gbangarga	... ..	£15-£18	King.
Ngani(Gnani)	... ..	£10	King

\* Dagbambas Tuhule—tuhule=1,000 cowries 1,000,000 cowries; when a 1,000 cowries are 6d., the 1,000,000 are £25, but now as a 1,000 cowries are 1s., the 1,000,000 are £50.

↳ Kpoge	...	...	...	...	£15	King
↳ Pion	...	...	...	...	£10	King
Zanduli	...	...	...	...	£10	King.

In every case, perquisites are paid to the different principal men who have to consult with the King upon these matters of chief-making.

## TITLES OF SOLDIERY AND NOBILITY.

The king and all the chiefs of Dagbon have provided themselves with "fighting" men who are called "Kabonsi". This self-same name has been applied by the Dagbambas to the Ashantis and to all foreigners from the coast. The dresses of these so-called soldiers on special occasions are short gowns ornamented with broad amulets partly wrapped and sewn in pieces of fine red blankets, which are said to be protective in time of war against bullets and poisoned arrows. These soldiers are generally quartered near and around the king's or the chief's compounds, and are supplied with Dane guns and gun powder. The titles of the soldiery are all names of Chwee origin and even the names of the days of the week are considered by the Dagbambas as honourable titles; and it is these sort of soldiers who call their children after Chwee names. The price for which both the soldiery and noble titles are obtained, is not a settled one, but takes the form of a "competition", the person who bids highest being confirmed.

The soldiers

The Nobility

Idleness and frivolous gatherings around the king or a chief to prattle and to "flatter" him, seem to be the delight and duty of the nobility in the eyes of the Dagbambas, so much so that in Yendi, any grown-up men, are all chiefs\* in their own estimation, and a supply of labour from the town Yendi† is very often a hard job to obtain by the king, and unless a stern regime prevail, these frivolous noblemen would remain truculent and mock at authority.

The Imam-ship

The Imamship which is hereditary in Yendi, is not for the service of God, but for the king. Therefore there is no need for such persons who fill that noble

\* i.e. A headman; a man may not have a wife or even a boy but "he" is called a "Chief."

† In all the large towns in Dagbon, such as Karaga, Safulugu and Miong the same thing prevails and labour is fetched from the surrounding villages.

post, to be versed in the Koran or in the traditions of the Arabian prophet. Beside the king, Zohe-na the chief minister of the state, also has his own Imam. There was no mosque but these two Imams were content to build for themselves a receptacle, wherein each could call upon the name of the Most High. As there was too much retrogression and lack of knowledge of Arabic on the part of these Imams, it became necessary to create a third Imam—a non-native and a learned man—to preach and to expound the passages of the Koran, and to teach such as would care to learn the necessary commentaries on the Koran, such as Beidhawi and Jallo'dhini. On account of procrastination in the erecting of a mosque, a German resident ordered one to be built in the present market place under the supervision of one mallam Yusufu Baba, and a learned Hausa man named Yakobu was appointed the "first" Imam to perform the holy functions. Yakobu died, and was succeeded by his son Haliru, a profound and learned man in the Arabic, which position he held for about three years. He being a naturalised stranger invested with such an honour, the present Zohe Imam a moderately-learned man, became jealous of this position, and a quarrel was picked on account of the distribution of an oblation offered by the Regent to the Mohammedan Community. This matter was, of course, mixed up with some other trilling past offences against Harilu, and Zohe Imam prevailed on the elders and the regent to deprive Haliru of his position. The matter seemed to be serious, but the whole Mohammedan community was charged to consider well on the palaver, and the final decision was "neither of them guilty nor right, but the preaching on Fridays in the mosque should, from henceforth be 'alternate' between the three imams".

The following are prices of some of the titles as far as it is possible to learn, but in some cases a title is confirmed without charge, except for perquisites to the elders :—

Probable  
prices of  
Titles  
(a) Soldiery

Kabon-na-Kpema (Big War Chief)	about	£25
Kabon-na War Chief	about	£10
Achiri-Kpema	?	about £10
Achiri	?	about £4
Nayiri-Monkwa	?	about £5

Nayiri-Adu	about	£10
Nayiri-Djahefo (Chwee Ogyahyefo)?		£4
Nayiri-Djahefo (Chwee Ogyahyefo)?	about	£3
Nayiri-Anim (Chwee)	about	15s.
Nayiri-Akwansi (Chwee) (Sunday)	about	8s.
Kaku (from Wednesday)	? about	5s.
Champong	? about	8s.
Takora	? about	6s.
Chintor	? about	3s. to 4s.

and many other kindred ones for which there is insufficient space.

(a) Nobility

- Wulana (Equestrian order).
- Kpana-lana (Master of the Lancers).
- Tu-na (Master of the Baobabs).
- Kpihigi-na (Master of the ?).
- Gun-na (Master of the Kapok trees).
- Sikariga-na (Master of the ?).
- Yalinza-na\* (Master of the ?).
- Nayiri limam (Imam of the king's household).
- Zohe limam (Imam of Zohe).
- Zamirigo limam (Imam of all knowledge).
- Jemole (?) (Titles conferred on certain mallams).
- Wolgena (?) (Titles conferred on certain mallams).
- Ngun-Kahago (Washer of the king's dead body)
- Karima or Krama (One that beats the state drum).
- Namogna (Chief drummer to the king).
- (Sampah-na (Next to the Chief Drummer).

These last two men recite the names of all the former kings commencing always from a present sovereign backward to the last; they have a large number of followers whom they call pupils or learners.

### C. THE DAGBAMBA ENSTOOLMENT CEREMONY.

After the last obsequies of a deceased king have been observed, the three candidates, i.e. the paramount chiefs of Karaga, Safulugu and Miong, together with all other princes of kindred chieftainships who cherish a vain hope of being elected at haphazard, come round to see which of them is to be elected king. As the elders would fain know the choice of the fetishes in the matter, fetish priests of Kalebila with many others from the adjacent countries are summoned,—this concerns not the chief of Gushiago—to foretell whose is the kingship.

The Candi-  
dates

\* This title is conferred on people only in Kasoriyiri.

In most cases of this sort a minor and uninfluential chief of the blood royal is often mentioned by these soothsayers. The contradiction of opinion and the general displeasure induce the elders to dismiss the assembly, and another time is fixed for a final meeting. Then nocturnal meetings are held by the elders for a resolution to choose one of the paramount chiefs, who, they probably know, has a blameless character—a thing which they keep very secret until the day that is fixed. During these intervals, bribes are heaped upon the diverse elders in secret by the chiefs or the candidates concerned, who again spend large sums of money on the mallams who used to make for them charms and kindred necromantic and magical amulets to be buried on the graves of some notable men, and on the various roads leading into the town from without; these things are of course done during the night when all is silent. When the appointed day is at hand, and the people reassemble, the linguist of the chief minister addresses the meeting and says:—“N., the paramount chief of such and such province, a son of R., a former king of Dagbon is graciously elected king by our Lord God; may God give him long life to look after us, may God deliver him from treacherous men”. Then people say:—“Amen”. This being done, the prospective king must then pay a certain sum, either in cash or cows to the one mentioned by the soothsayers; then things go on amicably and a king is made. But if the other two candidates who lose both their chances and monies which they have no right to claim, object to the decision of the elders, things must then be settled by force of arms in which the elders usually prevail.

When the chiefs of Kuga, Sunson and Zabzugu and the chief Minister, Balo-na and Kumlana have selected the man for the kingship, a Thursday night which is always preferred in this ceremony, is appointed and the chief of Gushiago, who has to receive £5, a gown and a horse to be ridden into Yendi, is now invited. The selected king is put into the house of the late king. At about 10 or 11 p.m. a procession of ghosts (men from Gukpiogo and Cho) go through the town shouting: “Palo! Palo!”\* meaning: “Give

The Cere-  
mony

\* The same thing is done when the king's funeral customs are finished,

way! Give way! ” and throw stones to either side of the way when anxiously doing their bit, and go into a house. The ghosts then retire into an adjacent house where the sceptres and other royal articles are stored, and await the king’s arrival. This house is called in the Dagbamba language “ Yiribila ” and contains a ghosts house, a sceptre house, a house in which the late king is buried, and houses for the king’s elderly wives. The chief of Gushiago who is entitled the “ Eldest of the Dagbamba country ” accompanied by Tuguru-nam of Kuga, and Gomle of Yendi and others who have to take part in this ceremony go into the compound of the king—a matter of hide and seek—to search for and catch the prospective king and lead him into “ Yiribila ” and lodge him in the house of the ghosts where he is clothed in the ancient fetish robe and cap, and decorated with three strings of agate beads. He is then blindfolded and led to the entrance of the sceptre room where the ghosts have assembled, and pushed in. The ghosts then direct him to the sceptres of which he selects one.

The Fetish  
Stool

The fetish stool covered with white cloth which the king is allowed to see once in his life, is brought from Kpatia.\* A concoction of herbs and roots and barks of medicinal trees being ready, the king is seated then on the said fetish stool and washed by the fetish priests concerned, and after he has received instructions as to what should be a king’s duty for the welfare of his subjects, etc., the stool is removed to Kpatia at first cock-crow. A cow is then killed and left in readiness for the ghost leaders, viz the men who called out “ Palo! Palo! ” Another cow is slaughtered for the fetish custom and food is cooked three times and distributed among the elders and others who are hanging about the walls without. This custom is called “ Bagayuli, ” viz: “ Offerings to the departed souls. ” in order to protect their living relatives from all unseen evils; and after certain ceremonies accompanied by thousands of ejaculations by the chief of Gushiago who is the mainstay in these performances, the latter goes back to his town before daybreak, as, according to custom, is not allowed to witness the procession of the king in the morning. The king remains in the fetish clothes till daybreak when they are covered over by other garments.

\* A village not very far from Yendi,

Friday

At daybreak, the whole populace assemble outside the king's house. A donkey awaits at the outside door of a small circular house through which the king has to pass from the ghosts house to the crowd—upon this animal which formerly had to be ridden, the king three times, places his right foot.—It is then removed and becomes a perquisite of Gomle, and a horse substituted upon which the king mounts. A stately procession\* is then made in complete silence save for muffled drums and applause by the women that follow, and it proceeds very slowly to the house of Zohe-na, where the king dismounts and sits under a grass-mat shed or shelter in an extraordinary silence. Just as the procession commences to proceed, the chieftainess of Gundogo removes herself to and occupies the king's house until the seventh day when she leaves at about 3.30 a.m. before the king enters at about 4 a.m.† The Wulana (master of the Equestrian order) of the Chieftainess of Gundogo rises up and addresses the chief Minister saying:—"The chieftainess of Gundogo states that the chief of Mamprussi sold her a slave and, being unable to keep him, she sends him to you 'Zohe-na' to chain and lock up for seven days to prevent him escaping. After this address the king rises up and enters into a house in the compound of Zohe-na. This custom is called the "Hiding of King." Every night, during the confinement of the king, drums are played till dawn of the day, both in the king's and Zohe-na's quarters. No one is allowed to visit him personally save a few of his servants who are posted in the front hall to receive messages and presents for him.

On Wednesday, the sixth day, the house in which the late king was buried is burnt‡ and the walls levelled since the new king would die when he sees that house. But previous to the burning of this house, all men are admonished not to come out, lest those that have had sexual intercourse with the late king's wives would die if they smell of the smoke, or they would die by seeing the deceased king's body walking in the flames.

Steps taken on Wednesday following

Early morning on Thursday, the seventh day at about 4 a.m., the king, accompanied by only one or two of his servants, goes away from his confinement to the

Thursday

\*In this procession the princes of the royal blood customarily never take part.

† Cf., page on this custom.

‡ This house on the occasion, is customarily burnt during the nights,

house of Bunga\* where he sits down for awhile, and then goes into the house of Mba-Dogo leaving his trousers and garment, the pillow and the cow-hide on which he sits. These articles become the perquisites of Zohe-na who comes to ask Bunga if he has seen his slave who just ran away from him. At 7 a.m., Bunga also, with a rope in his hands, goes to Mba-Dogo, to inquire if he saw his slave that ran away from him that morning. Mba-Dogo will say: "Yes, I have seen him, he is in my house, but I will not deliver him to you." Then a funny altercation takes place between the two, after which Mba-Dogo goes in to the king, and brings a handsome gown to Bunga who then retires into his house. On this day people from all places of the country begin to crowd into Yendi for to-morrow's spectacle.

Friday

Early morning on Friday the king leaves Mba-Dogo and goes into the house of the old king; there he takes the ancient wooden spear which Kpogonumbo had used in killing the high fetish priests in Gruma, points it to the North, South, East and West, meaning that the inhabitants of the whole world should, by God's power, and by the help of his forefathers, be subject to him. At sunrise, Mba-Dogo will then go into the king's house, angrily shouting, yelling and stamping along, saying: "My slave has run away from me this morning, is he not in this house?" Shortly after this, a servant comes with a fine gown for him, and he retires. This is called the "Running away of the Slave." After this, the king comes out in a common dress to distribute half quantity of pancakes which have been abundantly prepared for distribution, to the men, women, boys and girls who are hanging about to find something to satisfy their hunger. About 9 a.m., the Liman and his followers come round to read the Koran, and prayers are made, and a sacrificial offering of cakes is given. Now, from about 10 a.m. crowds of men begin to assemble, the principal men taking seats under the shade erected near the king's compound, to receive and do homage to the king. Now the king comes out from his house to the congregation in a stately dress, shielded by Dane guns, accompanied by the chief drummer and others, and Woripkan-na walking in front of him with a

\*Now extinct.

very slow march, till he comes and seats himself on the gorgeously decorated pillows. Then the elders and the chiefs are named one after the other by the linguist to receive kola nuts from the king's own hands. Drumming and other plays conclude the ceremony.

On the seventh day after this ceremony, that is Friday, the wives of the new king are taken to the chief Minister's house accompanied by the woman chief of Kpatuya (Patiya) where they are given new names or titles by which each of them is called, and shaved clean.\* They are then led by the same woman chief amid applause and roaring of drums to the presence of the king who, with the elders, have assembled awaiting eagerly for their arrival. On their arrival in the presence of the king and the elders, they kneel down each one of them and are called by the new names in the hearing of the elders, by the woman chief.

This being done, drumming goes on every evening from about 4.30 till 6 p.m. During the playing, any woman or girl who looks fair, is to be caught by the king's wives, taken into the compound and lodged in a house, and a silver bangle is brought to be put on her arms—such a woman is now become the king's wife, no matter whether she is espoused to some one or an intended. This thing is continued for about ten days. In spite of this, most of the chiefs in Dagbon used to present their finest daughters to the king with the simple idea of getting promotion or a good name—and to be called the "King's father-in-law," is an honour that one can be proud of in Dagbon.

#### D. DEATH AND FUNERAL CUSTOMS OF A KING OF DAGBON.

When the king of Dagbon is seriously ill, and there is no hope of his being convalescent in spite of the thousands of medicines administered him for his recovery, Mba-Dogo is then made to represent him in the compound until the time that he would expire and be gathered unto his predecessors. In the olden times the death of a king was not to be immediately announced until such time as it would be convenient for the king's servants to have pilfered and ransacked the

King's wives receiving  
Titles :—  
1st wife Galbanga,  
2nd wife Katini, 3rd wife Gbanzalon : The one that cooks " Koyubga " etc. etc.

King's getting new wives

\* From this time, the king's wives have to be clean shaved until the day when they or the king expire.

properties of his wives before it was made known. But in modern times the women are very particular, and wish to know at once how matters stand when the king is in the agony of death, in order to despatch, through their female relatives who are warned to come near behind the walls of the compound, their belongings which have been some time previously packed in readiness. Now when the king has died, the elders are privately informed to hold their peace till midnight when messengers are sent out to Miong, Karaga, Safulugu, Gushiago, Sunson, Yalzori (Zagzugu) and Nakpari (Kor'le), by the chief minister, to announce his death. In accordance with an ancient custom, the messenger to Gushiago must be a good rider and must be provided with a strong steed; this messenger must go as near as possible the chief's yard and shout with a loud voice saying: "The king is gone to farm and will not return." Immediately the chief shall give the order of "Catch." If the messenger be an expert rider, he shall save himself, otherwise he will be caught and sold into slavery or must be ransomed with a considerable sum of money, and vice versa when the chief of Gushiago is dead and the king is to be informed. This extraordinary custom exists only between the king and the chief of Gushiago.\* You will then see thousands of people, men and women pouring in from all the towns and villages, the three paramount chiefs excepted;† the deceased's children, men and women, walk bare-headed. The time taken to finish a funeral custom of a king is prolonged by the kindred chiefs, etc. coming in a dilatorily manner one after the other with presents, or sending in the same manner, their representatives; this is the reason why it takes four or five months to finish such funeral customs.

A vault is then made in a small room standing in the ghost's House. The chief of Chemba in Kpamkpamba (Basari District) has to supply thirty large new round hoes to be spread in the vault. Upon these hoes, cow-skins are spread and over these blankets and cloths, ornamented pillows etc. are laid. The body of the king is then placed on the thighs of one of his slaves before being washed by those whose duty it is; then

\* With what reason, my informants were unable to tell.

† They used to send their representatives.

silver bangles and rings\* are put on his hands. The body is then rolled in shrouds, and laid down until the chiefs of Sunson and Yalzori (Zabzugu) whose presence is necessary before the entombment of Dagbamba kings, come and look at the body before it is buried. Just as the body is deposited in the vault the funeral customs commence. The king's favourite horse and a donkey are killed by being cudgelled on the heads by a certain man whose duty it is on these occasions. Kola nuts are dipped in the blood of these animals (especially that of the horse) by the people and chewed, to indicate that they have not defiled themselves with the deceased king's wives. Parts of the horse flesh are cut and roasted on living coles and hid by the king's servants for the purpose of poisoning the wells around Yendi; for it is asserted that he who is guilty of the crime of having sexual intercourse with any of the king's wives shall certainly swell up and die, if he sees the blood of these animals or eats the meat thereof or drinks of the waters of the wells thus poisoned. Therefore all such delinquents leave the town, and remain outside until such time when the funeral customs will have been finished. The man who presides over these customs must be the king's eldest son, who is then called "Gbon-lana" † which means "A Presider over funeral customs" and not "Regent" as has been erroneously used in most cases in the Courts in the Northern Territories. Now, when the observation of these customs are to be finished, all the princes royal, men and women, the eunuchs, the elders, and the king's drummers have to shave their heads clean; this being done, the sons-in-law who have married the deceased king's daughters, bring certain sums of money accompanied by a cow or a sheep—every one according to his means,—as gifts ‡ to the "Gbon-lana," and also new cloths and headkerchiefs to their wives. Then a day will be fixed for the final observation of the obsequies. On that day, about 10 a.m. the "Gbon-lana," the elders and all who are present—a calabash in which are packed certain articles from the deceased king's personal effects, the bow, the quiver and the hairs, are carried in front of them—go three times round his compound amid loud shoutings and yellings, and disorderly beating of drums. Thus

\* I.e. Finger-rings.

† Gbon-lana is used not only in cases of kings, but for everyone having certain distinction.

‡ In every case 100 kola nuts are added to the presents.

ends the obsequies. But how do the king's wives carry on their part?

For the first seven days, the deceased king's wives are allowed "loosely" egress and ingress; on the seventh day they are crowded into rooms according to ages—that is, the old women separate in one room, the middle aged women in another room, the young women in another, and the girls in another room, and watched over by one entitled "Mba-na" from Gundogo, whose duty it is on these occasions, to undertake the office of "Restraining and Immuring" these lascivious women, until the funeral customs are concluded. This man brings in a cock tied to a peg or pestle in the yard. At every crow of the cock, the women have to come out from their cells, crawling on their knees, weeping and crying, and looking here and there with their faces downward, singing aloud: "Bienza, Bienza e ngani." One of the older women sings the "solo" and the rest answer.\* If anyone of them has of necessity to go outside, she has to pay a penny to Mba-na. Their food is cooked in the town and brought by their relatives. In process of time they are allowed to go to their families every morning to bathe and to take their porridge, and return back into the cells at about 8-9 a.m. but if they become unclean, they are allowed to visit their families both at morning and evening and it matters not where they go.† Now, when two or three months have elapsed, they have to put on "thickly" twisted yarns which are suspended on the right and left shoulders crossing each other at right angles on the belly and the middle of the backside, and pieces of sticks are supplied—three in number bound together, one and a half inches in length—which things they have always to carry with them. These signs show that they are not to speak to any outsider save their parents, brothers and sisters. If any strange man salutes them on the roads going out or coming in, they have to knock the calabashes in their hands with the bundle of the small pieces of sticks, three or five times, then on they go their ways. This is carried on for some twenty days or more, and then stops.

\*The translation of these mourning songs is very impossible, no one, even the natives know the meaning.

†Except one has special business which would not have permitted her to come in in time she has to pay a penny to Mba-na for special permission,

During the remaining days, they are comparatively free but must attend the cock-crow singing till the last day. On the last day of the funeral customs, you will see their younger sisters carrying water in the morning in big calabashes to them, while their brothers and uncles have gathered themselves in the yard, with razors in their hands for the purpose of shaving their heads clean. This being done, they bathe themselves in the presence of the lookers-on. In the meantime, Mba-Dogo comes to them, holding the deceased king's spear and the sabre in his hands, turning himself zigzagly here and there as if wishing to dance, saying: "If there is any amongst you who has not lain with any other man since her marriage with the deceased king our Lord, such a one must come forward to receive these things, from my hands, and pass through the prohibited gate,\* to the congregation without." You will not see even one amongst them who has been faithful to her husband. At the same time, you will hear the voice of the man whose duty it is to knock dead the deceased king's horse and the donkey (*cf.* page 73) calling out "Ba! Ba! Ba!" i.e. "Dog! Dog! Dog! It is curious and amazing that even in a place which has never been frequented by a dog, you will certainly see a strange dog coming and running swiftly towards the man to be killed at the spot. The king's wives who very well know what is to be done next to conclude the funeral customs, take very good care to hear the calling of the dog, so that they may run away, everyone to her father's house, because it is said that if they see the dog weltering in his blood, they will all die of certain diseases.

### E. THE EUNUCHS.

We have read in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and in many other books, that the Emperors of Rome and the ancient mighty Kings

---

\*The prohibited gate" is that which the Dagbambas call "Gamle" and it is the gate of the compound containing the vault, Ghost and Sceptre houses, etc. As the king's body is conveyed through it into the vault, and for obvious reasons, the women are not allowed to go through it on these occasions else they die, therefore it is shut, and walls are pulled down for the women's egress and ingress.

1. Cf. pages.

of the East, with those of them entitled "The Commanders of the Faithful," kept eunuchs to take charge of their household, (especially of their many wives), and that the eunuchs were raised to higher offices in their dominions. In the Scriptural Records, we read in the book of Daniel, chapter 1, verse 3, 7, 8 and 10, of the eunuchs in the services of Nebuchadnezzar: Acts Chapter 8, verses 27-39. Now, from whom and whence the kings of Dagbon and Nanu learnt to keep eunuchs in their services, and to raise them to higher and lucrative offices, is a question which no one, even the Dagbambas, themselves can answer. The men who are eunuchised are the grandsons of the sorceresses, who are called by the Dagbambas "Son-yanga," and men taken in raids and wars as captives, such as the Grunshis, Kpamkpambas and the Basaris. The place of eunuchising the fair looking young men is Binduli in the Nanumba country. The process of emasculating such young men is that when they are taken into Binduli, they are to be handed over first to the chief of the village, and a certain day is fixed for the operation. When the day is at hand, they are to be taken, one after the other, into the room of operation, and are struck on the head with a cow's tail containing amulets and other medicines which make them unconscious; then the testicles are taken by cutting the scrotum and a ball of shea butter is substituted, and the scrotum sewn. After the operation, another cow's tail full of medicines is struck on their heads accompanied by certain devilish commands, by which the men rise up conscious. Then they are cursed and well fed, and are despatched to Yendi.

Presents of gowns and native trousers are then sent by the king of Dagbon in Yendi to the operators.

H. J.  
24-11-77