

They all gather round each man's dish
in turn. (See p. 60.)



Cooking in company in the yard.
(See p. 69.)

for it, this does not take long. The girls all go at the same time in the morning and evening, and it is a time of noisy chatter and laughter. The big girls also carry most of the firewood, but these days much of it comes from the market, and the work is not hard except in the villages when it has to be gathered in the distant bush and carried long distances. The grasslands are now almost denuded of the little firewood they ever had. The boys and girls do a little sweeping and washing cotton cloths, the boys fagging for their fathers and uncles, the girls for their mothers and aunts. Lady missionaries and educationists who hope to make the women into bustling housekeepers have a formidable task. A Gã woman is happy to rise at three or four in the morning and, shouting and yelling with excitement, go with a lorry-load of other women and their baskets of fish to an inland town forty miles away, and there trade her fish for corn or bananas and return, still cheery, in the evening. But she has neither time nor desire for housekeeping. Women's work—trading and cooking—is not done in houses at all; indeed, nobody has much use for a house except to sleep in: people live, not in houses, but very wisely in their cooler yards.¹ Women's trading work is done in the market, travelling about on lorries or on foot, on the beach, and in a variety of places. Their cooking work is done in leisurely fashion in the yard, sitting on low stools with other women similarly engaged, all gossiping and laughing. Group-cooking is just as important a social function to the women as group-dining is to Europeans. There is a great difference between mere eating and the European institution of dinner; there is just as great a difference between mere cooking and cooking-in-company in the yard. The talk is an integral part of it. A convert to 'Christian marriage' who preferred to share a compound only with her husband and children and to do her cooking alone would be thought as unwholsomely churlish as a man who preferred to drink alone.

Often a teacher, trying hard to be European and superior, has a neat little house with the usual unused reception rooms and takes his meals alone in lordly fashion at a table waited upon by the schoolboy who washes and irons his white shirt and trousers, but his women-folk and children live elsewhere in the usual light-hearted welter of mothers and sisters of various generations. When a teacher or catechist is transferred from

¹ People are apt to forget that European housing and domestic usage, on which unfortunately much modern Gold Coast housing is based, was designed for people whom the climate forces to spend most of their domestic life under cover.

his own and his wife's native town he does sometimes share with her a compound—often provided by the mission—but never do they eat together,¹ and the wife invariably either has some female relatives staying with her or is away on a prolonged visit of many weeks to her mother's people.

¹ On one, and only one occasion, have I seen a man—a catechist—eating with his wife and children.

PART II
THE GÃ TOWNS

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

IT will be an aid to clarity first to sketch in broad outline the social and political history of the Gã and to give a general idea of the nature of some of the institutions described in greater detail later. It is also necessary, in view of many popular misconceptions, to indicate what Gã institutions are *not*. The points of impact between the native constitution and British administration must also be roughly indicated.

Nowhere in the Gold Coast do we find those circumscribed communities so dear to the arm-chair anthropologist. Such a community is imagined as an isolated system something like the ideal cube of gas of the Kinetic Theory—the component particles busily colliding with one another and interchanging energy in the give-and-take of social activities. Into such a community European culture is imagined as having recently charged like a comet into a solar system.

It begins to be clear, however, that the Gold Coast communities have for centuries been more like eddies in a fluid, for ever breaking up and re-forming into new whirls round new centres and new central ideas. And for centuries European influence has taken a part in stirring the waters.

Gold Coast chronicles tell us, for instance, how the Akwamu in the Akwamu wars harried the Gã and other neighbours, but they do not tell us that the Akwamu wars and most other wars were primarily slave-raiding expeditions. The Akwamu had learnt that captives could be sold—or rather bartered—to Europeans: the most coveted articles gained in exchange were guns and gunpowder, and these were used for the waging of still more wars. Nor do the chronicles tell us how every community reorganized itself on a military basis. In a district where social organization had circled round agricultural ritual of the millet as its centre, new military whirling-points in the shape of war-stools were set up and new groups were sucked into the whirls.

And throughout the long, restless tale of adaptation to change the additional problem of European patronage has vexed social organization. I hope in the following pages to show that the

main problem before the British administration to-day is by no means new though increasing in difficulty.

British administrative policy to-day takes shape in the Native Administration Ordinance. This ordinance was based on the native constitution of the Twi-speaking peoples and shows a tolerable appreciation of the nature of that constitution. But it was not known at the time of drafting the ordinance that the Gã constitution was essentially different. The attempt to squeeze the Gã constitution into this foreign mould has resulted in more destruction of law and order than could have been devised in any deliberate attempt at such destruction.

The Gã (or strictly, the Gã-speaking people) are not one people either in origin or organization. Each of the six coastal towns¹ is an independent republic with its own territory and its own unique set of customs. There has never been any political association between the towns and they have never had a paramount chief—nor indeed any chiefs at all in the sense that the word usually conveys.

Part of the people are aborigines, part are immigrants. When the Gã-speaking immigrants arrived they came as extended-family groups of harried refugees. Neither they nor the aborigines had any military organization. They were all farmers, and the newcomers settled peaceably among the aborigines wherever there was vacant territory. Much of the land was thick bush with dangerous wild animals, and hunters who opened up stretches of it were recognized as owners of those tracts. There were no towns, no centralized government, no military organization, and no chiefs beyond the priestly heads of the extended families and their active assistants, the hunters. The extended-family groups of both aborigines and immigrants formed discrete settlements which lived by farming and to some extent hunting. The religious rites were agricultural.

When slave raiding became rife the farming settlements were threatened with extermination, for 'all the world was spoilt'. They therefore gathered themselves together into 'towns' for mutual protection and set up military organizations. Temma is a confederation of four extended-family groups, Nungwa of four, the others of more than four. Temma, Nungwa, Labadi, and Teshi were formed only two or three generations before the

¹ A 'town', in Gold Coast usage, is defined as a place which has a stool. Many Gold Coast towns to-day appear to Europeans as insignificant villages and many 'villages' are now busy trading centres, and have acquired what Europeans regard as the attributes of towns.

battle of Katamanso (1826), Osu and Accra more than a century earlier.

The Gã word '*man*', inadequately translated 'town' or sometimes 'nation', is the Twi word '*oman*' and implies a military confederation: it has no exact English equivalent.

The military organization was copied from the Akwamu in interesting circumstances which we shall examine later.

Now, a part of the military organization was the Stool and the *mantse*. A Gã stool is not an essential part of the governmental organization. The stool is not a monarch's throne nor is the *mantse* a ruler.

What, then, is a stool and what is a *mantse*?

- A stool is a War Medicine or fetish.

Every activity in those days—as indeed to-day—had to be supernaturally assisted. Agriculture had its priests and its ceremonial to make the crops to grow and the rain to fall. Hunters had their hunting-medicines to make game plentiful, to propitiate the spirits of slain animals, to make aim accurate and accidents nil, and, above all, to make the hunter himself brave. Warfare also had to have its 'medicine' to make the warriors brave and to bring victory. The central medicine in the warfare organization was the war stool. Every little 'town' confederation set up a stool to carry into battle. To ignore the supernatural significance of the Gã stool is not only to play *Macbeth* without the witches, but to ensure complete failure to understand the curious position of the stool and the *mantse* in the constitution.

Associated with the magical war stool was the *mantse*, literally 'town-father' or more exactly, 'father of the military confederation'. The word 'chief' does not express the meaning and has grossly misled Europeans. The *mantse* was a man who had to be magically treated or 'medicined' by placing him three times on the stool so that its influence passed into him, making him supernaturally brave and invincible. This medicining of one man was regarded as the vicarious medicining of all his followers so that they too were rendered brave and invincible.

As a human being a *mantse* had—and has—no authority. He 'has no mouth'. Magically useful in war, in peace he is only 'a small boy'. Even in war he was not a military leader. He never went right into the fight, but he and his stool stood apart protected by a special bodyguard. The director of operations was the *akwafontse*. The *akwafontse*'s court is a military court and the *mantse* is subject to it. An unsatisfactory *mantse* could be beheaded by its order.

When the towns were formed by coalition of the extended

families, the heads of these families, who were also priests, remained the heads of all civil affairs, and one of them became the head priest of the whole town. He was not only head of the agricultural ritual, but he used to 'cook the war' and bathe the warriors in holy water before they went to war. Though each family had its own god, the whole town acknowledged the supremacy of one of these gods—usually a local lagoon-god of the aborigines—as god of the whole town. Of the lesser priests, one was often made *manʹtse*, combining two offices in one person. Thus in Temma one person is both *manʹtse* and priest of the god *Tʹsade*.

In the days of warfare a *manʹtse* was chosen partly for his physical vigour, for he had to travel to war. He was therefore seldom old enough to be regarded as the head of his family. Therefore, when a *manʹtse* was simultaneously a priest and, as such, the ceremonial head of the family, he was never the actual directing head. This position was and is enjoyed by the old man who would have been priest had the priest no military duties.

The hunters, who were always the active 'big men' in the families and relieved the priests of much active supervision of practical affairs, became the military captains (*asafoatsemei*) in the new military organization. They too had little stools, but they were far from being passive mascots. When warfare ceased and the people greatly multiplied they relieved the priests of the bulk of the management of secular affairs, the priests concentrating on ritual. To this day it is they who really run the town.

Thus the government of every town is a democratic gerontocracy. The *manʹtse*, unless he be also a priest, has no integral part in it. He has no means of support: he lives on either the fitful charity of his relatives or, if made a *manʹtse* late in life, on his own savings. He is a vestigial survival without function, like the vermiform appendix in the human body, and is of embarrassment rather than use to the organism.

Now, it is well known that many an institution is maintained for reasons other than those which actuated its founders. It will therefore be asked, has not the position of the *manʹtse* undergone any evolution since the days of warfare, bringing it nearer to the position which Europeans imagine to be a chief's? I cannot find that it has, except in so far as a chief's powers have been conferred by Europeans, partly by tacit assumption and partly by ordinance. Such artificially conferred powers have always been a source of strife between *manʹtse* and elders. The 'natural'

position of a *manɲtɲe* to-day is still simply that of a minor priest.¹

It will be asked, how can one know to-day, since Government's modifying influence is present, what is a *manɲtɲe*'s 'natural' position? The answer is that Government's influence is sometimes removed for years at a time. How this comes about I shall now relate.

Government administration consists mainly of two things. The first is Government recognition of the *manɲtɲe*. The second is the existence of a registered *manɲtɲe*'s tribunal before which offenders can be brought with police assistance. This tribunal has power to punish by fines, which fines are a source of income to the *manɲtɲe*.² In some towns there is—for reasons to which we shall return later—no *manɲtɲe* recognized by Government and the official tribunal is closed, although there is usually a 'people's *manɲtɲe*' recognized by the people. Such towns are therefore, for all practical purposes, not administered, but thanks to the public spirit of the elders (to whom Government owes more than it ever dreams) town affairs still go on and usually go on better than in those which are administered. Some towns have been for years thus left to their own devices. In such towns the investigator has a chance of observing how the town is run on 'natural' lines, and since there is usually a 'people's *manɲtɲe*' the observation includes a view of a *manɲtɲe*'s 'natural' position.

The problem of European patronage has been a profoundly vexing one from the days of the Portuguese. From those early days Europeans have had it in their heads that an African tribe must necessarily be under a single ruler, monarch, or 'chief', and that this ruler must be the most suitable agent to go between themselves and the tribe, whether they are giving orders to the tribe, trading, or otherwise negotiating.

Such a European, first approaching such a place as Temma and asking for the head of the town would have been told that there were four—the four priests. On asking to have the number reduced to one he would have been shown the priest of *Sakumo*. With the usual European ideas in his head he would have protested, 'No, no. I do not mean your fetish priest or any jujuman, I mean your king who sits on your throne', and would not

¹ The present *Osu manɲtɲe* and three other *manɲtɲes* (Teshi, Jamestown, and Asere) who have all three recently died, enjoyed a rather special usefulness by reason of their being literate among illiterates, and being willing to use their literacy helpfully. But any well-disposed literate can enjoy such a position.

² The 'natural' native courts do not fine. Members of the bench simply receive a 'sitting' fee for their time and the injured party is paid 'pacification' by the offending party.

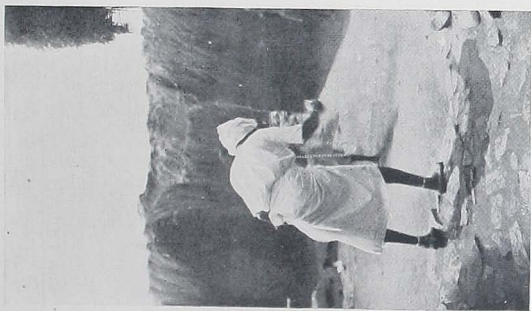
have been happy till taken to the *mantse*. He would have been still further comforted and misled by the pomp and superstitious awe that surrounded this dressed-up puppet. And with the *mantse* he would have insisted on making his negotiations.¹

It must also be remembered that most of the early negotiation between European and African was concerned with warfare in the fruits of which (namely, slaves) and the means of which (namely, gunpowder) Europeans were concerned. Negotiation through the *mantse* was therefore more natural than it is to-day.

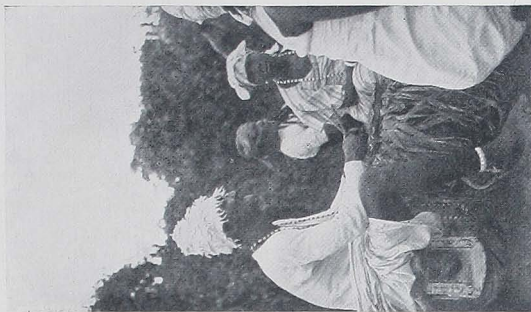
So from the very first Europeans have wrought change upon the position of the *mantse*, and this always against the bitter opposition of the tribe. In so far as a *mantse* now has any 'voice' it is the Europeans who have given it to him. And upon them he leans, and has always leant, for the support which his own people deny him. Looking back into Gã history every stool palaver has been bred by European patronage, and the two different views held by the tribe and the Europeans respectively concerning the powers of the *mantse*.

We must mention in this connection one peculiar difficulty. A *mantse* is made a *mantse* by a magical process, and that process cannot be undone. That is to say, he cannot be 'destooled' and replaced by another *mantse*. He can be removed only by killing. This used to be the treatment if he were sufficiently bad, but if insufficiently, he was simply deserted, ignored and 'sent to Coventry'. Tribal business was carried on without him and, moreover, carried on satisfactorily, for he was not essential to it. But when Europeans continued to support him and to approach the people only through him it was useless for his people to attempt to keep him in his place. To-day, in despair, they have resorted to what is called 'destoolment', but the main difficulty about this is that it cannot be done! There is no native custom for destoolment, which is why there is always disagreement about whether such and such a *mantse* has been destooled 'according to native custom'. When the N.A.O. decrees that in such and such a set of circumstances a *mantse* may be destooled 'according to native custom', it might as helpfully decree that he be electro-

¹ Although comparative religion now recognizes the close kinship of tribal gods with Jehovah and the Almighty God of Christian orthodoxy, and although sociology perceives the identity of religious organization with tribal organization, all early Europeans from the Portuguese traders to the Victorian British officials believed that 'The Fetish', as they called African religion, was a genuinely supernatural and essentially evil power begotten by the same devil that reigned in the orthodox Hell. Many missionary bodies and all African pastors even to-day still take that view. The British official to-day usually regards all priests and medicine men as blatant imposters and their adherents as 'fetish-ridden' dupes.



The priest of *Sakuma*. (See p. 75.)



Na Yō mubomo at the great annual festival. (See p. 87.)

cuted according to native custom. There is just as much native machinery for the one as for the other, and there would be just as much agreement on how to set about the one business as the other.

The only course open to people with an unruly *mantse* whom they may not behead is to persuade the Europeans to join them in ceasing to treat him as *mantse*. But here they tread a thorny path which has always been thorny. Consider what happened in Osu in the days when the Danes were in the Christiansborg Fort.

In those days there was no *manjeralo* in Osu, but there was a *mantse* who was concurrently the priest of Nadu. For unpriestly behaviour he was expelled from the post of priest and replaced by another, but as *mantse* he could not be destooled, so was simply deserted. The Danes, however, continued to treat him as *mantse*, so the town created a *manjeralo* to negotiate with the Danes and transferred their allegiance to this *manjeralo*. The Danes refused to recognize the *manjeralo*, so half the people returned to the *mantse* whom the Danes did recognize, and to this day there is hostility between the *mantse* and the *manjeralo*. The affair was an early and unsuccessful attempt to solve the ever more difficult problem of European patronage.

Up to the time of the coming of the Gã State Council every 'destoolment' was traceable to this same cause. The *mantse*, relying on European support, took upon himself more than his people were prepared to allow him. The Labadi *mantse* (in 1918) was destooled, not because he tried to 'enforce unpopular measures' in the matter of the new water supply—the measures were not unpopular—but because he made his negotiations with the Government behind the backs of his people.

Again, *Taki Obli* of Accra was destooled for pawning the stool, trying to sell town lands, and generally trying to get for himself money and privileges which were not by native custom a *mantse*'s.¹

His successor, *Taki Yaoboi*, first got into danger of destoolment by negotiating with the Government in the preparation of the Municipal Corporations Ordinance. Here, again, it was not the measures themselves that were unpopular, but his independence of his people that was considered intolerable. There was a dispute about whether he had been destooled or not, followed by a Government enquiry which concluded that he had neither

¹ At the Government enquiry into the destoolment the *dzasetse* said: 'Up to the time of the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance we had no quarrel with him. After that time he threw us away.'

merited destoolment nor been destooled in accordance with native custom. Though the enquiry, conducted by Mr. Welman, was as able and just as any such enquiry could be, it only aggravated the real trouble, for it made the *mantse* feel that the Government would always support him so long as he supported it, and he again fell into autocratic ways which brought another attempt to destool him. This time he fell into the less just and gentle hands of the newly-made Provincial Council and was destooled.

A *mantse* is not destooled because he tries to introduce unpopular measures, but because he tries to introduce any measures at all. To take part in important business is not a *mantse*'s proper rôle. The attitude to 'unpopular measures' is, 'We will take them, if we must, but not from *you*, small boy'. For the Government to try to work through an unmodified *mantse* is direct rule, for an unmodified *mantse* is not an integral part of the native government. And it is the one form of direct rule that the people will not take. Plain, undisguised, direct rule they would accept philosophically. The factor of jealousy and suspicion between African and African when they are both candidates for European patronage is a far more potent source of trouble than any persecution that might be inflicted on both equally by the European. The great danger always before the Government is not so much that it will set the Africans against itself as the danger of setting African against African by arbitrarily altering their 'natural' positions. The word 'natural' (it is the Government's own) applied to the tribal rulers is brilliantly apt, for it conveys much of the native attitude to tribal seniorities. To interfere with these is regarded not so much as a harsh unfairness as a monstrous and intolerable perversion of nature.

Another destructive assumption made in the Ordinance concerning the Gã constitution is that of the existence of a Native State. It was assumed that the Gã were essentially similar to the Akan peoples, the most striking characteristic of whose constitution is the Native State.

The Native State was essentially a military confederation of stools under a paramount stool. Although such military confederations are, under the Pax Britannica, naturally tending to break up, they have undergone in the past considerable evolution giving them some political as well as military unity. Chief among their unifying political institutions is the State Council.

It was assumed at the time of the drawing up of the Ordinance that the Gã-speaking people were a political State under the so-called Gã *mantse* of Accra as Paramount Chief. The main

cause of this mistake was a linguistic one. The word 'Gã' is the vernacular name for the town of Accra. 'Gã *manɔtɛ*' simply means 'Accra *manɔtɛ*'. But 'Gã' is also used to describe the 'Gã language', and all the Gã-speaking people are loosely spoken of as the 'Gã people'. It was therefore assumed that all the 'Gã people' were subjects of the 'Gã *manɔtɛ*', and that all the Gã-speaking towns were a part of a Gã State on the Akan pattern.

The criteria of a Native State on the Akan pattern are as follows:

1. Subordinate chiefs swear allegiance to the Paramount Chief at the time of their installation.

2. The Paramount Chief gives a share of all his income to all subordinate stools, and they in return give him a share of theirs.

3. The Paramount Chief can collect a tax from every stool in the State or from every individual in the State on such occasions as royal funerals.

4. The Paramount Chief can send his gong-beaters to beat gong-gong anywhere in the State. He can also cause an arrest to be made anywhere in the State.

5. A State Council, consisting of all the stools, meets to consider political and judicial affairs.

None of these conditions were ever fulfilled by the relations between Accra and the other Gã peoples. It is true that they often formed alliances in war and that Accra as a gunpowder importing centre was the natural head, but none of the alliances were more than temporary and no political alliance has ever been made.

By the Native Administration Ordinance a 'State Council' consisting of Gã chiefs under the presidency of the Gã *manɔtɛ* was instituted. Its main activity has been the handling of stool disputes.

Now, the danger of any Government created or Government maintained council is that the consciousness that its existence and prestige do not depend on services rendered (as do spontaneous native institutions) will encourage it to become a mere instrument of corruption. No body of Africans tries cases justly unless there are automatic penalties, such as loss of position and loss of prestige, for dealing unjustly. Such sanctions do operate in a *manɔtɛ*'s own little community in his own town, and there he can be relied upon to support the old tradition of decency to which he owes his position and to which his community owe its safety. But Government has assumed that he has an appreciation of abstract justice for its own sake. He has not, or if he has it is such a flickering flame that it is at once snuffed out

by the blast of bribery. The tendency of such a body as the State Council is to think, 'Government is behind us. Our people cannot touch us. We can do as we like. Plenty of people are offering to bribe us heavily, so let us make hay while the sun shines'.

Stool disputes have been the council's main concern. In justice to the ordinance it must be said that the council was not intended to be only a judicial body, but that is what it has become and that is how it does its mischief.

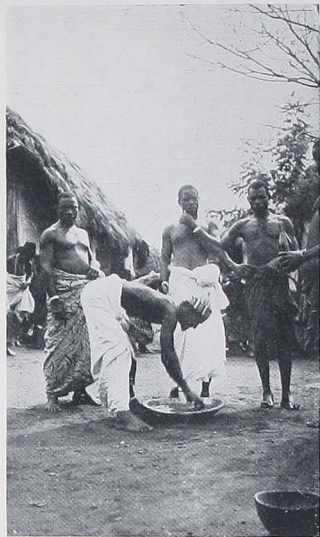
Because of the new importance which Government has conferred upon the *mantse* and because the registered tribunals have made his post a source of income, the *mantse*'s position is now a coveted plum rather than an irksome tie. Consequently, whenever the post of *mantse* falls vacant there is an unseemly scramble to fill it. The responsible elders of the town elect the new *mantse* constitutionally and usually unanimously, but invariably some unsavoury party of agitators, usually idle literates, relying on Government's ignorance of the native constitution, produce a rival candidate—himself often a passive puppet in their hands—and declare that he is the rightful heir to the stool. In native constitution there is no such thing as a 'right' to the stool. No one has a right until he has been constitutionally elected. But Government do not know this and the District Commissioner, bewildered by a dozen different tales of 'native custom', each invented *ad hoc*, refers the matter (as indeed he legally must) to the State Council. This body, after years of delay, muddled discussion and complicated negotiation, decide in favour of one candidate. In no case has their choice ever squared with what the conscientious elders or any serious student of Gā town constitutions could regard as native custom.

Government accepts the council's choice, the successful candidate's name is put on the Chief's List, and Government regard him as chief. To his people, however, he is known as a 'Government's *mantse*', and their own, or 'People's *mantse*', exists simultaneously. The elders, of course, employ lawyers and send frantic petitions to the Governor, but any governor who read, not to say digested, one-half of the petitions, frivolous and genuine, with which a Gold Coast governor is daily inundated, could do no other work.

A 'Government's *mantse*' is, as often as not, merely the puppet of a small gang who have financed him from the first, and are running him as a speculation. Apart from Government, the only recognition he gets in his own town is from the disreputable band of hangers-on who invested in him and hope for an income from the investment.



Kinsmen of the *Sakums wulom* assisting
in ceremonial. (See p. 87.)



The *maytse* and the *maykrals* became
again the two junior *wulomei*. (See p. 88.)

The elders, meanwhile, in the 'Government *manțfē*'s' town refuse to enstool him and never go near him. Respectable people also ignore him and take all their affairs to the elders. It is only the fact that a *manțfē* is so inessential a part of the gerontocracy that makes it possible for them to carry on without his crossing their path or they his. It is only when he interferes with the government of the town in unusual ways, such as trying to sell town land or getting the Government to forbid a town festival, that he comes into any real collision with them, and then his very life is in danger.¹ But for the most part the elders go their way, governing the town as they always have and holding their unrecognized private tribunals. He goes his way, content with the very considerable income he makes on the State Council and the smaller income from his own tribunal, to which strangers (of which every town now has many) take their debt cases and other petty disputes.

¹ Government have just conferred on recognized chiefs the legal right to form stool treasuries and to tax their people. No 'Government *manțfē*' has so far availed himself of this right, and were he to try to do so both he and Government would be in an unenviable position.

CHAPTER II

TEMMA

§ I

THE ABORIGINES

THE aborigines (*sikulebii*) of the Gã countryside were the *Kpɛsi* people.

Much can be learnt about these fascinating people by carefully piecing together the scattered fragments of circumstantial evidence. There is no need to rely on oral tradition, though this is often useful to corroborate independent conclusions.

These people spoke the *Kpɛsi* dialect which survives only in the songs of the *Kple* religious festivals. This dialect is akin to Twi, and in the Gã districts is usually called *Obutu*, which dialect it closely resembles.¹

The chief *Kpɛsi* gods were *Bleku* (the rain), the spirits of lagoons, hills, streams, pools, groves, and other works of nature, *Na Afɛyei* (a grandmother deity), and *Gua* (a blacksmith god associated with thunderstorms and agricultural implements). These gods had groves in all the *Kpɛsi* localities. Their cults were agricultural with the millet as centre. The rites were simple and beautiful, involving little if any bloodshed. They had no fetishes; pots of rainwater were almost all their sacred insignia, and the *nyanya* vine was their sacred herb. Their religious dancing and singing was known as *Kple* and their big agricultural festival as *Kpledɔ*. Their family name was *Afi*, and they performed the girls' puberty-rites known as *Afi*. These rites involved the wearing of an elephant's tail² and also the wearing of the hair in four

¹ In *Religion and Medicine of the Gã People* I myself also fell into the error of calling the *Kpɛsi* dialect *Obutu*.

² Reindorf says: 'The only way we suppose of finding out the different tribes which compose the whole Gold Coast population is by knowing those people who perform the following different customs for their marriageable girls. In the whole there are three principal tribes, viz. the Guan Bron tribe, the Gã Adangme tribe, and the Fanti-Twi tribe. The customs hitherto known to us are:

'1. Tun-yo, camwood girl, indicates the pure Gã tribe.

'2. Ama yo, pitch girl, the mixed Le-Ga tribe (the aborigines).

'3. Asim yo, elephant's tail girl, the mixed Guan Gã tribe (Kpɛshi and Obutu).

'4. Otufo yo, priestly hat and loin-cloth wearing girl. The Adangme tribe.

'5. Nsowumo yo, sea-washing girl. The Fanti tribe.

'6. Bradsu yo, menses-washing girl. The mixed Guan Twi tribe.

'7. Ako yo, red parrot feathers girl. The Twi tribe.'

I do not agree with Reindorf that these customs are an infallible guide. For instance, Temma is undoubtedly composed of three perfectly distinct peoples, but they all do the *Afi* custom of the *Kpɛsi* people. Again, everyone in Nungwa

balls surrounding a fifth central ball. These five balls were, and are, also the priest's head-dress. They had no kings, chiefs, or organization for warfare; the head of each tiny settlement was its priest. They had no towns and no centralized government,¹ but possibly they gathered together annually for a religious festival, perhaps at the *Kpɛsi* lagoon. At any rate, they were all probably of one extended family, for they have all to this day the family name *Afi*, and claim a common ancestry.



When the Gã-speaking immigrants arrived they nowhere drove out the *Kpɛsi*, but simply sprinkled their own farms between the widely-spaced *Kpɛsi* settlements. In some places, however, we have evidence that the *Kpɛsi* died out or went away, handing over their locality-gods to others. Until about two generations before the battle of Katamanso (1826), it was only at Accra, Osu, and perhaps Labadi, that there were compact settlements of more than one extended family, for only there were the people harried by inland raiders. But when the towns were formed the *Kpɛsi* were still recognized as the owners of the land and as the only people able to do the necessary work of propitiating the gods of the land. The owner of the land was known as the *sitɛ*, and even when the immigrants overwhelmed him with their numbers and their power they always gave him nominal seniority. 'The *sitɛ*', one old man explained, 'knows all the wonders of the land. You must be friends with him or you make enemies of the gods

does the *ɔny* custom, but the people are of two distinct sets, the descendants of *Odoi Koto's* company who were probably *Akwamu* and the descendants of *Bokete Lawei*, who were Gã-speaking immigrants and introduced the custom. In Kpong, where there are two main sections—*Adanyɛ* and *Le*—everyone does the *Dipo* custom (called by Reindorf the *Otofo yo* custom).

Furthermore, there has been much borrowing of ceremonial, for example, the *Otofo* girls of Kpong and Osu now wash in the sea like the Fanti.

Nor do I understand his analysis of 'the whole Gold Coast population' into principal tribes, and am forced to doubt whether he himself did.

¹ We are told by some historians that the Guan, of whom possibly the *Kpɛsi* were a part, 'ruled' a vast stretch of country. I have no doubt that they were spread over a vast area, but doubt if the idea of rulership and centralized government ever entered any of their heads till the Ashanti military menace came upon them. Certainly no *Kpɛsi* ever wanted to 'rule' anything, but his extended family group and the land that they cultivated. Nor did the immigrant Gã make any attempt at 'ruling' or 'conquering' but simply settled for farming and fishing.

of the place. They are his gods and he knows them all. The *sitse* is like the partridge on your farm. You make the farm and do all the work, but the partridge comes and eats from it, for he was there first and he is the real owner of the farm. But he can't stand against you and you don't mind what he says, but you don't drive him away.' Another informant gave me the proverb: '*Aspatri ke ele, si elee fe gbe*'—'The sandal says he is long, but he is not longer than the road.'

When the towns were made the *Kpesi* became an integral part of each town, always in a nominally senior position with their *wulomo* as senior *wulomo*, landlord of the soil and, in one case only, *mantse*. Everywhere we find the *Kpesi* to this day in charge of lagoons and lagoon worship—except in Osu and Accra, where they died out, but even in Osu the *wulomo* who took over the *Klote* lagoon from them is still the town landlord.

The *Kple* worship of the *Kpesi* everywhere remained the most important ingredient in the joint worship which each town evolved. The immigrants introduced the harvest-time festival of *Homowo*, and in Accra and Labadi this grew grander and bigger than the *Kpesi* planting-time festival of *Kpledzo*, but far from obliterating it borrowed much from it. The *Kpesi* tongue—or so-called *Obutu*—is still the language of *Kple* worship.

§ 2

THE MAKING OF TEMMA

It is impossible to understand the constitution and government of Temma—or any other Gā town for that matter—without a knowledge of how it came to be made.

Temma came into being as a town two or three generations before the battle of Katamanso.¹

Previous to this the present site of Temma was uninhabited. But scattered round within a three- or four-mile radius were sundry tiny villages or farming settlements, each probably consisting of one 'House' or extended family similar to the House of *Aboifewe* which we have examined. All informants are agreed that 'there were no towns in those days, only farms'.²

¹ Battle of Katamanso, 1826.

² After pondering over this I suggested to some of the travelled old men among my informants that distribution of dwellings in those days resembled that still prevailing in parts of the Northern territories to-day. It was greeted with that enthusiasm always accorded to any leading questions which happens to hit the mark. 'It was so exactly. You have understood us.'

These farming settlements were *Podoku* and *Atsendoku*¹ on either side of the present site of Temma, some two miles apart, and *Tebiano* and *Lafibi* on the Nungwa side of the *Sakumo* lagoon. These sites are uninhabited to-day, but one can find signs of ancient habitation in the shape of fragments of pottery and other kitchen-midden material.

The inhabitants of these villages were of two tribes, one of which was certainly the ancient aboriginal lagoon-worshipping *Kpɛsi* tribe and the other probably the *Lɛ* tribe² whose worship was associated with sacred animals. Exactly how these two peoples were distributed between the four—or possibly more than four—settlements, I am uncertain.

At the time of which I speak the raiders from forest country, who had never before annoyed this eastern side of the Accra plain as they had Accra, began to do so. Also there was much guerilla warfare between the people of the Nungwa settlements and the people of Labadi.³ For the farming settlements of the district 'the world was spoilt', and the people in danger of extermination. One 'big man' from *Podoku* went to the length of migrating eastwards with a party of followers and founded 'Kpɛsi in *Ayigbe*'.⁴

The despairing remnants of these harried farmers joined forces and came to live together on the present site of Temma, and made an attempt to organize themselves for warfare. For this purpose they put themselves under the tuition of one *Adzeite-Afari* who procured for them a stool to take to war. A stool is primarily a war fetish and is taken to war.

Accounts of *Adzeite Afari* differ, but they agree that he was a foreigner named *Afari* and probably an Akwamu refugee,⁵ and had come to live with one *Adzeite*, the head of a 'House', and *wulomo* of the god *Tfade*. He married *Adzeite's* daughter, 'became *Adzeite's* son' and was known as *Adzeite-Afari* (i.e. *Adzeite's Afari*). On the death of old *Adzeite*, *Afari* became *Tfade wulomo* and simultaneously filled the newly created post of *mantse* to take the new stool to war.

About the same time the town created a *manjralo's* stool—this

¹ The suffix 'doku' means deserted.

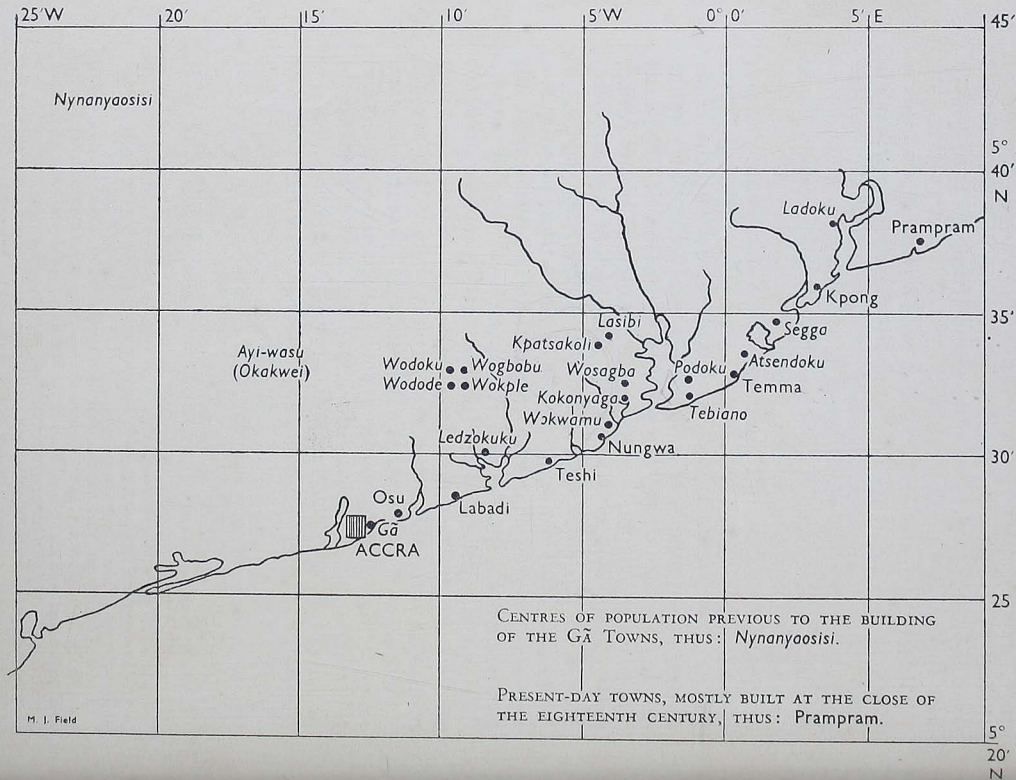
² Others of these *Lɛ* people lived in *Segga*, now uninhabited, whence they moved to *Kpong* and founded a town in co-operation with some *Adanyɛ* people.

³ Most of the inter-tribal warfare was for the purpose of taking captives to sell as slaves to Europeans. The Europeans always bought their slaves from African middlemen and paid well for them. Without African co-operation no slave trade would have been possible.

⁴ In *Religion and Medicine of the Gã People* I made the incorrect statement that the *Kpɛsi* people of Temma came from *Kpɛsi-in-Ayigbe*. On the contrary they went to that place.

⁵ The Akwamu kingdom had by this time been defeated and scattered.

DIAGRAM VI



also to go to war—and a *mankrabo* from among the relatives of the same old *Adzeite*. The *mankrabo* was and is concurrently *Awudu wulomo*, and the *mantse* still is primarily *Tsade wulomo*.

Adzeite's descendants with their two gods, *Tsade* and *Awudu*, formed the half of the town known as *Afaman* ('*Afare's* town'). The other half was composed of *Kpesi* people worshipping the three lagoons *Tsemu*, *Sikete*, and *Sakumo*, and the god *Akpitioko* (associated with the hare). This second half of the town was known as *Awudun*.¹

A little later the *Aboitsewe* people arrived from Late with their goddess *Na Yo*, and they became a part of *Awudun*. Later the *Kpesi* sub-House in charge of *Tsemu* died out and *Tsemu* was given into the charge of *Aboitsewe*. The *Nyado* of *Aboitsewe* is therefore the *wulomo* of both *Na Yo* and *Tsemu*.

The *Sakumo wulomo*² and the *Na Yo wulomo* are the senior *wulomei* of the town. They were too important to be allowed to go to war. It was because the *Awudu wulomo* and the *Tsade wulomo* were 'small boys among the *wulomei*' that they were made *mankrabo* and *mantse*. Their gods *Awudu* and *Tsade* (associated with the black snake *blika* and the leopard respectively) never, of course, became war gods, but their priests, in a different capacity, received the strongest possible war-medicine in the shape of a stool apiece.

Sakumo, *Na Yo*, *Awudu*, and *Tsade* are the four gods of Temma who are 'the gods for the whole town'. At the same time they are primarily family gods, and each of them is in the care of a definite House. Family organization is religious organization and is governmental organization. Religious rites are primarily what I may term Prosperity rites, and are intended to ensure the fertility of the soil, the increase of the family, and the avoidance of death. These three notes are struck, the first by the *Kple*

¹ It is confusing that the god *Awudu* does not belong to the half of the town called *Awudun*. This is simply because the *Kpesi* people lived in the half of the town abutting on *Awudu's* sacred grove and were named after their locality.

I do not know whether *Awudun* and *Afaman* ever intermarried strictly according to the plan known as the Dual Organization. Very likely they did. The neighbouring town of Nungwa, formed about the same time, certainly did. In both Temma and Nungwa we find one half of the town the head of Prosperity ritual (i.e. public worship and agricultural rites) and the other half the head of warfare magic (i.e. the stools).

² The *Kpesi* people who left the Temma district seem to have handed over the care of the *Sakumo* lagoon on their departure to Nungwa, so that Nungwa and not Temma had charge of *Sakumo* worship at the time of the founding of Temma. However, it was later restored to the *Kpesi* people of Temma, Nungwa people having no *Kpesi* people in their own town, and no doubt recognizing the *Kpesi* as the proper people to have the care of all lagoon gods. Before *Sakumo* came back to Temma *Kpesi* people the senior gods in Temma were *Tsemu* and *Akpitioko*, both *Kpesi* gods.

anthem shouted at dozens of religious festivals, the second by the song of the participants in the ceremony of Welcoming the Lagoon in the rainy season, and the third by the New Year greeting.

The *Kple* anthem runs:

'Exalted, exalted, exalted,
Ho, priestly people.
May Bleku (the raingod) bless.
Meat, meat,
Water, water.
Let blessings bless.
Masses of food.'

The lagoon song runs:

'May our fruitful women be like gourds,
And may they bring forth and sit down.
May misfortunes jump over us.'

And the third New Year greeting runs:

'Take life, take life.
May the year's end meet us . . .
May we live to be old . . .
At the end of this year may we sit again.'

The summing up of all three we get in the lagoon song:

'Life, Ho Life!
We eat corn
In order that our life may be long.'

We have, then, the fundamental Gā society, organized for the increase of life—the winning of food, the begetting of sons and daughters and the warding off of all the ordinary forces of destruction and death. And then comes upon this society the extra-ordinary force of destruction and death, the menace of war.

And against this menace a new and special organization is introduced, not breaking up the old, but interlacing with it. Later, when warfare ceased, the war-organization, though not obliterated, sank into insignificance and the old Prosperity organization became again dominant. The *mantse* and *mankrab* became again the two white-clad junior *wulomei* sitting side by side with the two white-clad senior *wulomei*—senior because their gods *Sakumo* and *Tsemu* are the inalienable owners of the land. And so matters are to this day whenever Temma goes its own way.

When we come, later, to examine the functions of all the

'big people' of the town we shall see how all the special offices, other than *mantse* and *mankrals*, created for purposes of war, have become adapted and changed to serve the ends of peace and the officers fitted into the old pattern.

Till 1931 Temma had almost escaped the notice of the British administration and the outside world in general, but in that year there arose a dispute—to which I shall return later—concerning the succession to the stool. This dispute was settled by the Gã State Council, an outside body, at its own leisure, and the settlement took about seven years. During this seven years there was, so far as British Administration was concerned, an interregnum in Temma and no *mantse* was 'recognized' as such by the British Government. There was therefore no registered tribunal and no institutions imposed or supported from outside. The town, whose 'dispute' had been engineered by politicians from outside, was quite unanimous about what it really wanted, and in the seven years' interval of non-recognition was free to do what it liked about its own government. It appointed its *mantse* in its own way, assigned to him only his ancient and customary powers and was all the more loyal to him because it alone recognized him. The government of the town went on in its own ancient fashion and gave me a unique opportunity of observing that fashion.

Temma social organization is the underlying one of all the other Gã towns also. On this they have all built their variations and are struggling to make their bewildered adaptations. But once the social structure of Temma has been understood the same skeleton can clearly be discerned in all the Gã towns.

§ 3

THE NATURE OF THE TEMMA STOOL

It will help at this point to digress into an examination of the nature of the stool. No Gã institution has been so disastrously misunderstood by Europeans. Most of the political turmoil in the Gã state to-day can be traced to this misunderstanding.

The following remarks on the nature of the stool apply equally to every stool of the Gã peoples.

A stool is a war-medicine. It is a piece of magical apparatus in which abides a supernatural power (*bewale*). The *mantse* is a man who has been 'medicined' or magically treated by being

held, naked and blindfold, in a sitting position over this fount of strength. On no other occasion does he ever sit on it, and even then he does not sit in the sense of resting his weight upon it. Only privileged officials ever see it, except when it is taken to war. When the town goes to war the magical *mantse* and his magical stool go too, and their presence makes their companions invincible and fearless. Neither the stool nor the *mantse* ever enters the thick of the fight. They keep aloof but visible, and are protected by a special bodyguard.

The *mantse* is not a field-marshal, leader, or commander. This work is done by the *akwasontse*. The *mantse*'s presence has a purely supernatural influence.

The *mantse* is not the ruler of the people, and his stool is not a monarch's throne. Just as a *woyo* has no authority except as the passive mouthpiece of a god, so has a *mantse* no status except as the passive channel of supernatural power. Further, that power is of a specific kind and makes only for success in war. It is the magical nature of the *mantse*'s office which has made that office so unadaptable to the ends of peace, whilst the military captains have grown into useful peace-time officials.

Accra had a stool of this kind much earlier than Temma, Nungwa, and the other Gā towns. These others deliberately copied Accra when they all became embroiled in warfare against a common enemy. 'It was the *Akwamu* people', say the Accra Gā, 'who first taught us all about stools.'

A stool has to be made by a 'very big medicine-man, and it is a fearful thing'. It is made of wood with no gold, silver, or anything 'for fancy' (*eflo*). Human sacrifice is involved in the process of putting its power into it in the first instance. When once the naked *mantse* has been medicined by it he is so saturated with power that some of this passes into the ordinary stool that he sits on every day, and at his death this stool also is sometimes put in the stool-room with the original magical stool. From time to time the powers of the stool were reconditioned by further bloodshed. All ceremonial bloodshed practised by the Gā was introduced with the stools as a part of its ceremonial. This includes the bloodshed at the funerals of 'chiefs'. Any secret bloodshed still practised by the Gā is in connection with stools. There is none in connection with the gods.

The popular misconceptions about stools are not hard to understand.

In earlier days a citizen, say, of Temma, asked to point out the head of his town would have replied that there were four heads—the four chief *wulomei*. If asked to reduce this number

to one he would have named the *Sakumo wulomo* as head of the town. If the inquiring foreigner, obsessed by the usual misconceptions had insisted, 'I do not mean any jujuman or fetish priest; I mean your king who sits on your throne or stool', then the citizen had perforce to lead him to the *mantse*. Partly for this reason, and partly because the *mantse* and *mankrabo* were the only *wulomei* allowed to leave the town these two officials usually carried out all the town's negotiations with foreigners. Indeed, the town of Osu, the first town ever to have a *mankrabo*, created him entirely to negotiate with the Danes.¹ But in the internal affairs of the town the *mankrabo* and *mantse* were kept at their old evaluation. 'To strengthen the power of the chiefs'² must, by shifting the delicately adjusted balance of power in the native system of government, necessarily overturn that government.

§ 4

TOWN PERSONAGES

General

The way the town is run can best be understood by considering, one by one, its various 'big people' and examining their duties and powers.

No one who knows the story of how such towns as Temma came into being can fail to be impressed by the power of adaptation and flexibility of organization which made these confederations possible. That the people themselves are capable of thinking out and carrying through severe self-organization—and this without destroying a single existing institution—they have amply demonstrated.

Since the cessation of warfare this adaptation has gone on. The population has enormously increased, and that alone would be enough to put an intolerable strain on the original officials. The *wulomei* have delegated many of their duties, but they remain the ceremonial heads. Roughly, the differentiation has been into sacred and secular; the *wulomei* themselves now deal chiefly

¹ And in Sempri of Accra, the *Oyeni wulomo* who was the first *mantse*, relegated his priestly duties to an assistant in order to be free to negotiate with the Europeans at any time. In peace time a *mantse* has always tended, as he does at the present day, to become European agent, but as such has never given satisfaction to his people.

² 'To strengthen the power of the chiefs' was one of the aims of the Native Administration Ordinance.

with the former and the newer officials with the latter. But every official still derives his authority from the same source that the *wulomo* derives his—the solid phalanx of the family behind him.

The Asafo Officers

The *asafo* is the military body, and theoretically every man joins it as soon as he is old enough to fire a gun. Actually Temma has never been interested in warfare, except when driven to engage in it, and as a military body the *asafo* has died a natural death. But it now functions as a kind of public works department and assembles whenever a number of able-bodied men are needed to deal with the town's emergencies. If an outlaw is to be hunted, a new well to be dug, a road to be made, or a coffin to be escorted to the grave, the *asafo* and their sons—whom the fathers make to do most of the manual work—are called out. I recollect an occasion when a very aged and feeble man disappeared from his home and was thought to be wandering light-headed or lying injured in the bush. It was the *asafo* who were called out to make search parties.

The officers of the *Asafo* are twelve in number. Two of this twelve comprise the *Akwafon*. The senior of these two—the *Akwafontse*—is supreme military commander and is responsible for all the military organization and also for military policy. The other is his deputy. In earlier days a bad *mantse* was never destooled, but was either killed or deserted, and it was the *akwafontse* who had the right to sentence him to death, for the *mantse*'s post was a military one and the *Akwafontse* was the head of all military affairs.

Next come two officers called *sipi*, one for *Asaman* and one for *Awudun*. Each is responsible for marshalling his half of the town, distributing ammunition and passing on the instructions of the *akwafon*.

Under each *sipi* are four captains, each called an *asafoatse* (father of the *asafo*). Each takes his orders from the *sipi*, and each is responsible for the movements of the men of his own company. *Awudun* has four *asafoatsemei*, one of which must come from *Aboitsewe*, and *Asaman* has four, two of which must come from the sub-section known as *Ablewonko*. Since I have known the town two out of the eight posts have been standing vacant.

It is interesting to notice how these officers' work has altered since the days of warfare. The *akwafontse* is now responsible for the allocation of land, knows all boundaries, and settles all disputes about them. On various occasions he represents the

townspeople. Money received on behalf of the town as a whole or paid out on behalf of the town as a whole is received or paid out by the *Akwafontse*. The occasion described on p. 17 is an example. Again, whenever a new *mantse*, *mankralo*, *asafoatse*, or any other 'big man' is chosen, the group from which he is to be chosen make their nomination and then 'show it to the town' through the *Akwafontse*, and the voice of the people comes back through the same channel.

The actual collection of taxes and distribution of monies is done by the *sipi* of each section of the town. The *sipi* also distributes gunpowder to his own group when town ceremonial demands gunpowder. On the occasion when the present Temma *mantse* was 'gazetted', gifts of kerosene and drink arrived from the Accra *mantse*, and a bullock was slaughtered. The distribution of the kerosene, drink, and meat was the duty of the *sipi*.

The older *asafoatsemei* act chiefly as magistrates—as indeed do their senior officers also—and hold courts to settle any disputes people care to take to them. Any elder can hold a court, provided that he calls together enough additional elders to satisfy both disputants and allows any other interested elders to assist. No one ever takes a dispute with a fellow townsman to the registered tribunal unless he wishes to spite his adversary and make him pay a large fine and tribunal costs. Seldom does anyone refuse to appear at one of the unofficial courts for he knows that the tribunal before which the police may force him to appear will cost him more. These unregistered courts are of two kinds, *Kwesi* and *Blohūn*—'under the eaves' and 'in the street'. The one kind is held in privacy, the other is open to anyone who likes to go and listen. Both kinds are, more often than not, before an *asafoatse*.

Of the six *asafoatsemei* at present active in Temma—*Afua*, *Ofiosu*, *Dade Agbo*, *Nabra*, *Blenya*, and *Odoto*—all are old men, except *Odoto* of *Aboitsewe*. *Afua* is also acting *dzasetse*, and is the town's greatest authority on customary procedure and is called in to every difficult dispute. *Ofiosu*, *Nabra*, and *Dade Agbo* work very hard settling disputes: *Dade Agbo*, in particular, seems to have a meeting in his yard on almost any evening one cares to visit it. *Blenya* is a very old man, senile and permanently disgruntled, is *Ofiosu*'s father-in-law and often sourly reminds him of this in public.

These older men—except *Blenya*—cope with all the serious emergencies. In the dramatic affair of the *mantse*'s conspiracy which I shall describe later,¹ it was *Dade Agbo* who was consulted

¹ See p. 118.

when the first whispers of the plot began to leak out, it was he who advised them to say nothing, but to be prepared, and it was he in person who collected a party of helpers and secretly watched in case anything should happen, and when it did it was he who took charge, called his fellow officers and handled the whole disturbance.

Odotó, the youngest of the *asafotfemei*, is, I judge, under forty, and was elected to represent *Abotfene* in response to public demand at a time when he had won great popularity by a display of courage when the town was hunting a dangerous robber. I doubt if his relatives, left to themselves, would have selected him. I have never known him preside at a court, for he has many seniors in his own House, but he does an enormous amount of active keeping of the peace on all sorts of occasions and is most resourceful and practical. Often he seems more like the ideal policeman than anything else and always appears, seemingly from nowhere, to cope with minor disturbances and emergencies. I recall the occasion of the opening of the registered tribunal in Temma when word came that the Accra *mantse* would be sending two representatives to declare the court open. All the 'big men' of the town assembled at six in the morning to discuss the arrangements to be made for the reception of the visitors who were expected at noon. The meeting had not been assembled ten minutes before some side issue arose—some small point of etiquette had been overlooked in the calling together of the assembly—and at once the discussion flew off at a tangent and did not return till hours later when suddenly somebody from outside called out that the visitors had arrived. Consternation reigned, for nothing was planned, much less ready. It was *Odotó* who coped with the situation, seized the right people to receive the visitors, thrust them forward and sent everyone else scurrying round, collecting a bull for slaughter, collecting drinks, collecting some grand trappings for the *mantse*, and generally saving the situation.

On a dozen minor occasions I have seen him tactfully keeping the peace. I remember him gratefully when I recall a day on which I heard that a woman from Teshi, who was a *woyo* of the hyena-god *Klan*, was in Temma, and was in the act of having a possession fit in the market-place. I had long wanted to see a *woyo* possessed by the spirit of a wild animal, so I went to see. There she was on all fours, growling and snarling and scattering the crowd whenever she made a particularly ferocious rush at them. When she saw me she singled me out for special attention, sprang at me with a yelp, knocked off my helmet and began claw-

ing out handfuls of my hair. Feeling it to be no part of my duty to contribute handfuls of hair, I gripped her firmly by the wrists, divided between laughter, apprehension lest she might give me a septic bite in the hand,¹ and anxiety not to appear discourteous to her god. The latter worried me most, and I knew it worried the crowd, for it is not done to obstruct a *wɔyo* in the performance of her sacred antics. She was quite skinny and light, but I hesitated to get rid of her with a harmless throw into a huge basket of corn that was standing by, for I knew that the throwing about of *wɔyei* would destroy my reputation as a friend of the local religion. So there we stood foolishly wondering what to do next, when suddenly *Odoto* appeared, hustling forward the *wɔyo*'s *sapati*—the only person who knew how to manage her. The *sapati* diverted her attention elsewhere while I effaced myself with *Odoto* in the crowd. 'If you had hurt her', said *Odoto*, 'we should have had to take you to the *wulomɔ* and fine you a cow and rum and thirty-two shillings, and that would have made shame for us of all.'

On another memorable and much more important occasion I saw what would have been a serious riot circumvented by *Ofiosu* and *Odoto* together. At that time, after years of anxiety and dispute, the rightful *manɔse* had just been gazetted by the government, to the great relief and joy of the whole town except one single household, that of the literate man who had started all the trouble. The members of this household were known as the *Kabii*, and as they were hopelessly outnumbered they kept quiet and sulked in hiding. On the occasion of the great annual lagoon festival, when the *Sakumɔ wulomɔ* throws the first net to open the fishing and scores of strangers come with their nets and their sixpences to share in the first day's catch, the *kabii* collected a gang of bruisers from Teshi and Labadi and arranged with them to help 'spoil the custom' as a gesture of defiance of authority. This custom is very sacred and dear to Temma, and has been kept in unbroken continuity for hundreds of years, and the rebels were right in thinking that nothing could goad the town to greater anger than to violate it. On the morning in question everyone had gathered round the lagoon, each with a

¹ I doubt, on calmer reflection, whether she would have bitten anyone. Not only do the mediums in these hysterical fits never hurt themselves, but I have never heard of their hurting any other human being or doing anything that they would be deeply ashamed to do in private life. The wolf and leopard *wɔyei* are said to seize fowls and goats, tear them to pieces alive and start to eat them, but every possessed *wɔyo* seems to retain contact with a second circuit of consciousness that tells her exactly how far she can go: she seems to have one eye on the audience all the time. The possessed *wɔyo* is a curious mixture of unrestraint and self-consciousness. In particular, she always seems ready to be guided by her *sapati*.

new cast-net that he had spent several weeks in making, the *Sakumo wulomo* and the *Nyado* had just arrived and were preparing their libations and net, when higher up the lagoon some men started throwing nets. The 'strangers' on the far bank half-a-mile away, seeing this, imagined that the *wulomo* had finished his rites and given the signal for general fishing, so they too all began throwing their nets. A horrified silence fell on the group round the *wulomo*, and then, as everyone realized what had probably happened, anger mingled with the dismay. The gentle old *Sakumo wulomo* was on the verge of tears, the fiery little *Nyado* was trembling with rage. *Asafoatse Ofiosu* called *Odoto*. 'It's those *Kabii*', he said, 'trying to make trouble. They want to make a fight and bring in the strangers. Go and see, and tell all the young men to keep away from them and don't let them have a row.' Off went *Odoto*, splashing through the mud, followed more slowly by his less nimble senior, and together they controlled their sorely provoked fellow-townsmen.

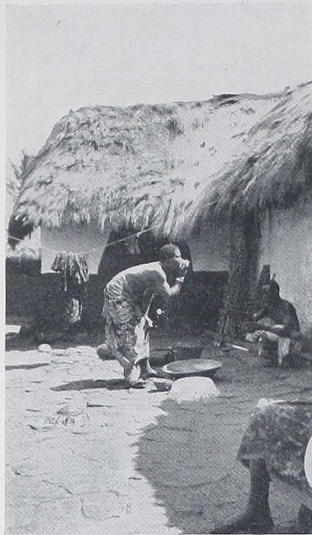
The *asafoatsemei* are profoundly respected and always obeyed. They, on their side, are proud of their honoured position and of the law and order that they maintain, and freely give their time and energy. If the British Government could enlist the help of these excellent men on those occasions when police are sent to prevent rioting the police would usually be unnecessary. The Gold Coast police often have a singularly tactless bullying manner when dealing with their illiterate countrymen, and their very presence is often enough to turn sulks into violence. I once saw an *asafoatse* box the ears of a quarrelsome hooligan. The hooligan glowered blackly, 'If you were not an *asafoatse* I would punch your face', he said. 'But I *am* an *asafoatse*', replied the other, 'so you will obey me.' And obeyed he was. A policeman's lot in such a case would have been the punched face.

The Dzasetse

The *dzasetse* is the head of the body known as the *Dzase* which consists of all members of the House or Houses from which the *mantse* may be chosen. The *dzasetse* stands for this electoral body, and without his approval no one can be a *mantse*. He is in charge of the stool itself and all matters pertaining to it, and it is he who in the presence of the head *wulomo* actually performs the midnight ceremony of medicining the new *mantse* by holding him over the magical stool. The stool is kept in his house, and he does all the rites connected with the care of it, except its annual bathing with soap and water, which is done by certain old women. He is the 'father' of the *mantse*, teaches him his



Wulomei at the annual lagoon festival.
(See p. 95.)



Every morning and evening the *Temma maytse* prays for the safety of the town.
(See p. 97.)

duties, guides him, corrects him, and admonishes him if he needs it. Every morning and every evening when the Temma *mantse* prays for the safety of the town the *dzasetse* has to be there.

It is his duty to know all the history and tradition of the stool, and all the town constitution. He studies the character and abilities of all his possible successors, and imparts his knowledge to the one whom he judges to be best able to serve the tradition.

The present *dzasetse* is very old and cannot leave his compound, but he works hard all day at fish nets and performs the rites for the stool itself. The rest of his work is done by the man who will be his successor, *asafoatse Afua*, also an old man. *Afua* is a man of rare intelligence, with a clear and well-stocked brain; what he does not know about the town's ancestors and customary procedure is not worth knowing. As he does not suffer fools and rogues gladly, the recent history of Temma has at times nearly driven him mad and sent him off in disgust to the seclusion of his 'village' at Sakumona, there to calm himself into resignation. He has more 'palavers' to settle than anyone else, and I should not be surprised if he wore himself into his grave before the imperturbable old man whom he is meant to succeed.

I remember a small 'palaver' between two *woyei*, one of whom had visited a neighbouring town and there used a sacred herb in private medicine. This came to the ears of other *woyei*, and led to some fuss, and the affair was eventually referred to a small committee consisting of the four head *wulomei*, two *woyei*, two *otsamei*, and our friend *Afua*. When the affair was settled *Afua* made a speech thanking the *woyo* who first reported the fault. He said that the matter might appear a small one, but no matter of breaking custom was small. It was custom, he said, that tied the town together, and anyone who broke custom broke down the town as harlots break down the town, and if the town were broken down all would be confusion and disorder.

The Mantse

Left to itself, Temma has no use whatever for a *mantse*, in so far as a *mantse* is understood to mean a 'chief'. Nor, actually, does it maintain one in that capacity, but in the primary capacity of *Tsade wulomɔ*. The Temma *mantse*—as a *wulomɔ*—is quite as busy as are the other three senior *wulomei*. But the town has no means, even if it had the desire, to support him as a 'chief', for

there is no stool treasury and no stool income.¹ The stool ceremonial, in so far as the stool is an old war fetish, is financed by the *dzasetse*'s family, just as any other family who possess a yam-eating god or medicine finance it and look after it. In so far as the *mantse* is a *wulomo* he is financed by the relatives who jointly own his god.

When the *mantse* is called upon from outside the town to behave as a 'chief'—as at the Coronation celebrations in Accra—his relatives, assisted by reluctant townspeople, have to scrape together the money for him. Just before the Coronation I came upon an ex-carpenter fisherman making new woodwork for the *mantse*'s big umbrellas. 'This will take me two days', he said, 'I shall lose two days' fishing and I shall not be paid a farthing. But I do the work for the honour of my own House because my House must help this town not to be ashamed among the other towns.'

Since warfare ceased the main changes that have taken place in the town are the substitution of fishing for much of the farming as a means of livelihood, an enormous increase in the population, the increased use of money, and a gradual change in the duties of the military officials to cope with the increase in population. As the *mantse* first came into being as a military official, it might be supposed that his duties, like those of other military officials, would have undergone adaptation to conditions and made the *mantse* as integral and indispensable a part of the secular peacetime organization as the other military officials have become. This has not happened in Temma, though it had showed signs of beginning in some of the other towns before the coming of the Native Administration Ordinance. There are two reasons, I think, why it has not happened in Temma and why it is much slower in happening elsewhere than the British Administration assumes. Firstly, the *mantse* is also a *wulomo*, and all the *wulomei* now specialize in the sacred and ceremonial part of the town's affairs. Secondly, there is an original and essential difference between the nature of a *mantse*'s office and the nature of the offices of all the other military officials. All these other officials were chosen from the beginning for their human capability and their personal qualities of wisdom, authority, and reliability. No supernatural element was involved. But the *mantse*'s significance was entirely supernatural; he was the passive vessel to hold

¹ The opening of a government registered tribunal at once alters the position of the *mantse*, for the tribunal is a source of income.

The towns vary slightly in constitution, but no town in the Gā State has any stool funds, though in some cases when land is sold the *mantse* is given a share.



The *maytse* is a *wulomo*. (See p. 98.)



Temma *maykralo* performing a *wulomo*'s ceremonial. (See p. 99.)

the 'medicine of the stool', the magical influence for bringing bravery and victory in battle, and security to the town at rest. As a human being he was never of much account. As many informants have insisted, as a person, 'he is a small boy'. His presence at the so-called *mantse's court*—as indeed at most of the gatherings he attends—is to give tone and dignity to the meeting.¹

The *mantse's* case is somewhat similar to the case of a *woyo*. When a *woyo* is possessed by a god she speaks 'with the god's mouth' and with supreme authority. But she is merely a passive instrument. When she is not possessed she has no authority whatever, and her opinion, as a human being, is negligible. A more closely parallel case to that of the *mantse* is that of the old *Dzranoyo* who impersonates the Temma god *Sakumo* at the *Dzra damo* ceremony annually. In this capacity she receives the highest possible homage—that due to the highest god—but all the rest of the year she is a perfectly ordinary old woman.

The 'Mankralo'

The *mankralo* is a second *mantse*, and has an exactly similar kind of stool. Why a town should have created two officials so alike is explained in the chapter on Osu. The *mankralo*, like the *mantse*, is, in most towns, simultaneously a *wulomo*.

Anyone who had seen the *mantse* or *mankralo* of Temma, day by day, during the seven years previous to the reopening of the *mantse's* tribunal would have seen that their daily duties in the affairs of the town were primarily those of *wulomei*. Some of these I shall describe later.

The funeral of the late Temma *mankralo*, *Kwesi Adzei*, which I had the privilege of attending, brought home very forcibly the fact that he was regarded much more as *Anudu wulomo* than as town *mankralo*.

This ceremonial, begun by the *Sakumo wulomo* and the *Na Yo wulomo*, ordinarily not allowed to see any corpse at all or to participate in anything to do with death, going into the presence

¹ This has been somewhat altered in a few other towns where the *mantse* is an elderly man of undoubted wisdom and ability. The late Teshi and Jamestown *mantses* were justly respected for their personal wisdom and the present Osu *mantse* does admirably hard, solid work on his tribunal—mainly drudgery which no one grudges him. These chiefs are, however, exceptional in a way which we shall discuss later.

On the other hand, I was many times present at the Labadi *mantse's* tribunal in the lifetime of the late *mantse* and never once saw him even present.

of their dead fellow-*wulomo*¹ before any of the washing, laying-out or mourning began and, employing the form of salutation used only in the *gbatsfu* of a god, asked him to avenge his own death if foul play had brought it about. Afterwards when the corpse was laid in state the *Nyado* took a bunch of millet-heads and fixed them in the dead hands and arranged the hands and the millet in a wooden bowl of holy water, as though the dead *wulomo* were performing a *wulomo*'s rites. The *wulomo*'s white hat was placed on his head, his beads of office round his neck, and offerings of white calico were laid on the bier. The manner in which a corpse is dressed up to lie in state is believed to give to the company in the place of the dead the clue to the manner in which they are to receive him. The *mankerab*, then, was to be received in the next world as an honoured *wulomo*, a lord of corn and blessing, not as a military *mankerab* with swords and guns.

*The Otsamei*²

The *mantse* has two *otsamei*, the town has two, and the *akwasɔy* has one. The *otsame* is the mouthpiece of any group and is chosen for his fluency, accuracy, and tact. An *otsame*'s position is a junior one, and he may be appointed while he is still a young man. Whenever a body of officials meet if they have no permanent *otsame* the most junior of their number acts as such and announces the decisions of the meeting.³ But since a permanent *otsame* is necessarily an intelligent man, when he gets older he naturally comes to take an active part in the deliberations of the body. The older *otsamei*, like the *asafoatsamei*, act as

¹ They allowed me to go with them on this very impressive occasion, though no one else but the *Awudu wɔyɔ* accompanied them, because they believe that a European has a natural priestliness, nay rather, 'is not very far from the gods themselves'. I am always invited to walk or sit with the high priests at religious ceremonies and am asked to pour out libations with the priests and ask the gods for blessings just as they do. This is not a personal favour to me (though of course it would not be offered to a hostile or openly incredulous European), but as an expression of their belief in the supernatural affinities of all Europeans. In times of drought I have often been asked to procure rain. The last big drought was attributed to the fact that Europeans were making a road across a swampy area and did not wish for rain till the work was done.

Administrators hardly realize the extent to which belief in European divinity survives, and the extent to which their own prestige is based upon it, and the necessity, as education destroys that belief, for replacing it by belief in the solid quality of the foreign human beings who have taken charge of African people's affairs.

² Twi = *okyeame*. *Gā* = *na wiels*, mouth-speaker. The Twi word is a part of the set of terms introduced with the whole military organization.

³ For example, when all the *mantsemei* of Accra meet the *Gbese mantse* acts as their *otsame*, for *Gbese*'s is the junior stool. When the Temma *asafoatsamei* meet *Odoto* is their *otsame*.

magistrates and hold courts. Unlike other elders, they are not chosen from any special Houses.

The Woleiatse

Though all the townsmen of Temma have farms, most of them are fishermen as well. All the sea fishing is controlled by the father-of-the-fishermen, or *woleiatse*. He allocates times and sites to owners of seine-nets, gives Fanti and other strangers permission to fish, collects dues from them, performs such fishing ceremonial as *Nfo bulemo*, and settles all disputes about fishing matters.

The *woleiatse* is chosen from one House only, and in all matters he is assisted by a committee of senior fishermen representing all the principal houses in the town.

He is greatly respected, and his word on all fishing matters is law. I remember an occasion when he sent round his crier saying that all the young fishermen were to turn out on such-and-such a Tuesday¹ and clean out the fishermen's bathing-pool—which was then dry—weed it, and repair its containing bank ready for the expected rains. An inadequate number of workers turned up and the work was unfinished. The *woleiatse* sent out a second notice saying that no one at all was to go fishing till the work was done. Everyone obeyed except a small party of the 'kabii'—whom we have mentioned before—who went fishing just to defy authority. On landing they were met by a party of the *woleiatse*'s stalwarts and hauled into his presence. A very large fine of some forty pounds was first ordered; they cringed and begged for mercy, and the fine was reduced to a small one of a few shillings, but they were told that if they gave any more trouble they would not be allowed to fish in Temma waters at all, nor beach their canoes on the Temma shore.

The *woleiatse* does not control lagoon fishing, but any breach of lagoon etiquette by a fisherman would be dealt with through him.

The Kple Agba.

The social life of the town is closely woven into the religious life—and most of the religious activity is of a very pleasantly sociable nature. Not only is the grand festival of *Kpledzo* the focus of the whole year's activities, but nearly all feasting and 'playing' is bound up with the worship of the gods, and the

¹ No one fishes in the sea on Tuesdays.

organization of worship needs the co-operation of a circle of leaders bigger than the circle of priests. Chief among these religious assistants is the *Kple Agba*.

This body is primarily a choir and orchestra, and is responsible for the singing and dancing connected with worship. Its members are also responsible for the behaviour of the populace during the festivals. If anyone is drunk or otherwise disorderly at a religious ceremony they can command him to be removed and afterwards punished or fined. Any breach of religious etiquette by the common people is their affair. They are also responsible for all manual labour connected with worship; they clear the sacred groves, clear *Sakumo's* dancing ground, *Sakumo's* road to the sea, and the plots for the sacred corn. They repair the thatch of the gods' *gbatsui* and help with ceremonial washing and sweeping.

They are about thirty in number, the descendants of an original body formed many generations ago. When a member dies a brother or son takes his place. Of two equally eligible successors preference is given to the more musically talented, but the company is always at liberty to co-opt musical talent if its own is inadequate or if striking talent is available. Their leader, the *agbafoatse*, is chosen by the company from among its members. This leader is the leader of the singing and drumming as well as head of the organization, but if he is not musical or able to sing he can appoint a deputy. The present *agbatfoatse*, *Abladu* of *Aboitsewe*, is an old man who can no longer sing, and for many years his deputy as 'father of song' at the festivals has been *Okulai* (G.24, Diagram I).

When last I stayed in Temma the farmers were suffering a severe drought, and the fishermen a fish famine. Every evening for weeks large parties of women and girls paraded the town 'crying for rain' and for fish, that is, shouting the well-known *Kple* anthem to the sky. These parades were organized by the *Kple Agba*.

Such parties also cry at the invitation of any *wɔyo*-in-training for some weeks before any big religious festival. A big festival to which *wɔyei* from many outside towns are invited is the time when the *wɔyo*-in-training hopes that 'her mouth will be opened' and she will become able to speak and sing during her possession-fits. When plenty of women cry to all the gods beforehand, the mouth-opening is held to be more likely to happen. When it does, and the *wɔyo* becomes fully fledged, she sends thirty-two shillings and other gifts to the *Kple Agba*. The *Agba* sends all this to the *wulɔmɔ*, but the *wulɔmɔ* always gives back the money to

the *Agba* for their various expenses, and out of it the *agba* give something to the women's crying parties.

✓ *The Adowa Company*

This is a company of women musicians, and was described to me as 'the women's *asafo*'. It is an institution borrowed from the Akan people in the same way as the *asafo* and the whole military organization were borrowed. In times of war some of the most war-like rallying cries and songs were sung by the women for the purpose of inspiring the men, and there was a certain amount of war magic to be performed by the women at home while the men were away. All this was in the charge of the *adowa* company, a score or so of senior members of the *dzase* families, with co-opted assistants of exceptional musical talent. The musical instrument used was not a drum, but a kind of rattle made of strung beads clashing against a hollow gourd. These days they have forgotten most of their war-like duties, but they still turn out to sing and dance at the funerals of men of the *asafo* and the funerals of distinguished women. They also take part in the annual yam-feast of the stool. Their songs, like most war-songs and *asafo* songs, are chiefly in Fanti.

The Medical Agba

The medical *agba* is really the committee of the private practitioners' trade union, but they perform public services as well.

They are ten in number in Temma; in most towns they are seven. They control the activities of all the private practitioners in the town as the *woleiatse* controls the fishermen's. They hold a general meeting twice a year, and they try all disputes involving practitioners. Other courts call them in if points arise involving witchcraft and medicine.

They have charge of all the magic concerned with warding off evil from the town. When an epidemic breaks out the *wulomei* can only use religious means and pray to their gods for succour, but the *agba* use impersonal magical means and herbs to impede the evil directly and specifically. When magic is directed against evil this is always an act of selective destruction, whereas a *wulomei*'s duty is to procure positive blessing and prosperity. 'My fathers never taught me to curse,' the old *Sakumo wulomei* explained to me one day, 'I only know how to bless.' The *wulomei* is rendered unclean and unfit for his work by contact with evil and death: he is not even allowed to see a

dead body. All cleansing of the town after deaths and epidemics, all gruesome jobs connected with dead bodies—such as the rites for dead pregnant women—and everything destructive, nasty, or unfortunate is dealt with not by the *wulomo*, but the medical *agba*.

For instance, some years ago an epidemic killed a great many children and the *agba* took a fish-net and with it swept all the borders of the town to enmesh the evil thing. During my own last stay in Temma the *mankrabo* died and shortly after his death many of the young children in the town began to suffer from headache and colic and to cry out in sudden fear. This was attributed to their ability to see the dead *mankrabo*, invisible to adults, hanging round his old haunts. The *agba* dealt with this by killing a goat and scattering the cut-up pieces outside the town to persuade him not to come inside and worry the children. Again, about ten years ago Temma and a neighbouring town had a quarrel which involved some small skirmishes in the surrounding bush, but the borders of the town were protected with impalpable magic barriers erected by the *agba*.

Dancing *woyei* have to be protected magically against malicious influences which might 'stamp on them' during their fits. This protective work is done by the *agba*.

An exceptionally bad *gbefi*, affecting a single individual, sometimes needs the whole *agba* to expel it, not only from the individual, but from the whole town which it might re-enter.

The head of the Temma medical *agba* is a man of *Anwudun* named *Boi-bi-boi*. To learn his medicines he travelled in Dahomey, Kru, and Nzima country, and stayed at Grand Bassam. He carries his head a few degrees out of the vertical because he was once bitten in the neck by an *otofo* when he was fighting half-a-dozen of these fearsome spirits at once. What he does not know about powers of destruction is held to be not worth knowing. I do not suppose anyone's presence creates such awe as his. I recall an occasion when I had been out in the bush with him collecting herbs and I had brought him back to my quarters to go through the herbs one by one so that I could write down their names and uses. The imparting of any important information must always be accompanied by a libation of rum, and as I had no assistant at the time I called in a young fisherman from among my neighbours and asked him to serve the rum,¹ a service he had done for me often before. He duly served the rum, but afterwards he told me that his knees had been shaking

¹ The server slips his cloth to his waist, pours the rum into the drinking vessel for each person in turn, and is then given a share himself. Lastly, he stoops with the vessel between both hands and empties the dregs between his feet.

with fear. I was astonished, as he was the least nervous-looking young stalwart imaginable. 'Is Father *Boi-bi-boi* a particular enemy of yours?' I asked. 'Oh, no indeed', was the reply, 'my great-uncle is one of the *agba* and is his friend, but it is very terrible to go near anyone who knows so many fearful things as he does.'

The general dread of his disapproval was on one occasion very useful to me. There was one medicine-man who was rather a drunken old sot, and as his apprentices followed his lead his patients were often neglected, and on the whole I had very little respect for him. But I often dropped into his compound, for I sometimes found interesting people there. One day when I called I found no one at home except two somnolent apprentices and one patient, an insane and frenzied girl. She was tied to a coconut tree by the wrists so high up that her hands were above her head and she could not sit down. The cord was cutting her wrists, and she was wailing as much through pain and discomfort as insanity. Feeling disgusted and angry I made the apprentices untie her and let her sit down. But I also went and told *Boi-bi-boi*. This was much more to the point. *Boi-bi-boi* went round to the compound and put a fine healthy terror into the old man, and thereafter, though I called there many times and always unexpectedly, I never found the girl other than well cared for, clean, and comfortable. She was finally discharged cured.

Some Characteristics of the 'Big Men'

To the 'big men' whom we have mentioned the town customs and traditions are very dear. They work hard to preserve these, for they see in them the source of law and order. They also enjoy the duties involved in their offices and they enjoy the honour and respect accorded to them. But it must not be supposed that their town is the only imaginable world to them. Most of them in their youth left the town and travelled, many of them doing surf-boat work at various ports all round West Africa. Some of them have worked on steamers and been to Europe, others have worked as labourers inland, some have been soldiers. Those who have worked with surf-boats and canoes have a special design tattooed on their chests, and it was the prevalence of this design among the older men that first made me ask its meaning. Even the old *Na Yo wulomo* and every one of the *asafoatsemei* except *Afua* wears this sign. *Afua*, however, left the town and learnt European carpentry. Far from being 'detrribalized' by these foreign contacts these travelled men are

the more devoted to their town and its traditions. They say they are the wiser for having travelled, and I think they are the more respected.¹

The habit of leaving the town still prevails. Even the women sometimes go off for a few years' trading. Many of the young fishermen spend the slack time of the fishing year working as sawyers and lumbermen in the timber forests where they earn good money. Many of them simply go to another fishing town in small parties—with or without one woman to cook for the party—and there work hard and save their earnings. They say it is not only easier to save money in a strange town, but also easier to work hard, for in their own town are many interruptions and social obligations, and their sense of exile makes them feel more like work than play. Young men who want to save enough to build a house or take a wife nearly always go as 'strangers' to other towns. There are Temma men in Nungwa, and Nungwa men in Temma; Fanti and Adangme men in all the Gā towns, and Gā men in the Fanti and Adangme towns.

§ 5

JUSTICE

It must be first noted that with the exception of the big town court and the *wulomei's* courts, hardly any court has a rigid permanent constitution of personnel. Every court is a commission of enquiry constituted *ad hoc* and has only the jurisdiction conferred upon it by the disputants. Only in 'oath cases' can one party summon another to appear. The two parties simply agree to submit their dispute to a committee of impartial elders and if either objects to the elders nominated by the other he is at liberty to do so.

One of the simplest and most typically Gā courts I ever attended was held in the bush 'village' of an old Labadi medicine-man—the village consisting of two compounds only. This old man was in the chair, and the other members of the bench were the head of a tiny Osu 'village' and an elder from a neighbouring Accra

¹ These Temma men are, of course, illiterate, but in some of the other towns we find examples—notably the *Jamestown manɔse*, the *Osu manɔse*, the late *Teshi manɔse*, and the ex-*Aserɛ manɔse*—of literate men devoting their old age and knowledge to the task of holding together the crumbling forces of law and order in their towns against the predatory hoard of literate adventurers. These old literates are the product of the departed system of stern Spartan Victorian education, and it is difficult to discern their counterparts in the rising generation.

village. The dispute was between a man and his wife, the sole inhabitants of yet another tiny 'village'. The man was a labourer for some Europeans but had made himself a 'village' for his own farming. One night he started knocking his wife about and she fled bellowing to the next village and threw herself under its protection. The husband then asked the head of the village to judge between them. The wife agreed to this and the two other impartial elders were called, also with the consent of the disputants. The court decided in favour of the wife, ordered the husband to pacify her with rum, cloth, and several pounds in money—which he meekly did. The elders themselves received only a few shillings' worth of rum for their time and trouble, though the hearing took several evenings. The wife, incidentally, was a most irritating woman and had long tried the husband's patience, as everyone in the district knew, and I feel sure the private sympathies of the court were with the husband; but they considered the case on its own merits with the most admirable cold impartiality.

The Mantse's Court

The *mantse's* court—or more correctly the supreme town court—is a gathering of all the *wulomei*¹ and all the other 'big men' I have mentioned already except the *woleiatse* and the *agba* officials who are co-opted only when necessary. The *mantse* is in the chair, his *otfame* does the actual talking for him, but his position as a mere figure-head is emphasized by the fact that he never 'goes to *Adzina*'.

At the hearing of every case, when all the witnesses have given their evidence, the bench retires to discuss the case in private and decide what judgment to give. This is called 'consulting the old lady' or 'going to *Adzina*'. As the *mantse* is not chosen for his wisdom in council as are the other elders he does not go to *Adzina* or take any real part in trying the case.

Although the *mantse's* court has had certain changes imposed on its character by the intervention of the British Government, even without these it is different from the other courts of the town in that the bench is composed of all the big people in the town instead of the elders of one or two Houses. It is therefore an expensive court even when it merely settles a dispute without imposing any fines or penalties, because all these 'big men' must be given adequate 'hearing rum' for their time and trouble. If the case goes on long, additional rum must be given

¹ The *wulomei* seldom choose to come, but they all have that right.

because 'you cannot cause a big man's bottom to become warm with long sitting unless you recompense him'.

The Akwasɔntse Court

In pre-administration days the chairman of the supreme town court for military and purely secular affairs was the *akwasɔntse*. The *mantse* as a military personage, was under the *akwasɔntse* and the *akwasɔntse*'s court could put the *mantse* to death if he proved thoroughly unsatisfactory. If they judged him but slightly unsatisfactory he was deserted and ignored. He was never destooled. Neither Temma nor any other Gā town has any customary procedure of its own for destooling a *mantse*. To this vexed question I shall return later.

The Conditional Curse

When one person pronounces a conditional curse in connection with a dispute and uses the name of a god, the case is taken to the *wulomɔ* of that god. But if he pronounces a military curse it is taken either to the *akwasɔntse* or, in these days, to the *mantse*. In the days before there were military officials the *wulomɔ* tried all conditional-curse cases and the plaintiff always said to him: 'Ke oye nii ogbo, ke'o nu nu ogbo, kedzi obii sane ne sifi oba mi. Kedzi obisifi oba mi le, ke' oye nii le o ka gbo, ke' onunu hũ oka gbo'. ('If you eat may you die, if you drink may you die, if you do not enquire into this business for me. If you do enquire into it for me, then if you eat may you not die, if you drink may you not die.')

This is still said when people take their oath cases to the *mankrabo*, the *wulomɔ*, or the *mantse*. To an *asafoatse* they now say: 'Na oden tsi ake sane ne ni Asimasi ye mi ne ke'o bii sifi obaa mi le oto Katamanso Ta'. ('By your hand's sword, if you do not enquire for me into this case between me and So-and-so, then may you bring about another Battle of Katamansu.') The officer in question must then hear the case without a fee.

If any third party hear one of the parties in the dispute calling down one of the great general curses, it is his duty to seize the speaker by the wrist then and there, saying, 'Oka apa mli'—You lie bound—and immediately take him to the judge. This third party will receive eight shillings for his trouble from the man who pronounced the curse. If the curser runs away the man who 'bound' him is responsible. As soon as the two reach the judge the plaintiff makes a trilling call by beating his lips with his fingers, all the 'big people' collect and the judge 'gives the case' to them. The plaintiff is held by the wrist till someone has seized the nearest goat and fetched two bottles of rum (called

Dabli). The goat is killed on the judge's feet and the blood and intestines put on the threshold of his house. The judge puts some of the blood on his own tongue and some on the plaintiff's mouth. He then holds up the two bottles, one in each hand, and prays either to the god or to the dead according to the nature of the curse. He puts rum three times on his own feet and three times on his own tongue. The goat is then cut up and the left foreleg is sent to the defendant with a summons to appear. The right foreleg is given to the plaintiff. The judge keeps the head and the 'waist' and each member of the bench receives a portion. The heart, liver, and lungs are cut into fragments, mixed with the dung and the blood sprinkled abroad by the judge who calls upon the gods or the dead to come and eat and depart. This nullifies the curse laid on the judge and he can now eat and drink without dying. Each party in the case then puts down thirty-two shillings hearing fee and the winner of the case eventually gets his back. If the hearing goes on a long time through lying and contradiction the elders may demand another thirty-two shillings 'because their buttocks are heated with long sitting'.

This procedure with regard to conditional curses is essentially the same in all the Gã towns.

Cases involving a conditional curse are always given precedence over other cases. The judge must drop all other business and nullify the curse on the same day that it is pronounced and must proceed with the hearing not later than the next day.

To pronounce a conditional curse (*Gã—ka kita*) has no exact English equivalent and has come into Gold Coast English as the phrase 'to swear an oath'. Cases involving it are called 'oath cases', and it is usually said that the plaintiff 'swears an oath on' the defendant. This is not quite correct: the curse is laid on the judge should he not consent to hear the case, or, in the case of a military oath, on the whole community.

Corporate Responsibility

Wrongdoers are forced by their families into submission to town discipline.

Responsibility for wrongdoing is a family affair. When a man is asked to appear before an elder's court it is not he himself who is called, but the head of his family—his father or elder brother—is requested to bring him. The head of his family is responsible for the payment of any costs he is ordered to pay. In earlier days some crimes, for example incest, were punished by drowning or shooting and the criminal's own family carried out the sentence. In the case of a shooting sentence it was held

that an executioner would be defiled by the execution, so the criminal was handed a loaded gun and ordered to put the muzzle in his mouth and shoot himself. If he was too cowardly to do this his nearest relative took the gun and committed suicide himself, after which the other relatives drove the coward from the town. Always, until European influence was felt, responsibility was collective, not individual; parents were punished for the crimes of their children and the seniors of families for the crimes of juniors. The solidarity of the family, and the helplessness and destitution of an individual at variance with his family, was beyond all else what kept the individual law-abiding. An individual who offended his town offended his family and quarrelled almost with life itself.

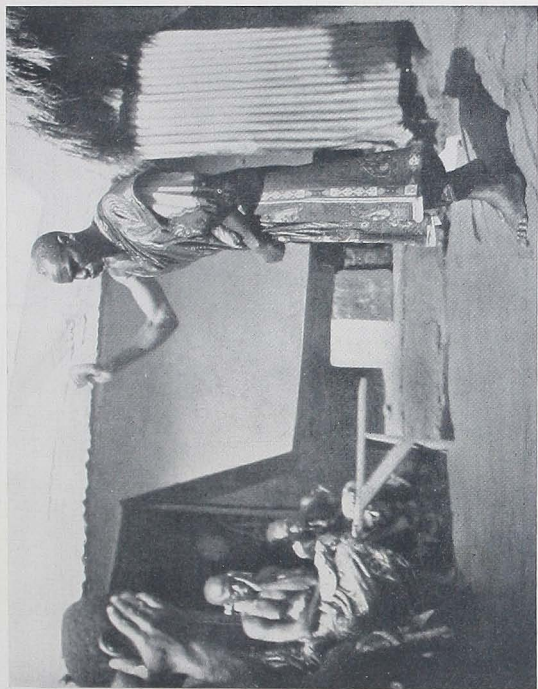
Punishments

Punishments and penalties are very rarely inflicted. Most of the cases tried by the various elders' courts are pure disputes concerning ownership, rights, and obligations. The disputant who is found to be in the wrong is simply ordered to restore what he has wrongfully taken, to do what he has declined to do, or to recompense anyone he has injured. Furthermore, it must always be remembered that there is no set of formulated, rigid laws which the bench is bound to administer. There are times when every British administrator dislikes the law because in being bound to administer it he is sometimes prevented from administering justice. A native court is free to give a man what it feels to be his deserts. It is guided in its ideas of justice by certain traditional precedents, but it is not bound rigidly to follow precedent.

Where one person has injured another—say a man has ill-treated his wife, seduced the wife of another man, or insulted or injured the reputation of another—then he has to pay pacification to the injured party. In addition to this, if the injured man has a god or a big medicine 'in his house' this too must be pacified and purified of the pollution with due sacrifices. In no case is the fine a punishment; it is simply compensation for injury. Nothing is paid into court and the elders receive nothing but 'hearing rum' or its equivalent in money, to repay them for their time and trouble.

In olden times minor breaches of law and order were punished with sentences of hard labour in the shape of farm work on the elders' farms, but this has almost died out.

In a great proportion of the cases the attitude taken by the parties is similar to that in the last case I attended in Temma. There a man was accused of stealing the mangoes from a tree



Senior of *same* of Temma making a speech. (See p. 100.)

which was not his. He said he believed himself the owner of the tree. Judgment was given against him, but the owner of the tree said, 'I know he didn't mean to steal the mangoes. He didn't know the tree was mine'. Whereupon the man leapt to his feet and rushed to shake the speaker heartily by the hand, saying, 'Thank you, thank you indeed. I don't want the tree. I don't want the mangoes. I only wanted you to say in public that I was not a thief'.

Repeated refusal to obey the orders of the town officials would result in expulsion from the town or—which amounts to the same thing—prohibition of fishing or farming, the only means of livelihood the town affords.

People caught in the act of theft or adultery are beaten then and there by the family of the injured party, and their friends and helpers. During my stay in Temma a woman who was a notorious thief was suspected of a further theft. Nothing was done till one day when I had been called away to Accra for the day, when the town raided her house. Discovering there the stolen goods they handed her over to the family whose property had been stolen, who tied her, stripped, to a tree and beat her.

Five or six pairs of adulterers were caught in the act during my stay in the town, and I came to recognize the distinctive sound of the adultery-hoot which the crowd always set up on these occasions. As a rule the guilty man jumps out of the window, escapes to bush and does not return till he has pacified by proxy the injured husband. An adulterer caught in the act is mercilessly beaten, especially about the abdomen and sex-organs, the object being so to injure his testicles that he becomes incapable of any further sexual activity. I know by sight one wretched limping man who is said to have been so dealt with. The adulterous woman is usually cuffed and slapped contemptuously but is not severely beaten. But when she is held to be a thoroughly worthless enticer of men she is eventually driven from the town. During my stay in Temma an Accra woman of notorious reputation who came to Temma under the pretext of fish-trading was caught one night at her ill-famed activities and the next morning was driven, yelling and screaming curses, from the town.

When the relatives of a wrongdoer side with him against the town the whole household is 'sent to Coventry'. Their wives dare not buy or sell in the market, nor any of the household show their faces outside the compound; their lives are a misery to them through the sheer weight of loneliness and unfriendship. This kind of desertion was, till recent years, the only way of dealing with an unsatisfactory *mantse* who was not bad enough to kill.

Enstoolment is a magical process and 'you can't undo the medicine', so it was not possible to destool him. He was therefore deserted, no one went near him, spoke to him, took any notice of him, or answered if he spoke.¹ This treatment is actually being meted out to one so-called *mantse* to-day. By political intrigue outside the town he succeeded in getting himself gazetted as *mantse* and recognized by the British Government as such though his own town would have none of him, refused to enstool him and simply take no notice of him whatever. Only the near relatives in his own compound ever speak to him, no one takes any cases to his tribunal. The situation is badly on his nerves: at intervals he gets hysterical and sends for Government police to protect him from impending murder and the town hugs its sides with laughter. But for the fact that he sits on the Gā State Council, a body on which are none of his own townsmen and is recognized as a *mantse* there he would long ago have given up the unequal struggle.²

Another old-time punishment was that of the *Kpa bu*. I am uncertain whether Temma ever used it, but other towns did. The *Kpa bu* is a grave-like hole under a house; its entrance is blocked by a slab of stone so that no light or fresh air can enter. Very troublesome people were put into it and the lid clapped down for a short time—say a quarter of an hour. They were then hauled out and told that next time they would be left there. Sometimes the *Kpa bu* was used to induce confession or make sulky people speak. Mostly it was used by the big courts, but fathers or grandfathers might take family delinquents to the town *Kpa bu* on their own responsibility.

Appeal against the Family

If parents or relatives ill-treat a junior member of their family he can go to any of the elders' courts and have his complaint investigated. Any neighbour who sees a young or helpless person being ill-treated by his relatives has a right to report the matter to any of the elders' courts, but must first warn the offender and 'set it before his face' that if he does not desist he will be reported.

Outside Arbitration

The custom of seeking for impartial arbitrators to whom to submit disputes occasionally leads a town with a big internal

¹ These days the process of desertion is inadequate, for the British Government continue to support the deserted *mantse* so long as he is not destooled and replaced by another. He is thus able to defy his own people.

² Since I wrote this he has been destooled.

dispute to apply to able outsiders.¹ In particular it was common in the past to take military matters—in which most of the towns were conscious of inexperience—to the Accra military court of *Modzawe*. Other cases likely to involve capital punishment, such as bloodshed and incest, were often voluntarily submitted to that court. This was not, as is sometimes erroneously believed, because Accra was in any way 'paramount' over the other Gã towns but simply because Accra had had a larger and wider experience of military matters than the other towns and had this peculiar court. When other towns brought their disputes to *Modzawe* they did so entirely of their own free will and by their own request.

Of recent years a dispute arose between two *mantfemei* of Accra. One of them suggested that the *mantse* of Osu, who is well known as an able and upright judge, should be asked to arbitrate between them. The other, however, declined, and declined further to accept every other suggested judge, so the dispute is unsettled to this day.

The custom of inviting an impartial outsider to take part in disputes is very common in all parts of the Gold Coast and has caused much misunderstanding in European minds.²

§ 6

LAND TENURE

The land in and around Temma is divided into four sections, the *akwasontse* being the arbitrator of all boundaries. These sections are owned respectively by *Afamany*, *Awudun*, *Ablewonyko*, and *Aboitsewe*. Any member of any one of these quarters is at liberty to make himself a farm on unoccupied land anywhere within his own quarter's boundaries, but if he wants to build a house or 'make a village' he first asks leave and gives a bottle of rum. Trees may be planted by any townsman anywhere except on other people's farms, and a tree remains the property of the planter and his heirs so long as it stands.

Temma has never sold any of its land, but if any stranger

¹ The Gã State Council, the outside body to which the towns have these days to submit their disputes, is not a body to which they would ever voluntarily agree to submit—wherein a fundamental principle of native justice is violated. Even if the Gã State Council were composed of perfectly incorruptible, disinterested men, they could not have sufficient knowledge of the various other towns—each of which has its own unique constitution and set of customs—to enable them to judge competently the kind of dispute that is most often submitted to them.

² For instance, in the Government records at Ada I find that some of the Volta-side Σwe tribes were assumed to be under 'a loose kind of allegiance to Accra', simply because the Accra *mantse* has assisted in some of their cases.

wanted to buy land or settle on it he would consult the 'big men' of the quarter in question and to them he would make all payments. The money would be divided by these officials between the heads of the principal households in the quarter. Households which receive money when money is divided are expected to contribute money in the same ratio to the whole quarter's contribution when money is collected.

In *Awuduŋ* the land committee consists of the *Sakumɔ wulomɔ* and the *asafoatsɛmei* of the quarter; in *Aboitsɛwe* of the *Na Yo wulomɔ* and the *asafoatsɛ*; and in *Afaman* of the *Tɛfade* and *Awudu wulomei* (i.e. the *mantɛ* and *manɔkrabɔ*) and the *asafoatsɛmei*.

Though the land is thus divided between the quarters for their use it is nevertheless not considered to be *owned* by them, but is owned by the two lagoon gods, *Sakumɔ* and *Tɛɛmu*. From the sea and roughly at right-angles to the coast-line runs a road cutting through the middle of the town and leading away inland. East of this road the land belongs to *Tɛɛmu* and west to *Sakumɔ*. On *Tɛɛmu*'s side nobody may either cultivate the land nor fish in the lagoon on Thursdays, for Thursday is *Tɛɛmu*'s day. On *Sakumɔ*'s side farm work and lagoon work are forbidden on Fridays. The *Sakumɔ wulomɔ* himself also observes Monday and stays in his yard, dressed in white, on both Monday and Friday.

The actual holding of farms by individuals is not particularly interesting because a patch of land is farmed only for about three years and is then abandoned and allowed to grow rough grass again. Movements are quite haphazard. There is plenty of spare room and no need for anyone either to interfere with another's farm or to resort to a patch recently cultivated by another. I made a careful plan of the *Aboitsɛwe* land and all the holdings on it, but the only interesting thing that emerged was that many non-*Aboitsɛwe* people had farms on *Aboitsɛwe* land and many *Aboitsɛwe* people had farms on land owned by other quarters of the town. Any *Aboitsɛwe* man may make a farm anywhere on unoccupied *Aboitsɛwe* land without asking anyone, but a non-*Aboitsɛwe* man must first ask the *Nyado*'s permission. A Temma citizen pays nothing, but a stranger brings a bottle of drink to the *Nyado*.

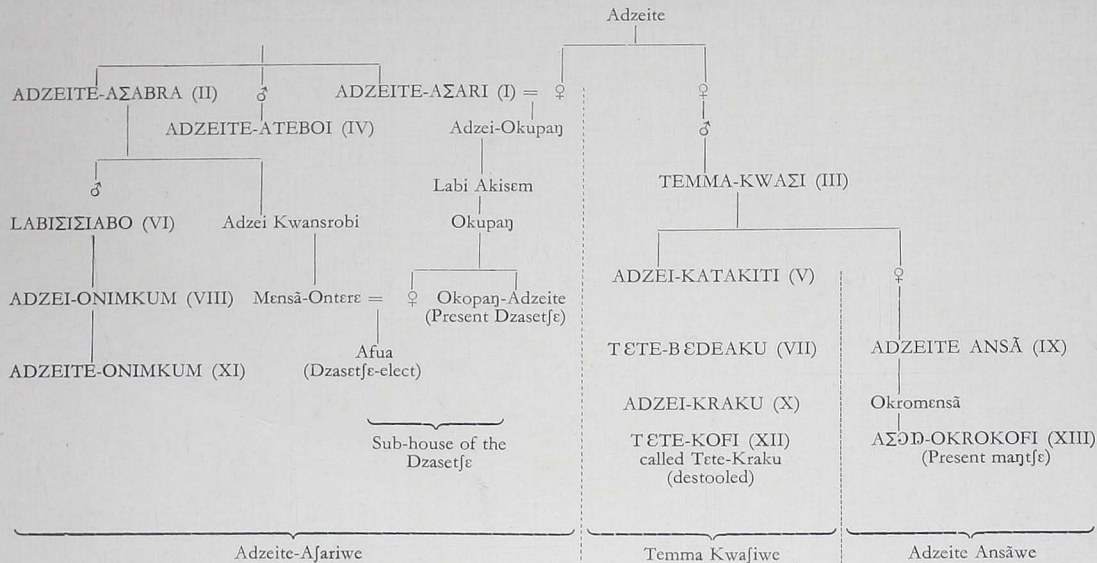
§ 7

STOOL HISTORY OF TEMMA

(See Diagram VII)

The first *mantɛ* of Temma was *Adɛɛite Afari*, who came from Akwamu (probably as a refugee after the break up of the Akwamu kingdom) and lived with old *Adɛɛite*, whom he instructed in all

DIAGRAM VII.—TEMMA STOOL AND HOUSE OF THE DZASETJE



stool lore and the business of warfare and whose daughter he married. He was succeeded by his 'brother' *Adzeite Afabra*, but whether this brother came with him from Akwamu or whether he was a true son of old *Adzeite* I do not know. Old *Adzeite* was short of heirs, so the descendants of another of his daughters were pressed into the service and one *Temma-Kwasi* became the third *mantse* and founded the house of *Temma Kwasiwe*.

This practice we shall find quite usual in stool successions. In normal times a daughter's or sister's son could not succeed unless she were married to a near relative, but in times of war, when a *mantse's* part was a dangerous one and the family depleted by war deaths, then if the sister's son could be persuaded to succeed he was gladly welcomed. Furthermore, he transmitted the right or duty of succession to his descendants in the male line and thenceforward his House became an additional stool House and took turns in succession with the earlier stool House or Houses. It twice happened in *Temma* that a sister's son succeeded and brought in another House; it happened once in *Abola* of Accra, once in Labadi, and once in Osu.

On the death of *Temma Kwasi* the stool came back to the original House—known thenceforward as *Adzeite Afarawe*—and was given to *Adzeite Ateboi*, the son of another 'brother' of *Adzeite Afari*. Again, we do not know the exact nature of the brotherhood, but at any rate the 'three brothers' *Adzeite Afari*, *Adzeite Ateboi*, and *Adzeite Ateboi* were counted as belonging to one House, *Adzeite Afarawe*. None of the direct descendants of *Adzeite Afari* ever became *mantse*, but his line took charge of the stool and thereafter the *dzasetse* always came from this line. The line of the *dzasetse* would more properly be called *Adzeite Afarawe*, and the stool branch of the original House would more properly be called *Adzeite Afabrawe*. The third branch of the original House, *Adzeite Ateboiwe*, died out.

After *Temma Kwasi*, the stool alternated between *Adzeite Afarawe* and *Temma Kwasiwe* till the time of the ninth *mantse*, *Adzeite Ansã*, who was the son of *Temma Kwasi's* daughter and succeeded, as *Temma Kwasi* had done, because of a shortage of heirs, and in the same way brought in another House, *Adzeite Ansãwe*.

After this the stool passed to each of the three Houses in turn till 1921, when *Adzeite Ansãwe* missed its turn in favour of *Temma Kwasiwe*, which provided the twelfth *mantse*.

Seldom do we find, in any town, that the alternation between the several reigning Houses has been absolutely regular. At the present day a *mantse's* post is a coveted one, and a House always

claims that its turn has come if it can possibly make a case of that claim. But in earlier days a House always claimed if possible that it was *not* its turn. In Temma, quite apart from warfare, there was not, until the coming of the registered tribunal, anything to be envied about a *mantse*'s lot. The *mantse*, unlike other *wulmei*, was not allowed to fish, farm, or work at nets, and time hung heavy on his hands.¹ The expenses of his position were borne by his relatives, who naturally were not eager for that responsibility.

§ 8

RECENT STOOL HISTORY OF TEMMA

The recent history of Temma is the history of a 'palaver' which took years to settle and would not have taken as many minutes had the town been allowed to settle it in its own way according to its own traditions.

Temma consists almost wholly of illiterates and none of its 'big men' were literate before the appointment of the last *mantse*, when the town felt that it would help them in their intercourse with the British Government to have a literate representative. So they appointed as *mantse* a man who had from his youth been absent from the town employed as a book-keeper by a trading firm in Accra. The choice was unfortunate; like so many literates, the man decided to use his literacy to exploit his illiterate brethren. He tried their patience in various ways for some years, and at length, finding himself badly in debt, decided on an ingenious and melodramatic trick to raise money.

He called one of the junior *wɔyei*, who was rather a discontented creature and jealous of her seniors, and told her that if she would help him he would help her to become senior *wɔyo* (she told me this, afterwards, herself) and he also promised her money. He then called several men friends, including one from Prampram, and they, reluctantly in spite of the lure of the money, agreed to help. The plot was this. During the *Kpledzo* festival when the *Nyado* and the *Sakumo wulomo* went to perform their midnight secret ceremony in *Sakumo's* grove, the townspeople all being shut in their own houses in darkness and silence, the male conspirators were to dress up in white, with jingling bells, pretend to be incarnate *dɛɛnmanɔdzi*, enter the grove and frighten the *wulomei*.

¹ The *mankrabo* was in the same position. The late *mankrabo* of Temma often asked me if I could suggest to him some hobby or pastime to wile away his days of boredom.

On the return of the frightened *wulomei* to the town the *woyo* in the plot was to throw a possession fit and announce, 'There is something bad in this town. That is why the *dzenmawodzi* have come. The town must be purified with many sacrifices of its evil. Each canoe must pay five pounds to the *mantse* to have the town cleansed'. And as there were over a hundred canoes this would have brought a good haul. However, one of the conspirators confided in a friend and the plot was whispered round till it reached *Asafoatse Dade Agbo*. It seemed to him incredible, but he deemed it wise to be prepared. So he warned the *Sakumo wulomo* and some of his young relatives. The *Sakumo wulomo* said nothing to the old *Nyado*, but when the time for the midnight ceremony came he went to the grove with a stout cudgel concealed under his white cloth. The *asafoatse's* party hid themselves, listening, in the nearest house to the grove. The two priests started their rites and in the middle of these they heard a sound of bells and saw four white figures approaching. The *Nyado* was mystified and frightened, but the *Sakumo wulomo* called out the customary warning always given to people intruding into holy places—*Aba· bie! Aba· bie!*¹ (One does not come here.) The figures continued to approach, so he drew his cudgel and smote three of them heartily on the head. They all ran away, three of them to bush, but the Prampram man ran back towards the town straight into the arms of the *asafoatse's* party, who had heard the commotion and rushed out. They found him wearing the *mantse's* own white robe. They tied him up and flogged him. He then told the whole story. The *mantse* was fetched to the *asafoatse's* house and never in the whole history of Temma had there been such indignation and rage.

There were no two opinions. The *mantse* had merited death. Firstly, as *Tfade wulomo* he had spoiled the town's most sacred rites and polluted his god. Secondly, as a *mantse* he had both plotted against his people and polluted his stool. In olden days they would either have themselves put him to death or more probably have shelved this responsibility by taking him to *Modzawe* and having him shot there. Certainly they would never have allowed him to set foot in their town again. And even in these days, though they knew they might not kill him, it never occurred to one of them that he could ever be either *Tfade wulomo* or *mantse* again. The whole town, with the exception of his own household, were solidly of one mind and held no other to be possible. They deserted him in the time-honoured

¹ He told me all this himself afterwards.

manner, sending him completely 'to Coventry' and appointed another *Tsade wulomo*. They knew, however, that the British Government would continue to recognize him unless the Government were satisfied that he was 'destooled', and as Temma had never destooled a *mantse* and had absolutely no customary procedure for doing so, they did the only thing they could devise and sent round the town crier announcing that he *was* destooled.

However, he was a literate and knew more about the Native Administration Ordinance than they. He took his case to the District Commissioner at Mampong, his version being that the plot was not his, but the other conspirators', and though they had confided in him beforehand he had treated it as no business of his. He admitted that he ought to have reported it to his town but claimed that his failure to do so was his only error, and one which did not merit destoolment. Mampong referred the case to Accra, and soon the hapless town was in the toils of the Gã State Council, and remained in them for some six years. The *mantse* sued the *mankrabo*—who represented the town—for usurping his rights, and said he had neither merited destoolment nor being 'destooled according to native custom'. The latter was true enough, for there is no Gã native custom for destoolment.

The town, advised by sundry rapacious 'pocket-lawyers'¹ proceeded to draw up about thirty additional charges, mostly frivolous, against the *mantse*, but finding that he claimed to be still enstooled they were driven foolishly to pretend that he never had been enstooled at all. Most of the arguments used by both sides were devised by legal advisers and were beside the point. That the Temma *mantse* is primarily a *wulomo*, and if he unfits himself for this office unfits himself to be Temma *mantse* was the chief of the vital points that the legal advisers, with their idea of chieftainship formed elsewhere, entirely failed to grasp.

While the case was still going on the old *Nyado* died, and to

¹ A 'pocket-lawyer' is a literate who writes and reads documents for, and gives advice to, illiterates in return for ready cash, which he 'pockets'. These vultures live on stool palavers which they deliberately tangle up and prolong. One of them, whose name I could give, went to some of the Temma officials and said: 'You ignorant illiterates, you don't seem to know that it is the District Commissioner who is holding up the settlement of your case because you have not yet bribed him. Give me eighteen pounds and I will take it to him for you and he will then give you some attention.' They gave him all they had—twelve pounds—which, needless to say, went into the aforesaid 'pocket'. Even the honest people believe firmly that 'under-the-water-money' is a necessary part of all legal transactions, and that secret negotiations are more effective than open ones. Consequently, every public palaver is like an iceberg—most of it is 'under the water'.

spite the town the *mantse* caused to be reported to the Government the fact that the body was buried under the *Nyado's* house.¹ The grave was accordingly desecrated by Government police and 'custom' again violated. After this the town 'saw red'. They said that if the *mantse* ever appeared in the town again (he was hiding elsewhere) they would kill him, and they meant it. They said they were willing to fight till not one of them remained alive, and that it was better to have no town at all than to have its rights and customs violated, and again they meant it.

Meanwhile the registered tribunal had been closed; there was no 'recognized' *mantse*, indeed, no 'recognized' town at all. The town appointed its new *Tsade wulomo* and called him *mantse*; and certainly he was all the *mantse* the town wanted or needed. Between the occasions of receiving news of the 'palaver' from Accra the town went on as in pre-Administration days and was perfectly happy and contented, tilling farms, catching and selling its fish, performing its ceremonies, and managing its own affairs in its own way. I myself had a unique opportunity of seeing its own way, for there was perfect unity between all the officials, and perfect loyalty of all the people to these officials.

At length, after years of debate, the Gã State Council returned its verdict in favour of the defaulting *mantse*.

Although judgment was given in favour of the defaulting *mantse*, through some mechanism which I entirely fail to understand that judgment was reversed during transit between the Gã State Council and the Government Gazette.² The *mantse* finally gazetted was the new one whom the town desired! So far as the Native Administration Ordinance is concerned the reversal of the judgment was incomprehensible. So far as justice and the native constitution of Temma are concerned the reversal was profoundly wise and right. Temma greeted it with the wildest joy and thanksgiving, and is to-day undoubtedly the happiest of the Gã towns.

¹ In those days, 1932, Temma had almost entirely escaped the attentions of sanitary authorities except on one occasion during a small-pox epidemic, when the M.O.H. ordered the burning down of several houses. Anyone who knew Temma in those days would agree that the burial of a body under a house was a sanitary measure when compared with many other features of the town hygiene.

² Presumably the Governor exercised his prerogative of overruling the State Council's decision, as this is the only legal mechanism whereby the Council's decision can be set aside.

CHAPTER III

NUNGWA

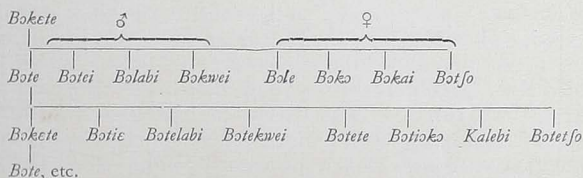
§ I

THE MAKING OF NUNGWA

NUNGWA as a town on its present site came into being at about the same time as did Temma, and for the same reason, namely, that 'all the world became spoilt' through warfare and the farming settlements threatened with extermination.

Previous to this, the people, who were of two different stocks and had two sets of family names only, lived in two sets of villages scattered within a four- or five-mile radius of the present Nungwa. Each set married, exogamously, with the other set.

One of these sets were Gã-speaking immigrants who came from 'Nigeria country' with, or at the same time as, the Accra immigrants.¹ Like the Accra people, they performed, and do perform, the *Tuy* puberty rites for their girls. Their leader was one *Bokete Lawei*, the priest of *Gbobu*. They named, and still do name, their children as follows:



As it was usual for the 'big men' to be succeeded by their grandsons there was a series of leaders all named *Bokete Lawei*.²

Bokete Lawei's people brought their god *Gbobu* with them, but they absorbed into their worship the agricultural festivals of the *Kpesi* whose land they had taken over, and their worship contains much of the *Kpesi* people's *Kple* rites and language.

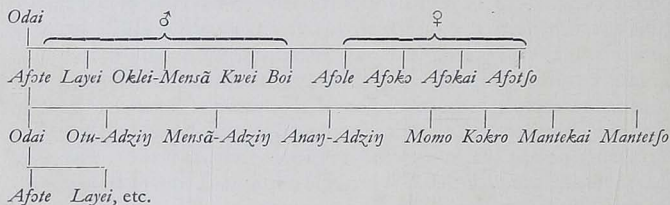
The other set of people were on the land before the immigrants arrived. Exactly who they were is uncertain, but most traditions have it they were of *Akwamu* origin. Probably they were

¹ Probably late in the sixteenth century.

² This, no doubt, explains the large number of events widely separated in time, all of which tradition associates with one *Bokete Lawei*. The same thing applies to *Odai Koto*, who is said to have sold the land for the building of the Christiansborg Castle, and also to have been associated with events several centuries later.

Akwamu refugees who settled after the defeat and breakup of the *Akwamu* kingdom. Their leader was *Odai Koto*, the priest of the god *Oswei*. They were famous hunters and owned—in the hunter's manner¹—all the land up to *Dodokwe* (a gully near what is now the Accra rifle-range) including the present-day sites of *Osu*, *Labadi*, and *Teshi*. Except round the lagoons, where there were farms, that part of the country was 'dangerous bush and forest'.² The *Kpɛsi* aborigines of the *Teshi* and *Labadi* district, though not actually disturbed, seem to have been in subjection to *Odai Koto's* people and paid them two-thirds of the salt that they won from the lagoons, but probably they received hunter's 'bush meat' in exchange for it.

Odai Koto's people were, and are, named as follows:



Bokete Lawei's people occupied the villages, now long deserted and razed, of *Wodoku*, *Wogbobo*, *Wodode*, and *Wokpɛɛ*, just outside and to the south-east of the present-day village of *Wawaleshi* between the *Abokobi-Teshi* road and the *Papao-Teshi* road (see Diagram VI, p. 86). Signs of this ancient habitation still remain. These include a big kitchen midden containing abundant pottery fragments, cow-bones, broken grindstones, and mortars, and the remains of the shell-fish which the inland people used to obtain by exchange from the coast people. These four villages were undoubtedly under *Bokete Lawei*, and their sites are undisputed. The other villages, also now deserted, included *Kpatɛkɛli*, *Kokonyaga*, *Wosagba*, *Wokwamu*, *Nunwa Doku*, and *Ledzokuku*, but I am uncertain of the exact position of all of them and whether they all belonged to *Odai Koto's* people.³ At any rate, most of them belonged to *Odai Koto* and most of them were near the sea and for a time their people had charge of the

¹ See section on Accra land tenure.

² Isolated forest trees standing about the plain support the tradition that the western half of the Accra plain was then forested.

³ Some traditions have it that *Odai Koto* himself was at *Tebiano*, and some of his people at *Lafibi*—villages from which some of the *Temma* people come—but if this be true I do not know under what conditions they occupied these villages simultaneously with the *Temma* people.

Sakumo lagoon. They used to allow Fanti strangers to come and fish, and payment was made in kind.

The Labadi immigrants at this time were at *Ladoko* near the *Laloi* lagoon. Later they quarrelled with the *Shai* people and left that district, and after a brief stay on *Adzanote* hill settled on their present site. They seem to have driven away some Nungwa immigrants from the northern part of the Labadi site, but did not disturb the *Kpesi*, who continued to send two-thirds of their salt to *Odai Koto* and *Bokete Lawei*. The Labadi people grudged this salt, though the *Kpesi* themselves seem not to have had any active resentment, and there was constant bickering between Labadi hunters and *Bokete Lawei*'s hunters. Matters came to a head on an occasion when two Labadi messengers were travelling to Gbugbla to claim an annual fee of fish which the Gbugbla people paid them for fishing in the *Laloi* lagoon, which lagoon still belonged to the Labadi people, though they had themselves left *Ladoku*. *Bokete Lawei* on this occasion was about to celebrate the *Awitsem* ceremony, which included human sacrifice, and *Bokete Lawei*'s scouts were in ambush at a place called *Agbesiano* on the beach looking out for a passing stranger to seize for the sacrifice. Unluckily they seized the two Labadi messengers, killed them then and there, and buried the bodies together with their *dukpei* (two-edged knives). Their heads and the sheaths of the knives they took to *Bokete Lawei* at *Wodoku*. Now *Bokete Lawei* was married to *Odai Koto*'s sister *Akle*, a Labadi woman was married to one of *Odai Koto*'s brothers, and another of *Odai Koto*'s sisters was married to a Labadian. When the scouts reached *Bokete Lawei* with the heads he saw by the knife-sheaths that the victims were from Labadi and reproved the executioners. They reminded him of the salt disagreements and said that a big quarrel was inevitable. The woman *Akle* was in the next room, heard all this and went and told *Odai Koto* in the presence of his wife. This woman told it to the Labadi wife of *Odai Koto*'s brother and it reached Labadi. The Labadians sent to search, dug up the two headless trunks and declared war on both *Bokete Lawei*'s people and *Odai Koto*'s people who 'were one'. But because of the marriage alliances between *Odai Koto*'s people and Labadi these two always spared one another and 'fired only with powder, no shot', and the real warfare was between *Bokete Lawei*'s people and Labadi. After long and devastating guerilla warfare the warriors of both sides were weary before their leaders—*Bokete Lawei* and the Labadi leader *Sowa*—and were growing mutinous. The two groups of warriors, without their leaders, met in conference and agreed

each to kill its own leader in the presence of both groups and make peace. They duly met again, bringing their leaders, in the valley of *Kokomadzioko* near *Wodoku*. *Bokete Lawei*'s people came unarmed, the Labadians secretly and treacherously armed, though they brought *Sowa*, bound hand and foot. *Bokete Lawei* came but did not consent to come bound. After confirming their decision to kill their leaders they began action by trying to kill *Bokete Lawei*, but 'he had such a strong knife-medicine that he broke three knives and was unharmed'. They then conferred again and agreed that it would sufficiently incapacitate both leaders to cut off their thumbs, as *Bokete Lawei* habitually fought with a bow-and-arrow and *Sowa* with a sling and stone. So they cut off *Bokete Lawei*'s thumb. The Labadians, however, then broke faith by refusing to cut off *Sowa*'s, and, producing their arms, fell on the unarmed followers of *Bokete Lawei* and killed many of them. *Bokete Lawei* bound his hand with his head-tie and fled, but as soon as he regained his home and his arms he set out, maddened with rage and pain, to hunt down *Sowa*. Everyone fled from him in terror, as much of his 'medicine' as of his arms, and he succeeded in shooting *Sowa*. His rage lending him strength, he carried *Sowa*'s body and the body of another Labadian whom he had shot to his sacred grove in the *Gbobukon*, and buried them there. Later, when the *Gbobukon* was transferred to its present site at Nungwa, the bodies were dug up and the heads placed under round pots in *Abokadzra*, the meeting-place of the gods in the new *Gbobukon*. This became the place for trying oath cases, 'for if you tell a lie in that terrible place you die'.

After burying *Sowa*, *Bokete Lawei* went back to his own people, more deeply disgusted with them than with the Labadians. He cursed them impressively, and then, his anger cooling somewhat, called all his sons and daughters and said that he would take them back again to the place whence the first *Bokete Lawei* had come. He collected his party and went to the beach, and tradition has it that he called to the waves to part and they did so, allowing him and his party to walk into the sea, and then closed over them so that they were never seen again.¹

¹ What really happened was probably that he waited for the waves, which were washing against a rocky headland, to recede and allow the party to get round the headland on to smooth sand and then set off along the beach, a much-frequented highway, towards the east. At any rate, his son *Bote Kodzo*, who, because of a disagreement with his father had refused to join the departing company, relented a few days later and decided to follow. He did so, and some years later was reported by some surf-boat men as having reached Lagos travelling along the beach, and in Lagos they found him, working as a foreman labourer for some Europeans.

Some traditions have it that many of *Odai Koto's* people went with *Bokete Lawei* when he left, and this is quite likely. At any rate, the numbers of both were so depleted and the dangers of warfare with Labadi so great that they decided to desert their villages and make a town organized for warfare. So they came to Nungwa bringing the bones of their illustrious forbears and making a new *Gbobukon* just outside Nungwa for all the gods who had been worshipped in *Wodoku*.

§ 2

SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE TOWN

The town was, and is, composed of two sections (*akutso*, usually translated 'quarter'). These two sections were *Amafa* and *Sanjsifi*, the descendants of *Bokete Lawei's* and *Odai Koto's* people respectively. Some of *Bokete Lawei's* sons were absent on a trading expedition when their father left, and on their return they founded the priestly Houses which provide the *Gbobu wulomo*.¹

Odai Koto's two sons, *Afolai 'nukpa* and *Afolai fio*, founded the two Houses *Adzenwe* and *Ayikuwe* which provide, alternately, the *Oswei wulomo* who is also the *mantse*.

Thus the one half of the town—the senior—was primarily responsible for the Prosperity ritual and the other half for the War magic or stool ritual.

No one was allowed to marry within his or her own section,² and this observance is still expected of the 'big people', but the rest say, 'we have now become so many that it does not matter'.

Soon after the formation of the town, *Sanjsifi* was joined by two parties of 'strangers', the first a party from Teshi who had originally been of *Odai Koto's* people and still retained their names, the second a man and his children from *Sempi* in Accra, bearing *Sempi* names. The Teshi group formed the House of *Odaitsewe* and the *Sempi* group the House of *Moive*. These two groups, being 'strangers' took no part in providing a *mantse*, but the *Moive* family, who were allowed to settle in the first instance on condition that they provided a personal body-guard for the *mantse* in war, exhibited such striking military

¹ See Chart V in the chapter on Gā succession.

² If the observer simply took the town as he found it without considering its history, he would say that it consisted of one people divided into two moieties according to the plan known as dual organization. We can, if we like, regard Nungwa as a community with a dual organization, which organization undoubtedly came about by fusion of two peoples, not fission of one.

talent¹ that they became the House from which the *akwasɔntse* was chosen and also provided an *asafoatse* and an official called the *mantse-atofo*, who stood close to the *mantse* in battle and was responsible for bringing home his body if he fell. The members of *Moiwe* still go to Accra at the *Homowo* festival to worship with the *Sempi* people.

Moieties or 'Quarters'		Houses
Amafa	{	<i>Dzenjewe</i> . . . descendants of <i>Bolabi Dzenje</i> .
		<i>Boteve</i> . . . " " <i>Wulomɔ Ni Bote</i> .
		<i>Osokronowe</i> . . . " " <i>Osokrono</i> .
		<i>Bokweiwe</i> . . . " " <i>Bokwei</i> .
Sanjsifi	{	<i>Ayikewe</i> . . . descendants of <i>Afolai fio</i> .
		<i>Adzinyne</i> . . . " " <i>Afolai nukpa</i> .
		<i>Moiwe</i> . . . " " <i>Sempi 'strangers'</i> .
		<i>Odaitsewe</i> . . . " " <i>Teshi 'strangers'</i> .

§ 3

TOWN GOVERNMENT

The four Houses of *Sanjsifi* and the four Houses of *Amafa* (which Houses are often these days loosely called 'Quarters', as they have grown very large and have branched into sundry sub-Houses) each have an elder (*Onukpa*) and an *asafoatse* in addition to the *wulomei* associated with the various gods. Each half of the town also has two *sipi* officers, and the whole town has one *akwasɔntse*. Thus there are in all eight elders, eight *asafoatsemei*, four *sipimei*, one *akwasɔntse*, a *mantse*, a *mankralo*, and the *otsamei* of the big officials. All these act as magistrates and judges, just as we saw their counterparts doing in Temma.

Of the *wulomei* the *Gbobu wulomɔ* is the senior and is the time-keeper, announcing when the time has come for the various festivals. Of the other 'big' *wulomei* that of *Onufu* is in *Amafa*, and those of *Tfawe*, *Osabu*, and *Oswei* from *Sanjsifi*. The *Oswei wulomɔ* is concurrently *mantse*, the *Tfawe wulomɔ* is *otsame*, the *mankralo* is not a *wulomɔ*, though he performs at *Kpledzo* a great many *wulomɔ*'s duties.

Of the other town officials the *dzasetse* is the most important and has a war-stool of his own which is kept in the same room as the *mantse*'s stool. The *dzasetse* is always chosen from among the descendants of *Kwei Kuma*, who form a sub-House within the House of *Adzinyne*. The *dzasetse* also acts as a magistrate.

¹ We often find among the Gā and Adangme towns that the original agricultural families who came together under their *wulomei* to make a town knew little or nothing of warfare and put themselves in the hands of some experienced outsider, usually an *Akwamu*.

The village of *Oyibi* is bigger and older than most Gã villages, and the goddess *Afiéle* has an *aklabatfa* (tree-fenced grove) and also a *wulomó* there. This *wulomó* acts as the head of *Oyibi*, and is there called '*manťse*', but whether he has a real stool which is used to go to war I am uncertain.

In pre-administration days disputes and offences were taken first to the elder and *asafoatťe* of the House if both disputants were of one House, or to the elders and *asafoatťemei* of the two Houses if the parties were not of one House. If the parties were dissatisfied with the decision they went next to the *manťkraló*'s court, then if still dissatisfied to the *manťse*'s court, and lastly to the *akwafonťťe*'s court, which was the supreme court in which all the 'big men' of the town took part. At the present day cases go first to the *asafoatťe*'s and elders' courts, then to the *manťkraló*'s, and then to the *akwafonťťe*'s court. This last has on it all the *asafoatťemei* and the *wulomei*. None of these courts are registered and recognized by the administration, and of course no written record is kept of their proceedings. The final court is now the *manťse*'s court which is 'registered', can fine heavily, and is therefore used 'for spiting people'.

§ 4

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS

The Dzranowoyei

These two women, unlike the ordinary *woyo* or 'medium' who is significant only when she is possessed, may properly be described as priestesses. They are never possessed and they play an important part in town ceremonial. Unlike most female officials—for example stool-washers—they are not succeeded by their daughters but are elected as a *wulomó* is elected, one from *Dzeyewe*, the other from *Bokweiwe*. It is they and the *Labia* who perform the installation ceremony for the *Gbobu wulomó* and have duties connected with the ceremonial corn at the *Kpledzxo* festival. If both of them are absent from the town the festival cannot be held at all, and they must stay in the town for six weeks after the initial corn-sprinkling ceremony. When any *dzeyemawon* orders a person to be ceremonially purified it is they who take him to *Ablókadzra* in the *Gbobukon* and there ceremonially wash him.

The Agbakolokiti

This is the company of musicians and religious labourers, and their work and organization is similar to that of the *Kple agba*

in Temma. The *Gbobu wulomo* gives them six shillings before every festival.

The *Agbafo*, or medical *agba*, is a company of seven medicine men, similar to the Temma medical *agba*, but they all come from *Bokweive* and *Dzeyene*. The original *Bokete Lawei* is said to have been a skilled medicine man as well as a *wulomo*, and though the *wulomei* are not medicine men to-day, the *mankrabo* who comes from a sub-House among *Bokete Lawei*'s descendants is always a member of the medical *agba*.

The present leader of this company succeeded his elder brother who succeeded his father. He is training his nephew, already a member of the company, to succeed him in due time. When an ordinary member dies another is elected from among the reliable practitioners in the town. He is initiated after one year's novitiate, and the initiation includes the sucking of blood from a cut in his skin by each of the other six, and the sucking of blood by him from cuts in the skins of the other six. An initiate brings a goat and thirty-two shillings, but in earlier days a human sacrifice was made. There are some rocks on the beach which used to be the scene of these sacrifices.

Annually the company meets in the *mankrabo*'s house and each sheds blood into one hole in the floor round which hole the company afterwards dance.

To this body other courts refer all cases concerning medicine and supernatural affairs. Medicine-men whose patients refuse to pay their fees bring the matter here and the defaulter is told that if he does not pay his original sickness will come upon him again, and this time incurably.

After any 'bad death' in the town—such as the death in childbed of a woman still undelivered of the child, or the death of a person who has been cursed to a *dzeymawon*, the *agbafo* purifies the house of the dead person. In cases of death in childbed the *agba* members do the rites in the *yeiakon* (the Nungwa name for the special burial place of such women¹).

When a bad fish famine prevails the fishermen invite the *agba* to pacify the sea, and special medicine is taken out in a canoe and cast into the sea with due prayers to the *dzeymawon* of the sea. Here the work of the medicine-man seems to be encroaching somewhat on priesthood, but as there is no god of the sea who has a priest in Nungwa this is perhaps inevitable. The *Gbobu wulomo*, however, does bless the party before it leaves for the beach.

¹ The property of such women is not in Nungwa disposed of differently from that of others.



Head of the Nungwa *Agba* cleansing
the town after a death. (See p. 128.)



Ablokodzra, the meeting-place of the
gods. (See p. 124.)

When an epidemic descends on the town the *agba* performs ceremonies of driving it out, purifying the town, and then blocking the paths with stones at all the town entrances to prevent it from coming back. They also erect a kind of gallows on which hang a bottle of rum and a bottle of water, and under these every person entering the town must pass to free himself from any evil thing that may be trying to slip in with him.

Some time ago it was thought that the women of the town were being affected by some evil influence that endangered their lives during childbirth. The *agbafò* were approached and through them the town purchased a special medicine for the protection of its women. The precautions included the bathing of every woman in a special bath prepared by the *agba*. For such services the *agba* levies a tax of sixpence a head on every household.

The work of the *agba* on behalf of the town may be summarized by saying that whereas the *wulomei* are concerned with the procuring of positive blessings, increase, and prosperity, the *agba* are a kind of supernatural sanitary department concerned with the cleaning away of harmful influences.

The Stool-washing Women and the Adowa Players have the same duties and rights as their counterparts in Temma.

The Nungwa Asafo.

Although in Nungwa the *asafo* never attained its most impressive development, the small size of the town makes it easy to perceive the manner in which the *asafo* organization is reconciled with the primary kinship organization.

The first thing to notice is that there are two distinct ways in which one military body groups itself. One is the formation in which it turns out to go to war, to honour a new *mantse* or *mankrab*, or to engage in public works, such as road-making. The other is the formation in which it turns out in peace time for what is called 'play'—drilling, training, dancing, singing, and funerals.

In the peace-time organization the whole military body is divided into two companies known as *Tfili* and *Afofo*. The earliest company formed was *Tfili*, and then when the members' sons grew up these formed a new and separate body, *Afofo*. As the third generation grew up they went into their grandfathers' company. One informant told me, 'My grandfather was in *Tfili* and went to Katamanso. My father played *Afofo*. I myself went into *Tfili* with my grandfather. My son is in *Afofo*, and his son will come into *Tfili* with me. This is because you have the same *kla* as your grandfather, and when your

grandfather dies all his bravery comes into you. You also inherit your grandfather's guns, weapons, and war medicines. If your grandfather was an *asafoatsɛ* or a *sipi* you will, if you are worthy, inherit this too.' The *Tɛfili* company has four *asafoatsɛmei*, two of whom are concurrently *sipimei*. *Aɔɔŋɔ* has four *asafoatsɛmei*, one of whom is concurrently *sipi*.¹

The two companies have their own flags, drums, songs, and dances, and each has its own supply of gunpowder which is distributed by the *sipimei* through the *asafoatsɛmei*.

On warlike occasions, such as the installation of a new *manɛtsɛ*, the *Tɛfili* and *Aɔɔŋɔ* groups break up and kinship groups are formed. This was probably because in war people liked to be near to their relatives to tend the wounded, bury the fallen, and claim the weapons and medicines of the latter.

The officers in the war formation are the same people as in the peace formation, but are differently grouped, being now in charge of their own relatives.

It will be remembered that Nungwa is made up of two moieties, *Sanɛsifi* and *Amafa*, the descendants of *Odai Koto* and *Bokete Lawei* respectively. These are the two divisions into which the *asafo* falls on warlike occasions. The *Tɛfili* flag is 'lent' to *Sanɛsifi*, both *Tɛfili* drums and *Aɔɔŋɔ* drums are lent to *Amafa*. Let us now observe the exact formation which the procession takes on one of these warlike occasions.

Each moiety is in four units, each unit being a House. With each House is its *asafoatsɛ*.

Sanɛsifi	Front	<i>Tɛfili</i> flag (lent).
	Second	House of <i>Odatɛwɛ</i> , with the lent family drums of <i>Botɛwɛ</i> of <i>Amafa</i> , under <i>asafoatsɛ Otusfo</i> .
	Third	House of <i>Adɛɛɛwɛ</i> , with the <i>manɛtsɛ</i> , under <i>asafoatsɛ Otu Akuaku</i> .
	Fourth	House of <i>Ayikɛwɛ</i> , under <i>sipi Anan</i> .
	Fifth	House of <i>Moiwɛ</i> , under <i>asafoatsɛ Odote Okai Guanta</i> .
	Sixth	<i>Akwafɔntɛ Sokopo Anum</i> of <i>Moiwɛ</i> , commanding the entire army.
Amafa	Seventh	<i>Aɔɔŋɔ</i> flag (lent).
	Eighth	House of <i>Bokɛwɛwɛ</i> , with its own family drums, under <i>asafoatsɛ Kwaku Belu</i> .
	Ninth	House of <i>Dɛɛɛwɛ</i> , with the <i>manɛkralɔ</i> , with its own family drums under <i>sipi Kakai</i> .
	Tenth	House of <i>Osokronowɛ</i> , with the <i>Aɔɔŋɔ</i> drums, under <i>asafoatsɛ Botɛ Kpla</i> .
	Eleventh	House of <i>Botɛwɛ</i> , with the <i>Tɛfili</i> drums, under <i>sipi Agbitikɔ</i> .

When the army went into a real fight the *manɛtsɛ* was never in the main body, but stood apart from the fighting with his

¹ Until about twenty years ago there were only two *sipimei*, but a dispute arose and a third was created.

magical stool, and was surrounded by a bodyguard called the *mantse atoso*, who had to protect the stool. The *akwasontse* stood between the *mantse* and the main body, and was the commander of the whole. His stool never entered the fight, but he himself might leave it and go to any part of the battlefield. These practices were followed in every *Gã asafo*.

§ 5

INSTALLATION OF OFFICIALS

The *Gbɔbu wulomɔ* is always succeeded by the *labia* of the House whose turn it is to provide a *wulomɔ*, and there is never any discussion about this succession. The installation ceremony is performed by the two *dzranowɔyei* and the second *labia*—the one who will in due time succeed the priest whom he is installing.

The *oswei wulomɔ*, who is also the *mantse*, has to undergo two separate installation ceremonies.

Installation as a *mantse* takes place first, and as it is essentially the same in all the *Gã* towns, it is worth giving in detail.

The *mantse*, as such, is a military personage, and when one *mantse* has died and a successor is required, it is the military officers¹ who first meet in the house of the *akwasontse* and ask him through the senior *asafoatsɛ* to find them a new *mantse*. The *akwasontse* replies, 'I hear what you say'. He then goes to the house of the *manɔkralɔ* and gives the message. The *manɔkralɔ* calls the elders of the eight Houses and the *wulomei* and passes it on. Then they send for the *dzasetse*, and the *manɔkralɔ* tells him to produce a candidate from the proper House, and a date is fixed for the *dzasetse* to bring his candidate. The *dzasetse* goes away and calls together the *Dzase*, gives them the message and fixes a day for a formal *Dzase* meeting. At this meeting the *dzasetse* tells the *Dzase* the name of his own candidate. If the *Dzase* approve, the *dzasetse* gives two bottles of rum to the candidate's father. The father gives back one of them, saying, 'I have given my son to you. Give him to the town if the town want him. I have given him up for ever. If the town do not like him I have two others' (or whatever the number may be) 'from whom they may choose again.'

¹ The military officers are collectively known as the *manɔbii* (literally 'town children'). European administrative officers are often allowed to believe that the term *manɔbii* simply means the populace, but this is wrong. The terms *mantse* (town father) and *manɔbii* (town children) are military terms. The term *manɔ*, town, has itself primarily a military meaning, for the towns were quite deliberately synthesized for military ends.

The *dzasetse* then sends to the *manʒkralo* telling him to call together the *wulmei*, elders, and the *manʒbii* (military officers). At this meeting the *manʒkralo* takes the *manʒse*-elect by the wrist and shows him to the *manʒbii*. The *manʒbii* have a right to refuse him if they wish.¹ When there is any disagreement between the members of the *manʒbii* it is put to the vote. If the *manʒbii* accept the candidate the *manʒkralo* takes him by the wrist and hands him over to the *akwafɔntse*. The *otsame* of the *manʒbii* then takes two bottles of rum and hands them to the *akwafɔntse*, he to the *manʒkralo*, and he to the *dzasetse*. A part of this rum is then given to the *wulmo*, and he uses it then and there to pray for the welfare of the town. The rest is shared and drunk and the meeting breaks up. The elders of the various Houses then meet in *adʒina*² and arrange a day for the reception of the new *manʒse*. They then send to the *dzasetse* telling him to put the *manʒse*-elect 'in the room' till the appointed day and to give him servants and fattening foods. If he has never undergone his *kromotsu* rites he does so during this interval.

When the appointed day has arrived the *dzasetse* sends to tell the *manʒkralo* that the 'time is reached'. The *manʒkralo* adds two of his own messengers to those of the *dzasetse* and sends them to the *akwafɔntse*, and he in turn sends them to the *wulmei*. Then at midnight the *dzasetse* and one or two other officials—only the *dzasetse* knows who they are—perform the ceremony by which the *manʒse* is endowed with his supernatural power of bringing victory to his army. The *dzasetse* himself stands behind the stool, and the two other officials hold the naked and blindfold *manʒse* three times over it. While the *manʒse* is still blindfold the prospects of war or peace during his lifetime are forecast by causing him to choose between two symbols standing respectively for war and peace. The stool is covered with a cloth before the *manʒse*'s eyes are unbound. Before they leave the stool-room the *dzasetse* takes the cloth which the *manʒse* wore on entering the room and gives him a new one, swearing that if he should ever betray his trust the old cloth will be sent back to him. The officials in turn swear that they will support him in war.

¹ The *manʒbii* are the only people who have the right to refuse the candidate offered by the *dzasetse*.

The *manʒbii* have this privilege in every town. The late *Ni Boi*, the sixth *Asere manʒse*, who had a long time on the stool and was highly respected, was the choice of the *manʒbii*. The candidate first offered to the *manʒbii* was *Ni Boi*'s younger brother, but the *manʒbii* considered him 'hard-hearted' and demanded his brother instead. The officials went back and reconsidered the matter and then offered the *manʒbii* the person they wanted. Afterwards they admitted the wisdom of this demand.

² A private meeting.

Immediately this ceremony is over two guns are fired and a drum beaten. Then horns are blown and the *Obonu* drums are beaten. The *asafo* hear this and all go to the *dzasetse's* house, where a ram is slaughtered on the doorstep and the *mantse* and his officials dip their bare feet in the blood. Dancing goes on till daybreak.

Shortly after this the new *mantse* is made *Oswei wulomɔ*. The *dzasetse* takes him to the *Gbobu wulomɔ* early in the morning, and the *wulomɔ* takes him with the *dzasetse* and other officials to the *Gbobukon*, or grove of the gods. There the *Gbobu wulomɔ* sits on a stone and the *dzasetse* places the new *mantse* three times on his knees. Ground corn is mixed with water from the *Gbobukon* pot, and the *wulomɔ* pours some of this three times outside *Gbobu's gbatfu*, calling on the god, and then puts the remainder of the liquid three times to the new *mantse's* lips. The *mantse* then gives the *Gbobu wulomɔ* a bottle of rum with which he prays for a blessing.

Then the new *mantse*, dressed in a priest's white *tekle*, is taken to the *gbatfu* of *Oswei* and introduced as the new *wulomɔ* and then he is taken round to all the other gods in turn.

Next the new *mantse* has to be 'shown to the town', and the military officers all come to swear allegiance. This is done in the market-place. The *mantse* himself swears first, to his own *dzase*, his own elders, the *mankralo*, and every *asafoatse* in turn. Then the town fine him thirty-two shillings for swearing an oath and he gives rum to each of the eight Houses. A ram is killed and cut up on the *mantse's* doorstep and of this the *mankralo* is given a foreleg and the entrails, the *dzasetse* the head, and the *wulomɔ* the jaw.

This is the *mantse's* oath: 'I, a small boy, ever since I was born I have been told that my grandfathers were *mantsemei*. To-day you have made me a *mantse* in my grandfather's place. If there is trouble in this town and you do not assist me you will have broken faith with the old people who have gone. Or if you call upon me, I swear by the old people who have gone that I will never run away. If any trouble comes through Europeans or neighbouring peoples I swear by the old people that I will shine before you as a light. Whenever there is any trouble and you call me and I do not come, then I shall have broken faith with the old people who have gone.'

This is the *mankralo's* oath. 'You, little child, your grandfather was this people's *mantse*. Therefore we agree that you shall be our *mantse*. I, the *mankralo*, am a big goat with a big head, and if I put my head on the road and shake it all the road

shall break up. If you do not respect me and I do not reprove you, then may I not sit down among the old people who have gone. I am a big goat who is big beyond all the goats of this town of Nungwa; if you become a woman's *mantse* and follow after your warriors' wives and I do not sit down and reprove you, I shall have broken faith with the old people who have gone. I, the *mankrabo*, if you are in perplexity because of Europeans or the people from towns, beyond the towns, upon the road or in the battle, if I do not shine before you as a light, I shall have broken faith with the old people who have gone. And I swear to you that I will not swear twice.'

This is the *akwasontse*'s oath: 'You *mantse*, I am your cushion.¹ I support you always. You and the *dzasetse* and all the stool are on my back. If trouble comes to you through fire, through water, or through men, and all Nungwa runs away, yet I will not desert you, upon my cushion you shall come home with me. This I swear by the old people who have gone.'

§ 6

LAND TENURE AND FISHING RIGHTS

The *Gbobu wulomo* is *sitse* or landlord, and the land is not divided between the sections of the town as in Temma. No one may work on any part of the land on Sunday, which is *Gbobu's* day.

When land is sold the proceeds are divided equally between the eight Houses. Neither *wulomo* nor stool have any special rights as 'the land belongs equally to all the people of the town'. Anyone may build, farm, or plant trees anywhere, so long as he does not disturb anyone else's house, farm, or trees. The land never becomes his, but so long as he or his heirs continue to cultivate the land or occupy the house nobody may disturb him.

A stranger wishing either to buy, build upon, or farm land goes first to the *mankrabo* with a gift of rum, and the *mankrabo* calls together the *wulomei*, the *mantse*, the *akwasontse*, the *dzasetse*, the eight *asafo* officers, and the elder of each of the eight Houses. If they decide to grant the stranger his request they drink the rum, but if they refuse they return it.

There are none of the aboriginal *Kpessi* lagoon worshippers in the town or on any part of Nungwa land: if there were, no doubt

¹ The word is *otofa*, the pad which a woman wears in the small of the back as a seat for the child she is carrying.

their *wulomɔ* would be nominal landowner (*fitʃɛ*) as in most other towns.

The *Gbobu wulomɔ* and the *Ofwei wulomɔ* are in charge of the *Sano* lagoon and the *Mokwei* lagoon respectively, but most of the actual overseeing of these lagoons is relegated by them to the *Owufu wulomɔ* and the *Osabu wulomɔ* respectively. On Sundays no one may fish or work at salt-holes in the *Sano* lagoon, and on Mondays the *Mokwei* lagoon is similarly closed.

The *woleiatʃɛ*, who comes from *Osokronowe*, has charge of the sea-fishing and discipline among fishermen. He receives the fishing-rents from strangers. Those moneys are divided equally between the eight Houses.

§ 7

NUNGWA STOOL HISTORY

(See Diagram VIII)

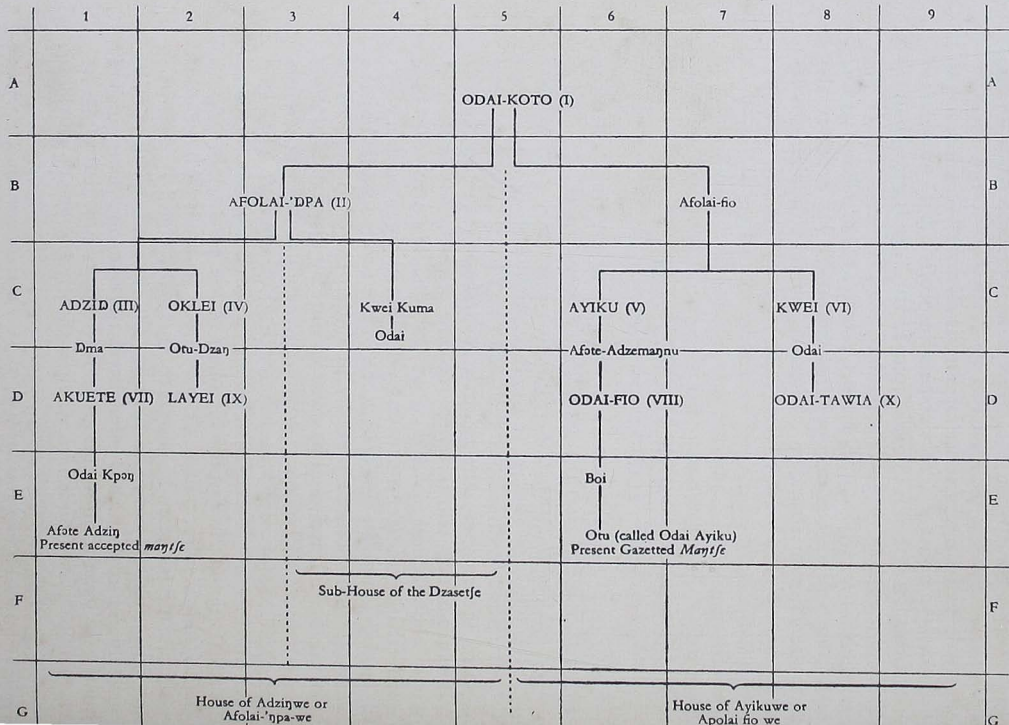
A war stool was first set up in Nungwa at the time when the town was founded after the departure of *Bokete Lawei*.

The first *mantʃɛ* was *Afolai-ɲpa*, the eldest son of the *Odai Koto* who was *Ofwei wulomɔ* at the time of the Labadi war. *Odai Koto* married two wives and founded two Houses through their respective eldest sons, *Afolai-ɲpa* and *Afolai-fio* (B.3 and B.7).

Afolai-ɲpa was still *mantʃɛ* at the time of the 'battle of Bame',¹ but he was an old man and could not himself go to war. He called all his younger relatives and ordered them to go. But *Afolai-fio*, though he accepted some of the funds supplied by the Accra allies, disgraced his family by failing to go to war. This enraged the old man, and he swore before all his gods that none of *Afolai-fio*'s descendants should ever rule. He therefore appointed his own son, *Kwei Kuma* (C.4), as *dzasetʃɛ*, abdicated from the stool, and caused *Kwei Kuma* to enstool another son, *Adzɪŋ* (C.1), in his presence. *Kwei Kuma* furthermore swore that *Afolai-fio*'s descendants should never succeed. All the gods and ancestors were called upon to annul the rule by which the succession should alternate between the descendants of *Afolai-ɲpa* and *Afolai-fio*. *Adzɪŋ* went away to battle and distinguished himself by capturing a famous horn. His father died while he was still away. *Adzɪŋ* himself died shortly before the battle of Katamanso, and *Kwei Kuma*, according to his oath, enstooled *Adzɪŋ*'s younger brother *Oklei* (C.2). Meanwhile, *Ayiku* and *Kwei* (C.6 and C.8), the sons of *Afolai-fio*, had grown up.

¹ Awuna war.

DIAGRAM VIII



Unlike their father they were brave and honourable men, went to the battle of Katamansu, and by their valour redeemed the good name of their House. The gods were therefore called upon again to witness that the House of *Afolai-fio* had been restored to its former status, and its members again had the right to succeed in due turn. *Ayiku* (C.6) was therefore made the next *mantse*, and on his death, because the descendants of *Afolai-'npa* had had two turns running, it was deemed just to give the other House two turns running also. Therefore *Kwei* (C.8) succeeded *Ayiku*.¹ After *Kwei's* death the stool alternated again in strict accordance with the Nungwa laws of succession. The next and seventh *mantse* was *Akuete* (D.1) of the House of *Afolai-'npa* (or *Adzɔɔnwe* as it became usual to call it for convenience of speech. *Afolai fiowe*, for similar convenience, was thereafter usually known as *Ayikuwe*.) The eighth *mantse* was *Odai-fio* from *Ayikuwe*, the ninth, *Layei* (D.2) of *Adzɔɔnwe*, and the tenth, *Odai-Tawia* (D.8) of *Ayikuwe*.

§ 8

RECENT STOOL HISTORY OF NUNGWA

The recent stool history of Nungwa is the story of a single arrogant young man setting himself against the whole of his town and its traditions, and being enabled to do so by gaining the support of the Gã State Council, a body which knows little and cares less about the traditions of Nungwa.

The tenth *mantse*, *Odai-Tawia* of *Ayikuwe* (D.8) died in 1935. It was plain that his successor should come from *Adzɔɔnwe*, provided that the *manbii* had no objection to the *Adzɔɔnwe* candidate, and the nominee of the *dzase*, accepted by all the proper officials, was *Afote Adzɔɔn*. He was duly installed by the *dzasetse* and the other proper officials. Then a young literate of *Ayikuwe*, brought up in Teshi and caring little for Nungwa traditions, put in a rival claim. He was supported only by a few of his own household, and the electoral body dismissed his claim as frivolous and impertinent. In pre-State Council days he would, of course, never have made it, but what he did was to send in his claim to the District Commissioner, who referred the whole matter to the Gã State Council. A tangle of negotiations, all more or

¹ I do not know whether *Adzɔɔn* and *Oklei*, *Ayiku* and *Kwei*, were whole brothers or half-brothers. If they were whole brothers the succession, as it took place, was perfectly regular, and just as it would have been had no quarrel come between the Houses, for a change of Houses is not due till a man has been succeeded by all his whole brothers. (See chapter on Succession.)

less 'under-the-water' and all quite deplorable,¹ were entered into by both sides.

All succession disputes before the State Council have proceeded on the assumption that succession is by 'right', not by election, and have set out to decide which candidate is the rightful one.

At the hearing of the Nungwa case the pretender based his claim on the assertion that there were not two, but three stool Houses. He held that the sixth *manɔse*, *Kwei*, had founded a new stool House. He made statements about stool history which every tradition refutes. He made many other quite untrue statements, among them that Nungwa possessed an official called the *Osiabene* (a Twi word), whose work it was to install the *manɔse*. Nungwa has never had such an official. He denied that Nungwa had a living *dɛasetse*, and said that the present *manɔkralo* was Nungwa's first, and had himself created the post of *manɔkralo*.² He was able to produce only one supporter in court, the mass of the town officials being solidly behind the *dɛasetse*.

The State Council had to decide which party was telling the truth. The *manɔkralo* and the *dɛasetse* said there were two stool Houses, the claimant and his supporter said there were three. To anyone unfamiliar with the history and structure of the town—as was every member of the State Council—there was nothing except the extreme unlikelihood of a genuine *dɛasetse*³ and a united body of town officials being wrong on a question of stool succession, to guide them in deciding which party was right. No one thought of bringing forward as evidence the numerous

¹ In all stool disputes the issue is prone to become confused in the eyes of all but the most dispassionate and well-informed judges by the crooked dealings of people who may be defending a perfectly just cause. I myself heard a British official refer with a shrug to one of the participators in a dispute as 'the crookedest old rogue in the Gā State'. A crooked old rogue he may or may not have been, but his cause happened to be a just one. The people with justice on their side are often the first to lose their heads when their rights are threatened, and to resort, panic-stricken, to shady methods. The first impulse of every Gā when political difficulty descends upon him is to go round to his friends and borrow money to use as bribes.

² Nungwa's first *manɔkralo* was *Bolabi Dzene*, who took his new *manɔkralo*'s stool to Katamansu. He was afterwards made *Gbovu wulomo* and his son, *Botekwei Tiātiāku*, became *manɔkralo*. (See Diagram V.)

³ I say a genuine *dɛasetse* because of late years pretenders to stools, knowing that the *dɛasetse* is the undisputed authority on stool matters in every town and that usually it is he who enstools the candidate, have learnt the new trick of claiming to have 'destooled' the *dɛasetse*! So far, however, this trick has not become general, and if I personally had to decide any strange stool dispute I should be guided mainly by the *dɛasetse* for I have always found him in every town the best informed and most disinterested authority on stool matters. But, of course, if once it were to become codified in any administration ordinance that the *dɛasetse* and not the State Council is the proper judge of stool disputes, then no doubt political adventurers would offer their bribes to him instead of the State Council, and his rather than the *manɔse*'s succession would be disputed.

occasions on which the total eight Houses of the town act as eight units and the stool Houses as two of these. If there were three stool Houses there would be nine units. For instance, the proceeds of any sale or lease of Nungwa land to strangers is divided equally between the eight Houses. Such moneys as that paid by the Government for the site of the artillery range, that paid by the Grunshi charcoal-burners for the trees of the Pinkwai forest, and that paid by visiting Fanti fishermen as fishing fees, have always been divided into eight equal shares. Conversely, when the town is raising money eight equal contributions are demanded. There is no record of the town ever acting as nine units.

However, all this independent evidence was not brought forward and the State Council gave judgment in favour of the pretender, *Otu*.

He is now the *mantse* 'recognized' in the Government Gazette, and sits on the Gã State Council. The latter activity is, however, his only satisfaction in life. For no one in his own town recognizes him. He has never been enstooled¹ and never made *Oswei wulomo*. No one, except perhaps an occasional 'stranger', ever takes a case to his tribunal. No one goes near him. If he sends a message it is ignored. If he were to appear at any public meeting everyone else would promptly leave. He never comes out from his house except to go to Accra, and his existence is a neurotic burden to him. He imagines that his life is unsafe and is always sending—quite unnecessarily—for Government police to protect him.

The town has now, for all the purposes of its internal affairs, no *mantse* at all, but it manages excellently and peaceably without one. It has never had any real use for a *mantse* so far as its own peace-time affairs are concerned. Furthermore, the whole town, except one household or so, are solidly united to work together. Even the visiting Government sanitary inspector knows that if he wants any of his instructions carried out the work will be done willingly if he goes to the *mankrabo* instead of the *mantse*.

But there is one destructive result of the state of affairs. The *mantse*'s fear for his own skin led him to appeal so urgently for Government police to protect him during the *Kpledzo* festival and to paint so lurid a picture of the dangers of that festival,

¹ He is one of several members of the Gã State Council who have never been enstooled or recognized by their own people. It is the opinion of many Gã people that these unrecognized members would like all the others to be in the same position and were influenced in their decision on the Nungwa case by this desire, even if not by more tangible inducements.

that the District Commissioner forbade the celebration of the festival. This is nothing short of tragic. The festival is the very pivot of tribal life and the greatest of all the forces of social cohesion. I am convinced that it would bring no personal harm to the *mantse* so long as he did not try to take public part. The festival is very dear to the people: it is the time of family reunion, new marriage contracts, and the sharing out of the past year's profits. It is the time of reunion with the dead family forbears, and the time of obtaining blessing, luck, and reassurance for the coming year's activities. 'When we knew that we couldn't hold our *Kpledzo*', they told me, 'then we knew that our town was spoilt indeed.'

But there is one accidental circumstance that may save the town. That is, the Government's desire to rent some of Nungwa's grass-land to make a veterinary cattle-station. The Government approached the gazetted *mantse*, but he cannot dispose of Nungwa land without the consent of all the town officials for all the land is town land. 'We have borne much with patience', say the town officials, 'but if anyone lays a finger on our land without our consent then we will fight till not one of us is alive.' And since they really mean it and the *mantse* knows they mean it, there is a deadlock. Until the Government assist the Nungwa to get rid of the *mantse* that the State Council have imposed upon them it will not get its land.

Two British officials visited the town about the land question. They went first to the *mantse*'s house and found only the *mantse* and two or three of his friends. Then they went to the *mankrab* and found gathered around him dozens of officials—*wulomei*, *asafoatsemei*, elders, *sipii*, *akwason*, *agbasoi*, *woleiatse*, and the heads of villages. This gave them an idea of the state of affairs, but had it not been for the accidental circumstance of the land negotiations, I doubt if they would ever have had that idea. For the responsible people in native organization are not articulate. They know how to run their own town affairs, but not how to explain them to officials. I do not think one of the Nungwa office holders is literate, and Temma has only recently appointed one literate.¹

It is true that lawyers write letters² and petitions for these

¹ Literates may almost be defined as people who are useful to Europeans and European-connected enterprise, but useless to the communities that bred them. There are a few shining exceptions: for instance, there are two excellent middle-aged literates in Nungwa, retired from European employment and returned to their old town, who do most intelligent, unselfish work for their town. It was they who organized the impressive gathering that convinced the two British officials of the real state of affairs, and they did it with that aim.

² The attitude to lawyers is a kind of fascinated loathing. The people declare

inarticulate people, but one Gold Coast lawyer's document conveys much the same impression as any other Gold Coast lawyer's document—a tedious mass of verbosity—and the British officials receive such an incessant rain of these that they may be forgiven for failing to pick out the few that are significant.

Afterword

Since I wrote this chapter affairs in Nungwa have come to a head. The District Commissioner, in view of the land deadlock, advised the people to frame charges against the *mantse* and try to get him destooled. They did so, but the State Council dismissed the charges. The District Commissioner then went on leave. The people approached his successor and asked for permission to hold their *Kpledzo* festival. The District Commissioner, new to the district and its affairs, asked the advice of the 'Gã *mantse*'—the inveterate enemy of the Nungwa people—and was advised by him not to grant this request. He acted on this advice, which action caused the smouldering anger against the *mantse* to burst into flame. There was a riot in which a man was killed, several received cutlass and gun-shot wounds, sixty-one houses were burnt out, and the *mantse* fled for his life.

Whether he abdicated or was eventually destooled I do not know, as I have not been in Nungwa lately, but at any rate they are now rid of him and Government has recognized the 'people's *mantse*', *Afofe Adziny*.

that they deliberately prolong disputes and grow fat on them, yet each side holds that a lawyer is necessary to frustrate the cunning of the lawyer which the other side is bound to employ.

CHAPTER IV

ACCRA

§ I

THE MAKING OF ACCRA

Introduction

IT was probably at the end of the sixteenth century that the Gã-speaking immigrants began to arrive and settle among the lagoon-worshipping *Kpɛsi* aborigines.

The immigrants were families of refugees fleeing in separate parties 'from Tɛtɛtutu and other Benin parts', probably travelling along the beach. Some of the parties consisted of one extended family with its family god and led by its family priest, others consisted of more than one family.

These parties were:

The *Gã Bɔni*.

The *Gã Wɔ*.

The *Gã Mafi*.

The *Obutu*.

The first three parties were Gã-speaking, and say that they 'came down the Niger' from inland before travelling along the coast. The Obutu people 'came down the Volta' from inland, spoke a Twi dialect known as *Obutu*, and did not practise circumcision. The Obutu and Gã refugees fraternized during their journey along the coast.

The *Gã Bɔni*, or *La*, people settled at *La Doku* on the *Laloi* lagoon near Prampram. The *Gã Wɔ* were *Bokete Lawei*'s people who, we have already learnt, settled in the villages of *Wɔdoku*, *Wɔsagba*, etc.

Early Days of the Gã Mafi

The *Gã Mafi* party which consisted of about seven families, came to Accra. There it split up into two halves. One half was under *Ni Tete* and *Ni Moi*, the *wulɔmei* of the gods *Nai* and *Oyeni* respectively. These gods were sea-gods and their people were fishing people and they settled by the shore near the site of Fort James. *Ni Moi*'s group became known as the *Sempi* people. *Ni Tete* had two sons, *Lakote Adu Wufi* and *Latei Boi* (the latter also being known as *Boi Tono* or *Boi Tolo*). *Lakote Adu Wufi* succeeded his father as *Nai wulɔmɔ* and *Boi Tono* became *Nyɔnyɔmɔ Tsawe wulɔmɔ*. *Boi Tono* was succeeded by *Boi Bokwai*. Later,

when the Gã organized themselves for war the *Nai wulomò* remained the ruler, and *Nyonmò Tsfawè's* owners became one of the Houses to provide a *mantse* or recipient of the stool-'medicine'.

The other half of the *Gã Masi*, under one *Ayi-Kufi*, went inland ten miles or so and settled on the hill *Ayivasu* (also known as *Okakwei's* hill or *Okakwei*). These people were farmers and exchanged farm produce for fish with their friends by the sea. Annually at the time of *Hòmowò* the hill people came down and had a joint festival with their seaside friends. The 'fish village' was regarded as the senior, and the *Nai wulomò* the head of the whole *Gã Masi* organization.

As soon as *Ayi Kufi's* people were settled on the hill the *Obutu* party arrived and settled on the hill with them.

There were also on the hill some friendly *Kpési* aborigines and their gods *Gua*, the blacksmith and thunder-god, *Akrama-Opobi*, the hunters' god, *Olila*, the whirlwind, *Ofila*, and the ubiquitous goddess *Afiyei*. These gods still have their groves and places of worship on *Okakwei* Hill. Some of the *Kpési* caretakers of gods died out and their gods were taken over by the newcomers with whom they had intermarried. 'The Gã', their descendants say, 'were very few on the hill, and they were glad to be joined by any friendly strangers who would help them if they were attacked by enemies.'¹

The *Obutu* party, which joined the *Gã Masi* on the hill were under a leader named *Wiete*. *Wiete* had gold and brought this wealth with him. Some of *Ayi Kufi's* people coveted the gold and transferred their allegiance from *Ayi Kufi* to *Wiete*. There were various bitter quarrels, and *Ayi Kufi*, irritated beyond further endurance, gave up his leadership to his son, *Ayite*, and went away, some say back to Benin, others 'into the sea'. Probably he set off, as many people did and do, along the beach. At any rate, he was never seen again.

Ayite continued the quarrel with *Wiete*, *Wiete* was beaten, lost his gold, and was driven off the *Ayivasu* Hill, first to *Ablekuma* near *Weiga*, and then to *Apara* Hill near the present-day home of his *Obutu* descendants.

Ayite was succeeded by his son *Amã*, and then came *Amã's* younger brother *Okai Mampon*.² *Okai Mampon* married *Wiete's*

¹ Historians who picture *Ayi Kufi* as a great invading, conquering monarch are vastly mistaken. He was a farmer, the head of a handful of insecure settlers.

² The wheeled carriage which everyone associates with the name of *Okai Mampon* was obtained by barter from the Portuguese who had begun trading. It was because he rode in this carriage 'like a European' that he got the nickname *Owura*—a title given to Europeans. The nickname outlasted the carriage for 'there were only narrow footpaths up to the hill and the wheels soon came off on the rough ground'.

grand-daughter *Dode Okaibi*,¹ to heal the old quarrel, but the main body of the *Obutu* never came back though *Dode Okaibi* herself brought with her a party of male and female attendants who never returned. These *Obutu* attendants founded the *Akumadzɛi* quarter of Accra.

When *Okai Mampon* died his son *Okai Kwei* (*Okai's Kwei*), usually called *Okakwei*, was very young, and *Dodi Okaibi*, his mother, took over the leadership in the name of her son. She also claimed for him succession in *Obutu* hoping to re-unite the two peoples, but as the *Gā Masi* practised circumcision and the *Obutu* did not, *Okakwei*, having been circumcised, was eligible to succeed only among the *Gā Masi*. *Dode Okaibi* was harsh and insanely unreasonable, and was so much disliked that she was at last stoned to death in a water-hole.

Okakwei was equally unpopular, and 'the whole hill was in confusion in his lifetime, so everyone remembers him'. Chief among those bitter against *Okakwei* was one *Ni Kolai*, the head of the House of *Dzɔsifi*, because *Okakwei* had allowed his sons to murder one of *Ni Kolai's* sons.

Okakwei died in a fight with the *Akwamu* people who were living on the hills around Nsawam. The *Akwamu* and *Gā* at first fraternized and intermarried. The *Akwamu* borrowed both money and men from *Okakwei* to help in fighting the Ashanti, and sent *Okakwei* their chief's son as a security. *Okakwei* allowed this boy to be circumcised and *Ni Kolai* reported it to the *Akwamu* chief. This started a fight in which *Okakwei's* own people gave him such half-hearted support—and seemed indeed to be rather helping the *Akwamu*—that he committed suicide on the battle-field.

He was succeeded by his son *Afanmo*² who drove off the *Akwamu*. But afterwards, *Afanmo*, with his little ivory 'grandfather' and a party of relatives and friends, left the district to find a more peaceable abode and never came back. He went to *Anebo* in Togoland.

Meanwhile, the *Gā* on the hill had associated a good deal with the *Akwamu* in friendship, and the *Akwamu* showed them how to 'make stools to take to war'. The *Gā* also created military officials after the *Ashanti-Akwamu* pattern. *Ni Kolai* of the House of *Dzɔsifi* had had a stool made, the House of *Kpakpatsewe* had one also. 'A stool is like a banner', their descendants told me; 'the spirit in the stool goes into the man who sits on the

¹ The word *Dode* means 'of the Ancients', and is nothing to do with the common *Gā* name *Dede*. *Dode Okaibi* therefore means 'Okai's child of the Ancients'.

² See p. 145.



Ivory pillow of Gua the Elder of Ancient Egypt. (This illustration is included by the kind permission of the British Museum.) (*See p. 145.*)

stool and he can never be a coward and his warriors can never be cowards.'

The Ivory Stool of Aſanmo

Some of my readers who know Reindorf's *History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti*¹ will here protest that before the death of *Okakwei* in 1660 the Gã of Accra had a stool which was taken away by *Aſanmo* to *Aneho* in *Togoland*. I have been at some pains to enquire into the nature of this anomalous stool and have followed it (literally) to *Togoland* and interviewed the people who now have charge of it—the direct descendants of the men who took it there.

The immigrant Gã company arrived in Accra—and here Reindorf supports me—under the leadership of 'two powerful priests'. There was no stool involved in their leadership, but one family possessed a small sacred relic in the shape of an ivory pillow or head-rest, carved out of one piece of ivory and 'small enough to hide in a man's armpit'. The Gold Coast people do not know the use of head-rests, and so strikingly similar is the shape of an ivory pillow to that of an Ashanti stool that the relic became known as a 'stool', and after its departure the attributes of a stool were quite erroneously associated with it. In *Togoland* I saw the old man who has charge of this 'stool'. He and his relatives live in the little village of *Glidzi*, some fifteen miles from *Aneho*. They are now an obscure family, but trace an unbroken descent from *Foli Bebe*.² The tiny ivory stool, they say, is not a stool 'but a pillow for the neck'; it has never been to war and it is not a chief's or ruler's stool, but a family relic. Nobody ever sits on it and nobody ever has sat on it even to be medicined. No one person is associated with it. It is simply a very sacred relic and the family that cherishes it

¹ This ambitious work is to be praised for what it bravely attempted rather than for what it achieved. Reindorf was a mulatto pastor in a Christian Mission. He collected a wealth of unsifted material from an enormous area and flung it down in chaotic manner, often contradicting himself. He was an indefatigable collector but did not understand the laborious cross-checking nor the ruthless surgery that must be carried out before tradition can be confidently claimed as history.

Mr. W. E. Ward, who compiled a *Gold Coast History for Schools*, told me that he 'relied entirely on Reindorf for information about the Gã'. This is a pity.

The account of Gã early history which I am now able to present here is, I believe, as accurate as any such history can be and represents years of work and no little patience.

² It was not the famous warrior, *Aſanmo* himself, who brought the ivory stool, say the *Aneho* people, but his three brothers, *Foli Bebe*, *Foli Hemazo*, and *Amã Kpasam*, who left Accra twenty years before *Aſanmo* left and sent for him to join them later. *Foli Bebe* founded the village of *Glidzi* and his descendants continued the care of the ivory 'stool'.

is not a 'Chief's' family. It is not in a stool-room; it is carefully hidden out-of-doors, rumour says in the river, and brought out secretly to receive its dues once a year. Unlike every war stool it has no name, but the caretaking family call it 'our old man' or 'our grandfather'.¹

'The ivory stool of Accra', then, was not in fact a stool at all, either in substance or in associations. None of the Gā stools were founded till later, and all were on a pattern and organization introduced from Akwamu.²

New Phase of Gā Mafi Organization

When *Afaɲmo* went he left the numbers on the hill so depleted that the remnant decided to come down and join their friends by the sea, as the Portuguese had established a trading station there and were extending their protection to the seaside people. They came down in two batches, one batch known as the *Aserɛ* people were brought down by one, *Ni Amontiā*, the brother of *Ni Kolai*, and he placed on the new war-stool *Ayi Frimpon*, one of the three remaining 'brothers' of *Okakwei*. *Ayi Frimpon* was the first *Aserɛ manɲɛ*.

The *akwasɲɲɛ*'s stool, founded on the hill, was also brought down; it remained the *akwasɲɲɛ*'s stool and is still in *Aserɛ*.

The second batch of hill people came down under *Tuɲma Ayi*, another survivor of *Okakwei*'s relatives.³ *Tuɲma Ayi*, also, had already made himself a stool on the hill. He was wealthy and his stool was 'a show stool', decorated with silver and gold. 'A real *wɔɲ* stool with power in it is always made of wood, no silver and gold ever touches it, and it may never be shown in public.'

¹ After my expedition to Aneho I told the Accra descendants of *Okakwei* what I had learnt there. They were deeply interested and quite ready to defer to Aneho opinion concerning the nature of the ivory stool. When I said that its family called it their grandfather one of my hearers said, 'I think the *susuma* (soul, spirit) of that family is inside it'. But I cannot be certain that he was uninfluenced by what he might have heard about the golden stool of Ashanti. On the other hand it is possible that *Akomfo Anokye*, who made for the Ashanti the golden stool which he said was to contain the soul of the Ashanti people, first got the idea from *Afaɲmo*. It is known that *Akomfo Anokye* was a travelled man and stayed in *Akwamu*, where he could hardly have failed to hear about *Afaɲmo*'s family 'soul'.

² I reproduce the photograph of the ivory pillow of Gua The Elder not because I am in the least interested in any current theories that Egypt was the origin of W. African culture, but simply to prove that a superficial resemblance to a *manɲɛ*'s stool does not necessarily give *Afaɲmo*'s 'stool' the significance of an *manɲɛ*'s stool.

Since writing the present book I have met several similar ivory neck rests among the Voltaside Ewes. These people are also immigrants and associated with the Gā before their immigration. Their ivory stools are the repositories of family 'soul' and are not the chiefs' war stools which they have since adopted.

³ There were only three survivors of *Okakwei*'s 'brothers'—*Tuɲma Ayi*, *Ayi Frimpon*, and *Ayi Bonte*.

Shortly after the making of this stool an Ashanti refugee named *Ofori Dkama* came and lodged with *Tuyɔma Ayi* and married his daughter *Ayikɔ Adu* and had by her a daughter named *Kɔkɔ Mota* and a son who was adopted as a member of *Tuyɔma Ayi*'s family and named *Ayikuma Tiekuba*.¹ *Ofori Dkama* also brought a decorated stool. When *Tuyɔma Ayi* died *Ayikuma Tiekuba* inherited both his stool and his own father's stool. *Ayikuma Tiekuba* came down from the hill and joined forces with *Boi Tono* at *Amugive* by the sea, and their joint habitation became known as the *Abola* quarter of Accra.² *Boi Tono*'s House (known as *Amugive*) and *Ayikuma Tiekuba*'s House (later known as *Tieka Tsurume* after one of its members), alternately provided the *mantse* for the *Abola* stool.

The *Gã Mafi* military settlement by the sea now consisted of the *Asere* quarter with its stool and its *mantse*, and the *Abola* quarter with its stool and its *mantse*. Of the original seaside people *Boi Tono*'s family, the *Nai* worshippers, became a part of *Abola*, and the *Oyeni* worshippers, known as the *Sempi* people became a part of *Asere*.

The *Sempi* people soon quarrelled with *Asere*, left them, and went to live a mile away on the other side of the *Kɔle* lagoon at *Kɔle Gɔnyɔ*, but later *Asere* apologized to them and they came back to the place where they are to-day. Soon after their return they instituted a stool. This made three *mantse*'s stools in Accra.

Tuyɔma Ayi's grand-daughter *Kɔkɔ Mota* (the sister of *Ayikuma Tiekuba*) married a man called *Ama Wufi Abia* from the district of Swedru, and had by him a son named *Okaidza*. *Ayikuma Tiekuba* bought some gunpowder from Europeans at Elmina, and as he was unable to pay for it he sent *Okaidza* to Elmina as a security on the debt. This was treating *Okaidza* like a son and heir and he was promised succession to *Ayikuma Tiekuba*'s goods and position, partly because of the service he was rendering, and partly because, being an Akan on his father's side, he expected to profit by the Akan custom of inheritance and succession from the mother's brother. He was a long time in Elmina, long enough to have grown-up sons of his own there, and still the debt was not redeemed. He was still there when *Ayikuma Tiekuba* died, and his goods and the stool were given to his son *Tete Akia Akwa*. News of this reached *Okaidza* and he set off

¹ An Ashanti man's son belongs to the wife's family.

² The 'Abola' of the 'Chief's list' to-day is not this Abola, but is *Abola Kpatafi*, a group of descendants of a colony of Fanti fishermen. The true Abola quarter is now the quarter of the so-called 'Gã *mantse*', who should always be called the Abola *mantse*.

for home. Arriving, he found that *Tete Abia Akwa* had taken his father's two stools to war at *Tɔm* in Togoland, and only one elder—an old man named *Ayika Osiabene*—remained behind. This old man opposed *Okaidza*, but *Okaidza* had supporters from among his father's relatives and the friends he had brought from Elmina and he overcame the old man and entered the stool-room. There he found nothing but a sword. But around this sword he raised a fighting force to pursue *Tete Abia Akwa* to *Tɔm*. The Dutch, who were on the coast at the time, persuaded him not to go and said they would themselves send a ship to *Tɔm* and bring *Tete Abia Akwa* and the stool. When *Tete Abia Akwa* heard that the Dutch were helping *Okaidza* he hid or destroyed his stools and they were never seen again. The Dutch seized him without his stools and put him on board their ship, but he poisoned himself on the way, and all they brought was his body which was buried by his daughter *Momo* who had married a Dutch officer. A solemn oath in Accra to-day is that of '*Momotse Tɔm*'—*Momo's* father of *Tɔm*.

Okaidza had a new stool made, and, supported by the Dutch, he founded a new quarter called *Gbese*.¹ This made four *mantse's* stools in Accra.

The *Akuɲmadzei* people, mainly descendants of *Dode Okaibi's* *Obutu* retinue, seem to have been a part of this new quarter *Gbese*. Later they quarrelled with *Gbese* and went to make a settlement of their own on the borders of 'English Accra', a part of which they later became.²

The *Gā Mafi* immigrants thus gave rise to the *Asere*, *Abola*, *Gbese*, and *Sempi* quarters of Accra, each of which has its own stool to this day, and to the *Akuɲmadzei* quarter which has no stool.

Otublohū.

During the time that *Okakwei's* people were on the hill there were *Akwamu* farmers settled on and around the hill *Nyanyao* near Nsawam. The two peoples were friendly and inter-married in spite of difficulties about circumcision, which the *Gā*, but not the *Akwamu*, practised. The quarrel in which *Okakwei* lost his life was between *Okakwei* as an individual and the *Akwamu* chief. Most of *Okakwei's* people were friendly with the *Akwamu*,

¹ *Gbese* means 'at the back of the road'.

² I have been unable to extract any satisfactory information out of *Akuɲmadzei* people themselves. Their elders are literate and say they no longer carry any of their history in their heads because their 'scholars' have written it down and there is no necessity to remember it. As 'scholars' write down only what seems to them impressive in the light of their scholarship, I have not drawn upon this source.