A STUDY OF CHILD TRAINING AT ABIRIW IN AKUAPEM.

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PREFACE

This thesis is an investigation into child training, development and activities at Abiri a village in Akuapem.

All the information in this essay was collected through observation of children at play, how mothers and fathers treat their children and through interviews with native herbalists, native midwives, medicine men, fetish priests and priestesses, mothers and fathers of children and twins.

I wish to express my gratitude to all those men and women whom I interviewed for information during my field work. At times some of these people were very busy with their domestic duties and affairs yet they sacrificed their time and gave me all the information I needed.

It shall be ungratefulness on my part if I do not give thanks to my two young friends Akuffo and Opoku who were pinned down for long periods on three occasions drawing the sketches at the end of this essay.

I also thank those children, men and women who gave themselves to be photographed as illustrations to some of the points discussed in this essay.

Last of all but not the least, my deepest gratitude goes to Dr. M. M. Lusty (Institute of Educa who was my tutor and who took pains to read through the manuscript and generously he and guided me in arranging the data in this essay so that it is what it is now.



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INTRODUCTION

Description of ABIRIW, a village in Akuapem.

Abiriw is one of the oldest villages in Akuapem. It is about sixty six yards away from Akropong the capital town of Akuapem and it is also about a quarter of a mile from Dawu. It is 34 miles away from Accra and 25 miles from Koforidua the nearest commercial town.

There are about two hundred and fifty houses in Abiriw and these houses are built very close together so that the lanes are very narrow. As I have already said, Abiriw is one of the oldest villages in Akuapem and in the olden days, it was the practice to build houses close together so that when an alarm was raised in times of war or danger, it could be heard at all the different quarters of the village. These houses, with the exception of about fifteen, are all built of swish and roofed with corrugated iron sheets.

This village falls into five main quarters according to the different clans of the people. The names of these quarters are Atetemantere, Konkon Alabiri, Akesere and Adworiamau. In addition to these different five quarters there is the Christian quarters.

A lorry road runs from Akropong through Abiriw to Adukrom where a branch of it goes to Koforidua and the other branch goes to Akuse and the Trans-Volta Region. This same lorry road which runs from Akropong divides itself into two at Manfe (another village which is only three miles away from Akropong and on the way to Accra) and one branch runs to Accra and the other branch runs to Suhum in the Akim Abuakwa district.

village. There are radio boxes in some homes at Abiriw but they are not very many. There is no Post Office at Abiriw so letters are posted at the Akropong Post office which is near the market-place which is built on the no-man's-land between Abiriw and Akropong.

As this village is on the top of the Akuapem mountains, there are no rivers. The people of Abiriw therefore get their drinking water from wells and springs the most important of which is called Densu. The other wells and springs are Adumi, Adami Asua, Nsebi and Katanankuu. In addition to this source of water supply, many homes have cement water tanks which collect and store rain water for them.

The population of Abiriw is about 2,000 made up largely of Kyerepongs who are the indigenes of the village. Living in this village are also a few Nigerians, Ewes and some people of the Northern Territories. The people of Abiriw speak Kyerepong but in their case, their language has been greatly encroached upon by Twi due to their living near to and intermarrying with the Twi speaking people of Akropong. The result is that many Kyerepong words have got and are getting out of use and Twi words have been and are being used in their places. Examples of these words are "Gbei (dog), Ahɔle (Turtle dove), abetsu (palmnut soup), adefe (a royal) and kyerenkyɛ" (basket.) Instead of these pure Kyerepong words, the people of Abiriw are now using the Twi versions of them. The Twi words for these words are "ɔkraman (dog), aburubuuru (Turtle dove), nnɛkwan (palmnut soup), ɔdehyɛ (a royal) and kɛntɛn" (basket).

It is not only the language of the people of Abiriw that has been influenced by Twi but the very culture of the people has also been influenced. The traditional war songs, funeral dirges and the drumming of proverbs on the talking drums are all

now rendered in Twi instead of in Kyerepong. Even the very appellation with which Abiriw is identified is said in Twi. It is this, "Abiriw kokwabo a ɔse kyerɛ, ɔnom adakasu kronkron". When translated it means, "Abiriw, thou art a smooth stone that drinks clear water from a hole in the ground."

The major occupation of the people of Abiriw is farming. Those who take to food-farming are permanent residents of the village whereas those who take to cocoa farming migrate to Akyem, Ashanti and other parts of the country where cocoa grows to pursue their occupations and they come back home annually to take part in the Celebration of the Ohum festival. This results in the village being thinly populated for a greater part of the year and its being thickly populated at the time when the Ohum festival is celebrated. One interesting thing is that when these people migrate, the aged, the infirm and the young are left behind. Some of the young attend School but some are left behind purposely to be attendants to the aged and the infirm. There are also six storekeepers (petty-traders), eight carpenters and 3 tailors in the village. Strictly speaking, these people are not professional traders, carpenters and tailors for they are farmers who pursue these trades as their hobbies. For example an uncle of mine at Abiriw is a farmer, a carpenter and a tailor at the same time.

There are two Christian churches in the village and these are the Presbyterian Church which is the oldest church and which commands the greater number of christians and then the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Comparatively, the christians at Abiriw form a small part of the population of the village. The majority are heathens who worship the four gods of the village. These gods are Ayesu Bosompra, Ola and Kwaku Amoa. During the annual Ohum festival the women worshipers of

these gods clothe themselves in white, hold white pieces of cloth and parade the main street of the village singing songs to the glorification of these gods. The words of one of the songs they sing always run like this, "Ogya oo, yeye abosomma". In English they mean, "Hurrah! we are the children of heathen gods".

There is a football field to the east of the village and it lies on the right hand side of the lorry road that goes to Dawu and beyond. On this field, the people, especially the young men, go to play football and learn cycling. This football field lies in front of the School which is up to Middle Form four. Such is the nature of the society and environment into which a child is born at Abiriw.

CHAPTER I

Attitude towards having children.

Abiriw is a typical Kyerepong village and because of this the attitude of the people of Abiriw towards child-bearing is the same as that of the other Kyerepong people in Akuapem. This attitude is that child-bearing is a blessing and barrenness is a curse as well as a disgrace.

The Kyerepong Society is based on patrilineal descent. That is, everyone is born into the line of the father and inherits the property of the father. The explanation to this is that the woman is considered to be only a bag into which the man emits part of his spiritual elements for development into another being. The woman therefore plays a very minor part as she is considered to be just a helper. The child is the father's and not the mother's. The father perpetuates his kind through his sons. It is therefore regarded very fortunate to give birth to boys. It is also considered very fortunate if the first born is a boy for when he grows up, he stays with the father and helps him in looking after the younger children who come after him. The bringing forth of girls is not considered so fortunate as that of boys because when they grow up, they get married to men who take them away from the father's house leaving the house desolate. More than this, the father's line is brought to an end if he brings forth only girls and no boys. This is one of the worst catastrophies that can befall a man.

Looked at from this angle, it is seen why the Kyerepongs consider childbearing a blessing especially when many boys are born. Child bearing is therefore one of the most important, if not the sole purpose of marriage. Marriage is regarded a failure

if it proves fruitless. Barrenness or sterility constitutes a rich ground for divorce.

In addition to regarding child-bearing as a means of perpetuating a man's kind, it is regarded as great honour. Many a times when there is a quarrel between two men, the one with many children is heard challenging the other man with the the words," How many children have you?"

When a man dies, it is his sons and daughters who buy the coffin and the other articles for burying and decorating the corpse when it is laid in state. When a man has many children and they buy costly articles and a beautiful coffin (especially a silver plated coffin) for the purposes named above, when the man dies, then he is considered greatly honoured. It is no wonder then when such a man dies that his children sing the song with the words," Asamoawa ee, nnowaa Asamoawa awoaye Asamoawa. Onnibie, woahwe wo sieda". These words mean," Asamoawa (a man's name) child-bearing is great honour. Thou barren, your burial day will reveal your disgrace".

In addition to all these, when a man becomes aged or weak so that he cannot work for his daily bread, it is the duty of his children especially his sons, to provide him with food and clothing till he dies. This is also regarded one of the most important advantages of child-bearing. To these people of Abirim the more children you beget, the better you will be cared for in your old age or when you are ill and incapacitated and the grander your funeral ceremony will be.

The Kyenepong word for a barren man is "Dsae" (the castrated) and the barren woman is called "Obonini" (literally meaning a woman-man). Barrenness is regarded both as a curse and unnatural and many causes are assigned to it. In some cases it is attributed to some devils and witches who are believed to have

the power of removing the ova or sperms, or turning up-side-down the womb of a woman or even removing the womb and hiding it. This is usually believed to be done by the old-women in either the man's family or the woman's family. Old women are always suspected of witchcraft. In some other cases it is believed to be the fate of the person concerned and in such cases, it is believed nothing can be done to help the person.

It is not always that barrenness is thought to be caused by devils but some are believed to be caused by diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea. I was told the two notorious diseases which cause barrenness in women are called "Odae" and "anidan". These are diseases which attack the womb and cause barrenness. When a woman is suffering from "Odae", she suffers from lower abdominal pains either just before or after her monthly menstrual flow.

When a woman has been married for two years or so and yet has no child, suspicion of her barrenness begins to arise. The husband takes her to the medicine man who gives her medicine. This medicine may consist of the leaves, roots, bark and the seeds of certain plants. Some of these are boiled and drunk daily. Some of the leaves may be ground and made into balls which the woman pushes into her vagina when going to bed in the evening and removes the next morning. This is to be repeated about three times every fortnight. Some of the herbs can be ground, mixed with water and given as enema. This treatment may be continued for say six months or more. During this period some foods such as groundnut, palm nut oil, okro, cocoyam and oranges are not to be eaten. The woman has to bear no grudge against the husband or any other person. Neither has the

A licensed native herbalist and fetish-priestess I consulted told me that in many cases the treatment described above helps many of the patients who come to her to overcome their barrenness so that they give birth to children. However if after a year of such treatment the patient continues to be barren she has a way of knowing the cause of barrenness. This way of knowing the cause of barrenness in women is called "Dwobofor or Gbese" (meaning bad fate) and it is practised on "Awukudae" days only.

The woman herbalist told me that when a woman is going to be taken through this Gbese ceremony, she goes to sleep with her for a day and early in the morning, the patient rises up, puts on white cloth and besmears her face with white powder. She is given a talisman to wear round the neck. She is then made to carry on her head a new calabash that has never been used. The calabash is filled with water, some leaves and eggs. The fetish priestess begins to sing and some of her people help her by clapping their hands and singing too. After some time, the patient begins to quake all over — she is possessed by her own spirit. (Okra) The priestess then pours wine on the ground and says, "Okra Amma, (or whatever the birthday name might be) you were brought into this world by a woman and as a woman you have to bring other children into this world too. You have been brought under my treatment for the last twelve months or so and yet thou art as thou were. Barrenness is a disgrace and a curse at Abiriw here. I have therefore called you this day and I command you to speak out. Thou art come from the spiritual world where you have three eyes which help you to see more than we can see with these mortal eyes of ours. If it is your fate (nkrabea) not to bring forth any children or if your barrenness has been caused by any witch or

devil, tell me. I command you to speak out." The patient, still quaking (at times so very violently that some people have to hold her to prevent the calabash on her head from falling down for it must not) tells the cause of her barrenness and what must be done before she can give birth to children. When the cause is known, the priestess asks her to swear an oath that she will be fruitful. When that is done, the calabash is removed from her head and the water in it used for washing her face and the rest is poured away on the dunghill. The patient is then put to bed to sleep. She wakes up later quite unconscious of what happened.

The priestess told me she had an instance once when a patient who was taken through this "Dwobofo" ceremony said that she hated the idea of children soiling and wetting her clothing with their faeces and urine respectively. Therefore, when she was coming from heaven, she asked God not to make her bear children. I was told nothing could be done for such a one. However there are several cases when some of the women, after having been given the treatment they prescribed when they were possessed, have given birth to children.

There are some women too, especially the christians who do not go to these fetish-priests and priestesses for treatment but rather go to the hospitals at Koforidua, Larte or Mampong to receive treatment from qualified doctors.

The lot of many an unproductive husband at Abiriw is equally shameful and unpleasant. The husband is looked down upon by the people and he may lose his wife for ever and may never get another wife. He is publicly laughed at and his opinions on public or social affairs are not taken into consideration but are frowned at. When a man has taken a woman or two to wife for say two or three years or more

and yet there is no offspring, he consults the medicine man who gives him chopped roots (of a kind of plant) to be bottled in gin or Schnapps and drunk every day. If this and other subsequent taking of different medicines fail, he may go under the same "Dwobofo" ritual as the women do.

In the olden days, if the "Dwobofo" ceremony failed to help a man, he was forced through a very disgraceful ceremony called "Kote kwawa" (the unproductive male organ). In these days it is only practised in very rare cases. It may be practised when a man is a very important royal and who must by all means beget a child lest his line come to an end and in which case may bring the loss of social status and prestige to the clan from which he comes. This ceremony is practised only once a year during the Ohum festival and it is practised very early in the morning.

The victim is caught by force, taken to one end of the village where he is stripped bare, he is shaven, besmeared with red soil and snail shells on a string are put round his waist. This is done in the presence of his mother-in-law. He is then marched through the town from one end to the other end three times. He is hooted at continuously by the people who follow him. When the three rounds are finished, he is made to swear an oath that he will bring forth children. I was told during my investigation that after having been forced through this shameful ordeal, there were some instances of suicide in the olden days and it was that which led to its discontinuance.

Because of the importance attached to child-bearing, all children born outside or before formal marriage are not branded as bastards but they are given the same status as all the other children born after formal marriage. These children inherit the properties of their father with the same privileges



Fig. 2.

An orphan of 10 years and who has been adopted by a woman. Up till now she does not know she is an orphan.

as those children born within marriage. The usual practice is that when a loose and unauthorised union between a man and a woman results in the birth of a child, the man has to pacify the woman's father with some drinks and money the total value of which ranges between £5 and £15. In addition to this the man has to provide for the woman and to bear all expenses incurred in giving the woman medical treatment during her pregnancy. When all these are done, then the child is the man's and he exercises all responsibilities over the child till he is about six years more or less when the father is expected to bring him to his house.

When a woman dies through labour pains, the child is given to the other wife of the husband or it may be given to the sister of the husband if he has no other wife. Such orphans are given very good care and the woman to whom the child has been given must treat him like her own child. The people of Abiriw hold the belief that if such orphans are not cared for properly, the spirit of the deceased mother will get angry and either come to take the child away or she may harm the caretaker of the child in several ways. It is this fear of the evil influences of the spirits of the deceased mothers that makes the women very willing to adopt these orphans. When a child is adopted as such, his being an orphan is kept very secret from him as long as possible. He is brought up into the belief that he is the real child of his benefactor. Any body who makes it known to the child that he is an orphan is severely reprimanded by the father.

When the children of a woman are grown before she dies, one of her sisters is chosen to inherit her properties. She takes the children of her deceased sister as her own children and she looks after

she cares for them better than she does for her own children. This is done just to avert the anger and evil influences of the spirit of the deceased sister.

In the same way, when a man dies, one of his brothers is chosen to be the step-father of the children of his deceased brother. He has to look after these step-children and treat them as his own children. He should not favour his own children against these step-children but he may favour these step-children against his own children. This is meant to make the children feel happy and at home and to avert the anger of the deceased brother.

CHAPTER 2

PREGNANCY AND PRE-NATAL PERIOD.

The people of Abiriw understand the physiology of conception as the mixing into one the blood of a woman and the spiritual elements of a man. Man is therefore believed to be of two distinct elements namely "Nkrɛ" (blood transmitted by the mother) and "Kokwave" (the spiritual elements of the father) which when mixed together into one give rise to "Okra" (a living Soul). It is also believed that the "Nkrɛ" and "Kokwave" can mix together to give rise to a living soul (Okra) when there is complete harmony between wife and husband. The woman is considered the less important half in this business and to induce fruitfulness and to ensure the well-being of the children born and to be born, she is to submit herself to the taboos of the man, she is to subordinate herself to the man, she is to obey him and to live in harmony with him. It is held it is under such conditions that the man's spirit is pleased and then readily emits some of its elements into the woman's blood to cause conception.

As already stated in the last chapter, the woman is given second place importance in the matter of conception and reproduction. It is believed that the woman is only a bag into which the man emits some of his spiritual elements for developing into a living being. According to these people, a child's life is held and protected by the spirit of his father. Because of this, when a child falls ill very seriously during the absence of the father, he is immediately sent for and it is believed his presence alone will help, to some extent, in restoring the child's life.

A man I discussed this point with told me

it is true for in his case, any time he travelled to a far distant place, he came to find some of his children ill.

All the women I contacted during my investigation told me that they got to know they had taken seed after seeing a man through the cessation of the monthly menstrual flow. In addition to this they say the breasts get enlarged, the teats of the breasts get darker in colour and the skin of the face becomes lighter in colour. The body temperature rises considerably.

Some other typical feelings during the early months of pregnancy are constant feeling of headache and morning sickness which usually causes frequent vomitting. This habit of frequent vomitting is one of the signs and changes which help parents to detect when their young daughters are expecting a child or children. A woman who has brought forth three boys told me that she vomited every morning before she could eat any food in all the three cases when she was pregnant. Some of the women told me this feeling of morning sickness and vomitting stops after the fourth or fifth month of pregnancy.

Some say during their pregnancy, especially during the first six months and during the ninth month, they always feel very lazy and also very very sleepy during the day. Because of this some of these pregnant women stretch themselves usually on the verandahs in the house and sleep during the day. The old women regard this feeling of sleepiness as laziness. They believe that a woman who sleeps a lot during her pregnancy gives birth to very lazy children. When a pregnant woman forms the habit of sleeping a lot, she is always rebuked. In some cases, the old women in the home pour water on the pregnant woman to force her to wake up

and stop sleeping. The pregnant woman is expected not to show any sign of indignation when she has been treated like this – because it is regarded as a sign of disrespect to do so.

One typical feeling which the women told me was a usual source of unpleasantness and discomfort during pregnancy is the abrupt change in appetite. The most remarkable change in the appetite as I was told is the dislike for certain foods which were the favourite foods of the women before pregnancy. My mother told me whenever she became pregnant she never ate pork, cocoyam fufu and bananas. She told me that any time she ate any of these foods during her pregnancy she vomited and fell ill.

Another woman told me whenever she is pregnant she does not like scented perfumes like lavender and scented powders. In the same way she does not like medicines and drugs with any sharp smell. She told me that about six years ago when she was pregnant, she was forced by her mother to drink a glass of castor oil. After that she ate an orange just to tone down the sharp smell of the castor oil. She says she has never drunk any castor oil nor ever eaten any oranges since then.

At the same time as these women develop a dislike for certain foods, they develop a strong desire for certain other kinds of food. Some even go to the extent of developing the habit of eating dry mud bricks used for building. Some told me they simply liked the smell and taste of it. They say that the feeling for eating a kind of food is always aroused when a pregnant woman sees somebody either eating, selling or cooking that type of food. They say when the appetite of a pregnant woman has been aroused in this way, she

cannot control herself and she has to go to beg for some of the food to eat. When a pregnant woman begs for food to eat from you and you refuse to give her you are regarded a very cruel and unsympathetic person.

The following is the story a woman with four children told me. "I was pregnant last year (1955). One day when I was coming from the market, I saw Mama Akosua Fio, Papa Owusu Agyakwa's wife, eating some marshed cocoyam with palmnut oil (called "Saosao" in Kyerepong) in front of her store. I wished I could ask her to give me some of it to eat but because I was feeling shy of her I could not do so. When I reached my home, I was so filled with sorrow that I could do nothing but sit down and weep. My mother came in to see me weeping and she asked me why I was weeping but I felt shy to tell her and so I never told her."

During my investigation too, I chanced upon a woman who had given birth to six boys and three girls. She told me that she had marked the changes in her appetite to the extent that during pregnancy she could tell correctly in seven cases whether the child would be a boy or girl. She said in the cases of the males she always disliked and stopped eating cocoyam. She never experienced that dislike for cocoyam when the babies were females. She told me it was only with her last born that she forecast the birth of a girl and failed.

I asked for an explanation of this change in appetite from about ten women but it was only three of them who could explain it. They said that everybody has a type of food he or she likes best and another type he or she dislikes most. The unborn baby stops the mother from liking the food that it would dislike when born and

creates a special liking in the mother for the food it would like eating best when it is born into the world.

Another feeling which usually develops in pregnant women from the seventh month onwards is the development of sharp and uncertain temper. The women told me it is during this period that they feel bodily weak and as such the slightest disturbance arouses their anger.

Normally the restrictions placed on the diet of a pregnant woman are very few. She is not expected to eat such sweet foods as sugar, sugar cane, honey and mangoes as the sugar in them is believed to melt blood very quickly to cause miscarriages. She is not allowed to eat too much of snails as it is believed that the child to be born will form the bad habit of producing slimy saliva from the mouth. Apart from these, the woman can eat any kind of food she likes.

However in cases when the pregnant woman has been put under the care of a fetish or medicine man or woman, she is asked not to eat certain foods until she has given birth to the baby. Such foods include pork, pig feet, palm nut soup, groundnuts and okros. If the woman happened to know that she has eaten some of these foods through forgetfulness or otherwise, she has to report herself at once to the fetish priest for purification. She undergoes a fine ranging from seven eggs to a fowl. The fine is determined by the condition and circumstance under which the offence was committed.

When the fine is paid, then she is purified. Three leaves of the life plant (Hausa: Kyerepong and Egon Twi) are placed in a plate with water in it. Some leaves of a type of portulaca called "Bosompra adwera" are added and an egg is also added. Then the woman takes off her head-gear and

the portulaca is used in sprinkling some of the water in the plate on her three times while the priest says," I purify you, I purify you, I purify you. If there is any evil man who wishes that some evil influence falls on you, let him be driven far away from you." The woman then dips her mouth three times into the water in the plate. The water with all the leaves in it is then poured away at the entrance of the house. The egg goes to the fetish. If the fine is a fowl, it becomes the property of the priest.

Normal marital intercourse continues according to the feelings of the couple. However it is to be discontinued at the end of the first week of the ninth month. I was told if sexual intercourse is not discontinued at that period or a bit earlier enough before the birth of the child, the seminal fluid condenses and forms a black shiny substance on the child's skin. They say this fluid is hard to wash away after birth but if it is not well washed away, it causes a bad odour on the child and this odour continues to old age. On the other hand if sexual intercourse is discontinued too early or is not at all practised during pregnancy, the uterus contracts and increases labour pains at birth. It is therefore an offence for a man to refuse to have sexual intercourse with his wife. It is equally an offence on the side of the woman if she refuses the approaches of her husband.

Some of the women and men I interviewed hold the view that sexual intercourse is necessary during the first five months of pregnancy for it helps the development of the baby. However there were some of them who held the contrary view. They argued on the grounds that

there are cases when some women's husbands have died just a month or two after their having got pregnant and yet they had given birth to beautifully developed babies.

Every pregnant woman at Abirim is regarded as a woman from the Northern Territories and as such she is given names like "Kaya or Opepeni". We all know that most of the Northern people who come to the South as labourers do not dress in fine and neat clothes. If a pregnant woman is taken to be of the Northern extraction, then the inference in this sense is that she is not to dress in nice and neat clothes. The belief of the people is that there are some bad spirits moving about in this world and they always take away the lives of beautiful women. On the other hand these Spirits do not want to do harm to ugly women. Therefore if a pregnant woman, who is already said to be susceptible to the evil influence of these spirits, dresses herself in beautiful clothes and keeps herself neat, she renders herself a good victim to these bad spirits. Pregnant women are therefore not expected to dress neatly. If they do so they are rebuked.

A pregnant woman is also expected not to be lazy. If she shows any signs of laziness she is condemned. She is expected to do hard work so as to loosen her veins (as they put it) so that the intensity of her labour pains might be reduced and more than that so that she might give birth to strong babies. It is believed that what-ever attitude a pregnant woman develops towards hard work is registered in the child to be born. A woman is therefore to be industrious during this period so that her children will also become very industrious. The pregnant women are therefore commonly seen doing

such hard work as pounding fufu, breaking fire-wood, going to fetch water and grinding maize.

A pregnant woman is also likened to both an old woman and a sick woman. She is said to be weak and easily influenced by evil spirits, witches, medicine men and other external forces. Because of this she is expected to keep in the confines of her own house. She should not expose her belly especially in the presence of strangers lest any of them who might have evil spirits bring harm on her and on the baby. It is said there are some men who can cause the death of babies through the evil influence of their juju when they happen to see the belly or the breasts of a pregnant woman. The woman is not to take her bath in the night otherwise a bad spirit will see her belly, touch it and cause miscarriage or death of the child. When she goes to the market and buys some food, she is not to eat the food in public otherwise some witches will hurt her and the baby through the food. When she buys a new black cooking pot she must touch her belly with it before using it otherwise if the pot touches any part of her body, a black spot will be registered anywhere on the skin of the child. When she goes to work on her farm and she collects some peppers she should not keep them in her cloth just below her navel as other women usually do. If she does so, the baby will develop abnormal number of fingers or toes. This abnormal development of six fingers or toes is a taboo of the first magnitude. In the olden days a child with this abnormality was not allowed to live as it was thought to be a great disgrace to the mother and her family. Nowadays such

people find it hard to get wives and husbands and their companies are shunned to some extent.

As already stated a pregnant woman is to keep to the surroundings of her house and should not make her appearance frequently at public functions. She should not look at nasty and ugly faced animals like the monkeys or the frightful faces and masks as displayed at concerts. If she does so, these ugly faces will be registered on the unborn baby so that it is born with a monkey-like face. It is believed the sight of profuse bleeding as is usually seen in cases of fatal accidents do give rise to emotional shocks in a pregnant woman and such shocks can cause miscarriages. A pregnant woman should not therefore go to places where fatal accidents have occured.

It is the duty of the woman to try to avoid miscarriages as much as she could. To avoid this mishap, she is not to bear any ill feelings against her husband or anybody else. Neither should she ever allow herself to be seduced by another man however strong the temptation may be. If any man makes any love to her she should report to her husband at once otherwise miscarriage will result or that her labour pains will be intensified and she will never give birth to the child safely unless she confesses that such and such a man had made love to her.

It is the man's duty also to do all within his power and to spend all with his pocket to safe-guard the well-being of both the mother and the baby to be born. Some of the men therefore take their wives to the hospital at Koforidua, Larte or Mampong for medical treatment. Some of these men do not take their wives to these hospitals or even to the midwives

at Akropong and Adukroom but they treat them themselves. The pregnant women are given purgatives like castor oil and mist alba to take. It is believed these purgatives wash the impurities from the mother's stomach and the babies' skins so that they can develop healthily. Soup is prepared with twenty seven palmnuts and the leaves of a kind of fern (called (timetime) which grows on the trunks of palm trees and the women drink this soup. I was given the names of several leaves that can also be used but as I cannot find their English equivalents, I choose not to write them here. One interesting thing I noticed is that in counting the number of palmnuts to be used, they never say twenty seven but they always say three times nine. The nuts are counted in groups of three.

Some of the men take their wives to native midwives, fetish priests or priestesses for care and treatment to ensure the well-being of the babies to be born as well as that of the mothers'. I contacted the fetish priests of "Bosompra" and "Ayesu" two of the gods of Abiriw and they gave me accounts of the treatment they give to pregnant women to make them proof against the evil forces of devils, bad spirits and bad medicine men.

The following is an account of what one of them told me. "When a pregnant woman is brought to me, the first thing I do for her is to give her the medicine that will protect her from being harmed through the food she eats. I ask her to bring little bits of all the foods she buys from the market. When these are brought, I break each bit into two, keep one half in a pot and the others in a plate. The woman has to carry this on her head and walk seven



Fig. 3
A pregnant woman receiving treatment from a priest at the annual purification of pregnant women.

times round my house. As she walks, she must pick the bits of food with her left hand and eat them. The food must be finished exactly at the end of the seventh round. When that is done, the remaining bits of food are burnt into black powder to which I add some other black powder. I then make three cuts at her two temples, at the forehead and at all her joints. Some of the black stuff is rubbed into the cuts, some mixed in a tot of Schnapps for her to drink and the rest tied in her belt. This belt she must always wear wherever she goes. On the day she brings forth, the powder in the belt must be added to the water for giving the baby its first wash. This my medicine has the power of rendering a pregnant woman and a new born baby immune against the evil influences of bad spirits, witchcrafts and jujumen. It is called "Akum" (The medicine which renders all other medicines or evil forces powerless.)"

One ceremony I was fortunate to see was the annual sanctification of pregnant women. On the last day of celebrating the annua Ohum" festival, food is cooked for the heathen god of the town. It is on this day that the priest prepares some herbs for sanctifying pregnant women at the house of the god. All pregnant women who are adherents of the god are brought there to be sanctified by the priest. When a woman is brought, she takes off her head-gear and strips herself to the waist. The priest then dips his hands into the herbs and rubs the woman down from the head to the waist passing his hand over the belly three times while he says, "I wash thee. Come down peacefully on your appointed day. Come down to help us run this our state".

These people say that when a pregnant woman goes to the priest and she is washed in the way described, then she has put herself under the protection of the god and that the god will help her to deliver her child safely. Because of this, when this day comes, many pregnant women are seen rushing to the house of this god to be washed.

As previously stated in this chapter, a woman develops a sharp and uncertain temper during pregnancy. Therefore the husband has to exercise a large measure of patience for her behaviour. However serious an offence she may commit, he has no right to stretch his hands on her because a pregnant woman is believed to be a sick person and moreover it is believed that any physical pain inflicted on her is liable to cause deformity of some sort on the unborn child.

When a woman's time of delivery is very much overdue, both husband and wife get alarmed over the situation and several causes are attributed to it. Sometimes it is believed the child is expecting something in the form of a present or pacification from the father or mother for an offence committed. At times it is believed to be caused by some evil influence. In such cases, the woman is taken to the fetish-priest of the god of the town and he takes her through a ceremony called "Afekubi" (string cutting.) They say that in such cases a witch has tied some strings round the woman and therefore she has to be extricated from this spiritual entanglement. The woman wears a small white cloth around her waist and the young leaves of the palm tree (called "mmrenkensono") are tied round her neck and all her joints. After pouring libation in which the town god is called and the whole

situation explained to him, the priest cuts all these leaves with a knife and collects them into a pot of water. The water is then used for washing the woman from head to toe. All the beads, the white cloth and any thing the woman was wearing during this washing are all left behind in the house of the god.

The old woman and herbalist who gave me a lot of the information I needed during my investigation told me she has a way of interpreting the language of unborn babies. and by this means she has helped many women (whose time had been overdue) to give birth very quickly in cases where the delay had been caused by the unborn baby. She told me that in cases like this, she rubs an egg on the pregnant woman's belly and then breaks the egg in a juju pot. When she listens attentively she can hear and interpret the mind or language of the unborn baby.

She told me of an instance when a woman was brought to her and after going through this consultation of her oracle, the child said the father had beaten the mother and that the beating had affected it badly. Because of that it felt shy to come into the world and so if the father was worried and he wanted it to come the father must pacify it with a white fowl and a cutlass. The things were brought. The fowl was killed, cooked and given to the mother to eat and just after three days the child was born. It was blind in one eye. The woman said the boy is still living.

These practices are indulged in by some of the heathens. The christians and some of the heathens go to hospitals or to the midwives at Akropong and Adukrom for treatment in such cases.

CHAPTER 3

BIRTH

The normal period of conception is nine months. The women I contacted during my investigation agreed on the development of the embryo into a child. They told me that during the first three months the embryo is just a clot of blood which increases in size. Between the third and fourth months, the centre of this clot of blood changes into a jelly-like substance and the outside continues to be blood. Between the fourth and sixth months, the baby takes shape for it is then that the different parts are formed so that at the end of the sixth month, if miscarriage occurs, a complete human form can be identified. However it is so weak that it cannot live. During the seventh month, the bones and all parts of the child are strengthened and the eyes open. The native midwives I consulted told me that during the seventh month the child is so well formed and developed that a little more care given to a child born at that period will help it to survive. There was one of these women who told me that she had given birth to two such premature children who are still alive. It is believed that during the eighth month, the child becomes covered with a slimy substance which helps in complete formation of the skin and other external parts. This substance renders the child weaker than it was within the seventh month. Because the child is then very weak, it cannot survive when born. During the ninth month, the substance clears away from the child leaving it stronger and better developed than before. The child is at times felt to give movements during this time.

One habit I noted about expectant mothers at Abiriw is that they usually move away from their husbands home and go to stay with their mothers, grandmothers or their near relatives. They go back to stay with their husbands three months or four after the period of confinement. Husbands who stay in other towns like Koforidua and Accra always send their wives home to stay with their mothers-in-law till they have given birth to children. During my investigation I met two girls who had come down to Abiriw from Kumasi and Takoradi to stay with their mothers till they bring-forth.

The explanation of this custom is that it ensures the mother and the baby are well cared for. A woman is expected to bear labour pains bravely and that she is not to scream or weep excessively. If a woman does not do so it is considered a disgrace. It is also believed that at times some women give birth to freaks or ill developed or deformed babies. When a woman brings forth a child with six fingers or toes or a child which looks more like an animal than human, it is considered a disgrace to the woman and her family. If an expectant woman goes to her mother and during birth any of these above named disgraceful acts happen, they can be kept secret.

When a pregnant woman goes to stay with her mother or grandmother, she begins to prepare against the period of her confinement so that she might not be in need of certain things. She therefore gets a store of firewood ready. When she sees that the time of labour is near she prepares against her confinement. The things in a room are removed, the room is swept and kept neat. Old rags, in many cases old pieces of her own cloth or her husbands cloth, are washed and dried. They are kept for sanitary purposes and

some serve as the child's bedding. It is usually the rags of the father's old cloth that serve as the child's bedding. In the olden days dry plantain fibre called "mposae" was used for the sanitary purposes.

When birth is going to take place, the woman feels pains in the lower part of the abdomen just below the navel. Other pains follow but they differ from individual to individual. Some of the women told me that in their cases they always feel pains in the waist, others say in their thighs and some even say they feel pains in the head. One woman told me that her abdominal pains are always followed by vomitting.

It was explained to me that just before birth takes place, the child turns itself round and points its head towards the mouth of the uterus ready to come out. It is this turning that causes the lower abdominal pains. As the child turns, the sac in which it lies bursts and a sort of slimy fluid flows out. As soon as a woman sees this flow of water she reports at once to her mother who in turn calls in a native widwife in her family. The pregnant woman must stay in the room she has got ready and she must remove anything she is wearing round her waist. Her mother puts water on the fire so that when the child is born there will be hot water ready for washing it.

Rags are then strewn on the ground to form a cushion for the woman to sit on. She leans backwards and her mother stands behind her holding her hands. The midwife also holds her under the arm pits. Another woman may hold her by the two legs to prevent her from moving the legs about. She is not allowed to hold any part of her own body because she is feeling pains. The only part she is allowed to hold is her hair. The belief is that if she holds any part of her body that part of the child's

body will be badly bruised. If the pressure exerted by her hold is very great, it is believed it can even harm the baby.

When everything is ready, the woman is asked to press to help the child to come out. At times the woman is given an empty bottle to blow air into as she would when blowing a trumpet. In cases of excessive pains and prolonged labour, unfaithfulness or some misconduct is suspected on the part of the woman. In such cases the father is brought in to lay his hand on the woman's belly and to address the unborn baby in the words "Adefe mobi, wo enne me le a, yu ase" meaning "if thou art my heir, come down". It is believed the child comes out after this. If however the pains and labour continue and the child still does not come out, it is believed the mother has either allowed herself to be used by another man or that she has a case with her husband and that the child is punishing her for it. To ease her pain, she is asked to confess her sins. It is believed this confession appeases the child and helps it to come out quickly. To help ease the pains and to help the child to come out, the woman is given the leaves of a plant called "Abimmiri" (Kyerepong) to eat. In many cases the child comes out.

In some other cases the midwife tries all she knows and she fails. In such cases a car is hired and the woman is carried on it to the midwife at Akropong or she is taken to the hospital at Koforidua.

Normally a child proceeds with the head first but I was told there are some cases when some children come with their buttocks or their legs or their arm first. In many such cases the children find it very difficult to come out and this results in their death. I was told the worst case is when the child brings out its legs first for in such cases it is hard for the midwife to offer any help.

The result is that both the woman and her child die. One of the native midwives who gave me a lot of the data on this subject told me that in such cases she rubs her hands with the green matter from some herbs and then she pushes the baby gently inwards to let it turn and bring the hedd first. She told me she had saved many children from death in this way.

The most painful period at birth is when the head has already come out and the chest and shoulders, the largest part of the body, follow. The mother has to press the hardest for just a moment and everything would be over for when this part is out, the remaining part of the body follows very easily. I was told that if a woman refuses or fails to press hard when it is the turn of the shoulders to come out and she delays longer than is necessary, the lobes and muscles of the feminine passage contract and thereby press the child. Many children are known to have died through this pressure brought on them through this muscular contraction.

Normally, the placenta comes out immediately after the child is born. When it happens so, the midwife throws a mouthful of water over the child's face to make it cry. She then pushes her fore-finger into its mouth and removes some phlegm from it. If the baby cries, then it means it is alive so the navel cord is cut to separate the child from the placenta and the remaining part of the navel cord. The navel cord is tied with the fibre got from the young leaves of the raffia palm before it is cut. A length of about two inches of the navel chord is left attached to the child's navel. The chin of the child is then touched three times with the lower end of the navel chord where it is joined to the placenta. The child is talked to in the words; "Adefe behu ese pee ne akẽ" which mean "A royal is reserved, he does not let

out secrets". It is believed if a child is not treated like that he grows to be the sort of person who is not able to keep secrets secret.

If the child does not cry when the midwife pours water over its face and pushes her finger into its mouth, she gets alarmed and she rubs pepper into the child's palms and soles of the feet. A bit of snuff is then rubbed into its nostrils to induce it to sneeze. If after all these the child does not cry then it means it is dead. It is then wrapped together with the placenta in a rag and is buried not at the cemetery but in the dunghill.

In some cases as I was told, the placenta does not come out after the child is born. In such cases the navel card is cut to separate the child from the placenta. The end of it is then tied with a string to a piece of stick to prevent it from drawing inwards. The placenta must be induced to come out very quickly otherwise it will become poisonous and kill the woman in a very short time. Quick action on the part of the midwife is therefore necessary. A palm kernel is put on the woman's left shoulder. She picks it up with her lips and chews it. While chewing it, the back of her waist just above the buttocks is struck three times with a half pair of sandals.

If it fails to come out, the green juice of the leaves of a herb called "Nyinya" (Twi and Kyerepong) is dropped into her mouth and she is given an empty bottle to blow air into. This blowing of air into the bottle causes the muscles of the stomach to contract and thereby try to press and force the placenta out. If all these fail to help the placenta to come out, the woman dies.

When everything is alright with the mother as well as the child, the midwife quickly gives the child inspection. She examines the child's fingers, toes, eyes and the

Fig. 4.

Washing a four-day old baby.



Stage "A". The head is washed first



Stage "B". The child is turned and washing continues.



Stage "C". The child is turned again and its back washed.

arms to see if there is no abnormality about any of these parts. I was told that in the olden days if a child had six fingers on one hand or six toes on one foot, it was left to die in a pan of water. It was put in face downwards and was told not to come back again with such abnormality. Nowadays the extra fingers or toes are cut off and the child is made to live. This development of six fingers called "Nsansia" is a taboo at Abiriw and many people refuse to move together with persons who are known to have this abnormality. Some of these people find it hard to get wives or husbands. The people say that if a man marries a woman with this abnormal development of six fingers, ill-luck follows him always.

When a child is normal, it is given its first wash. It is always a hot water bath and is done in the room. The midwife who does the washing sits on a low chair and stretches her legs. A big pan to receive the used water is placed below her legs. The woman puts the child on her lap with the child's body across her lap. The child is supported at the back of the neck by the woman's left hand. (Fig. 4 A)

The head is first washed with soap and sponge (washing fibre) and is then rubbed dry with a towel. The child is then turned so that its feet point towards the woman's feet and washing continues from the neck to the arms, the trunk and finally to the feet. The child is washed thoroughly in this way twice. The woman pays special attention to the folds of skin at the joints and below the chin. The child is then turned face downwards and its two arms are bent backwards. The elbows and the knees and all other joints are gently pressed with a moderately hot water towel. The child is then rubbed dry with another towel which is dry.

The towel and sponge used for washing the new baby must be quite new ones which have never been used. When the baby has been rubbed dry, it is smeared with red-clay or shea-butter to give smoothness to the skin.

While the baby is being washed, the room is kept clean. Traces of blood on the floor are covered with dust and then swept. The rags on which the child was received are removed, washed and hung up to dry. The mother sits on the floor with her legs stretched in front of her in long-sitting position or she lies down on a mat to rest. She is not allowed to stand up and walk about within the first thirty minutes. If she is still bleeding, she is given some herbs to chew to stop her from bleeding. When she is alright she goes to take her bath and comes back quickly to receive her child.

When the mother is ready, she sits down and her baby is presented to her. The baby is held gently and put on the mother's laps three times. The mother is told," Take your baby, take your baby, a mother does not run away from her baby." The mother then receives her baby and covers it with her cloth.

The grandmother of the baby then spreads a mat on the floor and prepares a bed of rags for the baby to sleep on. A headkerchief folded into a round pad serves as the baby's pillow. The baby is then put to bed. There is a kind of disease called "Asram" which is believed to be transmitted to new born babies by some evil people through their look. It is because of the fear for the transmission of such a disease that all the dressing of the baby is done indoors and in camera. To preserve the baby and render it immune against such evil forces, some cuts are made at the baby's wrists, shoulders, chest, forehead and the temples and black powder is rubbed in. This black powder was in many cases given by a medicine man from whom the mother received treatment during

pregnancy.

Sometimes a leaf of the sensitive plant called "Have" and "Egoro" (Kyerepong and Twi respectively) is put in a small plate with water in it and a ball of red-earth (Ntwoma) is added. This is left on the floor just above where the head of the baby is. This is believed to drive away evil spirits and evil forces.

A baby who is less than eight days old is regarded as a visitor who is very susceptible to the influence of bad spirits. Because of this, it is not brought outside but is kept indoors till it is eight days old. During that period outsiders are not allowed to see it. If any outsider hears of the birth of the child and he comes to congratulate the mother, he only stands at the door and says "Wo wu nkpɛ̃ oo" (meaning literally "long life to your head") The only people who are permitted to enter the room to congratulate the mother and to welcome the baby are the near relatives of the parents of the baby. As already stated a new born baby is considered a visitor so people who come to see it hold its right hand and say "Akwaaba, woaba tra ase" (Welcome! if you have come stay with us)

As a pregnant woman was regarded as a sick person so is she regarded after she has given birth to a baby. It is believed that her belly, especially where the baby was lying, is badly inflamed. The lobes of the vagina also get inflamed and bruised due to the muscular expansion effected by the out-coming of the baby. Because of this the mother is not allowed to do anything for a long time after birth. She keeps indoors and is fed and given medical treatment. The women say that the most painful part of childbearing is the medical treatment given after birth. Once every day, the mother is subjected to hot water fomentation. Hot steaming water is poured into a chamber pot or a bucket and she has to sit on it and allow

her genital organ to be well heated by the hot vapour rising from the hot water. This treatment lasts for say ten minutes every day. After this ground ginger and black pepper mixed with little water is then applied to the genital. Some of it is made into a round ball which is pushed into the anus. At times the ground ginger and black pepper is mixed with water and then is syringed into the anus. This treatment continues to be given every day for a week after which it is given twice weekly for about three weeks more.

For about a month or more the woman continues to take daily doses of boiled bark of a plant called "Onyamedua". It is believed that this medicine heals the inflamations in the womb very quickly. In addition to this the woman is given a lot of palmnut soup with a lot of green leaves in it to drink. The leaves of the sugar Cane are used as such. Other leaves that are used are "Toantin, Ntommɛ" and the leaves of the pine-apple.

The mother of the baby is fed on plantain fufu and palmnut soup two times daily. Her friends and relatives come to help in the preparation of the fufu These friends fetch water for her every day and they also bring her lots of presents. These presents are usually firewood and foodstuffs like cocoyams, plantain, yams and other articles like tomatoes, garden eggs and onions.

On the eighth day the child is out-doored and named. The naming of a child form the subject matter for the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

CHILD NAMING CEREMONY

As the custom is with the people of Abiriw it is the father of a child who determines what name is to be given to the child. A child is usually named after its grandmother, grandfather and their real sisters and brothers. That is, if you had your first born and it is a boy it is to be named after your father but if it is a girl it is to be named after your mother. It is when children have been named after your mother and father that you name children after your paternal and maternal uncles and aunts. Apart from these people a man has the right to name his children after any of his benefactors in life.

When a man has had many children with his wife, the woman has the privilege of asking the husband to give her one of the new-born babies to be named after either her mother or father. This the man can allow or refuse for no law or custom compels him to do so.

The people of Abiriw say that the soul of a child exists long before it enters into a woman's womb to be born. While existing in this spiritual world, every soul selects one of the week days as its favourite day and takes that day as its name. Every soul has therefore a name long before it is born. This name is called "Okra nyɛ" (the name of the Soul) and the day this name represents is called "Okra nkyɛ" (the day of the Soul). The soul of every child selects for its birth into the world the day the name of which it bears. Every child is therefore born with its first name. Each week day name has its masculine and feminine forms. Each masculine form has its own appellation which characterises the nature of the character of men born on those days. The following table gives the names of the days of the

week, the soul names for boys and girls and the appellation for the masculine names.

Name of week-days	Name of boy	Appellation	Name of girl
Dudu (Monday)	Kwadwo	Okoto (A Mediator)	Adwoa
Soro (Tuesday)	Kwabena	Ogyam (Tale Teller)	Abena
Kpɔro (Wednesday)	Kwaku	Odaaku	Akua
Isu (Thursday)	Yao	Preko (Anxious fighter)	Yaa
Ibiru (Friday)	Kofi	Okyin (The wanderer)	Afua
Hwɛ (Saturday)	Kwame	Atoapoma (The Gunner)	Amma
Yinkyi (Sunday	Kwasi	Bodua (Magic Stick)	Akosua

The naming ceremony which this chapter deals with does not concern any of the above names but the second name the father gives on the eighth day. The eighth day of a child's existence is one of the important days in its life because from that day onwards it is no longer considered as a visitor but as a person.

The child's mother is notified of the naming ceremony on the previous evening. Early the next morning, she washes the baby and besmears it with white clay and puts it to bed. The mother also dresses herself beautifully and waits for the sisters of her husband, for it is these sisters in-law who perform this naming ceremony.

The father tells her sisters the name he has decided to be given to the child. These sisters dress themselves beautifully and gather the presents to be taken to the child and its mother into pans, cover them with table-cloths and carry them to the wife's house. These presents usually consist of two yards of cloth (ntama), a mat, a pillow and its cover, a bucket, a towel and sponge, a bar of soap, a comb, a tin of powder, a tin of pomade, a tea-cup with a saucer, a tea spoon and six or more changes of babys' dresses. An amount of four shillings is added to these to serve as the stamp to the child's

name. Two headloads of cocoyam and plantain, three or more changes of women's "ntama" and an amount of money ranging between four pounds and twenty pounds is also added. In some cases the husbands rather prefer to give an amount of say fifteen pounds so that the wife could buy whatever things she thinks are needed by herself and the child.

When the man's sisters get to the wife's house they tell the wife and her relatives who are already gathered in the house that they have been sent to come and name the child. One of them takes the child on her lap and says to the child, "You are eight days old today and we are accepting you into our relations today. Your father says your name is "Gyebi" (or whatever the name may be). He has named you after his own father. We want you to grow up following the steps of your grandfather Gyebi whom you have been named after today. Grow up to see all of us alive so that you may fetch water for us. Your father has therefore asked us to present all these things to you". The mat is spread on the ground and all the different articles are displayed on it and shown to the child. One of the dresses is put on the child. The mothers articles are also given to her. She and her relatives then thank the sisters-in-law who brought the presents.

If the child's grandparent whom it has been named after is living, then the child is taken to his house. This grandparent who had been previously informed of the ceremony sits in his yard with his relatives or friends waiting for the child. The child is presented to the grandparent who receives it with hearty embraces. Then he sits the child on his lap and spits three times into the child's hair at the crown of the head. As he does so he says "Deento, Deenkye" meaning grow up to my age, grow to

outlive me. After this is done the grandparent pours libation to his deceased relatives and ancestors and the gods of Abiriw asking for long life, prosperity and fertility for the child and for those there assembled. After this he presents either a precious bead or money to the child. This money may be anything more than four shillings. Other relatives also give similar presents. When the child is taken home, other relatives and friends pour into the house to look at the baby and to give it presents. It is only on this day that the child is brought out for all to look at. From this day onwards, the child is then carried at the back.

Either in the evening or early the next morning, the wife, her relatives and friends dress themselves neatly and go to the husband's house to thank him for the gifts. Likewise the god father goes to thank the father for the honour done him.

Abamme Ceremony:

This is the ceremony observed for twins before they are named as any ordinary children. Twins are said to be gods and as gods they have super-natural powers. The twin-god is called Abamme meaning "joined". Because this twin-god is worshipped only on Fridays it is called Kofi Abamme. It is believed if this Abamme which is the spirit of the twins is defiled, it results in bringing ill-health or even death to the children or even to the parents. Because of these reasons when twins are born they are treated with the greatest reverence and are even worshipped.

As a sign of respect and welcome to the Spirit of these twins, two white fowls are sacrificed to this spirit called Kofi Abamme on the first Friday after the birth of the twins. This sacrifice is done early in the morning.

Water is poured into a white pan and the



Fig. 5
A mother with her twin babies.

leaves of some plants called "Abimmiri, hare timetim akyeawa and nyinya" are put into the water. These leaves are pressed and wrenched till the water is coloured green with them. Two eggs and a ball of white clay are added. After the two white fowls have been presented to the children, the fowls are killed and some of their blood is sprinkled on the water in the white pan.

When this is finished, the twins are washed together with the contents of the pan. While washing them, the person doing the washing says," Kofi Abamme mebie ene oo, mebie ene! Abamme begyi no ni ɛba tɛ, Abamme begyi no se adaka tɛ. Abamme gyi kene kwantɛ, gyi idi kwantɛ. Abamme mebie ene oo, mebie ene!" This simply means "Ye gods of Kofi Abamme, I sanctify thee. We pray to thee and ask thee not to waste thou the properties of thine mother and neither should ye feed on the treasures in thine father's box. I command thee to eat from the tops of the silk-cotton and Odum trees."

This incantation shows that the people believe that the twins can bring harm or poverty to their parents and they are therefore prayed to not to do any such harm.

The twins are then rubbed dry and marked at the forehead and the temples with white clay. They are then clad in white calico and given to the mother who is also clad white.

Cooked yam is marshed and half of it is coloured red with palm oil. This marshed yam (Ɛtɔ) is sprinkled all over the yard calling upon the gods and the deceased relatives to come and eat. A bit of this marshed yam is left in a small plate with two boiled eggs in it and this is put near the children's bed till it is late in the evening when the parents eat the eggs and throw the marshed yam away. This Abamme ceremony is

observed every year before the twins are allowed to eat the new harvested yam of the year. It is repeated yearly till the twins are about seven to ten years old when it is discontinued.

The "Ɔkɔbaa" Ceremony:

When three or more previous issues of a married couple have all died successively, any other child born is called "Ɔkɔbaa" (the child who has returned). The people of Abiriw say that when such successive deaths occur, it is usually the same child who reincarnates and dies with the view purposely to grieve its parents. They say when such a baby is treated kindly it continues with this cruel torture to its parents. To punish such a child and to stop it from this evil practice it is treated differently and very cruelly when it is born.

Until such a child is eight days old it is not allowed to sleep on cloth but its bed is made of dry plantain fibre (mposaa) and its towel is made of the same plantain fibre beaten soft and called "Ɔbosaa". It is neither powdered nor smeared with shea-butter when it has been washed. Its hair is not combed and when it cries, the mother replies to its cries very reluctantly. As part of this treatment, the child is given such mean names like "Donko, (a slave) Mposaa, (plantain fibre) Kayakaya, Mosi, Wangara and Pepe (all of them nicknames of peoples of the Northern Territories). All these are done to show the child that the parents do not care what happens to it and that it is an unwanted child. They say when the child realises that, it decides then to be a burden to the parents and therefore refuses to die and go back.

The most cruel treatment is meted out to the child on the eighth day when it is named. A kind of basket which the Twis call "Bede"

and which the Kyerepongs call "Abare" is woven with the leaves of the palm tree. The inside of it is covered with dry plantain fibre (mposae) and then into this basket the child is put. One man then draws the basket on the ground for a few yards and then carries it on his head. While doing this he shouts out saying "Who will buy this nasty child? Who will buy this nasty child?" Another man standing by agrees to buy it at any price not exceeding a half-penny. He gives the money to the buyer and takes the child. It is this part of the ceremony that gives such children the nickname "Dɔnkɔ" (a slave)

The supposed purchaser of the child then uses a sharp knife for making cuts on the child's face near the two edges of the lips and at the temples near the edges of the opening of the eyes. The child is then handed over to its mother and the naming ceremony is carried on as for any ordinary child.

After this ceremony the child is allowed to sleep on rags and is treated kindly as any ordinary child except that the hair is not cut. It is twisted here and there and queer things like farthings, half-pennies and cowries are hung in the child's hair. All these things are removed when the child is about nine years old or a bit earlier than that if he goes to School or if he is baptised into a christian church.



Fig. 6.
The mother brings her feet together, the child sits on them and is taught to eliminate.
(Age: 8 months)

CHAPTER 5

ELIMINATION AND WASHING.

Toilet Training:

The first time a baby is washed after its birth, some warm water is dropped gently into its anus to produce a sort of sensation which helps the child to go to latrine. This first latrine which is slimy and greenish in colour is called "Nkyema bin" (the faeces of the ghost.) It is said that this latrine must be removed from the child's intestines otherwise its presence in the intestines gives rise to stomach troubles.

Whenever the child is carried on the lap or is put to bed, clean rags are placed under the child to collect its faeces and urine. After the first week when the child has been named, a string of small beads is banded loosely round the child's waist. A piece of rag is wound round this string of beads both at the front and at the back so that the rag passes between the two thighs. This forms a kind of napkin which collects the child's faeces so that it does not soil its mother or people who carry it. This piece of cloth is removed and washed any time it is soiled and a new one is put in its place.

After the first three months when the child has been given its first lesson in sitting, the child is taught not to soil its napkin, bedding or anybody who may be carrying it. When the mother feels that the child wants to go to latrine, she brings her feet together leaving a small gap between them. This forms a kind of stool on which the child is seated for its toilet. Some of these women use chamber pots on which the child sits for its toilet.

One perculiar thing I saw was that from birth until the child is about six months old, the childs' faeces are collected with rags, paper or dry plantain fibre (mposae) The faeces are not to be touched with

a broom; neither should they be thrown into a pit latrine. They are taken to the dunghill or they are thrown away into the bush. It was explained to me that if the latrine is swept with a broom or if it is thrown away into a pit-latrine, the baby constipates.

When the baby is between twelve and eighteen months old, it is shown a spot in the yard and it is there that it goes to latrine. It is taught how to squat for its toilet. It is the mother who dresses the child after it has had its toilet. It is at this time and thereafter that the child's latrine is swept with a broom and is also thrown away into the pit latrine. Later when the child is about three, another spot outside the house is selected for the child to use. Children are not allowed to go to latrine anywhere near the house when they are five years old. They are conducted to the public latrine or if there is a private latrine where they are taught the correct way of squating on the latrine. They are taught not to touch the pieces of rags and paper used by other people. They are taught to use their left hands for holding the toilet paper when using it. When a child has mastered all these lessons, then toilet training is supposed to be over.

The women at Abiriw are always very particular about the health of their children. They are very clever at detecting any signs of ill-health. Before a mother sweeps away the faeces of her child, she looks at it very carefully and takes note of the quality and quantity of it. She also looks for signs of worm diseases as well as traces of blood and slime. Any signs of illness detected are reported to the husband. As a cure, the child is given enema with some herbs ground and mixed with water. On certain occasions too, ginger is ground into a soft paste and is pushed into the child's anus. In addition to this treatment, some other herbs are boiled and given to

the child to drink. I was told the bark of a plant called "Onyame dua" (God's tree) when boiled and given to children to drink, cures them of stomach troubles and worm diseases.

As the habit is, a mother usually carries her young baby on her lap when eating. It happens sometimes that the child soils the food with its latrine or urine. If it happens so, the soiled part of the food is removed and thrown away while the rest is eaten. It is interesting to see how the facial expressions of the people especially the adolescents who are partaking of the food, show that they are disgusted with the food. In spite of this feeling, the people have to continue eating the food for it is believed that if they refuse eating the food, the child takes it to mean that it is not wanted in the house. It therefore takes offence and dies as a result of this feeling.

Elimination :-

Training in elimination begins usually when a child is about a month old. However there are some mothers who start with this training from the day the child is born. Before a mother puts her baby to bed or before she carries the baby at her back, she holds up the child and says "Szz Szz". This hissing sound is the child language for elimination. This sound is repeated daily till the child associates it with passing water. When the child has learnt this lesson it stops wetting its bed and people who carry it. Some mothers use chamber pots for giving their children this training in elimination. In the night too, these mothers wake up and continue with this training in elimination so that the children learn not to wet their beds at night.

Normally a child is expected to stop wetting its bed at night before it is four years old. If a child wets its bed during this period it is not considered a disgrace but after four years, it is. Whenever he

wets his bed, he is laughed at by his brothers and sisters as well as his mother. To help the child, he is not allowed to eat any food or drink any water late in the evening. The mother continues to wake the child up at night. If after all these the child continues to wet its bed, pepper or ground ginger is pushed into the anus any time it wets its bed. The pepper and ginger can also be mixed with water and given as enema.

If a child continues to wet his bed after he is six or seven it is considered a very disgraceful act. The other children in the house are allowed to hoot at him when he commits the act. Occasionally these children are permitted to treat this child harshly. The child who wets his bed at night is caught and stripped bare on a cold morning. A string of snail shells is put round his waist and he is forced to carry his wet bedding and march round the house while the other children follow him singing and clapping their hands. The words of one popular song the children usually sing say: "Tsolo beyi wo kete tsolo. Ade akye oo, tsolo." (You who wet your bed, remove your mat. It is day time.)

I was told in extreme cases and when the parents think that the child wets his bed because he feels so lazy that he does not rise up to pass water at night, the parents allow the child to be subjected to a very bitter experience. The child's mat is strewn with some leaves which cause irritations when they touch the skin. The child is stripped bare and then is wrapped tightly in this mat. Water is poured on him before he is set free. As the child scratches himself and wriggles his body as a result of the severe irritation he is suffering from, all the other children stand by hooting at him. This practice is now dying out as only very few parents do allow their children to be treated in this way.

There are some parents who when they see that



Fig. 7
Dressing the baby's head with a hot-water towel.
(Age : 10 days)

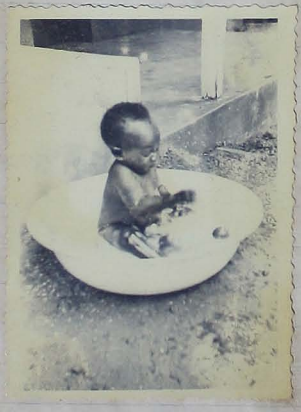


Fig. 8
The child is left to play in a pan of water.
(Age : 11½ months)

their child is so old that he should not wet his bed at night, suspect that there is something wrong with the child's bladder. Such cases are taken to the hospital at either Mampong, Larte or Koforidua for treatment.

WASHING:

As touched upon in chapter 3, a baby is washed within the first thirty minutes after its birth. From that day onwards, the child is washed twice daily with warm water. It is the head that receives the greatest attention during the morning wash every day. The women say a baby's head is soft at the early part of its existence. The bones of the head are not well joined together for they have gaps in between their joints. Because of these two reasons the head is subject to deformation if it is not well treated. The head is therefore given hot water treatment every morning before the child is washed. It is gently pressed in a piece of soft flannel or towel dipped into hot water. This hot water treatment as it is said, hardens the bones, joins them together properly and thereby helps the head to take the proper shape. This treatment continues to be given until the fontanelle at the top of the head heals up.

After dressing the head in this way, then the navel is attended to. It is given warm water dressing. A small hole is perforated at the bottom of a cigarette tin or any other small tin. Warm water is poured into the tin and as the water drops through the hole the drops are allowed to fall on the navel. This treatment is repeated daily till the sore in the navel is completely healed. It is after this that the child is given its normal daily wash every morning.

It is known that children like to splash water on themselves when they are about eight months old or more. When the weather is very warm during the middle of the day, some mothers place their children in shallow pans filled with water so that they

Fig. 9.
The child receives training in self-washing.



Stage "A"
The child learns to wash himself.



Stage "B".
The mother helps by giving the final wash.
(Age : 5 years)

would splash the water over themselves. This the children do with great satisfaction. This is the beginning of training the child to wash itself.

The child begins to receive formal training in washing itself when it is four and a half or five years old. The mother places a bucket of water somewhere near her in the yard and then asks the child to wash himself. A child of this age always washes his head, his chest and his abdom The mother points out to him which parts also need washing. Later on the mother jumps in and gives the child a full wash.

Before rubbing the child dry, if she is a gi the mother rubs her left forefinger through the girl's vagina and adds a bit of water to help clean that part. This is repeated any time the girl is wash so that the girl also learns how to pay attention to this part when washing.

When the girl is about eight years old she begins to feel shy in performance this function in the presen of people in the house so she takes to having her wash always in the bathroom. Very often she takes h bath at the same time as her mother is taking hers It is here that the mother criticises and corrects performances in washing the loin cloth and the genita Apart from this the girl learns all her lessons about washing and even about menstruation through silent imitation of what she sees her mother doing.



Fig. 10
A mother giving milk to her child.
(Age : 7 months)

CHAPTER 6

FEEDING AND NURSING.

The greatest service a woman of Abiriw thinks she can render to a man is to bear a child or children with him and to be able to care properly for the children. It is with the greatest pleasure that these women undertake the task of feeding and nursing the children they bring forth. It is true that the nursing and feeding of a child tells a lot on the general health and outward appearance of a woman yet these women do not worry an inch about it. They say "ɔbaatan" (a woman with a baby) means "ɔbɛa tantan" (a nasty or dirty woman) They mean to say that the nursing and feeding of a child makes a woman dirty and nasty yet these are the marks of a good mother.

As already stated under the chapter of birth, a baby is presented to its mother immediately after receiving its first wash. The mother covers it up with clean clothes to prevent it from catching cold. She then puts the child across her lap so that its head faces one of her breasts. If the head is facing the left breast, then the left hand is placed below the child's head to give the child a somewhat leaning position. The teat of the breast is then put into its mouth and to help it to suck with ease, the mother gently presses the breast with the other hand. This helps the milk to ooze out freely. After a few minutes the child is turned and given the other breast to suck. The women say that the two breasts must be equally sucked otherwise the one that is least sucked gets swollen with milk and causes pain to the mother.

When the baby stops sucking efforts are made to induce it to take more by pushing the teat into its mouth when it has left it. At times this goes on till the baby vomits part of it

It is then taken that it has had its fill. Usually the mother looks at the child's belly and when she sees that it has sufficiently bulged out, she says it has had its fill. She puts the baby down to rest or sleep on a bed of clean old cloth. There are no regular times for feeding the baby. It is fed when it begins to cry or when the mother feels a long time has passed since it was last fed and therefore it might be feeling hungry.

If it happens that a woman has no milk in her breasts on the day a child is born, the child is fed on water with a bit of sugar in it. The middle finger is dipped into water and is then allowed to drop gently into the child's mouth. If a woman relative who has milk in her breast is available, she feeds the baby till the mother gets milk in her breasts.

In order to help the mother to get milk in her breasts, she is given kernel nuts or fried maize to chew. These are put on the left shoulder and the woman picks them up with her lips without holding them with her hands. In addition to this treatment, she is given palmnut soup to eat. The leaves of a plant called "Akyeawa" (Kyerepong) are boiled and added to this soup while it is being prepared. This treatment succeeds in helping the mother in getting milk in her breasts, if not on the first day on the second day.

Liquid foods:

The mothers I interviewed told me that from the fifth month or so onwards, breast milk does not fully satisfy the child because it is then very light for its stomach. Liquid food is therefore introduced. Light soup (called "Nkita") is dropped into the child's mouth and when it cries because of the pepper in it, it is given the breast to suck. It is after this giving of soup to taste that other liquid foods are given. Porridge is the food that

is given continually as a supplement to breast milk after the child has tasted soup. The porridge is mixed with water to make it very light. A little bit of sugar is added. It is believed too much sugar causes inflamations in the child's stomach and that is why much of it is not added. The baby is fed on this pap with a small spoon which is usually one of the things presented to it on the day it was named.

Solid Foods:-

It is after a child has cut teeth that solid foods are introduced. Marshed cocoyam, plantain or yam with palm oil is often the first solid food given. The mother presses a bit of this food in between her fingers and her palm and then puts it into her baby's mouth bit by bit. When the child refuses to take more because it has had its fill the mother tries to coax it to take more. When she is satisfied that the child has had its fill, it is given water to drink and then breast milk is added as dessert.

I was told another very good food is marshed cocoyam leaves with palm oil and salt. This food is called "Kontomire akora" and is served with a spoon. The child sits on its mothers laps when it is fed.

The women of Abiriw say that the introduction of solid food has some ill effects on the health of a child, but this differs from one child to another. Therefore when a mother begins to give solid foods to her child, she has to keep keen eyes on the childs health and to note any ill-effects caused because of a kind of food eaten. Such foods should no longer be given to the child.

Teething:-

Normally the average child cuts its teeth when it is five or six months old. The general health of the child is affected by teething. The temperature rises and the child feels very feverish for

a day or two. There is also a mild attack of diarrhoea. When a mother detects (through looking at the teeth-ridge) that the change in the child's health is due to teething, she gives it medicine to drink to reduce the effects. The leaves of a leguminous plant called "Nyinebi nyinebi obuwodwo" (Children's plantain) are boiled and the child is given doses of it daily. This medicine is said to keep the bowels open so that the child is free from the evil effects of teething. It is said that when a child constipates during this period, it is rendered very susceptible to the attacks of convulsion.

When a baby cuts its first teeth, they are not called teeth (enyi) but they are called "ebui" (stones) The teeth are not to be mentioned and so anybody who mentions them has to give the child an egg. The egg is boiled and a little bit of the yolk is put into the child mouth to eat while a bit is pressed against the child's forehead for its soul to eat. The rest of the egg is then given to the children in the house to eat.

WEANING.

There is no specified age for the weaning of a child at Abiriw. It is done according to the convenience of the mother but especially when a new baby is expected. It is believed that when a woman is pregnant, the milk in her breast changes in quality and this change makes it unsuitable for the consumption of the child. A mother must be very careful of when to wean her child for if weaning is done too early and the child is not well fed on other nutritious foods, inflamations can occur in the child's stomach and kill the child. When it happens so, the women say "breast milk has made sores in the child's stomach" ("Ahote ntsa ne ku moame te aloe")

If weaning is done because a mother is pregnant then it is effected abruptly. Bitter

herbs (or quinine) are rubbed on the teats so that when the child sucks and tastes the bitter herbs it gives up sucking. Some of the women frighten the child with stories of some ghosts (akyema') who will catch the child if it went on sucking. One woman told me she had always weaned her children by frightening them. She said, "I always skip continuously allowing my breasts to slap my chest. Then I draw the child's attention to the breasts and then I tell it that if it ever asked for the breast to suck, it would be caught by a ghost (akyema) After this the child never asks for the breast. I wean all my children when they are between two and three years."

Some of the mothers wean their children gradually. In such cases the woman stops giving the child the breast to suck during the day but she does in the night to stop it from crying. The breast is given during the day as a pacifier when the child is crying as a result of hurting itself, or falling down or when something is removed from it and it is crying. As the child advances in age, the mother begins to pacify it by other ways instead of using the breast. To pacify the child it is sometimes given food or it is carried at the mother's back and usually it stops crying. The breast is given very sparringly until it is withdrawn entirely. This may take a month to complete.

Self-feeding and Table manners:-

A child is given lessons in feeding itself as soon as solid foods have started to be given it. When the child is crying, the mother gives it a lump of food to eat. The food is always put into the right hand and when the child changes into the left hand it is taken away and put again into the right hand.

At certain times when the mother is very busy

dish purposely bought for the child and it is encouraged to eat from the dish. Sometimes, the child's older sister or brother is asked to feed him. This is done near the mother so that she can direct the older child as to when to give the child water to drink. Or if the older child is pushing too much food into the child's mother she or he is corrected at once.

When the child is about three years old when it can feed itself, then it learns to eat with its elder brothers and sisters. It is here that the child receives much training in table manners. The child is taught to wash his hands before and after meals. He is taught not to talk at meals, to sit up straight at meals and not to touch the ground with the left hand when eating otherwise, they say, the food will pass through the hand into the ground instead of entering the stomach. He is taught to break his food into small bits and to take his time to chew the food properly before swallowing and to shut the lips when masticating so that the chewed food is not seen by other persons with whom he is eating. All these lessons are given by the mother who sits nearby eating her food and at the same time divides her attention between giving the child his lessons in table manners and her own food. At times the older children correct and teach the younger child when he does the wrong thing. If the child refuses to take this correction, the older children report at once to the mother who advises him on the correct thing to do.

It is at this time that the child is at times bribed with food or meat. When a child refuses to eat the food given to him and his brothers, or when he refuses to accept the correction of his older brothers, the mother asks him to eat the food or accept the correction and then come for a piece of meat or



Fig. 11
Self-feeding. The boys eat their food together.

to be done for her, for example if she wants some water to drink, she is heard telling her child, "Give me a calabashful of water to drink and come for a piece of meat."

I saw during my investigation too that some of the mothers use food as a means of gaining good discipline. I was in a house when a boy of about four and a half took a sharp knife and started cutting a plantain peeling into pieces with it. The mother, thinking the child would hurt himself with it, asked him to stop playing with the knife. The boy refused and continued with his carving. The mother said, "Kwadwo, if you don't stop I will not give you any meat to eat when I am eating my fufu today." The child threw the knife away saying "After all your knife is a dirty one".

One thing I saw is that when the children are about six years old, they are separated so that the boys eat together in one group and the girls too eat together in another group. I was told the boys eat much quicker than the girls and so if they ate together the girls would get very little food to eat. The mothers do still continue giving instructions and corrections in table manners. If he begins to form the habit of over-eating or if he is becoming a glutton, he is rebuked and is nicknamed "Aggyiho" (a glutton.) This is meant to correct the child.

At this age, it is the boy's duty to serve the father with water when he is going to eat. It is also his duty to remove the dishes in which the father ate, to remove and wash the table on which the father ate.

When a girl is about fourteen or fifteen when she had had her first menses, she is considered matured and she joins her mother and the other women in eating together from the same dish. The boy is also given the privilege of dining with the father. However there are some fathers at Abirim

who never dine with their sons and their reaso
is that when a father dines together with his
son, the son loses some of the respect he has
for his father.

CHAPTER 7

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

One of the signs of life in a new born baby is that it can move its arms and legs. Before the child is a week old, it can throw its arms about. As it does so, it stretches and clenches its fingers. It can move its hand to its face and can even suck its fingers. When you put your finger into its hand, it can grasp it. Apart from moving the arms it can also move its legs by kicking the air. Kicking becomes more vigorous as the child advances in days, weeks and months. When you make the child stand up when carrying it, it stretches its legs and makes you think it is trying to jump. I was told a young child must not be made to stand up for a long time otherwise breast-milk collects at its feet thereby causing swollen feet. More than this, as the bones are not yet rigid, but very pliant, they bend and cause bow leggedness

A young child who is less than a month old cannot balance its head on its neck because of the softness of the neck. The neck gets stronger and stronger as the child grows. After about five weeks the neck becomes strong enough to bear the head. When a child is six or seven weeks old and yet it cannot hold up its head because the neck is still weak the mother bands round the neck very loosely a string of white small beads which they call "Nhuuwa". The people say that the beads help to strengthe the neck.

Carrying:-

A child is first carried at the back when it is eight days old. When it is carried at the back, the two arms are all kept in the cloth with which it is carried and are not allowed to show out till the child is three months old when only one arm is allowed

Fig. 12.
Stages of carrying the child.



'A'
Not matured. The 2 arms are in cloth.
(Age : 10days)



"B"
Not quite matured so only one arm shows out.
(Age : 4months)



"C". Quite matured now so the two arms show out.
(Age : 12 months)



"D" The father also carries the child.

to show. The arms are shown out alternately till the child is about five or six months old when it is considered matured for its two arms to show out from the cloth when it is carried at the back.

The child is not allowed to be carried by the young girls who are under eight till it is more than a month old because they are said to be inexperienced in carrying such young babies. At times they handle the child wrongly and make it fall ill. The child is therefore carried by its mother grandmother, father and the older girls in the house. Usually the boys do not take part in carrying the baby except when no other person is available and the mother is busy doing something when for a few minutes the child is given to the boy to carry. Or when the child is crying and yet the mother is so busy that she cannot stop what she is doing and pacify the child, she gives the child to the boy who walks about with it as a means of pacifying it.

Relatives and friends who come to the parents' house on visits are also allowed to carry the child. Some of them, especially the women, go to the extent of carrying the child to their homes and bringing him back later on. The saying, "Bako betsu ayirebi" meaning "the mother should not carry her child all alone", signifies that the child should not be carried by its mother only. The father also carries the child.

Sitting and crawling:

When a baby boy is two months old, it is taught how to sit by itself. A girl is taught when she is three months old. The reason for this difference, as explained to me, is that girls are generally weaker than boys when they are young. The first lesson in sitting is always given by a relative who walked very early in his infancy. The reason is, so that the child will copy the person and walk early too.

This lesson is given early in the morning

Fig. 13



The child learns to sit.
(Age : 2½ months)

Fig. 14 'Stages of Crawling.



"A" The child is induced to crawl.
(Age : 6 months)



'B'
The child crawls on its hands and knees.
(Age : 9 months)



The child crawls on all fours.
(Age : 12 months)

'C'

The person touches the ground three times with the child's buttocks and on the third time leaves the child sitting down. It is supported at the front with a pillow or some cloths to prevent it from falling forwards. The person stands behind the child ready to catch him if he should fall. After two or three minutes, the person sits down, lifts up the child and lays it face downwards on his lap. The back part of the child's waist is rubbed, the arms and legs are stretched while the person recites the following words, "Asi mfofofo, ɛba asi, ɛna asi". (A strong waist, strong arms and legs to help you in walking.) The child is then given to its mother. After this first lesson, the child is seated on the ground every day. Pillows or rags are used for supporting the child so that it does not fall or when it falls over it does not hurt itself. An elder sister or brother is, in some cases, asked to sit behind the child and to prevent it from falling over. Within a month or so then the child can sit all alone.

When the baby has learnt how to sit by itself it is encouraged to crawl. When a toy is to be given to it, it is put a few feet away from it to induce it to crawl forward and take it. A baby begins to crawl by moving the legs sideways so that it can turn itself round. After a few weeks it begins to drag itself on its buttocks using its hands as supports. This is followed by the stage when it moves on the knees and hands. It begins to move about faster at this stage. Towards the latter part of this stage the child can hold on to tables and chairs and other solid upright things like walls and stand up. It begins to climb steps and low chairs. The last stage of crawling follows when the child stoops and moves on all fours.

Walking:

When the child begins to stand up and walk round tables and along walls it is understood it

Fig. 15

The child is taught to walk.



The sister says," Tataa tutu. Tataa tutu".

(Age : 16 months)



Fig. 16

A boy with a bad leg using a wooden tricycle.

(Age : 3 years)

wants to walk. Teaching therefore begins. Adults as well as children in the house take part in teaching the child to walk. When the child has been induced to stand up by a sister or so who holds his hands, she drags the child gently and says, "Tatae tutu, Kwadwo (the child's name) bedi nnansa na wanantew, tataa tutu." (Step by step, before three days are over, Kwadwo would have walked.)

Another method of teaching the child to walk is to use a walking stick. The mother holds the upper part of the stick while the child holds the lower part of it. The mother moves backwards gradually while the child follows walking. Wooden tricycles are also used for teaching the children how to walk. This type of tricycle is not ridden but the child stands behind it, pushes it and follows it walking. These lessons are given daily till the child walks without any help or support.

It is great joy to the mother when her child walks. To congratulate the child on his success and to fill him with enthusiasm, the mother stands at a distance, opens her arms and says "Awaawaa atuu." (This is the expression for welcoming people home). The child walks towards the mother and when he reaches her, she embraces him and pats him at the back. The child is then asked to go to tell his father and aunts that it has walked. As the custom is, the father and his sisters have to give the child some eggs or money with which to buy the eggs. The eggs are boiled for the child to eat.

Normally a child walks when it is about twelve or eighteen months old. However there are some children who walk earlier or later than that. When a child walks early the parents do not worry about it but when he walks very late it troubles them. A late-walker is more or less a burden to his mother. When I asked a woman what she had to say about a child who walks very late she replied,

"There is nothing that is more annoying than to have a late-walker. He is very heavy to carry at the back. He makes his clothes very dirty so that you have to wash them every now and then".

When a child takes a long time to walk, the people say the child's joints are very soft and that is why he is not walking. To strengthen the joints of the leg, the mother ties little strips of her loin-cloth round the child's legs at the ankles and just below the knees. When this fails to help the child to walk, he is given enema with some herbs. I was told the stem of a climber called "hama poruwa" when ground, mixed with water and given as enema helps the child to walk. The roots of the plantain with small slender fruits ("apem": Twi) when ground with black pepper and pushed into the child's rectum has the power of strengthening the muscles and bones of the waist. They say that these muscles and bones of the waist need strengthening before a child can walk. This treatment is repeated weekly till the child walks.

One funny and interesting thing I saw a woman doing was that when she had caught a tsetsefly (Ani) which had bitten her, she rubbed it through the sole of her child's feet. I asked her why she did so and she told me that it would help the child to walk very early. When I asked how a tsetsefly could help her child to walk very early, she replied, "Meeni. Ala ne me ni kɛ me." (I don't know. That's what I learnt from my mother.)

Limits for motor activities:

A child is expected not to be carried too often at the back because it is said that the body temperature of the adult is too much for the child. If the child is carried too often at the back, it is literally baked by the heat of the body and this gives ill-health to the child. Because of this belief, the child is often left in bed to give it enough time to kick, stretch



Fig. 17.

The child is allowed to play about in the yard.

"This stool is rather very heavy", the girl says to herself.

the arms and carry on with all sorts of bodily activities it is capable of doing.

When the child has crawled, it is not carri as much as it used to be. It is carried only wh it cries as a result of a fall, fright or hunger When the mother feels it has been left to itself for too long a time, she carries it to let it feel secured.

The child is said to have no idea of which things are useful or precious and would therefore destroy anything that comes its way. To prevent this destruction of things, the child is not allowed to be left alone to crawl in a room. It is rather allowed to crawl about the yard as much as it wishes and it can. All the while, the mother keeps her eyes on the child to see that it does not hurt itself. When it crawls towards anything like fire, a pot of soup or a bucket of hot water which will hurt it, the thing is either removed from its way or the child is carried away and placed at where it may crawl about and play safely. If it cries it is given a harmle article like a finger of plantain to play with. When the child picks up a knife it is taken aw from him and he is given a different thing to play with. In this way the child is taught which things he may play with and which things he should not play with.

When the child has walked it is encouraged to move outside the house. The mother usually tells her older children to take the young child outside the house where it can move about freely. They are instructed to take good care of the child so that it does not hurt itself. The mothers encourage this play outside the house so that they will be free in carrying out their domestic duties.

This is the time when the child is often dragged into the company of other children. I

meets outside the house. He then begins to wander away from the house for long periods with these children who attract his fancy. The mother gets alarmed over this situation for the fear that the child might get involved in a lorry accident or in an accident of some sort. Another fear is that the child might get infected with one of the contagious or infectious diseases like yaws, measles or whooping cough. Because of the fear for these mishaps, when the child forms the habit of wandering off, efforts are made to keep him round the house.

Until the child is about four years old, he is not punished for wandering off because it is said he does not understand what is wrong with his wandering off. Instead, he is frightened with stories of strange animals and people who live in the streets and who catch children. The animal often used is the bull. In the evenings too, when the tree-bear cries out, some mothers tell their children that they will be caught by that animal any time they go into the streets. The child is also frightened with the story of an "Opepeni" (a man from the Northern Territories) who lives somewhere in the village and who has a big bag in which he carries away children who stay in the streets.

The child who is more than five years and yet wanders off very often is said to be a disobedient child. To punish him for his disobedience he is flogged or pepper is pushed into his rectum. In extreme cases the child is starved for some time before he is given food to eat.

CHAPTER 8

SPEECH AND STORIES

CRIES:- The child is born with the ability to cry. Because of this, as soon as a baby is born, efforts are made to make him cry to show that he is alive. It has already been explained in the chapter under birth how the native midwife pours a mouthful of cold water over the child's face to make him cry.

The child's early cries are mainly expressive of how the external things around him affect him. They are also expressive of his feelings like hunger fright and anger. As he grows, the child learns to use his cries in gaining his needs. For example if he wants a toy to play with and yet he cannot reach it, he cries for it. It is rather very remarkable how ingenious the women at Abiriw are in telling the cries of their children from the conglomeration of noises and in interpreting the different cries that the children make. It was explained to me that when a baby utters a sudden and sharp cry it signifies intense bodily pain or fright. On the other hand if a child cries for a long time it means either he is feeling hungry or he has some pains.

When therefore a mother hears her child cry out suddenly, she gets alarmed and rushes to where the child is. She takes up the child and tries to find out what the cause of the cry is. When it is found it is removed. If it is hunger the child is suckled and is then carried at the back or on the lap to stop him from crying. She may clap and sing to him or she may give him a toy to play with.

If the child has talked, the mother coaxingly tells him to stop crying and he is at times promised a toy or some food which he likes best. If he

continues to cry he is threatened with punishment or with stories of a ghost or a strange man who would carry him away if he did not stop crying. If the child has once had a bitter experience like vaccination or injection, this experience is mentioned and the child is threatened with its repetition if he does not stop crying. With young children one person goes behind the house and, calling the child's name, he produces some unusual sounds calculated to frighten the child and to make him stop crying.

It is a popular belief at Abiriw that the child who cries very often never grows fat and he is always childish in his behaviour and that is why adults employ as many different methods as they know to stop the child from crying always.

Though a child is not expected to cry very often yet certain occasions remain legitimate for crying even as far up as into adult life. The legitimacy of crying is determined by age as well as by sex. The more a child grows up the less is he expected to cry. If therefore a child who is fairly grown up cries on minor matters like when feeling hungry, he is laughed at and is asked if he is still a baby.

As much as possible the boy is expected to hide his tendency of crying. He may cry when he has lost a parent or a near relative or a dear friend through death but even then he is not expected to overcry himself. If he does so he is asked, "Are you a girl?" Similarly when he cries he is expected to call his father by crying, "Agya ee! Agya ee! (Alas Father!) If he calls his mother in crying he is laughed at and is called a woman's son. ("Akye mo bi"). This shows clearly that it is the girls who are expected to cry for long periods and at funerals.

When a grandparent dies, the grandchildren to the deceased person perform a special Funeral

rite called "Nana Due Due" (Condolence, grandparent) on the eighth day. At about five o'clock in the evening they all meet at the house of the deceased person. The boys carry guns which they fire into the air. The girls form two lines and as they move from the house to the cemetery they cry while the boys continue to fire guns. It is considered a disgrace if a girl does not cry or if she cries and gets no tears. In order to avoid this disgrace, one of the boys carries a stick with which he whips those girls who do not cry so that they may cry.

SPEECH

Similar to crying, a child is born with the ability to produce all sorts of human sounds. Not more than five months after birth, the child begins to produce babbling sounds which are quite unintelligible. It is through listening, selecting and imitating the speech sounds that he hears around him that the child learns to modify his babblings and eventually learns to speak intelligibly.

The writer M.M. Lewis says in his "Language in Society" that, "Until the child begins to speak he is not quite one of us; to the mother whose child's speech is retarded, the most terrifying thought is that perhaps he may never speak and so will remain something less than fully human. And since the child is felt to be speaking only when he uses words recognizably like our own, there is a constant urgency in the group to accelerate the growth of imitation". The mothers at Abinsi know (as I gathered through observation and investigations) that a child begins to learn to speak through babbling and imitating the human sounds he hears produced by the people with whom he lives. So when a mother is carrying her child and she hears that he is playing with babbling sounds

like "ma ma" or "Adaa daa dã, she encourages him to do so by repeating the same sound too. When she hears the child babbling with a sound that appears to be recognizable she purposely repeats the sound correctly so that the child might hear and imitate her in producing it correctly too. For example if she hears the child playing with the sound "pa" she purposely repeats "papa" in a play-way to induce the child to repeat it correctly too. She moves a step forward in using the word in a sentence like "Look at your Papa" when she sees her husband. Through gradual encouragements like this, the child learns to speak. Before he is two years old or more, the child has learnt to speak with a great deal of understanding.

I got to know during my investigations that the mothers are quick at understanding most of the not so quite understandable early talks of their children. In some cases in order to let the children understand them better and also as a kind of amusement some of the mothers do at times speak to their children using baby-talk. Normally the mothers speak to their children using the correct forms of the Kyerepong language so that the children may learn to speak the language correctly too. When a child mispronounces a word he is corrected at once. In the same way if he makes grammatical mistakes he is corrected at once. For example if a child says, "Mekyinẽ me abie so" for "Meyi me abie so" (I am sitting on my chair) the people in the house correct him at once. Gradually the child stops using baby-talk and learns to speak the language as it is spoken. Before the child is six years old then he can express himself as freely and correctly as possible.

Training in speech does not end there but continues for some years more. The child is trained not to use any obscene language especially in the presence of strangers his parents and all other adults. He is

told not to use any abusive words on his brothers and sisters as well as other persons. Whenever adults are conversing, the child is expected to sit or stand by silently and to listen to them. Through listening to adults talking, the child learns the different idiomatic expressions, proverbs and greetings of the Kyerepong language. He also learns how to respond to greetings and how to style his elders.

Occasionally when there is a fight between any of the children in the house, all the other children who were present when the fight ensued are called to give evidence or to tell the cause of the fight. Or at times when the adults in a house hear the noise of something happening in the streets it is some of these children who are sent to go, listen and bring back reports of what is happening. It is in giving account of happenings like this that the child is expected to be factual. If the child purposely distorts his reports he is scolded and is told he is a liar.

If it is seen that a child has begun to form the habit of telling lies to deceive people or to hide offences he has committed, he is severely scolded and in very serious cases he may be punished to teach him to stop telling lies. From the age of about ten onwards the child is considered to know the difference between fantasy and truth. If a child is noted for telling fantastic tales he is told to try to be real, for it is believed that this habit develops into the habit of distorting true stories and in rendering them falsely.

Questions and Story-telling

Between the ages of three and four the child's desire to know things becomes so intense that he talks a lot and asks a lot of questions. Typical among the questions he often asks are the "Why? Where? how? what and who?" questions.

Many parents at Abiriw appear not to know that it is through asking these questions and getting correct answers to them that the child learns about the world and the things in it. The result of this ignorance is that when the child begins to talk a lot and asks a lot of questions, he is hushed down. He is told he talks too much but a child should not talk like that. More than this he is told that he is too inquisitive. I remember that one day when I was interviewing a woman on birth, her child came rushing from outside the house. The child had a leaf which he showed to the mother and asked, "Is this leaf eaten?" The woman turned to her child and said, "Keep quiet. You talk to much. Don't you see I have a stranger here?" I told the boy the leaf was not edible and then explained to the mother how children learn through the questions they ask.

Story-telling is one of the main channels through which the child at Abiriw learns a lot of his lessons in language. Very often in the evenings, the adults in the house sit round the fire telling stories of their experiences or telling Ananse stories. More often, the child is not expected to take part in telling these stories when he is seven or less. He is expected only to sit down quietly and listen to them. It is only occasionally that they call him to tell an Ananse story. If the child is not able to tell the Ananse story he wanted to tell with the correct sequence of events, one of the adults tells the story over again for the child to hear.

Ananse stories are always accompanied with lively folk-songs. So while the child listens to the adults singing and he joins in singing the choruses he incidentally learns how to sing these songs too.

I asked a girl of about ten to tell me

her favourite Ananse story and the following story was what she told me. " Once upon a time the tree called "Odan" married the tree "Odum. Soon after the marriage Odum became pregnant. One day "Nyankopong" visited them and told the woman that if she brought forth a girl she would be his wife but if the child was a boy he would be his personal attendant. Fortunately enough the baby was a girl and she was named Abena. Nyankopong was informed of the birth and a lot of precious presents were brought to the child.

Because the girl was going to be the wife of Nyankopong she was not made to do any work, instead she was given a maid-servant to serve her. Very soon Abenaa reached womanhood and had to go to her husband Nyankopong. She was given a train of servants to carry all her things. All these servants went ahead leaving her and her personal attendant to walk comfortably behind.

On the way to Nyankopong's town, Abena told her attendant that she was going to latrine and she gave all her gorgeous dresses and precious ornaments to the servant to look after till she came. While she was away, the servant dressed herself in Abena's dresses and said she was that Nyankopong's wife. When Abena returned this wicked girl forced her to be her servant and to carry her load.

Nyankopong received this pretentious girl as his wife with all pageantry while Abena, the real wife became a servant who was made to work beyond her strength. She slept alone and wept bitterly every night and whenever she was working alone.

One day as Abena was going to fetch water from a stream she sang saying:-

" Odan ne ba ne me,
Odum ne ba ne me
Odum kese a me na woo me nkrabea pa
Abena eè! se minya 'wu a mepɛ

Menkɔ asu da.

Abena ee! Abena ee! Sɛ minya 'wu a mepɛ OO

In English the words mean:-

(" I am the daughter of Odan,
I am the daughter of Odum.
I was born with a good fate by the great Odum.
Alas Abena! I wish I were dead.
I have never gone to fetch water.
Alas Abena! Alas Abena! I wish I were dead")

An old woman heard Abena singing and reported the case to Nyankopong. A big durbar of all Nyankopong's chiefs and subjects was held. Nyankopong sa on a raised platform and the two women were made to stand on a chalked line about fifty yar away from Nyankopong. They were told that the one of them who could spit straight so that the sputu went to wet the breast of Nyankopong would be th true wife of Nyankopong.

The supposed wife of Nyankopong tried first and failed horribly in all the three chances given but Abena succeeded in all the three chances. Abena wa therefore proclaimed the true and real wife of Nyank pong and the treachery of the other girl came to light. As her punishment, this girl was killed, her head and feet were cut and put at the bathroom of Nyankop

Through telling stories like this, the child learn how to express himself, he learns how to arrange his thoughts logically and continuously. More than all these things, he draws some morals from thes stories.



Fig. 18.
After child has been given milk he is put to bed to sleep. The bed is a mat with clean rags on it. (Age : 7days)

CHAPTER

SLEEP AND HEALTH OF THE CHILD

The early part of a child's life is made up mainly of sucking milk from his mother's breasts and sleeping. The child who sleeps a lot is belie to grow healthy and fat too. Therefore whenever a mother has suckled her baby she puts him to bed to sleep. In order to induce the child to sleep, the mother lies beside the child and pats hi gently at the back. The breast is left in the child's mouth. As he sucks the breasts, he falls asleep. In other cases the child lies on the mother's lap till he falls asleep before he is transferred to his bed.

If the child cries a lot during the day when the weather is a bit warm, he is given a cold bath. The mother then carries him on her arms or at her back and walks about till he falls asleep If the child continues to cry and refuses to sleep the mother begins to suspect stomach troubles. She therefore gives the child enema with warm water with soap lather in it. It is after this that the child is given milk and efforts made to induce him to sleep. Usually after this, the child sleeps. Any time the child is put to bed during the day, an elder brother or sister sits by him and drives away flies that settle on the child's face and thereby disturb his sleep. When the child struggles and pulls part of his bedding to cover his face it is removed by the brother or sister who sits by him. If the mother has nothing to do in particular, it is she who sits by the child. While keeping watch over the child, she is seen stringing the beads, plaiting her hair or mending her old clothes.

When a baby smiles in his sleep the

interpretation given to the smile is that he has seen his lover. On the other hand if a sleeping child cries out suddenly, the mother says," Asɔko ɛndɛ wɔ a, dɛ mɔ nko" (when somebody strikes you strike him too.) The people of Abiriw say that children, especially when they have not talked, have the power of seeing spirits who are invisible to adults. They say some of these spirits appear to children in their dreams and frighten them by fighting them. If the child is not encouraged to fight back, these spirits overpower him and make him ill. That is why when the child cries out suddenly the mother utters a word of encouragement.

After supper, the child of two years or more lies on the lap of his father, mother or grandmother till he falls sleep before he is carried to bed. As the child of this age can talk, the commonest means of making him go to bed if he refuses to sleep is that he is frightened. A person goes outside the house and speaks with a shivering voice. He calls the child's name and says he will come to take him away if he does not want to go to sleep. The mother says," Aha! Listen to that Ghost. He will catch you soon if you don't sleep. Shut your eyes and sleep." When the child has been frightened in this way, he is either put to bed or the mother carries him on her lap, and covers him up with her cloth till he sleeps. He is carried to his bed when he sleeps.

The people of Abiriw believe that some spirits move about the village at night and that some of these spirits hate to hear the cries of children. These spirits are said to punish children who cry excessively in the night by making them ill. In order to avert this punishment, when the child cries in the night, the mother beats her

pillow. They say that when the night spirits hear the sound of the beating, they think it is the child who is being beaten and so they refrain from coming near to punish the child.

A baby sleeps on a mat with rags on it. Until the baby is a week old it is a piece of cloth rolled up into a soft cushion that serves as his pillow. The baby shares the mat on which he sleeps with his mother till he is three months old when the mother and the baby are transferred to the father's bed. These three people (the father, the mother and the child) continue to share the same bed until a new baby is born when the mother moves away to sleep on a different bed. The child continues to share the same bed with his father until the new baby is transferred to the same bed when he is given a mat to sleep on in the same room. This mat is often spread on the floor for the child to sleep on while the parents sleep on a bed.

All the children who are under five sleep together on one big mat spread on the floor and covered with a blanket or an old cloth. Later on when they are about six, the boys are separated from the girls but the family continues to share the same room. Towards the beginning of the age of adolescence, the boy is given a separate room in which to sleep but the girl continues to sleep in the same room with her parents till she is married. The boy shares his room with his younger brothers till he is also married. After his marriage, the younger brothers are given a separate room.

HEALTH:

As already stated in chapter 6 the mothers at Abiriw are very particular about the health of their children. They are able to detect

signs of illness through studying the quality and quantity of the children's faeces and urine. In addition to these they also watch for signs of loss of colour and weight, changes in the children's body temperature, changes in the children's appetite and in the general behaviour of the children. These mothers are very clever at detecting any of these signs and in interpreting them regarding what ails the child. If the child can talk, the mother questions him as to what he feels. This is just how the mother confirms her suspicion.

When the mother is quite sure of what illness the child is suffering from, she reports to her husband who if he knows any cure for the illness, goes to the bush and comes back with herbs to be used for curing the child. Some of these herbs are boiled for the child to drink if he has stomach troubles. I was told the bark of a tree called "Onyame dua" (literally "God's tree") when boiled and given to children to drink, cures most of their stomach troubles.

If the child has headache, his head is dressed with a hot-water towel and then cuts are made at the temples and at the forehead. Black powder is rubbed into these cuts and the child is given some of the same stuff to lap.

The people believe that severe headaches are caused by the flow of impure blood into the head. To cure severe headaches the impure blood must be let. A cut is made at the temple and the horn of an animal is used for drawing out the blood. A bit of the dry husk of a cob of maize is burnt in the horn. While smoking, the big end of the horn is pressed on the cut and the smaller end of the horn is sucked for some time and then stopped with chewed wax. The horn sticks to the skin and drains some blood through

the cut. This is treated on the other side of th head before the child is put to bed to sleep.

In order to make the child feel very comfortal he is allowed to sleep on his father's bed and i the night two he sleeps with the father. The fathe covers him with part of his cloth. More than making the child comfortable it is said that when a sick child sleeps with his father, the fath spirit looms over him and protects him from the influences of evil spirits.

During the day, the child is asked not to sleep all the while but to try to walk about for some time. The people of Abinio believe that when a sick person sleeps all the while, he subjects himself to the illness and this allows the illness to develop from bad to worse. It is because of this that the child is asked to walk about eve if he finds it very painful to do so.

The sick child is not allowed to go without food for a long time because they say hunger also helps illnesses to grow from bad to worse. All sorts of food are therefore continually brough to the sick child to eat. The mother sits by the sick child and supplies him with all that he need She frequently asks the child what food he would eat and what things he would like done for hi

I discovered during my investigations that i many cases of ill-health the parents do not report at once to a doctor or a native herbalist for treatment but they try to treat the child with herbs they know or with some drugs bought from the stores. It is after their own treatment has failed to cure the child that they report to one of the herbalists at the village. At times when the parents have failed in their treatment they are heard saying, "Mɔ le bede afure." (This is no ordinary illness) They suspect at once that their child has been bewitched or that the child

has been poisoned by an evil spirit. Such cases are always reported to one of the priests of the gods in the town. More often than not these priests confirm the suspicion of the parents before asking for things like white fowls, some cowries, some money or a full piece of calico to be given to his god so that the god would deliver the child from the hands of the witches who are harming the child.

A woman told me of her experiences when her child convulsed vigorously one day. She said many people came to give the child all sorts of treatment but they all failed in curing the child. She therefore became alarmed and took the child to the house of the priest of Bosompra (one of the heathen gods of Abiriw). After the priest had consulted the god, she was told some three witches were causing the illness. The witches were so strong that the child's chance of living was very very small. She was asked to bring two white fowls, seven half-pennies, seven pennies, seven three-penny pieces seven six-penny pieces, seven shilling pieces and seven two-shilling pieces. She brought all these things but the treatment given failed to cure the child. She told me it was the doctor at Koforidua who succeeded in curing the child. The more enlightened people do not go to these priests for treatment when they or their children are ill but they go to the hospitals at either Koforidua, Mampong or Larte.

Fig. 19
Difference between the boy's and the girl's dress.



The dress has a high neck with a string through it to gather the cloth around the neck. (Age : 4years)



The girl's dress has a low waist.
(Age : 4years)

CHAPTER 10

CLOTHING AND SELF-EXPOSURE

The child, after it has received its first wash, is presented to its mother who carries it on her lap or puts it to bed and covers it up to the neck with cloth, usually it is one of the father's old cloths. It is here that the child gets its first contact with clothing. During the first fortnight or so the child is always covered up with cloth to prevent it from catching cold. It was explained to me that the womb, inside which the child was lying in the mother's body, is warmer than the air around us and because of that the child is always feeling cold and that is why it is always thickly covered with cloth.

The baby is not dressed in any baby dress until it is eight days old. The explanation given to me is that the sore in the navel is not yet well healed within the first seven days and so if the child is adorned in any dress, the dress will disturb the sore and prevent it from healing as quickly as it should.

After the baby has been washed in the morning on the eighth day a string of white small beads is banded round the waist to hold the loin cloth. It is also dressed in a white pant, a white chemise and a baby dress. From the eighth day onwards the child is dressed in this way before it is put to bed during the day or before it is carried either at the back or on the lap.

The baby dress for girls differs slightly from that for boys. With the dress for girls, the blouse and the skirt are joined just above the navel while they are joined high up at the chest if the dress is for a boy. More than this the boy's dress has a string through the neck so that when the string is pulled and knotted at the back it gathers the cloth close round the neck.

Fig. 20



The boy wears his ntama in the style called "Kɔla" (Scholar)
(Age : 5 years)



The boy wears a jumper and a pair of knickers.
(Age : 3 years)

Fig. 21



The girl uses "kaba" and "ntama" skirt.
(Age : 4½ years)

Fig. 22.

The boy continues to wear this kind of dress till he has walked when the dress is changed into a gown with a string through the neck. The boy is also dressed in a pair of knickers with a string through the waist and a jumper. The boy wears the gown in the morning and in the evening when the weather is a bit cold. The pair of knickers and jumper he wears when the weather is a bit warm. At times he moves about wearing only the pair of knickers.

The African cloth (Ntama) is introduced when the boy is about three years old. It is usually a yard of cloth. The "ntama" is wrapped round the boy and two corners of it are knotted at the back of the neck. This way of wearing the ntama is called "Kola" which is a corruption of the word Scholar. The history behind this name is that when schools were introduced into the Gold Coast, the pupils had no uniforms as they have today. They were allowed to use their "ntama" which they had to wear in the way described above. As this way of wearing the ntama became popular, if a man wanted to tell his son to wear his ntama in the way the school boys did, he told him to wear it like a Scholar. Eventually, the word Scholar turned to be associated with this way of wearing the 'ntama'. At about five the boy knows how to wear the ntama in the traditional way. The ntama increases in size as the boy advances in age.

The girl too continues to wear her baby dress till she has walked when the "Kaba" (Blouse) and the ntama skirt are introduced. She continues to use the loin cloth and the pants.

The child begins to receive training in dressing and undressing when he is about three years old. The child is usually given his dress to wear and whenever he has any difficulty the mother helps. At times an elder brother or sister is asked either to dress



Fig. 23

The young boys are encouraged to go about naked but the girl is taught to feel shy of self-exposure.

or undress the child. This encouragement goes on till the child is about six years old when he can dress and undress without any help. Good performance in dressing and undressing is always praised. If the child is nearly six and yet he cannot dress and undress without any help, he is rebuked before being helped.

All through infancy until the child is about five his clothes are not made of heavy materials but are made of light linen, cotton and poplin prints or plain ones. It was explained to me that heavy clothes press against the tender skin of the child and distress him greatly and that is why the child's clothes must be made of materials of light texture.

Self - exposure:-

It is the belief of the people of Abiriw that a child grows healthier when he allows air to move round his body freely by going about naked or half-clothed. It is therefore very common to hear a mother ordering her child with the words," Kojo, put off your ntama and let the air move round you. The sun is up so it is no longer cold". In order to let the child move about well exposed he is provided with a pant or a pair of knickers with braces and in this he is expected to move about for a greater part of the day.

The girl is also expected to wear her loin cloth or pant and to move about in them without feeling ashamed. Some of the young girls form the habit of pulling of their loin cloths and then going about stark naked. In order to encourage a girl like this to wear her loin cloth always, it is often knotted both at the front and at the back.

Until the child is about seven or eight he is not expected to feel ashamed of himself even if he goes about without wearing his pants.



Fig. 24.
A boy in a pair of knickers with braces.
(Age : 4½ years)

But after this period the child is taught gradually to feel ashamed of himself if he goes about without his pant. He is taught to feel ashamed to appear before strangers without wearing his pant or pair of knickers. When it is wanted that the child should wear his pant, the child is shown where his pant is and he is asked to go for it. If he does not want to go for it the parent points at his genital and says it will be cut off by an "Opepeni" (a man from the Northern Territories) or by one of the visitors. The special children's words for the male and female genitals are respectively "akokono" (a grub) and "akutuabi" (a small earthern pot.)

By the time the girl is about seven or eight she is expected not to expose herself and to feel ashamed to appear naked either in the home or elsewhere. However she is expected not to feel ashamed to expose herself in the bathroom in the presence of other girls or her mother.

The boy is expected not to feel shy to expose himself provided he is in pants. It is common to see boys as old as ten wearing only their pants and playing football or other games in the streets and lanes. These boys are taught not to feel shy in taking their baths in the yard and not in the bathroom.

When a child feels ashamed of being seen naked at an age when he is not expected to feel so ashamed, he is considered a bad child, bad in the sense that he knows something of sexual dealings and love affairs whilst he is not expected to know anything about these things till he is grown-up.



Fig. 25

The girl carries her younger brother because a new baby has been born.

(Age of girl : 8½ years
" " boy : 2 ")

CHAPTER II

The Child and his Relations.

Relations with Brothers and sisters:

As I have already pointed out in the chapter dealing with birth, a pregnant woman usually goes to stay with her mother when she is going to give birth to a new child. The child is therefore born into a home where very often, there are some children who are its brothers, sisters and cousins. It is these children who give the new child the company from which it learns a lot of things during its early infancy.

As soon as a pregnant woman has reported the signs of birth to her mother and the native midwife has arrived, the older child is carried away from her by either an older sister, an aunt or the grandmother. The child is taken care of till everything is over. The child is not allowed to be present at birth because birth is connected with sex and the child is not expected to know anything about sex at such a tender age. More than this it is believed it is a secret and frightful spectacle which the child should not see lest he should talk of it to his friends. Very often it is the grandmother who takes the greater share in looking after the older child when a new baby has been born. This is done in order not to give the mother the unnecessary burden of looking after two children at a time when she is considered weak.

The older child is brought to the mother for the first time after the birth of the new baby at the time when the mother has had enough rest. Usually he is brought in because he has been crying for the mother. The mother tells him not to cry because he has got either a new brother or sister. He is asked to shake hands with the new baby

to show that he is pleased to have a new brother or sister. The writer one day chanced upon an instance in which a boy of about three asked to be given the chance of carrying his week-old sister on his lap. The mother asked him to sit down and then the girl was put gently on his lap for a few seconds. The boy was satisfied so he went out and told his elder sisters that he had also carried his younger sister.

The older child is taught to be friendly with the new-born baby. He is taught to fetch things for the new child. For example if it is going to be washed he is asked to bring to the mother the towel and Sponge to be used. I noticed that some mothers use the relation with the new child as a means of gaining discipline. For example if a child refuses to stop crying the mother says," Stop crying otherwise Yaa Baby (the new child) is not your sister." The child stops crying. All these are done to inculcate in the child a loving and friendly attitude towards the new baby.

At times when some of the older children see that because of a new baby they are no longer fondled or carried as much as they used to be but instead they are left for long periods or days without ever being carried, they become jealous and cry a lot asking to be carried too. Some of them go to the extent of asking that the new baby should be put down so that they are carried in its place. When a woman sees that her child is behaving in that way, she suckles the new baby and induces it to sleep. In order to satisfy the older child, she carries him till he is satisfied and then he is coaxed to get down. The more impatient mother refuses to accede to the child's wishes but she rather frightens the child with stories of a ghost or something that the child fears. This is done to stop the child from feeling so jealous of

the new baby. If the mother's efforts fail to make the child stop crying she beats the child.

Quarrels and fights:

The brothers and sisters in a house are expected to be on very loving and friendly terms with one another. In order not to arouse any ill-feelings they are taught not to use abusive words among themselves. The child is hushed down at once if he is heard using obscene and abusive words. At times he is reprimanded. If the child persists in using words on his brothers and sisters the one on whom the words were used is asked either to slap his buttocks or to beat him to teach him a lesson. At other times the mother avenges on the one's behalf by slapping the child at the buttocks. With serious cases pepper is pushed into the child's rectum. When a very young child uses abusive words on his elder brother, the brother is asked not to beat him nor take it seriously because the child does not really mean what he says. The older children are also expected not to use abusive words on their younger brothers and sisters.

In spite of all the expectations of parents quarrels and fights are very common among children because by nature they are pugnacious. The causes of quarrels and fights among children are numerous but broadly speaking I classify them into four main categories which are:-

1) When a child uses abusive words on his brother or sister anger is aroused and a fight results.
2) When one child deprives the other child of any of his possessions or playthings by either taking it away or by damaging it.
3) When a child obstructs another child from free bodily movement thereby preventing him from taking part fully in a game.



Fig. 26
The two fighters make peace.
Kwame Safo, Kwaku Amponsa and
a witness.

4) And the last and commonest is when one child inflicts bodily pains on his neighbour in one way or the other.

For example, as the writer was going round one day, he saw two boys fighting and four other boys were looking on. There were no adults present in the house. The writer entered the house and stopped the boys from fighting. The cause of the fight was that as they were all playing together, the boy called Kwame Safo insulted his brother Kwaku Amponsa. Kwame ran into a room. When he saw that Kwaku was hard at his heels, he turned and banged the door against Kwaku's face. Kwaku managed to force his way into the room and a fight followed.

Parents do not entertain quarrels and fights among brothers and sisters however their attitude is that if fights occur they must take place between children of the same age, size and sex. A boy who quarrels or fights with girls or boys far his juniors, is strongly reprimanded and is told to be ashamed of himself for fighting or quarreling with girls or his juniors. He is also told he is a bully.

If two children fight they are separated and are told to be ashamed of themselves for fighting. The cause of the fight is looked into by the parents and the guilty child is asked to render apology. In some cases the two fighters are punished together irrespective of who is guilty. If two children form the habit of fighting always, they are allowed an open fight to determine which of them would defeat the other. By this means, the vanquished is taught to fear and respect the victor. Usually the two children never fight again.

Relationship regarding food and possessions:

The child is taught to share his food with his brothers and sisters. For example, when food like bread

is bought for the child he is asked to give a portion of it to his sister or brother to eat. If he refuses to do so he is rebuked and teased with the word "Ade" (the child who refuses to share his food with his brothers and sisters). The child is also taught to share food from the same dish with his brothers and sisters. It is therefore the custom to let children eat from the same dish. It is a common sight to see children all squating round a dish of "fufu" or "ampesi" eating together. At meals the youngest child gets the smallest piece of meat to eat because the meat is shared proportionately according to age. That is, the oldest child takes his share of the meat first, then the next person follows till the smallest piece is left for the youngest child among them. The child is taught to share food with his brothers and sisters by these means.

The value the Gold Coast African places on generosity does also prevail among the people of Abiriw. Therefore, right from infancy the child is taught that in addition to food he has to share some of his possessions with his sisters and brothers. He is also taught to value others articles and not to damage them. If a child has a plaything in hand and his younger brother is crying, he is asked to give the plaything to the younger brother for some time so that he stops crying.

If a young child graps a toy or a plaything from his elder brother, the brother is asked to let him play with it for some time and he would soon leave it. If an older child grabs a toy from his younger brother or sister he is ordered to give it back at once. He is told to be ashamed of himself for doing so.

In order to teach the young child not to take things belonging to his older brothers without their permission, he is given another thing to play with and the object he has taken is taken away from him



Fig. 27

A boy repairing his toy-lorry.
It was damaged by his two younger brothers who look on. He has not beaten them because he has been taught not to beat young children.

The young child is told at times that the object smells badly and must be thrown away at once. The mother takes it away from him and she purposely throws it away for the older child to take.

If a younger child destroys any object belonging to an elder brother, the elder child is entreated not to slap the child but to repair it if he can. If the object is damaged beyond repair, the mother or father promises to buy him a new one. The young child on the other hand is instructed not to destroy things belonging to his brothers and sisters. Very often he is insulted and told he is a very destructive child. The word used for expressing this in Kyerepong is "Akpɔtɔkpaho". If on the other way round it is the older child who has damaged a plaything belonging to the younger child, he is asked to repair it at once.

If the child brings to the house objects belonging to other unknown children, he is asked to return the objects at once because it is believed that such habits lead to stealing.

If the child tries to handle a thing that is fragile, hot or sharp, the mother tries to disgust the child by saying the thing taken smells very badly. She squeezes her face or holds her nose and says "koo, koo, koo" (This is the child language for saying that a thing smells badly). After that the mother takes away the object from him and he is given a different thing as a substitute. By these methods the child is taught to share his possessions with his brothers and sisters, he is taught to value the possessions of his brothers and sisters and not to damage them, he is taught not to take things belonging to unknown people and lastly he is taught not to handle fragile and dangerous objects.

Respect among brothers and sisters:- As the

custom is at Abiriw, a younger child is expected to respect his elder brothers and sisters. As a sign of respect the child is not to call his elder brothers and sisters by their names without first saying for the boys, "Me se", (my father) and for the girls, "Me ni" (my mother). A new convention that is steadily taking root is that the younger child is taught to call his elder sisters, "Sissy" (a shortened form of "sister") and his elder brothers "Broa" (a corrupted form of "brother"). The significance of these titles is to show that the child respects his elder brothers and sisters in the same way as he does his father and mother.

Then again the child is taught not to use any abusive words on his elder brothers and sisters. It is an offence if he does so. The child who uses abusive woods on his elder sisters and brothers as well as on adults is called, "Agaw mpanin" (the child who insults his elders.")

RELATIONS TO PARENTS AND OTHER ADULTS

The child begins to receive lessons in who are his relations right from the week in which he is born. When the father comes in to congratulate his wife on her succesful delivery, the child is given to him to carry on his lap. In handing him over to the father, the woman says to the child, "Look at your father. Go to him." When anybody comes to see the child, before the child is handed over to him the mother repeats the same introduction described above. She only adapts it according to the relationship between the visitor and the child. This lesson keeps on to be given till by the time the child has talked he can recognise his father and his near relations.

As the child learns how to talk, he is taught how to style his parents, his relations and other adults. He is taught to call his father "Papa or Agya" and his mother "Mama or Me ni" (my mother). He is

taught to call all his uncles "wɔfa" (uncle). Likewise he is taught to style all male adults "Me se" (my father) and all female adults "Me ni" (my mother) before mentioning their real names. Any time any relative comes to the house or is met in the streets, the person is introduced to the child and the child is asked to shake hands with the person or he is asked to go to the person to be carried.

Then again as the child advances in age he is taught how to salute adults he meets. He is taught not to insult adults and when adults send him to fetch things he must not refuse to go. Through these lessons the child learns his relations with adults and how to behave towards them.

Discipline and Punishment:

As the father is very often away from home working on his farm while the mother stays at home looking after the young children, she gets much more contact with the children than the father does. It is when he has come home after the day's work that he takes part in carrying the children and in playing with them. In the evening some of the children, especially the young boys, rest in his bosom till they fall asleep before they are transferred to their beds.

Because the mother remains more with the children during their early years she takes the greater share in the discipline and punishment of the children than the father does. The father who is known to be very impatient, inflicts the severer punishments. Because of this many children at Abirim fear their fathers much more than they fear their mothers. Knowing that, some mothers threaten their children with reporting them to the father for offences committed or for failing to carry out instructions given them. In short

these mothers use the fear of the father as a means of gaining discipline.

One thing I noticed was that the mothers never punished the adolescent boys themselves but always they reported them to the father who either talked to them or punished them. Similarly except for very serious offences the adolescent girls were not punished by the fathers but they were reported to the mothers for punishment. In reporting the boy to his father the mother usually referred to the boy as "Your son" and in the same way the father also referred to the girl as "your daughter" when reporting her to the mother.

Occasionally quarrels or disagreements arise between parents on the punishment of a child. If one of the parents protests against the severity with which the other has punished a child for a small offence committed, quarrels arise but these quarrels die off as quickly as they were caused.

Quarrels and fights between parents and children:-

It has been dealt with already under the chapter on work and moral training that from about the age of eight onward the boy becomes more attached to his father than to his mother and he follows his father to many places. The stories some of the fathers tell the child about the evil ways of women help to implant in the boy a large degree of disrespect for his mother and women at large. The result of this is that the boys (especially the adolescents) tend to disobey, disagree and quarrel very often with their mothers. There are even cases where some boys are reported to have gone to the extent of fighting with their mothers. The girls too (who at the same age become a bit wayward) fight and quarrel with their mothers.

With the girls one of the usual causes of quarrels

is when the mothers insult them for staying long in the streets in the night. Another cause is when a mother insults her daughter very often for not carrying out her domestic duties in the prescribed manner while the girl thinks she has done so.

With the boys, quarrels with the mother arise when the mother favours and supports a younger brother or girl against the boy when there is a disagreement between them. For example if a boy slaps his brother for damaging his toy and the mother steps in and insults him thereby clearly supporting the other boy against him, the boy's feelings get hurt and often a quarrel between him and his mother ensues.

When there is a quarrel or a fight between a mother and one of her children, it is the father who arbitrates. He goes into the cause of the quarrel or fight and tries to bring about peace and oneness. As the custom at Abiriw is, however right a child might be, he has no right whatsoever to raise a finger against any of his parents. So it is always on the child that the guilt lies. If the child is young, that is below 15, he is considered not very sensible to know the gravity of his offence so he is only asked to render apology to the mother and to ask for her forgiveness. He is asked to promise never to repeat the offence. Very often the child is also asked to seal his promise with an oath and which he does by swearing by the father's leg or by the adversities the father had encountered in life.

If on the other hand the child is about fifteen it is considered he should know much. So after rendering apology he is asked to pacify the mother with a number of eggs or with a fowl in very serious cases.

The mother too is advised to give up the

case and to take the child back as her child. She is told to give the case up for, proverbially, when a child soils his mother's lap with his faeces, the child is not killed. The mother agrees and everything is over.

Quarrels with the father are very very rare however if one does come, it is treated as described above by the father's brothers.

CHAPTER 12

Work and Moral Training

The training a child receives in work and the training he receives in morals are so interwoven that it is hard to separate them. It is at the same time as the child is given instructions in how to work that he is given instructions in good moral standards. The training the child receives in both work and morals is not systematic. It is given informally when the occasion arises.

The child is not expected to take part fully in the work done in the house during his early childhood (3–7 years) because he is not capable of much work. In spite of this fact, the child, who lives in the world of fantasy and make-believe at this stage of his growth, thinks he is capable of doing any kind of work. He has a strong desire to participate in the work done to prove his capability. Because of this the child is seen frequently trying to intrude into the work adults do in the house. When the mother is pounding palm nuts for making soup, the child holds the pestle and asks to be given the chance of pounding too. Usually the child is given the chance and when he has tried and seen that the work is beyond his strength, he gives it up.

I came across a case in which a mother was washing her husband's cloth and other articles. Her young child of about four put his hands into the pail to help in washing. The mother gave him another bucket in which to wash another cloth. The child was satisfied with it so he went on with washing the other cloth. After some time the child complained that the cloth was too heavy for him. He therefore stopped and went away to play.

It is believed that the child who shows great

desire to take part in the work adults do would become a hard worker when he grows up. Therefore when the young child shows the desire to take part in adult work, he is encouraged by being given something lighter to do. In order to make the child feel that he is taking part in the work in the house, he is sent to bring the little things that are needed. If the mother needs a cup of water to drink or to wash her hands with, if she needs a broom, a pan, a cake of soap, a chair, a small dish, a knife or a finger of plantain, it is the child who is asked to bring it. It is not only to the parents that the child is taught to bring things needed but he is taught to fetch things to other adults as well as to his brothers and sisters. Very often the child is praised for fetching things very quickly. When the mother sends the child and she wants him to come back quickly, she spits on the ground and tells the child to return to her before the sputum dries up. It is explained to the child that if he does not return before the sputum dries up his navel will rot. On the other hand if the child refuses to fetch things when sent to do so, he is rebuked and named "Ade" (the child who refuses to go when sent.) In some cases he is punished.

The behaviour of boys and girls become distinct towards the end of this period and thereafter in the child's life. The work of the boy gradually becomes different from that of the girl. The boy becomes more attached to his father than his mother while the girl also becomes much more attached to her mother than to her father. The boy is expected to be in the company of men or boys and to do the work of men. If the boy behaves like a girl and follows his mother or girls, he is nicknamed "Di mmaa to." (The boy who follows women.) If a girl behaves like a boy and follows boys and does what they do it is thought she would be weak morally when

she grows up. She is therefore laughed at and nicknamed "Enyenkireho" (The girl who loves boys). Sex-distinctions in work, play and behaviour project much clearer than has ever been the case from the time the child is seven and onwards.

The boy follows his father to the farm but he does not take part in the work done. He is left to himself to do whatever he likes provided that he does not destroy any of the crops on the farm. These crops are shown to him so that he can distinguish them from weeds and other useless plants. More often, he is given a place to sit near the fire so that he may push sticks into the fire to make it burn brighter. He is given a stick which he can use for turning the food that is being toasted.

While left to himself, the boy carves wheels for his toy car from the roots of the silk cotton tree, he collects sticks for setting bird traps and he carves some of them into walking sticks. He also makes horns and toy-guns from the stalk of pawpaw leaves and the midrib of plantain leaves. He indulges in all sorts of play with his toy-gun. He points at birds that fly by and points at other objects with his toy-gun and says he has killed them.

When the boy is about eight or nine years old he is provided with a small cutlass and he is taught how to sharpen it. When he accompanies the father to the farm, he is given the less bushy part of the farm to weed. He is taught how to make yam mounds and how to put in the yam seeds, how to fix stakes to the beans and yams, how to sow maize, cocoyam and cassava and what seasons of the year favour the planting of the different crops on the farm. This is the time the child learns the names of the different plants and their uses from the father.



Fig. 28.

The boy follows his father.
Here they have come to join in the
worship at the house of "Jbasom Ayesu".
Look at the sign at the father's forehead.
It is a sign of being an adherent.

When the day's work is done on the farm, the boy accompanies his father in hunting and setting traps. The boy learns the names and behaviour of the different animals of the bush and which traps are most suitable for catching each kind of game. The boy carries his catapult and shoots at little birds. The boy acquaints himself with the different bush paths and where each leads to.

When any game is trapped or killed it is the boy who carries it home. He is taught how the animal is flayed and cut up to required pieces. As compensation for carrying the game home, the boy is given the neck of the animal.

The boy also accompanies his father when he visits his relatives and friends at different parts of the village or at one of the nearby villages. It is on such errands that the boy receives most of the lessons in morals. The father tells him stories of how some people of high moral intergrity have succeeded in life while on the other hand people of low morals or how people who hate hard work have succumbed under the sledge of poverty and adversity. The boy is advised to work hard and to be obedient to his elders.

He is advised to beware of women for they have been the usual cause of the downfall and ruin of many a promising young man. He is also told of people whose company he should never entertain because of their questionable character. The father points out to the boy the women suspected of witchcraft in the town and so he is to beware of them. The boy is also told of the power of the heathen gods of the village and how they can punish evil-doers and also why these gods must be feared and worshipped.

The family lineage, which is patrilineal, is usually explained to the boy whenever a new relative is met. The affinities of other relatives are



Fig. 29
A girl and her brother preparing fufu.
The girl turns the fufu and the boy
does the pounding.



Fig. 30
A girl washing her sister.
The child is matured so
the used water is allowed to fall
on the ground.

also explained to the boy. For example the father explains in this way, "This man is one of our relations and a brother to me so he is your uncle. His father and my father come from the same parents. His father comes immediately after my father in birth. So you see, he is no distant relative but a near and real relative of yours". When the boy accompanies his father on visits like this, he is expected to sit by quietly and listen attentively to the talks and discussions of the old men. He is not to take part in any of the discussions.

If it is rather the father who has been visited by his relatives or friends, it is the boy who gives the visitors chairs to sit on and water to drink. When there is any wine to be served, it is the boy who does the serving. The boy is taught the correct manners of serving wine. For example the person who bought the wine is the person to be served first. Then again when serving men, they hold the glass and the wine is poured into it but when serving women the wine is to be poured into the glass before it is given to them. The last tot of wine must always be shown to the buyer and his permission obtained before it is drunk. All these things the boy learns as he moves in company with his father and other men.

Training of the girl.

As already stated at the beginning of this chapter, the girl is expected to be with her mother or she is to be in the company of other women or girls when she is seven years and more. Because the girl sleeps with her mother, she wakes up when her mother wakes up. Her day begins a bit earlier than that of the boy. When she wakes up, she goes to fetch water with the mother from Densu or any of the wells and springs at Abirim. Because she is young she is given a small bucket to carry but as she



Fig. 31 The girl learns to cook
(Age : 12 years)



Fig. 32 The girl learns to pound fufu
(Age : 10 years)



Fig. 33 The girl sweeps the yard every morning.
(Age : 10 years)

grows up the receptacle is changed till when she is about twelve she carries a kerosene tin.

She is given the small dishes and plates to wash while the mother washes the bigger ones or while she does something else. However the mother looks at her and instructs her. She praises good performances and criticises wrong ones. As the girl grows up she is entrusted more and more with a lot of the work in the kitchen. She is taught how to plaster the hearth with red clay, and when the kitchen and the yard are swept she goes to throw the rubbish away. She also learns how to cook food and how to cook the different kinds of soup with their correct ingredients.

When the girl is young she does not take part in pounding fufu but she turns the fufu while the mother does the pounding. Later on the girl is given occasional lessons in pounding. When she is about twelve or more then she does all the pounding and the mother does the turning.

Mondays and Fridays are said to be the sacred days of the gods of Abirw and so no farm-work is done on these days. It is on these days that they learn a lot from their mothers and other women. They learn how to string beads and how to plait the hair. The girls are given the dirty clothes to go and wash. Sometimes the mothers go with their daughters to the wells where these clothes are washed and there they teach the girls the correct methods of washing and drying.

If a mother will not keep very long when she goes to work on her farm, the young of about seven to nine years is left behind at home to look after her younger brothers and sisters if any. She washes them, feeds them and carries them at her back. It is her duty to see that they do not wander off into the streets and that they do not damage anything in the house. She has to cook food



Fig. 34
Two girls and a boy entertaining their young brothers. "Mother has gone to her farm", they said.



Fig. 35
The girl is pounding maize for her mother who makes porridge.
(Age : 9 years)

so that when the mother returns she might get some food to eat.

If the mother will keep very long on the farm, she goes with the girl. At first when the girl is very young, she does not take part in the work on the farm but she takes care of her younger brothers and sisters or she toasts food for the mother to eat. When she is fairly old, say nine, she takes part in the work. The mother teaches her how to sow maize, okro, garden eggs and pepper as well as tomatoes. She learns how to weed round these vegetables. She also learns how to plant cocoyams, plantain and cassava. In addition to all these, the mother teaches her how to dig for cocoyams, cassava and yams. When coming home she is given a headload of cocoyams, cassava or plantain or a bundle of firewood to carry.

When the girl is about fourteen the mother often gives her a section of the farm to cultivate. Some of the yield from her farm she sells for the mother and some of them swell up the food supply in the family.

While the girl accompanies her mother to the farm or to fetch water or while she works with her in the kitchen the mother tells her stories of the virtues of a good woman. She is advised to be very careful of her girl friends for some of these girls are spoiled and they lead other girls to useless and worthless youngmen. She is also advised to be careful of men who approach her to win her love. She is told the qualities of a good husband and the sort of man she should look forward to for her husband. Some of the women go to the extent of telling their daughters to tell and receive their sanction before assenting to the love making of any man. These informal instructions the girl continues to receive till she is married.

CHAPTER 13

PLAY AND GAMES

Play is one of the most important characteristic features of infancy. Without it the child's healthy and happy development would suffer greatly. In order to facilitate the healthy and happy development of the child Nature has so arranged that the child indulges spontaneously in play-activities right from its cradle.

The child begins to play with its arms, fingers and legs. The satisfaction the child gets by moving its arms and legs about or by grasping the fingers and toes is best seen when the baby is lying in its cot or in its bed. Throughout infancy (0-3) the child's play activities consist mainly of handling things, tearing things like paper and leaves, splashing water and playing with sand. In order to encourage the child to play in this way, the mothers at Abiriw at times leave their children in big pans with water in them so that they may play with the water. Usually too, the mothers provide their children with toys that jingle. A few pebbles are put into a cigarette tin the mouth of which is beaten flat so that the pebbles do not fall out make a popular plaything that jingles. Some mothers buy European made toys for their children.

During the period of early childhood (3-7 years) the child's play-activities are no longer mainly connected with movements of the arms, fingers and legs but with the mind too. His play-activities are prompted mainly by imagination and make-belief. This is why psychologists call this period "The Age of Imagination, fantasy or make-belief." Sir Percy Nunn explains in his



Fig. 36.
Boys and girls playing together.
Childhood (3-7).



Fig. 37
Age of phantasy play. These children are playing at cooking. The food is sand.
(Age 3-7 years)

"Principles of Education" that," It is not that the child prefers fantasy or make-belief to realities but unable, through weakness and ignorance, to bend the stubborn reality of things to his will to achieve his far reaching purposes objectively, the child employs the magic of make-belief to make the world answer to his heart's will". The child therefore ignores hard facts and lives in a world where anything can happen and the laws of nature are not binding.

When one enters houses or walks through the streets and lanes of Abiriw, the one sees boys and girls of this age (3-7) playing together. More often they are naked or half-clothed. The children are seen playing at being mothers washing and nursing their babies. These babies are usually fingers of plantain, pieces of sticks, the shin bones of the sheep or goat, wooden dolls or European made plastic dolls. The babies are washed, dressed, suckled and even carried at the back.

The children also play at cooking. It is interesting to note that no real fire is used for cooking. Bits of sticks heaped together form the necessary fire for cooking. Sardine and Cigarette tins are the cooking pots. The tins are filled with sand and then they are put on the fire. The children blow air into the fire with their mouths and after some time they say the food is cooked. They sit round the food and then say they are eating it. The food is not really eaten but the chin is touched with it and then it is thrown away yet it is said to have been eaten. The parents encourage these make-belief cooking activities by saving for the children old sardine or cigarette tins.

Then again these children make sand dishes and sand ovens. The sand is heaped into a round pyramid shape and the elbow is used for making a conical hole at the top. Water is then poured into the hole. The dry sand is carefully removed



Fig. 38

Two boys enjoying a ride on a tricycle. They say, "Drafa way".
(Ages: 4½ & 5 years)

from the sides of the wet sand which because it is wet sticks together in the form of the dish in which pepper and other things are ground.

With the sand ovens, the sand is moistened and then heaped on one foot. It is then pressed hard and shaped into the form of an oven. The foot is drawn out slowly leaving a hole where it was.

Very often tables and chairs are taken to be lorries or trains. The girls and some of the boys play at being drivers while the rest of the boys play at drivers, drivers' mates, collectors and policemen. The English sentence, "Driver wait" which is corrupted to "Drafa way" is frequently used.

In playing at travelling by train, one boy holds a long stick in between his legs and all the other children fall in behind him each of them with the stick in between his legs. The first boy is the engine driver and the others behind him are the passengers. They all walk forward imitating the noise and whistle of the train.

The children go about hunting butterflies which they trap with their cloths. The wings of the butterflies are cut short so that the butterflies cannot fly again. They are then perched on the arms and said to be parrots (Akoo).

Inanimate objects are personified and talked to by the children. A mother told me that some time ago she gave her son of about 3 years old a tin-box to play with but the boy returned from the streets without it the next day. One day she heard the child saying to a pillar, "You stole my box. Give it back to me otherwise I will take you to the police station".

Play-activities of Later Childhood (7-11 years)

During these years, the play activities of the boys become quite different from those of the girls and so the boys do not play together with the girls as much as they used to do. They play together in



Fig. 39

Boys playing together. It is the age of reality thinking. They are playing with a toy cart.



Fig. 40

A boy going to fetch water with his toy lorry.
(Age : 11 years)

the case of some organised games. The boy who takes part in play-activities for girls is laughed at and called, "Ntoobea" (a boy who has become a girl). Similarly the girl who plays with boys is called "Ibaa barima" (literally "girl-boy"). This is the time when the child becomes very much interested in group activities.

During these years fantasy thinking gives way to reality thinking. The child is no longer interested in make-belief. Instead of using a stationary object as a lorry, the boy likes to use something that moves. The boys make miniature carts (they call them "keteke") with old packing cases. The wheels of the carts are made from the fruits of the sand-box tree or they are cut from the round roots of the silk-cotton tree. One boy sits on the cart and the others push it from behind with sticks. There is yet another type of this toy-lorry which the boys make. The wheels of this kind of lorry are made with the spools of machine threads. Because the wheels are small these lorries are driven on cement floors. (Fig. 39)

There is yet another kind of toy-lorry which the boys are very fond of making. It has two wheels which are connected by an axle that runs through the centre of each wheel. The wheels are made from the round roots of the silk-cotton tree and are driven with a pole of about four feet long. A nail is driven into this pole and on this nail buckets are hung when going to fetch water. Parents allow their sons to make these toy-lorries because when they are made, the boys use them for fetching water. (Fig. 40)

Rims, especially the rims of old bicycles tyres, are also used as lorries. These rims are driven with sticks. As the rim revolves the boy follows it running and keeps the rim moving with a stick.



Fig. 41

The age of reality thinking. These girls are no longer interested in cooking sand. They are cooking real food to eat.

The boys tie one end of their cloths around their waists and then hold the opposite ends. As they run, the wind is caught in the cloth behind so that the cloth looks like the sail on a surf boat. The boys like this game very much and they call it "Ohurututu" (Blown up).

Both the boys and girls of this age are very interested in group activities and organised games. The boys play marbles and football. They are seen playing football in the lanes and streets and on the football field near the School. A lime or an orange fruit serves as a ball but rubber balls are used if they are obtainable.

In the night when the moon is up, these boys gather themselves together and play games like "hide-and-seek, Tioo ti Samanya, Kwaku Osimpi and Nantwi nifuraefo". For the full description of these games and other games see Appendix III

The boys undertake some other play-activities. They hunt birds with their catapults and they also construct houses with sticks and the leaves of plantain or banana. These houses are constructed behind houses which are near the bush.

Girls and play-Activities

The girls of this age continue to practise make-belief cooking (Mkurobo) but at this time they are no longer interested in cooking sand. They build native hearths in which they kindle fire and they cook real food to eat. The mothers eat some of the food the girls cook. The mothers say it is through these play-activities that the girls learn cooking so they encourage the girls by providing them with small dishes and cooking utensils. At times the girls are allowed to use the pots and cooking utensils from the kitchen.

As already stated the girls also become very interested in group activities and organised games.



Fig. 42
Boys playing football.
This was a hectic moment in the game.

In the day they are seen playing games like "Ampe Nsaamma, pempraa and Aso". On moon lit nights too, the girls meet in the streets and play a lot of games some of which are also described fully in Appendix III.

The Adolescents and Games

Through observation and interviews I saw that the adolescents (11-15 years) become more and more disinterested in a lot of the games that used to interest them as they advance in age. They rather get interested more and more in the games that need more of physical and mental exertion than those that do not. When these adolescents are asked by their younger brothers and sisters to join them in their games, they usually reply, "We are grown. We do not take part in child play nowadays".

The games that interest the adolescent boys most so that they are always seen playing or taking part in them are football, draughts, Ludo, marbles, Oware, Hide-and-seek and Ahama. (Tug-of-war) During the afternoons when many of these boys have nothing in particular to do, they congregate on the football field in the town and ride bicycles. The games of Hide-and-seek and Ahama are always played when the moon is up.

The girls also play games like Ampe, Aso, Oware, Ludo and Hide-and-Seek. Another popular game among the girls is "Nwonkyo" (Sing-song.) When the moon is up, these girls meet in the street and sing together. They form a big circle and they sing songs. One of them starts a song and the rest join in the chorus. The starting of the songs goes from one girl to the other girl and goes round and round. As they sing they clap their hands together. This singing continues far into the night on some occasions before these girls stop and go to sleep.

CHAPTER 14

SCHOOLING

The School at Abiriw is up to the Middle Form 4 standard. The School falls into the two departments of Primary and Middle. Each of these departments is under a different headmaster.

The Primary department is housed in two blocks of building. The first block has two classrooms in it for the two upper classes — Primary 5 and 6. The other block which is built adjacent to the first block, contains four classrooms, an office and a store. The floors are tiled, the rooms ceiled, the walls are whitewashed and are hung with illustrative pictures.

The Middle department is also housed in an uncompleted block of building containing four classrooms, the office, a store and a cell for keeping tools. The shutters of the windows and doors are not yet fixed and the walls, though plastered, are not yet whitewashed. The rooms are also not yet ceiled.

The School has a total enrolment of 436 children made up of 134 boys and 127 girls in the Primary department and 144 boys and 31 girls in the Middle department. Of these 436 School children, 94 are not natives of Abiriw. From the proportion of non-natives and natives, I can safely say that the majority of these children are attending school in their home-town — Abiriw.

The staff of the School is made up of ten trained teachers eight of whom hold the Teachers' certificate 'A' and the remaining two also hold certificate 'B'. There are six men and 4 women teachers forming the staff.

By interviewing the two headmasters, I got to

know that the average age of children entering the school is between 6 and 7 years and that normally the children finish at the average age of about 16 or 18.

It will be remembered that in the introductory chapter to this thesis, I pointed out that the majority of the people of Abiriw are cocoa farmers who travel to different cocoa growing parts of the country to pursue farming, and that during this exodus the children are in many cases left at home to attend School or to serve the old and the infirm relations who are left behind. The result is that many of these school children do not stay with their real parents but with their relations. Some of the older children in the Middle school do not stay with any relations but they stay by themselves. At times two or three of them live together in one house and they cook their own food when school is over. This causes late-coming to school to be on a higher percentage in the Middle School than in the Primary school.

There is some sort of training different from that for boys for the girls. In the two departments of the school the girls are taught needlework and knitting. Some of the work I saw done by the girls included handkerchiefs, table-cloths, chemise, aprons, draws, babies' dressing outfit, lapbags and baby bootees. They also undertake modelling native dishes and making native sweeping brooms. The boys are also taught simple wood carving, basket weaving, brush making and bread and cake tin making. Some of the things I saw done by the boys and neatly packed at the store were carved pestles, small stools, bush rope baskets sweeping brushes made from coconut fibre, door mats made from the husks of cobs of maize and some bread and cake tins.

I also saw that the Middle School children



Middle School boys playing volley ball.



Middle School girls practising scoring in Netball

crack palm kernels and they also grind sand-stones into sand and these two things are sold and the money, as I was told, is used for buying games and crafts materials.

The number of games played in the Primary department is quite insufficient. The only game for the boys is football and the girls have three sets of Ludo which they play during games periods. In addition to this they play native games like "Aso, Ampe and Ahamma". The only competition in which the children take part is the annual inter-schools sports meeting.

In the middle school things are different. The boys play football and volley while the girls play netball, volley and native games. In addition to these there are indoor games like Ludo and Snakes-and-Ladders.

Competitions are organised regularly in these games and they are keenly contested by the four sections into which the children are divided. Nearly every month there is some sort of competition in football, volley, netball or sports. The winning sections are awarded marks or points. Although these competitions are keenly contested no hostilities are displayed. However the members of the section that comes last (for example if it is the Red section) are teased with a popular song the words of which are, "Redfo awe OO, ee Redfo awe OO, eye m'asem ben". (The Red section members have come last. It doesn't concern or affect me)

Normally there is friendly relationship among the children despite the occasional quarrels or fights which the teachers do not entertain at all. The children who fight are always taken to the headmasters who punish them.

Discipline in the middle school is much severer than it is in the Primary School. The teachers say that some of the children especially

some of the older girls are a bit wayward and disrespectful to the young teachers on the staff. The teachers told me that it is the children in the Form 4 class (the topmost class) who are most disrespectful to the teachers. They say it is this attitude of some of the children that has called for the rigid discipline in the school. Apart from this the teachers are on very friendly and lovely terms with the children as well as among themselves.

Although the parents expect good performance in school work from their children yet the children told me they are not punished at home for poor work done. Instead, they say, the parents often advise them to work harder. When I asked the headmasters I was told that there has never been an occasion when any parent has come to dispute school decisions.

CHAPTER 15

Adolescence and Puberty Rites.

The period of adolescence begins when a girl is eleven and it ends when she is fourteen. whilst with the boy it begins when he is thirteen and ends at fifteen. Next to infancy this is the most important period in the child's growth as well as in character formation. Though very important this period is, and clear are its symptons yet the people of Abiriw have no name for it.

The period of adolescence is characterised by physical, physiological and psychological changes in the child. Under physical changes we see that the child's breasts begin to develop. The boy's breasts develop till they are about the size of the thumb and the girl's develop till each is as large as a man's fist. Hair begins to grow in the armpits and around the private parts. While the boy's muscles stand out clearly the girl develops the round curves of womanhood and a broad waist.

Under physiological changes we see that growth is very irregular and this makes the child become long-legged. The child develops a large appetite. The boy's voice becomes temporary brassy and then breaks. The Adam's-apple begins to show. Though the child becomes very active yet he gets tired very easily and quickly. So he becomes very lazy.

Psychologically the children become rebellous against adults. Very often they defy the authority of their parents and other adults. The boys tend to pay less fear and respect to their mothers and other women. They become very mischievous. They form gangs, go about in these gangs through the streets when the moon is up and they steal the bunches of bananas some sellers have left hanging outside their houses. They also steal fruits like oranges,

pine apples and mangoes from peoples orchards. They also make nocturnal raids on the farms very near the village and steal crops like maize and cocoyams which they toast in fires they set in the streets. Lizards fall victims to the attacks of these boys.

Some of these adolescent boys do not even fear the gods in the town. I was told of an instance when one night some of these boys went and stole the foreleg of a sheep that had been left hanging on the wall of the house of one of these gods. The sheep had been sacrificed to the god that day.

The girls too get obstinate and wayward and at times refuse the corrections of their mothers. Some are known to pick quarrels with their mothers and go to the extent of fighting them.

The young adolescents become self-conscious and begin to pay more attention to their personal appearances. The boys begin to cut their hair fashionably and they also begin to grease their hair. They are easily attracted by new fashions in dress. The girls on the other hand blacken their hair and eyelashes. They begin to spend long periods before the mirror powdering their faces and admiring their beauty.

The sex instinct becomes strong towards the end of adolescence. Very often, when the boys meet in the streets in the evenings they indulge in idle talks in which sex talks play a dorminant part. These talks form the main source of sex knowledge that they get. Because these talks are not sanctioned by parents they are always done at places where the participants can escape the notice of their parents.

When the moon is up these adolescent boys and girls play hide-and-seek in the streets. Whilst in hiding the boys embrace the girls and shake their waists. Some go to the extent of trying their hands at sexual intercourse with the girls. If there are

no girls taking part in these plays, the boys are known to pull and play with one anothers penis.

As this is the time when the boy is given his own room it often happens that he invites his friend to sleep with him. While locked up in their room the boys are known to embrace each other. At times they strip themselves, stand up face to face and one of them rubs his penis against the penis of the other boy. Sometimes these boys smuggle into their room a girl of their own age and practise sexual intercourse with her.

The girls too are known to embrace themselves when alone. Also it is known that at times when two girls are alone, each pushes her forefinger into the others vagina and then they shake their waists vigorously. Children who are caught practising these sex acts are always punished and because of that the children employ all sorts of tricks to help them to avoid detection.

It is known that these adolescents practise unsanctioned sex acts such as have been described above and so some parents object strongly to allowing their sons to sleep with their friends. Similarly the girls are not allowed to share the same sleeping room with the boys in the house but they sleep with their mothers.

The adolescent boy and National Festivals:

The people of Abiriw know that the adolescent boys are interested in customs and national festivals so they are always given a place to play in the annual Ohum Festival. This part they play with full gusto. The Ohum Festival begins on the last Akwasidae (Holy Sunday) of the Akan year which is calculated by counting forty days from one Sunday to the next Sunday. The ninth Akwasidae is the last in the year and it is on that Sunday that the Ohum festival begins. The boys play their part on the next Monday.

At about four o'clock in the evening on that day, the adolescent boys meet at the house of the high priest of Bosompra. (the town god) They gather round the shed in which the god (Bosompra) is housed. There stands a tree called "Akyeawa" in this shed and this tree the high priest (called Ɔsɔfo) prunes. Each of the boys, wearing only a pant or pair of knickers, takes some of the leaves of this plant and then they run together from house to house through the village. One man leads them and they obey his commands. The women in any house they come to have to meet them at the entrance and pour buckets of water on them. otherwise when they enter the house they pour out all the water they see in any barrels and pots.

While running from one house to the other, the boys sing a song which says, "We want water with which to wash. You don't know how to pour water on us. You know how to pour water on us". In Kyerepong the words of this song are, "Akyeawa ee! Yɛpɛ nsu aguare o! Ɔbenni etu ntsu. Oni etu ntsu". When the boys have finished with their rounds, they go back to the priest's house where they are given mashed yam to eat before they disperse into their houses.

Puberty Rites for Girls

The average girl menstruates for the first time when she is fourteen. As the girl gets nearer the end of the period of adolescence, the parents begin to look forward to the day she will have her first menses. They begin to plan about the things they would give to the girl. The girl herself begins to leave her hair bushy so that her headgear would take good shape when she wears it that day. In addition to this she begins to stack firewood which would be used for cooking her food. She buys two or three changes of "ntama" which she gives to her

mother for safe keeping. The girl takes her morning bath every day before she takes her breakfast. It is considered a disgrace if the girl eats food first and later she sees she has menstruated for the first time. If it happens so and it is known people tease her with the name "didi-aye-bra". (The girl who menstruates after eating food.)

When it is about a fortnight or less to the time the girl will have her first menses, she begins to complain of attacks of feverishness, headache and slight pains in the waist. The skin of the breasts become light and glossy in colour and the nipples get darker in colour. When the parents see all these signs which herald the menstrual flow, they begin to watch the movements of the girl every morning.

The girl usually wakes up early every morning. She goes for water, sweeps the yard and the kitchen and goes to throw the sweepings away. When she sees that she has menstruated she runs away from the house and goes to hide because she feels shy to let people know that she has menstruated. Some girls go to the extent of weeping bitterly when they are in hiding.

As soon as the parents see that the girl is nowhere to be found and that they suspect that the long expected day is come at last, they send a search party of girls after her. When they see her they bring her home and seat her behind the house. Except in the christian quarters when a girl or a woman menstruates she is not allowed to enter the house until the sixth day. This is done because she is considered unclean within those six days. Even on the sixth day she must take her bath before she enters any house. This is why she is given a seat outside the house. Relatives and all friends are informed of the girl's menstruation.

In the olden days the girl's menstruation was

announced by a woman crier. She held a hoe which she tinkled with an old cutlass. She then cried out and sang the words:-

"Obommoriwaa ee! Saa ee!	" Hark! Hark!
Hena aye bra o?	Who has menstruated?
Akosua Kyerebea aye bra O!	Akosua Kyerebea (the girl's name) has menstruated.
Obommoriwa ee! Saa ee!	Hark! Hark!"

On hearing this announcement many girls and women rushed to where the girl was to congratulate her. Nowadays the announcement is not given in the way described in the last paragraph above but people are sent to inform relatives and friends. When they receive the news they go to congratulate the girl with the words; "Wo nuru nkpɛ!" (Long life to your head.)

The girl initiate cuts and scrapes her nails neatly and then goes to wash herself at the bath-room or if she chooses, her friends accompany her to one of the wells. She washes herself with a new towel, a new sponge and a new cake of soap. These signify a new change in life. She washes herself with soap three times. In days gone by, after the girl had washed herself, any first born among the girls presented a brass pan filled with water to the initiate. She dipped he mouth into the water three times and any time she did so the other girl said, "Na meegyi kwaadu." (Mother I will eat banana). This was meant to ask the initiate to bring forth children who would beg for food from her. This is no longer practised so the girl comes home after washing herself. The girls who follow her beam with smiles.

Touching of Lips

After the girl has dressed herself then follows one of the most important puberty rites — the touching of the lips. This is performed by a woman relative who is the first born of her mother.

She holds in her left hand a plate in which are three small balls of marshed yam (white), three other small balls of marshed yam (red with palm oil), three small slices of boiled egg and three small bits of the toasted skin of the grey duiker the Twi people call "Otwe" and which the Kyerepongs call "Akpe". The woman touches the girl's lips with each of these things. She begins with the skins, then the egg slices follow, then the red balls of marshed yam come and the white balls come last. When the last ball of marshed yam has touched the lips the woman tells the girl to bring forth thirty children. The girl is then given about a table spoonful of the red marshed yam to eat. She may now eat any food she likes.

The girl sits with her friends around her ready to receive presents. Very often the first gifts to be received come from the parents and they consist of two or more headloads of cocoyam and plantain, a fowl or a goat, one or two skewers of mud-fish, two or three changes of cloth (ntama) and some trinkets. Other presents from relatives and friends keep pouring in till the end of the sixth day when the girl is allowed to enter the house. Even after the sixth day some people keep bringing in gifts.

For the five days that the girl stays outside the house, her friends cook for her, fetch water for her, sleep with her, eat with her and serve her in all ways possible. The girl is not allowed to do any work but she dresses beautifully, eats and sleeps. She takes her bath before she is allowed to enter the house on the sixth day. On the eighth day, she invites many girls and women who go round with her to give thanks to all those who brought her presents and to show herself to the queen-mother. It is after this that her puberty initiation is over. Two or so years later she may marry.

Not very long ago there used to be a special dance held every evening for the five days the girl stayed outside the house for her puberty initiation. The dance started at about five o'clock in the evening and lasted till about midnight or cock-crow everyday. Many girls and women met together in the main street and formed a big circle. They sang, clapped their hands together and danced in turns within the circle. The initiate took part in this dance. She was well dressed in blouse (kaba) and two pieces ntama skirt. She wore a special headgear called "Oduku" in which were several gold pins. She wore a lot of precious beads and gold ornaments round the neck and at the wrists.

There was observed another rite which marked the last phase of the puberty dance. It was called the "pullet head" (akoko tire). It was observed on the fifth day of the puberty dance. Very early in the morning, while all the young girls were gone to fetch water, a pullet was killed secretly. Its head was wrapped with a piece of rag and it was bound with a string to form a small ball of about the size of an apple. This ball was given to the initiate who hid it in her cloth. As the girls who had gone for water were passing, she threw the ball at the back part of the waist of any one of the girls who it was expected would soon have her first menses. As the initiate threw the ball at the girl she said, "Menstruate tomorrow". (Akye bo ahue). All the women and other girls shouted their appreciation in a chorus.

The pullet that was killed was cut up into very small bits, stewed and then distributed among all the women and girls present in the evening when the last phase of the dance was held. It was after all of them had received their

shaves that they dispersed to their homes and the dance was over.

All the people who came to take part in this dance were fed every evening for the five days at the expense of the girl's parents. This, plus other expenses often, led the parents into heavy debts which ranged between twenty and forty pounds. Because of this, the dance has now been abolished.

The girl is expected not to know any man sexually till she has menstruated. If a man is caught using a girl who has not menstruated, he is taken to court where he is fined very heavily. Some parents punish the girl severely. It is a taboo of considerable magnitude if a girl becomes pregnant whilst she has not menstruated. She and her partner are arrayed before the chief and his elders and they are fined very heavily. In addition they are asked to slaughter about seven sheep to appease the gods of the village. In the olden days the girl and her partner were exiled from Abiriw.

As the root of the puberty rites described in this chapter is grounded in beliefs about menstruation, there are no puberty rites for the boy. He begins to pay taxes and to take part in any communal labour that is undertaken at the village when he is between eighteen and twenty years old. He may marry at any time at this age or after because he is now considered an adult.

The puberty rites and practices also described in this passage are observed only by the non-christian natives of Abiriw. With the christians, the boys and girls of about fifteen or sixteen are confirmed together in the church on one of the advent Sundays to Christmas. On that Sunday all the candidates go to church dressed in white and after the service is over they march through the



Fig. 43
A christian girl who has recently been confirmed.
(Age : 16 years)



Fig. 44.
The girl is now an adult.
She wears a headgear and two two-yard ntama and kaba. (Blouse)
(Age : 18 years)

streets. As they march through the streets they thank people. When they go home they give presents in the form of biscuits and sweets to people who in turn bring them monetary gifts. In the evening, the parents hold feasts in honour of their children's confirmation.

While the boy's confirmation falls into the background two days after the occasion, the girl's confirmation has greater importance. This is so because the boy's confirmation is no sign of maturity but the girl's is. During the week following the Sunday on which she was confirmed the girl is exempted from all domestic duties. Her friends fetch water for her, they cook for her and serve her in any way possible.

The girl, dressed in her best and adorned with golden trinkets, attends service the next Sunday. After the service she goes round with her mother or aunt to thank people who brought her presents. She begins to take part in communal labour and in paying taxes. A year or two after her confirmation she is considered an adult and can marry. To mark her emergence into adult life, the girl plaits her hair, and dresses in "kaba" (blouse) and two pieces ntama.

As the girl is now considered an adult the parents do not exercise much authority over her but she is given a wide measure of freedom of action. Her views on all matters are taken into consideration. Her training is over.



Fig. 45

Some young school children are brought to be blessed by a heathen Priest. The boys are of heathen parentage.

The second characteristic feature I saw in the lives of the people of Abiriw is that the beliefs in gods and the other superstitious beliefs and practices have taken deep roots in the minds of the people. One evidence of this is that when a child is ill sometimes the belief is that he has been bewitched. So instead of taking him to hospital for proper treatment, he is taken to fetish-priests to ask them to extricate the child from the evil influences of witches or some evil spirits. Very often the child is taken to hospital when the fetish priest has failed to cure him and when, in many cases, it is too late. The result is that often the doctor is not able to save the child and he dies.

Another evidence is that when a woman is pregnant the superstitious practices which are believed to have the power to safeguard the well-being of the child and its mother are carried out before she goes to the hospital or the clinic for treatment. At times these practices are carried on at the same time as she continues to receive treatment from hospital.

A third evidence that superstitious beliefs and practices have taken deep roots in the minds of the people is that some of the chistians follow some of these practices secretly. For example when a girl menstruates for the first time, some christians give the girl eggs and marshed yam in the same way as the heathen girls are treated and they say it is a custom and that customs are not to be broken or ignored. Then again some of the christians do still believe in witchcraft. I was in a christian home one day when a woman came there and told the people in the house how fortunate she had been for taking her

child who had been bewitched to a fetish priest at Apiredε. She said that it was the priest who told her that the child had been bewitched and that if she had not brought the child to him that day, it might have died just the next day. This story the woman believed with all earnestness although she was a christian who should not have beli! in such things.

On Mondays, Fridays and "Awukudaε" days, the people of Abiriw are not allowed to go and work on their farms for these days are said to be the sacred days of the gods of the town. This practice in particular should have been obeyed and carried out by the adherents of the heathen gods as I think; yet some of the christians keep to these orders and do not go to work on their farms on these days.

The third thing I saw during my investigation is that some of the treatment and training given to the child are unhygienic, bad and cruel. If a child does not cry immediately after its birth, the midwife pours a mouthful of water over the child's face to make it cry. In training the child in self-feeding, he is encouraged to pick up and eat the food that has fallen to the ground from his hand. The people say the child is young and does not know anything about dirt. If at meals, the baby soils the food with its urine or faeces, the soiled part is removed and partakers of the food including the other children are expected to eat the rest of the food.

In my own opinion I believe that these practices are unhygienic because they give rise to all sorts of worm diseases and direct introduction of germs into the tender bodies of the children.

Some of the medicines prepared from herbs

and then administered are very efficacious but in my personal opinion I think many of them are dangerous. For example when a child is ill, the medicine given him to drink is not scientifically measured. The dosage is usually a calabashful or cupful three times daily without taking into consideration the strength of the patient or the medicine.

Then again some of the medicines given by some of the fetish-priests are smelling water and herbs from the black pots of the fetishes. I think some of the patients given these dangerous medicines fall victims to overdosing and direct introduction of germs into the body thus causing other diseases or even deaths, yet when such a malady happens it is attributed to witches or the evil influences of bad spirits or some bad medicine men.

When a child does something wrong some mothers push red pepper into the child's rectum as punishment. The "come-and-stay" child (Okobae or bagyina) is not allowed to sleep on rags but it sleeps on dry plantain fibre which do not really protect the child from feeling cold. On the eighth day when it is going to be named, a knife is used for making cuts at the edges of the mouth and near the outer corners of the eyes. The knife is not sterilised and so it may convey germs into the body. More than this I think these practices are cruel practices.

On the other hand I think that some of the methods of training the child are good and need retention. An example of this is that the child is taught to address all his elders with some word of respect. The child is also taught to be obedient to all his elders and should not refuse to go when he has been sent by any of them. The reason why I say that in my opinion this

training in respect is good is that many of our Gold Coast children, especially some of those in the big towns, have become disrespectful to their elders and old age. To teach the child how to respect his elders is, as I think, very commendable.

Another training which I think is good is how the boy is taught the occupation of his father by following him and how the girl also learns her lessons in domestic duties by keeping near the mother as well as the other women in the house. The women also encourage their daughters to play at make-belief cooking and in caring for the younger children. In this way the girl practises and learns many of the things that will be useful to her later in life. The reason why I believe in these methods of teaching is that the child is confronted with real life situations in which he learns. The modern educationist says teaching through real life situations is one of the best methods of teaching.

When a girl is going through her puberty initiation some parents allow their daughters to go and serve the girl. This breeds unity and friendliness among the girls. In my opinion I think this is also good training. It is a training in social responsibility.

When a relative or friend gives birth to a child some of the women leave for some time their domestic duties and go to serve the woman who has brought forth by pounding fufu for her, by fetching water for her and in carrying the older children. Then again I saw that every woman at Abiriw is concerned with the care and welfare of one another's children. When therefore a woman sees a child crying in the streets and yet his mother is not near, she carries the child, caresses him and

takes him to his mother. It is remarkable how these women can easily tell one another's children. These two things too, I think, are very good examples of friendliness worthy of imitation by the young girls.

Another thing which I think is also good is the training given to the child to inculcate in him respect for others properties and how he is taught not to steal others properties.

The fourth and last but not the least aspect of training the child is the great influence that christianity, education, modern economic factors and the impact of Western ideas are having on child training and welfare as well as on the lives of the people at large. These factors have done and are still doing much in breaking and disintergrating some, if not many, of the superstitious beliefs and practices of the people of Abiriw

The child with six fingers is now allowed to live and is not so much a person whose company was believed brought ill-luck and whose company should therefore be shunned. The shameful Krawa ceremony (the ceremony for unproductive men) is no longer practised. Parents have stopped spending huge sums of money in organising puberty dances for their daughters. I was told that parents who are caught organising these puberty dances are taken to the Native Court at Adukrom and they are fined.

Some, if not many, of the women have now begun to patronise the clinics at Adukrom and Akropong. I think this new attitude is serving as an effective instrument in reducing infant mortality as well as the deaths of women through bringing forth

with difficulty.

I believe that the gradual disappearance of these superstitious beliefs and practices will eventually give way to freedom from fear; and that the benefits of modern scientific discoveries will be used for alleviating pains and deaths and for solving a lot of the problems of child-health and welfare as well as the training of children. But the question is, as these social factors are gradually disappearing under the influence of christianity, Education and Western ideas, what has the civilization of Europe and America for replacing them?

Appendix I

The death of a Baby who is less than a week old

As already referred to in the chapter dealing with birth, a baby who is less than eight days old is regarded as a visitor. Its death is therefore considered as the exit of a stranger and should not be the cause of sorry on the part of the parents. Anybody who hears of the death of such a child and comes to see the parents to express his sympathies should not use the word "Due" the usual word of condolence as it said to make them sad.

When a child dies on the day it was born it is wrapped in pieces of cloth and buried. If it stays for more than a day then it is wrapped with rags and put into a small parking case for burial.

When a mother finds that the baby is dying, she is not to hold it but to raise alarm and let some people come in to help her. Whoever gets to her first dips his fingers into water and allows some to drop into the child's mouth. The right hand is then placed on the child's chest and then it is addressed to with the words," Ayirebi behaw mo ni ala. Akye bɛ kyeba" (A child should not make its mother sorry. Next time you come, be a surviving child.) It is when it is seen that all life is gone away from the child that it is wrapped and put into a box for burial.

The mother is not allowed to weep and she is hushed down any time she tries to weep. If her mother is near she comes to comfort her. As soon as the corpse is taken to the cemetery for burial, the mother goes to the bathroom for a wash. The sponge and towel and the soap she used are not to be brought home and neither should they ever be used again. They are thrown away.

While the mother is taking her bath, plantain

is cooked, marshed and palm oil is added to it. This food is given to the mother to eat after she has put away the cloth she was wearing when her child died. This cloth must later on be washed before it is used.

The people of Abiriw believe that when a mother whose child dies before it is a week old weeps or shows signs of much sorrow and refuses to be comforted, her attitude can bring one of two consequences on her. One is that it can be a cause of barrenness in her and the other is that the next child she will bring forth will also die. Upon investigation I got to know that these people believe that children are spiritual beings who live in a spiritual world from where they can see all that is going on in this world of ours. When the spirit-child sees that its departure from this world grieves the mother exceedingly, it chooses to tease the mother by reincarnating and dying again. If however it sees that its departure does not cause sorrow then when next time it reincarnates it survives.

If none of a woman's children has ever died, the first of them to die is called "Fea" and his death must not be the cause of much sorrow in the house for the same reasons as named in the last paragraph above.

APPENDIX II

English translation of Songs

1. Kwadwo Okoto wants some pawpaw to eat.
   There aren't any pawpaw fruits here.
   Pawpaw fruits are down the hill.

2. Short pants, short pants.
   That woman will lose her hair.

3. Oh! Rock him,
   Yes, yes.
   Oh! Rock him.
   Yes, yes.
   Put Kofi at the foot of that tree.
   Yes, yes.
   I should not eat any food if Kofi touches me.
   I should not eat any food if Kofi touches me.

4. This one cries, "Nger, nger."
   This one says," What's the matter?"
   This one replies," He is feeling hungry."
   This one says," Let us steal some of our
   father's food for him to eat."
   This one says," I'll tell Father when he comes."

5. The squirrel climbs trees
   Kobɔ, (a boy's name) look at it.
   It is climbing the tree.

6. You this fat baby,
   Are you now going to cry?
   Your mother has no time.
   Are you now going to cry?
   Your father has no time.
   Are you now going to cry?

APPENDIX II

Songs mothers sing to their babies

1. Kwadwo Okoto bedi aduwa,
   Aduwa bɛɛtɛ to,
   Aduwa bo bɔ ano.

2. Twakoto ntimi ntimi
   Twakoto ntimi ntimi
   Me ni akye ako ntakua bɛsa

3. Sosro no O,
   Hoo ayee
   Sosro no o
   Hoo ayee
   Wɔmfa Kofi nkɔto nkwrodua ase ɛ
   Hoo ayee
   Kofi enyi me megyi ɛtɛ
   Kofi enyi me megyi ɛtɛ.

4. Oyi se, "Ngɛɛ, ngɛɛ."
   Oyi se, "Den na aba?"
   Oyi se, "Ɔkɔm na aba".
   Oyi se, "Moma yenkowia agya aduan no bi ma no ɛ".
   Oyi se, "Agya ba a mɛka".

5. Oporu, 'puro fam nnua ho.
   Kɔbɔ, kye.
   Ɔfam nnua ho.

6. Opotropo ba ee
   Afei na worebesu?
   Wo ni nni adaagye
   Afei na worebesu?
   Wo se nni adaagye
   Afei na worebesu?

7. I have got a beautiful ,
But a Kotokoli man has taken it away
from me.
I have got a very fat baby,
But a Kotokoli man has taken it away
from me.

8. You that short woman,
You alone carry your baby,
By the grace of God,
I'll one day get my own baby.

7. Manya m'adeɛ fefɛɛfɛ,
Kotokoli agye me nsam.
Manya m'adeɛ potropo
Kotokoli agye me nsam.

8. Kpeekpee wo ako tsu wo ɛtɛ,
Kpeekpee wo ako tsu wo ɛtɛ.
Onyankopɔn adaworoma,
Kyɛ ako menyɛ me le.

APPENDIX III

Games and Songs.

When the day's work is done so that the children are free, the children at Abiriw usually meet in houses or in the streets and play a lot of games. Many of these games are played in the evenings. When the moon is up these games are at times extended far into the night. At times some parents get alarmed when they see that their children have kept too long in the streets so they go after them and bring them home to sleep.

It will be remembered I have said in this thesis that Mondays and Fridays are the holy days to the gods of Abiriw and so the people do not go to work on their farms. It is on these days and on Sundays too, that the children at Abiriw play a lot of games after they have finished serving in the house. The School children too take part in these games when School is over in the evenings and in the night when the moon is up.

Under this section, I have selected for full description a few of the games commonly played by the children at Abiriw. It will be seen that some of these games are accompanied with songs. Some of them are played by boys only and others are played by all sexes and by children in all the different age groups.

1. NSAAMMA (SPAN)

This is a game that is played by all classes of children except the adolescents who think it is a childish game. However some of them do play it occasionally. It is a game that is played anywhere that there is dry sand and it is played by any number of children. It is played only in the day.

The leader draws a circle with a diameter

of about three inches in the sand. From the circumference of this circle, he uses his three middle fingers for drawing radiating parallel lines. Each line is as long as his span. There are as many parallel lines as there are many players. These parallel lines form the homes of the players.

The leader puts a small round pebble at the centre of the circle. He then gives the pebble a push with his finger. The pebble rolls into the home of the player to his right. If he succeeds in getting the pebble to fall into the home of the next player to his right, he measures with his span the distance between the circumference of the circle and where the pebble is resting. He elongates his home with the exact number of spans he got. This elongation is done and continued in subsequent scores in anti-clockwise spiral form.

The next player also drives the pebble from his home into the home of the player to his right. If he succeeds in getting the pebble into the home he scores and he also elongates his home in the same way as the first player did but with the number of spans he scored. If the pebble does not fall into the home of the next player he fails to score anything. In this way, the game goes round and round. Some players score spans and elongate their homes accordingly.

If a player scores a number of spans which help his home to overtake the home of any player, the player who has been overtaken is knocked out. His home is rubbed out and his head is supposed to be cut off. The game goes on till one of the players remains while all others have been knocked out. He is the winner and champion of the game. When he is declared the winner, the game ends.

2. AHAMMA (Tug of War)

The real translation of the word "Ahamma" is ropes. This game is really a kind of tug-of-war. It is a strenuous game so it is not played by the young children but by the older children. It is played in the evenings when the moon is up.

The children form a circle and hold their hands. One of them repeatedly calls a tune by calling "Ahamma OO!" The rest respond by saying "Yoo yoo." As they sing, they pull hard in all directions and yet no one is to break the circle by leaving the hand of the other child next to him.

If a child breaks the circle, he has to run away to a safety-home that is always chosen before the game starts. When he gets to the safety-home he has to shout and say "Asase ee!" and then touch the ground with his hand. While running away to the safety-home, the rest of the children chase him and if he is caught, every one of the players gives him a slap at the back of the hand or at the buttocks. At times the victim cries.

After the child has been given his slaps or after he has safely reached home, the game starts again.

3. "Ɔdɔ fa wo nsa beto me kɔn mu"
(Love, put your arm round my neck)

This is a game that is played by all classes of children but mostly by the adolescents. It is always played by boys and girls together and it is played when the moon is up.

The boys form one line at one place opposite another line formed by the girls. A space of about ten yards is left between these two lines.

The children clap their hands and sing saying, "Ɔdɔ ee! Fa wo nsa beto me kɔn mu. Obi dɔ, fa wo nsa beto me kɔn mu." (My love, come and put your arm round my neck. Somebody's love, come and put your

arm round my neck.)

As they sing and clap their hands, the first boy in the line walks to the tune of the song towards the girls. When he gets to them, he puts his arm round the neck of the first girl and both of them walk together side by side to the boy's place. She in turn puts her arm round the neck of the next boy and they walk back to the girl's place and so the game goes on till the last children also get their turn and then it is started from the first boy again.

When a boy puts his arm round the neck of a girl whom it is known he has affections for, there is always a roar of laughter. The game goes on till they feel for a change then they stop.

4. "Se manya" (I have got.)

This is a game that is mostly played by boys and girls of seven to eleven years old. It is played both during the day and in the evening when the moon is shining.

The children form a circle in which they follow one another. Each child wraps his cloth loosely around him holding it on his chest with his left hand. The right hand he uses for holding the cloth of the child right in front of him.

When all of them are ready, one of them begins to sing and all of them join him. The words of the song and the only song for this game are," Tiooti, se manya, ti ntontonto, se manya. Minnya ntama mfura, se manya. Obi ntama na efura me, se manya Nowaa waa!" (Listen! I have no cloth to cover myself with. I use somebody's cloth for covering myself)

As the children sing this song, they jump forward rhythmically to the tune of the song. When they get to the last word of the song, they stop skipping and at the same time each player leaves his cloth and takes the cloth of the player in front of him. He was holding

this cloth all the while they were hopping together.

After this they wrap the cloths loosely around them as they did at first and then the game begins again. As the rule of the game demands, they keep strictly to their places right through the game. On the last round, when every player gets back his cloth, they all burst into a cheerful song at the last word of the first song. This second song which ends the game says," Bless my soul. I have got my cloth back." The game ends when they finish singing this song.

5. The Game of Marbles

The game of marbles is played by older boys only and also by the youth especially.

A round platform with a flat top is raised with sand. This platform has a square shape if it is built of the stems of the plantain. A mat is spread on the flat top of the platform in such a way that the edges are slightly raised and the middle is slightly depressed. This platform is not more than six inches high from the ground.

The boys squat round or sit round the platform. The first player twists his marble between the left thumb and the right forefinger and then leaves it spinning round and round on the mat. The players to his right do the same in succession till every player has his marble spinning on the mat too.

If in spinning round, your marble knocks another marble off the mat, you take that marble and the owner forfeits it. He may redeem it by giving you another marble or a cube of sugar if it is agreed upon by all the players. This game has many rules.

One of the rules is that if a marble that is not spinning is knocked down or if it rather knocks down a spinning marble, there is no forfeiture on either side. The explanation to this rule is that a marble that is not spinning is considered dead and a dead person can neither kill nor be killed. If two marbles

collide and they all fall off the platform, that is a par and there is no forfeiture. If two players claim that their marbles have knocked down a third player's marble, the third player declares by saying "puu!" and he goes free— he does not pay any ransom for it.

At times this game lasts for more than six hours. Because it takes a long time, it is usually played on Sundays or on the days the boys have no work to do.

6. "Amuamuani"

The word "Amuamuani" is a Twi word and it means 'shutting the eyes'. It is another version of the game of "Hide-and-Seek" and is played by all classes and sexes of children. The younger children like to play it in the day while the older ones like playing it in the evenings when the moon is shining. It is a game that is played by any number of children.

A big circle is drawn on the ground with ash or anything that can be seen clearly. This is the safety home. Two children stand in this circle and one of them shuts the other's eyes and says loudly, "Amuamuani ee! Kɔ na nya bi brɛ me OO, ntetea wɔ gyade!" (You whose eyes are shut, go and fetch me something. There are ants at the kitchen.) As he does and says so, all the other children run into hiding. When all of them are gone, he opens the eyes of the hunter as he is called.

The player who shuts the seeker's eyes must touch the ground and shout, "Osim ee!" immediately he leaves him, otherwise, if he is caught, he in turn becomes the hunter.

As soon as the hunter has been set free he begins to go about looking for those in hiding. He sees not to go far away from the home so

that he may be able to touch one of the players before all of them step into the home. Any player who manages to get into the home must say "Osim ee!" and then he is free; free in the sense that he is not to be touched by the hunter.

When the hunter succeeds in touching one of the players before he steps into the home, he announces his success and all the other players come out of their hiding places and the game begins again. The player who was touched by the hunter now becomes the new hunter.

When the children see that they are all tired they meet at the home and they all stretch their arms forward then they all say together, "Hwete, hwete, samm!" On the word "Samm", all the players run away home and the game is ended.

7. "Nwonkoro"

"Nwonkoro" is one of the most popular games for the girls, (especially the adolescents) at Abinin. This is really a game of sing-song, dancing and clapping of hands. A lot of the songs these girls sing are songs in honour of the men they would wish for as their future husbands. Some are praises to their parents, brothers, their lovers or men who have really caught their fancy.

The girls meet at a place and stand in a circle. They clap their hands rythmically together according to the beat of the songs they sing. One girl steps into the circle, begins a song and the rest join her in singing it. As they sing, the girl in the circle takes a few dancing steps before she retires to her place. As soon as she reaches her place, the next girl to her right also steps in and dances before returning to her place. In this way the game of singing goes on.

Because many of the songs these girls sing are



Fig. 46

"Agyesi egyi me. Kpaa leelee", and they skip round and round.

very melodious, many young men and boys are attracted to the scene. These young men stand by watching and occasionally some of them pass remarks on the performances of some of the girls.

The girls dissolve the game and go home when they get tired or when a disagreement arises between some of them.

8. "Agyesi egyi Me" (Smoke is getting into my eyes)

The game of "Agyesi egyi Me" is one of the most interesting games that the children at Abiriw play. Though it is a game mainly for girls yet the young boys do very often join in. This game is very popular with the children who are between seven and eleven years old. The game is played both during the day and in the evening when the morning is shining brightly.

The children stand in a circle and join their hands. One girl with a handful of sand stands in the circle. She sings saying, "Agyesi egyi me" (smoke is getting into my eyes) and those girls forming the circle respond with, "Kpaaleelee". (the name of a shrub.) As the girls sing they skip to the right still keeping in the circle. After they have skipped for some time, the girl in the centre orders them to stop. She then goes round the circle and pours a bit of the sand on the girls' hands. As she is pouring the sand on their hands she says, "Abobi neko etse wo se adaka tɛ" (A bird has left its droppings in your father's box) They all respond by saying, "Bemmave bave sika kɔɔ." (May the droppings change into pure gold)

When the sand is finished, she sings again and the girls skip again till she orders them to stop. She then begins to tell them to allow her to pass. She goes from one joint of hands to the other joint and keeps saying, "Moma me kwan na mensen ɛ!"

(Allow me to pass.) The girls say," Ngoo." (a Twi word which means 'no'.) She moves round and round the circle and then suddenly forces her way out and runs away. The other girls chase, catch and bring her back. While bringing her back they sing a song which means," I have caught my father's bird. I have caught my father's bird. (Meekye me se abobi twaa twaa.)

The girl (Captive) is asked to sit down and then the other girls imitate and dramatise all the different processes in cooking fufu. They mime the peeling of cocoyam, washing it, cooking it, pounding and cutting the fufu into balls. The girl who escaped is supposed to be five so the cooking of the cocoyam and the soup is done on her head. When the cooking is finished, she is no longer a five but a table so the imaginary dishes of fufu are all placed on her head.

All the girls surround her and begin eating the imagined food very quickly. The girl sits down ready for the signal that the food is finished. As soon as the signal is given all the girls begin to run to a wall that is taken as the safety place. The girl chases them and any-one she touches takes her place and the game begins again.

APPENDIX IV

Methods of obtaining Information

Most of the information in this thesis was collected from informants who were fetish priests and priestesses, midwives (native), herbalists, mothers and fathers of twins, teachers, mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers of many children.

Some of the information was also collected through watching children at play, by watching the treatment mothers and fathers give to their children and the relations between children and adults.

I was also fortunate to witness and take photographs of the annual purification of pregnant women and children at the house of the god "Ayesu" in the Akesere quarters of the town.

Informants used during field study.

1. Madam Konyɔ̃ : A licensed native herbalist, a native midwife and a fetish priestess.
2. Ado Kwadwo : Fetish Priest and herbalist.
3. Okyeame Kofi Diabene : Father of 3 pairs of twins
4. Madam Abena Asantewaa : Native midwife
5. Madam Adwowa Okyerebea : My mother who gave me most of the information about birth.
6. Madam Amma Buruwa : Mother of two twins.
7. Kwasi Budu : The Priest of "Ɔbosom Ayesu"
8. Afua Kuma : A christian, native midwife and the mother of six children.
9. Miss Agyei : A woman Teacher – Middle School
10. Mr. Hanson Okyere : A teacher in the Primary School
11. Messrs Ako Larbi & Newman : The two headteache of the School
12. Nana Ofori Ayisi II : Mankrado of Abiriw and who gave me the information on "Krawa & Afekuk"

13. Miss Afua Afi : A girl of about 25 and yet has never brought forth.
14. Madam Victoria Kobɛ: Who gave me all the information about menstruation and Puberty Rites for girls.
15. Madam Abena Kumaa: Who taught me many of the songs mothers sing to their children.

BOOKS READ

1. Child Study — W.M. Beveridge, M.A., Ed. B.
2. Education - Its Data and First Principles - Sir Percy Nunn.
3. A West African Teachers Handbook - S.A. Banjo, B.A (Lond.) Dip. Ed.
4. Language in School — M.M. Lewis, M.A., Ph. D.
5. Language in Society — M.M. Lewis, M.A., Ph.D.

NAME OF CHILD : Janet Akufo

Sex : Girl

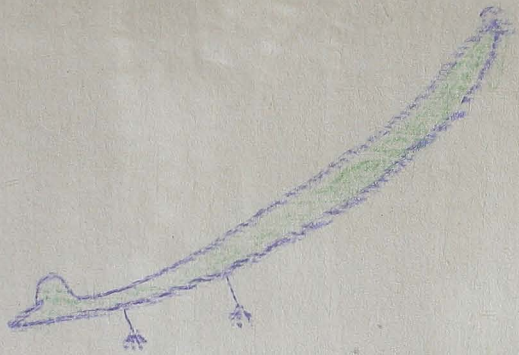
AGE : 7years 8months

CLASS : Primary Class 2.

POSITION IN FAMILY: The second of three children

Akuffu Janet

Drawing a) Free Drawing.



anoma (A bird)



A Woman



A girl's dress



A church

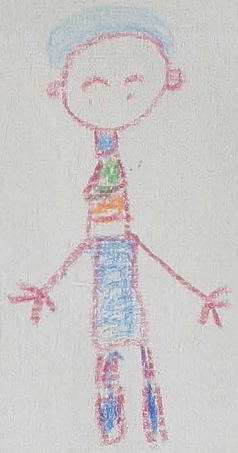


A Dog

Drawing (b)



A woman



A man

"The woman has a bigger head than the man because she is wearing a headgear." ("Wabɔ druku")

A Fight

Drawing (C)



Amma

Kwaku Twum



"Amma is lying down"

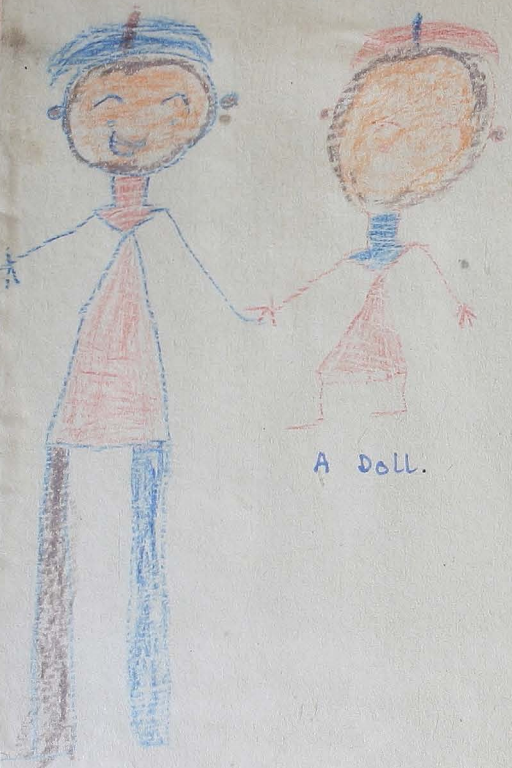
"Kwaku has pushed Amma"

Cause of fight:- "Amma bit Kwaku for taking her sardine Tin".

Akuffu Jane

The most pleasant thing the child can think of.

Drawing (D)



A Doll.



"I am running to my father for a new doll he has bought for me".

"My father"

Akuffu Janet.

The most unpleasant thing the child can think of.

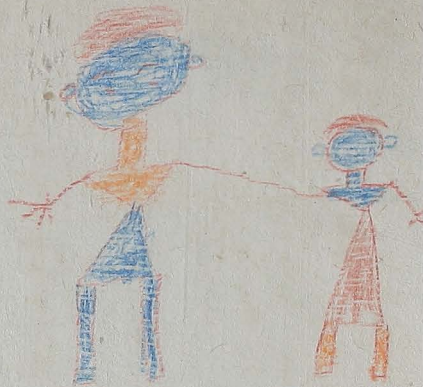
DRAWING "E"



"Myself"



"My younger sister Afua lying down".



"My mother beating me"

"I was playing with my younger sister, Afua Ntiriwa, and She fell down and cried. My mother beat me for making her fall down".

What the child is afraid of.

DRAWING "F"



A Ghost (Osaman)

DRAWING "G"

"A DREAM"

"I dreamed that my mother, my sisters and I were going to church at Akropong"



The Akropong Church





"My elder sister and I"



"The Apostolic chapel"



"My mother and my younger sister."

The inside of the child's house

DRAWING "H"



"My House"



"My younger sister Afua"



"My mother"



"My elder sister Amma"



A hen roost

PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES FOR THE CHILD'S FANTASY LIFE

Records of Conditions of Presentation

The work was done by two school girls who are in Primary Class II at Abiriw. They are friends. Akufo, whose work has been used in this thesis, will be eight next September while her friend, Opoku, will also be eight next November (I mean September and November 1956).

The work was done at home in the interviewer's room on two Sunday afternoons and on one Saturday morning when the girls were invited by the interviewer. After service on the first Sunday, the interviewer saw the two friends walking together and invited them to his house. The girls were already familiar with the interviewer and so they did not feel shy.

The interviewer served them with some biscuits and after asking them questions about their homes, their School, the children's service and their sisters he introduced the subject by asking, "Do you know that I am writing a book about the children of Abiriw?" They answered that they did not know. He showed them some of the photographs used in this thesis and they were able to recognise some of the children in the photographs. They asked to be photographed too and it was done.

Interviewer: "Akufo, do you know how to draw?
Akufo : Yes, I can draw a bird".
Opoku : "I too can draw."
Interviewer: "That's very good. I am going to give you paper and crayons and coloured pencils so that you make some drawings for me. What you draw will be given a place in the book I am writing.

a) Free drawing

The girls were given a blank sheet of paper each, two boxes crayons, gold, red, blue and green coloured pencils and two lead pencils. They were also given a table on which to draw. The interviewer said," Draw as many things as you can on the papers given you using any of the colours supplied".

After some time Akufo said," Teacher, can you tell what I have drawn? This is a bird, this is a girl's dress, this is the Akropong church, this is a woman and this is a dog." As she spoke she fingered all the sketches. The other girl also showed what she had drawn. I collected the finished worked and then gave them new sheets of paper.

b. Drawing a Man and a Woman

The interviewer said," This time you are going to draw something I want. Draw a man and his wife". They started drawing and after some time, Apoku showed her work to me saying she had finished.

Interviewer:" Who is this man you have drawn?"

Apoku :" He is that Ewe man in our house and that is his wife".

Soon, Akufo also finished with her work and showed it to me.

Interviewer :" That's very beautiful. The woman has a bigger head than the man".

Akuffo :" Yes, because she is wearing a headgear."

c. Drawing a fight between two children.

Apoku :" Are we going to draw something else?

Interviewer :" Yes. Have you ever seen a woman carrying her baby at her back? Draw her.

Akufo :" Shall I draw the same too?"

Interviewer: "No. Have you ever seen some children fighting?"

Akufo : "My uncles children fought some time ago."

Interviewer: "When was it?"

Akufo : I don't quite remember."

Interviewer: "Do you know why they fought."

Akufo : "Kwaku took Amma's sardine tin. Amma asked him to give it back but Kwaku refused so Amma bit him. He hit back and Amma also hit him. Kwaku pushed her and she fell down".

Interviewer: "Then draw them let us see".

When they finished drawing, they said they were tired so I played some gramophone records to them. I gave them the box of gramophone records and asked them to select two each and those records were to be their best records. I played those records for them and then we sat down again to draw.

D. The most pleasant thing the child can think of.

Interviewer: "Do you remember any very pleasant thing ever happening in your lives? The thing must be so pleasant that you always remember it.

Opoku : "Yes, it was Last Christmas when my mother gave me a new pair of shoes and a new frock."

Akufo : "Yes, it was when my father brought me a big doll from Accra."

Interviewer: "Draw that for me". Akufo, when coming next time bring your doll along for me to see".

The two girls finished drawing in about ten minutes and gave their work to me. I went along with them to their homes which were not far away from my house.

The child's favourite story

The two girls came to my house one Saturday morning and asked me to give them paper so that they would draw something for me.

Interviewer: "Before we begin drawing anything, we are going to tell "Ananse" stories. Did you tell any stories at School this week?

Akufo : "Yes, we did".

Interviewer: Would you tell us your most favourite story."

Akufo : "Once upon a time Kwaku Ananse and his wife "Okonore" and his son "Ntikuma" lived at a village. One day Kwaku Ananse went to the bush and started weeding for a new farm. After he had weeded for some time, a small boy came to the farm and said, "Ayiko" (Well done) to Ananse. Ananse responded.

The boy said, 'Give me your cutlass so that I help you in weeding if you are tired'. Ananse said, 'What can you this small boy do?' The boy said, 'You just give me the cutlass and show me where to weed. When I finish weeding I will fight with you'. Ananse gave him the cutlass and sat down. In less than three minutes the boy finished weeding the area given to him to weed.

The boy gave the cutlass back to Ananse and then challenged him to an open fight. Before Ananse could say anything, the boy had given him several blows so that Ananse's mouth was bleeding and he had several swellings at his face. The boy vanished and Ananse did not see him again.

When Ananse came home he said that he had been stung by some hornets. The next day Ananse said to his wife, 'I am not going to the farm today. you will go and weed too'. The wife went, the boy came, weeded for her and then beat her so that she also came home with a swollen face and mouth. She also said, "Some hornets have

stung me badly today". Ananse laughed under his sleeves when he heard her saying that.

The next day, Ananse and his wife asked their son, Ntikuma, to go and work on the farm too. When Ntikuma left, Ananse followed him and went to hide behind a tree to see what would happen. After some time the wonderful short boy came to the farm and asked Ntikuma to give him his cutlass. Ntikuma refused to give him the cutlass and so a fight followed.

When Ananse saw that his son had put the boy on the ground and he was beating him, he rushed out from his hiding place and went to help his son. They beat the boy so severely that he lost all his teeth. They put him into a basket and covered him up with leaves. When they reached home, the boy had vanished from the basket. Before then, all children were born with teeth but from that time till today all children have been born toothless. It was that boy who caused it to be so".

Interviewer: "That's a very good story. Opoku you will also tell us your story when we have finished with today's drawings".

E. <u>The most unpleasant thing the child can think of.</u>

I gave the papers, the coloured pencils and the crayons to the girls and then said, "Do you remember that last Sunday you made drawings of the most pleasant things in your lives?

Both of them replied: "Yes, we do."

Interviewer: "Today, you are going to draw the most unpleasant thing you can think of".

The two girls started working and after about ten minutes Akufo said, "Teacher, do you know what I have drawn?

Interviewer: "Explain what you have drawn to me".

Akufo: "That's myself. I was playing with my younger sister Afua Ntiriwa and she

fell down and cried. My mother beat me for making her fall down. That's my mother beating me and that's my sister lying down".

Interviewer: "Did you cry when you were beaten?"

Akufo : "Yes I cried."

The other girl also finished and gave me her work.

F. What the child is afraid of.

Interviewer: "Do you know that everybody has something that he is afraid of? Since my infancy I have always feared the wall-Gecko". The two girls laughed and then Akufo said, "There are some of these Geckos in my house but I am not afraid of them. I rather fear the ghost. (Osaman) The other girl said, "I am afraid of the bull. Whenever I see one I run away." I then asked them to make drawings of what they fear most. They finished in a short time.

G. The child's Dream.

Interviewer: "A boy came here yesterday and during our conversation he told me that he had never had a dream. Have you ever dreamed?"

Akufo :- "Yes, three days ago I dreamed that my mother, my sisters and I were all going to Church together at Akropong. We walked pass the Apostolic church. I woke up as soon as we came to the Akropong Church".

Interviewer: "What about you, Opoku?"

Opoku : "I dreamed that a thief had come into our house and he was going to steal the box in which I keep my things. As soon as I shouted he began to run away and I woke up.

Interviewer: "Make drawings of your dreams for me. When you finish then we have only one more drawing left to be done. We leave that drawing till tomorrow. Opoku, let us hear your story."

She told the story of a boy who was sent to buy a needle by his mother. He put the needle into a basket. When he reached home, it was lost. The mother told him that any time he was sent to buy a needle he must pin it at the inside of his coat. The next time when the boy was sent to buy butter he put it into the inside pocket of his coat and by the time he reached home it had all melted. His mother told him that any time he was sent to buy butter he must put it into a pot and cover it with a lid.

One day when the boy was sent to bring home a puppy that the mother had bought, he pushed the puppy into a pot and covered it so tightly with its lid that it died before the boy reached home. His mother told him that he was a fool and that any time he was sent to bring a puppy home he must put a string round its neck and lead it home. The boy agreed to do so but when one day he was sent to bring a pound of beef from the butcher, he put a string through it and dragged it after him. When he reached home the mother beat him for being so foolish.

Interviewer:- "Can you tell us any story about a bad girl or boy, Akufo?"

Akufo :- "Once upon a time there lived a girl called Oforiwaa. She was bad because she refused to go whenever she was sent. She refused to work in the house and she insulted her elders.

One day, she went to catch crabs with some girls in a river that was full of big rocks. They came to a big rock hanging overhead and they all walked below it. Oforiwaa was the last in the line. When she came exactly below the stone, it fell on her and pressed her hard against the ground.

Because she was a very bad girl the other girls stood by and sang saying, 'Ɔbo mia no, mia no, mia no; Ɔbo mia no. Oforiwaa apɛrewa ee! Ɔbo mia no, mia no, mia no Ɔbo mia no.' (Meaning: Press her hard, press her hard. Stone press her hard. Oforiwaa is a bad girl. Press her hard.)

Some of the girls ran home and reported the mishap to Oforiwaa's parents who brought some eggs which were sacrificed to the rock before the girl could be removed. The girl did not die, but she became lame in the left leg. The girl changed and became a good girl ever after that happening".

After this story the girls went away and they came again the next day (Sunday) after Service.

H. <u>The inside of the child's house</u>

Interviewer: "Today we are going to finish with our last drawing so we shall do that first. You are going to draw as many things as you can that be seen in your houses. You will also draw the people there".

Akufo: "Teacher, I have finished. This is my house, this is my younger sister Afua, that my elder sister Amma, that my mother and that, the hen roost in which our fowls sleep. Do you know that I have a hen?"

Interviewer: "No, I don't know."

<u>The Story of a good boy</u>

Once upon a time there lived a good boy called Samuel. Because he was a good boy he went to stay with a Priest. He slept in the church and always he swept the church very clean. He dusted all the pews and other furniture in the church.

One night he heard somebody calling him, "Samuel, Samuel!" He arose and ran to Eli and said, "Please, here I am." The Priest said, "I have not called you." He went back to sleep but the voice called him again and he ran again to Eli and said, "Please, here I am". The Priest said, "I have not called you. Go and sleep and when you hear the voice say, 'Speak Lord, Thy servant heareth.'"

The boy went to sleep and when he heard the voice again he said, "Speak Lord, Thy servant heareth". It was God who spoke to him. Our teacher says that when we become good children like Samuel God will speak to us too."

The Child's First Wish.

"If I were granted one wish, I should like to have a fine blue frock with a pink hat and a pair of white shoes to match".

Self Description.

"I am Akufo. I am a girl in class II. I am nearly eight years old. I have bushy hair and I am dark in colour. I have two eyes, two eyes, two arms and two legs".

Life Story

"My real name is Akosua Akufo and my School name is Akufo Janet. My mother is Amma Dapaa and my father is Papa Atta. When I was very young my mother went to stay in Koforidua with me. When I was six years old my mother brought me to class I here. At first I did not know any of the School children but now I know many of them".