SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE GÃ PEOPLE

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TO

THE MEMORY OF

R. S. RATTRAY

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS volume is the complement of *Religion and Medicine of the Gã People*, and will not be understood except in reference to that.

The Gã are not one people. Each town is an independent republic, having its own unique constitution which has grown out of its own unique history. By intermarriage and proximity the different peoples have come to have a language and many everyday customs in common. Part I of this volume is concerned with these common customs.

Part II deals with the history of the constitution of each town separately. The recent history of each town necessarily becomes a study in the interplay of the Native Administration Ordinance with the underlying native constitutions. I have recounted recent 'stool histories' in some detail from the point of view of the elders of the various towns solely in order to give students of Colonial Administration in England an idea of the kind of landslide which may be set in motion when an Ordinance which appears admirable in the light of the study lamp is let loose upon a present-day tribe.

The Native Administration Ordinance in question was thoughtfully constructed with regard to the needs of the Twi-speaking tribes, and it was not suspected that the constitution and needs of the Gã were essentially different. Even though all the defects of the Ordinance may have been remedied by the time this volume is published, it appears to me that the reactions of an African people to a harmless-seeming Ordinance are worth putting on record.

As parts of the book will probably be used for reference by teachers of Gold Coast History in Gold Coast schools I have included more detail of local traditions than would have been appropriate had I been writing only for anthropologists. Students of History must, however, remember that my aim in touching on history is to sketch the evolution of social organisation, not to provide dates and other exactitudes of the historian. For instance, it is not desired to know whether the Europeans who

imported arms were the Danes or the Dutch, but rather to study the effect of those arms on the changing communities.

The fieldwork was carried out partly in my own time, partly during two periods of three months, kindly granted to me by Achimota College, and in some small part since I began to work for the Gold Coast Government.

The book was written early in 1938 and the field-work, of course, done earlier still. I have recently added to some of the chapters brief appendices bringing them up to date.

It is by the generosity of the Gold Coast Government that the book is at last enabled to appear, and I here record my gratitude.

It is also through Government generosity that the price of the book is comparatively low.

It is not possible to record the names of all the Gã friends who have helped me. Part II of the volume could never have been compiled without the patient collaboration of many elders who gave me uncounted hours of their time and their close, untiring attention. I cannot adequately thank them.

The tact and good manners of my skilful 'ambassador', Mr. J. V. Obodai Darku, have saved me much time and trouble and rendered the work incomparably easier.

My thanks are due to Miss Hester Raven-Hart for her kindness in reading the proofs and to Mrs. Livie-Noble who typed from my manuscript.

M. J. FIELD.

July, 1940

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PART I

EVERYDAY AFFAIRS

CHAPTER I

THE FAMILY OR 'HOUSE'

THE Gã word *we* is usually translated 'House', the word having the same meaning as in 'House of Hanover' or 'House of David'. The members of the House are called the *webii*[1] (house-children) and are all the descendants of the founder of the House counting only the children of male members. A woman who marries a man of another House does not become a member of his House but remains a member of her own father's House. Her children belong to their own father's House.

The word *we* is used as a suffix on the distinguishing name of the House. Thus *Aboitʃɛwe* means literally 'The *Abos*' father's House', Abo being one of the personal names peculiar to that family. Again, *Sakumɔwe* means *Sakumɔ*'s House or the family that serve the god *Sakumɔ*. *Kɔlitʃɛwe* means the family of the owner of the *kɔli* tree and refers to a tree that once grew in the original compound of the founder.

The family which I have selected for detailed description is the family of *Aboitʃɛwe* of Temma. This family exemplifies all that is typical of Gã family organization, religious organization, and the relation of the family group to the town. But for some obscure reason, providential for my own convenience, the *Aboitʃɛwe* people have been less prolific than their fellow townsmen, so their family to-day is not so unwieldy that one cannot know it as a whole and have a personal acquaintance with most of its individual members.

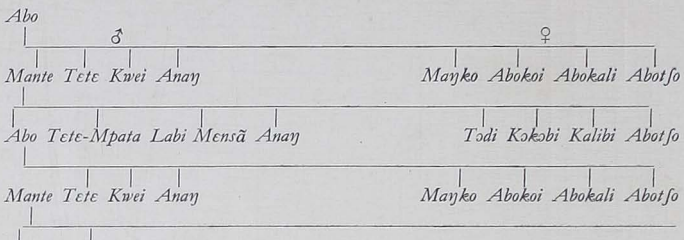
Family Names

Every Gã House has its own set of family names. This set is divided into two sub-sets which are used in alternate generations. A number of brothers receive the same names as their paternal grandfather and his brothers, sisters receive the same names as their paternal grandfather's sisters. If three brothers have each three wives who all bear sons, the nine sets of sons will be named exactly alike after their paternal grandfather and his brothers. People's formal names are therefore almost useless

[1] Sometimes the word *weku*—family group—is used. The suffix *ku* meaning a group or company.

for identification[1] and unless people have nicknames, which fortunately most of them have, it is impossible to construct an intelligible family tree. Most of the names in the various genealogical tables in this volume are nicknames.

The formal family names of *Aboitʃɛwe* are as follows:



Often the father's name is prefixed to the son's as an additional identification. Thus, the eldest sons of *Mante* and *Kwei* are known as *Mante-Abo* and *Kwei-Abo* respectively, the prefixed name having the significance of a possessive adjective, as one might say in English, Robert's John and Richard's John.

The Family Elders

The head of the family elders is the *wulɔmɔ* or priest of the family god. The *Aboitʃɛwe* family god is *Na Yo*. The *Na Yo wulɔmɔ* is also known as the *Nyado*, a word peculiar to *Aboitʃɛwe*.

The present *Nyado* or *Na Yo wulɔmɔ* is the sixth of whom there is any living memory or tradition. The earliest of these was *Nyado Dade Hamle* (Diagram I (A.11)) whose nickname means Iron Hammer. He was probably a mighty man of valour[2] and fought in the wars in the capacity of *asafoatʃɛ* before being made *Nyado*. In this house it has several times happened that the *asafoatʃɛ* became *Nyado* in his later years.

The next generation is not clear, but probably *Kɔmitʃɛ Mensã* (C.4) was *Dade Hamle*'s grandson, *Tɛtɛ Agbohu* (B.11) his son, and *Mante* and *Tɛtɛ* (B.16 and B.20) also his sons. It is agreed that the last two were not only brothers but *musuŋbii* ('out of the same belly') of one mother.

[1] Family names are, however, most useful in tracing tribal connections and origins. By the laborious method of recording all the family names in the Gã towns I have obtained invaluable circumstantial evidence against which to check traditional accounts of migrations, etc.

[2] I have never heard that he was a blacksmith, though this is possible.

Dade Hamle was succeeded by his grandson *Abo Kofi* (C.15), who was followed by *Tete Agɔdzɔ* (C.11), who was followed by *Komitse Mensã* (C.4). These last three were all probably *Dade Hamle*'s grandsons, but it must be remembered that a man with several wives is sometimes still begetting children at the same time that his grandchildren are begetting children. Thus a man may even be older than his own classificatory 'grandfather'.

Abo Kofi's son, *Mante Diŋ* (dark *Mante*) (E.14), the next succeeding *Nyado*, died less than ten years ago. Before being *Nyado* he was *asafoatse*. The present *Nyado*, *Tete* (E.20) his cousin, was never *asafoatse*.

When the present *Nyado* was appointed two other old men, *Komi* of Zenu (C.2) and *Abladu* (D.7), were also in the running. Of these *Abladu* is acknowledged to be the senior male member of the House and could have been *Nyado* had he wished, but he preferred to stand aside and not be the ceremonial head. He has been, however, many years head of the *Kple Agbafo*. *Komi* of Zenu, a highly respected old man, is a skilled physician and a member of the medical *Agbafo*. Except during the big festivals he lives in the village of Zenu with his sons and prefers this quiet life.

Labi Mensã (E.16), the late *Nyado*'s younger brother, is still alive and able, but the oldest member of the whole House is his sister *Abokoi* (E.11) whose grandchild's grandchild has a child of about ten years. *Abokoi* is rather deaf, but retains most of her teeth and all of her intelligence. Last time I saw her she was making a new clay fireplace. The two sisters, *Dede* and *Kalibi* (C.19 and C.21), though belonging to the generation senior to the present *Nyado* and his sisters *Abokoi*, *Abokali* and *Abotso* (E.22 and E.23), are younger than they. *Kalibi*, in particular, is a comely active woman with perfect teeth. These two women are accorded a status in the family senior to that of the *Nyado*'s sisters.

The Gã Household

Before following any of the *Aboitsewe* people to their dwellings it were well to digress briefly into Gã domesticity in general.

Gã men do not live with their wives. They live with their 'brothers' in groups of from three to ten, and their sons join them as soon as they are too big for the women's compounds. Thus a men's compound contains men who are all of the same family or House. Women live with their mothers even after

they are married, and three or four generations of mothers and daughters are in most women's compounds. A woman of House A married to a man of House B will have a daughter of House B. This daughter may marry a man of House C and have a daughter of House C. Or two sisters may marry men of different Houses, producing daughters of different Houses. Thus a woman's compound contains women and children of several different Houses; a man's compound contains men all of one House. We shall look at this in greater detail later.

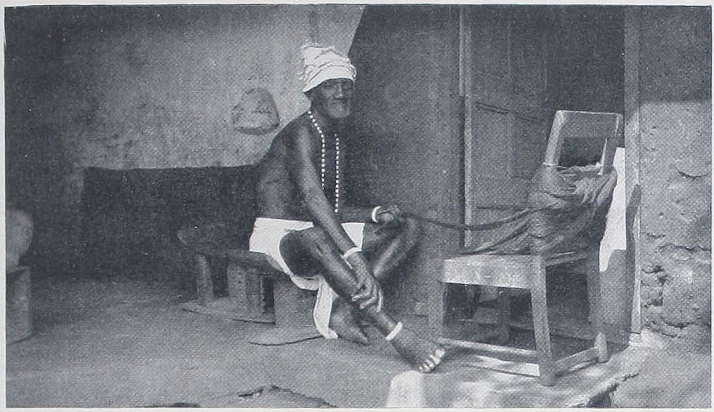
The Adebɔ ʃia

Now let us go to the *Nyado*'s home (Diagram II). It is in the centre of the town, and the houses of the other three chief *wulɔmei* of the town are very near. We enter a paved courtyard containing a shade-tree and the goddess's round *gbatʃu* or tabernacle. The doorway of this tabernacle is covered by a white calico curtain and inside is an inner holy-of-holies enclosed in calico and thatch. In a little recess behind the *gbatʃu* hang the ceremonial hats of *Na Yo*'s *agbafoi* and some family drums. The *gbatʃu* stands on a little platform, which extends round the inner end of the yard and on it the *Nyado* is often to be found sitting at work at his fishnets or holding a palaver. Round two sides of the courtyard and opening into it are rooms, each occupied by one important person.

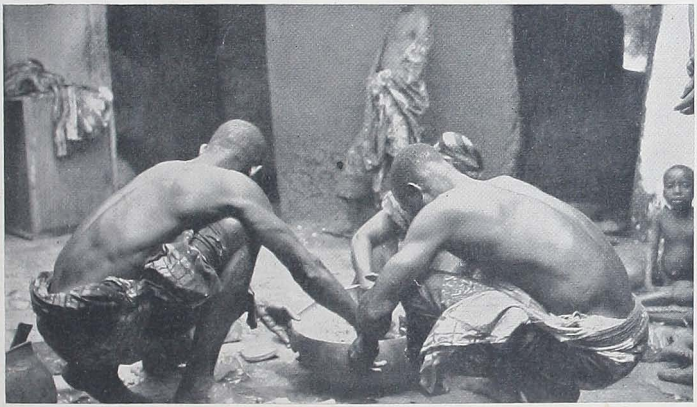
This compound is the heart of *Aboitʃɛwe* family life and religious life. It is the oldest and original dwelling of the *Aboitʃɛwe* people of the town and is called the *Adebɔ ʃia* or origin-house. Here not only does the *Nyado*, assisted by the other chief priests of the town, preside over the annual blessing and washing of all the elders of the town, but here any *Aboitʃɛwe* person who has had unexpected good luck will 'kill a goat for the Old Lady'. In the one aspect *Na Yo* is the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent god of the whole town, in the other she is rather like the old great-great-great-grandmother *Abokoi*, become invisible. Besides these and many other ceremonies, numerous ordinary family affairs are carried on—reception of friends, family discussions, the killing of a goat, the bathing of a child.

Abutting on to this compound is an overflow compound considered a part of it. Here the rooms open on to a typical fishermen's courtyard with hanging nets and paddles.

Exactly who are the people living in the origin compound can be seen by referring to the family tree (Diagram I) and the plan of the *Aboitʃɛwe adebɔ ʃia* (Diagram II). The *Nyado* himself



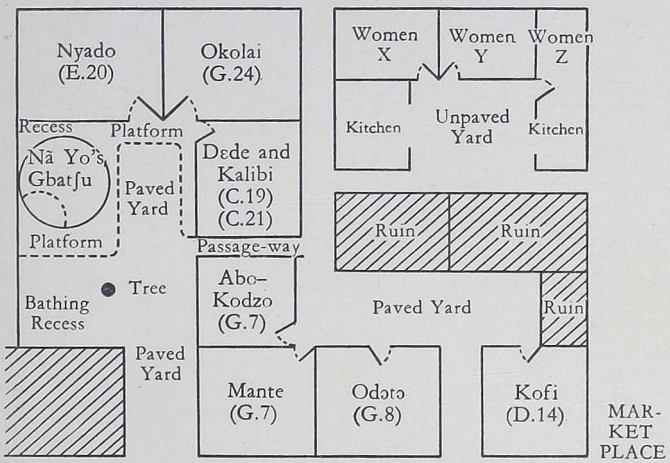
The *Nyado* is often to be found sitting at work at his fishnets. (*See p.* 4.)



Private ceremonial in the yard. (*See p.* 9.)

DIAGRAM II

ADEBƆSIA OF ABOITSƐWE



The three rooms, X, Y and Z, are occupied by the following women:

Tʃotʃo	C.19	Adzeili	H.23
Adzeili	D.21	Dɛde	H.24
Abokoi	E.22	Mansa	H.25
Abokali	E.23	Kai	G.24
Abla	E.21	Kali	G.11
Afiyei	F.21	Nɔka	D.7
Daughter of	E.22		

always must live here and always occupy the same room. The others have some latitude. If *Kɔmi* of Zenu (C.2), *Abladu* (D.7), or *Labi Mɛnsã* (E.16) were to demand to come and live in this senior compound they could not be refused. *Dɛdɛ* and *Kalibi* (C.19 and C.21) would then be banished to the women's quarters; indeed, it is very unusual to find women in a senior compound at all, and it is only on account of their great seniority that they *may*[1] be there and on account of the uncrowded state of the compound and the crowded state of the women's compound that they *can* be there. If further senior males were to appear, then, after *Dɛdɛ* and *Kalibi*, the people to be turned out would be *Mantɛ* and either *Abo Kodzo* or *Kofi*. *Odɔtɔ*, being *asafoatʃɛ*, would never be turned out. Old *Obokoi* (E.11) or *Abotʃo* (E.23) could either displace or join *Dɛdɛ* and *Kalibi* if they wished, but each is head of a woman's compound elsewhere and is better off.

The Women's Adebɔ ʃia

Down a narrow passage-way that leads out of the *Nyado*'s compound we find a compound full of women and children. In one particular the *Aboitʃɛwɛ adebɔ ʃia* is not quite typical: that is, it is unusual to have a women's compound so near to the men's. A women's compound often contains four or five times as many adults to each room as does a men's compound, together with all these women's children except the bigger boys. All the cooking and clothes-washing is done in the women's compounds, and the resulting squalor and brawl of children is something the men like to have as far away as possible from the tidy peace of their own compounds.

In the women's compound the occupants live there by two kinds of right: firstly, those who are members by birth of the House of *Aboitʃɛwɛ*—for example, *Abokoi* and *Abokali* (E.22 and E.23)—and, secondly, those who are either daughters or granddaughters of women who were born either in this compound or some other *Aboitʃɛwɛ* women's compound, such are *Abla*, *Afiyei*, and *Afiyei*'s children (E.21 and E.22).

In no case in these town communities does mere marriage give a woman the right to live in the house of her husband's female relatives. Often a man is found living with his mother's male relatives, where he has, strictly, no right to be, but a woman is rarely found where she has no strict right. A man may demand of his wife that she live with his mother—though he seldom does

[1] Had they not passed the menopause they would not be allowed to live uninterruptedly in a *wulɔmɔ*'s compound.

so—but a wife cannot demand a home of her husband's people if she has relatives of her own near at hand.

Social Effects of the Housing System

In the women's compounds, where children of different Houses are brought up together, is to be found—or so it seems to me—the secret of the religious toleration and respect for other people's gods which is at first sight so astonishing a feature of Gã worship. A man said to me, speaking of his friendship with a man in another quarter, 'We have slept on the same mat, we have sucked the same breast[1]: how should we not be brothers?' Sometimes an intelligent man with an intelligent mother will have, through that mother and her brothers, more detailed and accurate knowledge of the history and affairs of another House than most of the members of that House itself.[2]

When the boys reach the age of thirteen or so and regularly work with their fathers they go to live in their fathers' compounds and eat with them there. They are always proud to do so, but their strongest homing sentiment—and it lasts all their lives—is always towards their mothers' compounds. One man said to me, 'A woman doesn't mind a divorce half so much as a man does because she knows that the children will always love her compound better than their father's and will sneak away from him whenever they can'. You will often find a man having an extra evening meal in his mother's compound. 'I like my mother's cooking better than my wife's', he will say sheepishly, meaning that he has a sense of home in his mother's compound which he has nowhere else.

I have heard Gã men discussing with Ewe and other strangers the comparative advantages of their different housing systems. The Gã admits that his system gives him little control over his wife and that when she has the connivance of her mother she can deceive her husband grossly. If he send for his wife to come and sleep with him her mother may send a message, 'I have sent her away for a few days' trading', and, as the husband says, 'A man cannot argue with his mother-in-law without making trouble'. Or the mother or sister of a wife who is one of several wives, may connive at a few weeks' absence of the wife by sending the children as usual with the husband's meals

[1] In spite of the scorn which some anthropologists have poured on the idea, any one of the babies in the compound may be suckled by any one of the nursing mothers whenever it happens to be convenient.

[2] But he will never divulge a word of it without the permission of the members of the House concerned. In such matters he is as scrupulously honourable as most English people are in handling their friends' money.

and not telling him that she has left the town. As one informant put it: 'She can then sleep with six other men and her husband will never know'. The solidarity of the Gã women against the men in defending their independence is monstrous in the eyes of the African stranger. 'It is true', agrees the Gã man ruefully, 'the women do not respect us.' On the other hand, the Gã man is alive to the advantages of a system which allows him to have all the dignity of a married man and a father without renouncing the joys of the bachelors' mess and without surrounding himself with the domestic turmoil of the nursery and kitchen.

In these conditions the children are often the only strong tie between husband and wife. In Temma I knew dozens of married couples as separate individuals quite familiarly before I began to guess that they were married to one another, and invariably the first hint was the recognition of the same children hanging round both compounds. Each parent speaks of the partner by the child's name. The husband says, 'I am just going to hoe *Maŋko*'s mother's farm'. The wife says, '*Maŋko*'s father has sent no fish to-day'. When the child is a young baby the proud father may often be found paying a brief and rather stiffly formal visit to his wife at sunset. He comes in very diffidently, greets his mother-in-law and the older women ceremoniously and almost ignores his wife. It is usually from her arms that he takes the baby and holds it for a few minutes, but this is the only clue the stranger has as to which of the younger women is his wife. Only on one such occasion out of dozens have I seen the slightest hint of any familiarity between husband and wife when the husband was visiting his wife's compound. On this occasion he knelt beside her as she sat on a low stool washing her child, and whispered in her ear. On another occasion I saw a wife come to her husband's compound as he sat netting with his brothers. She pulled his hair playfully and thumped him on the head with an empty basket. He laughed and said, 'You do not respect me', but he obviously thought it an indecent display of familiarity. It is not merely a question of etiquette; the Gã rarely disguise their feelings in the cause of etiquette; the etiquette rather reflects the genuine lack of warmth between husband and wife. They seem anxious that the personal issue should not invade the biological.

When the children have grown up it is almost impossible to know without asking who is married to whom. For instance, the *Aboitʃewe* woman *Dɛdɛ* (C.19) is the wife of *Kwao Odoŋkɔ*, the Chief-of-the-Fishermen. I have spent hours gossiping in their

separate compounds at all times of the day but I have never seen them together. There is no quarrel or formal separation between them, the situation is a normal and happy one, but if I had not asked *Dede*, point blank, about her husband I should never have known who he was.

The Men's Compounds

Now let us go fifty yards from the *Aboitʃewe* women's compound and visit a typical men's dwelling. (See Diagram III.)

A men's dwelling can be distinguished at a glance from a women's. There is no kitchen; no cooking is done about the place at all. The paved yard is a tidy, pleasant place, for the fishnets and tackle which hang on the walls are always beautifully cared for.

The yard is the common living-room. In it the men sit and mend their nets, hold their meetings and pleasant chats, perform private ceremonial, and eat the cooked meals which the children bring from the wives.

Every grown man has his own room, and of this room he is king. His wife comes to it at night when he 'calls' her. When he has any valuables in his room he locks it whenever he goes out. The room doors all open into the central courtyard and there is but one door into this courtyard from the outside. The rooms have windows—that is to say, wooden shutters—opening on to the outer world, but when these are shut and the yard door is shut, the occupants are safe from thieves and from prying eyes.

If a young man commit adultery or any other offence he has simply committed an offence, but when he does it in his father's room, which is usually also the room of dead and gone 'fathers', he has committed a monstrous outrage against his father and his family.

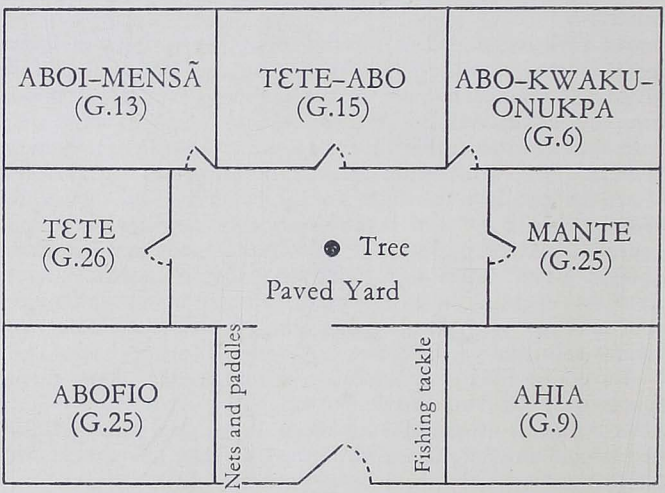
In dry weather a man and his wife alone occupy the man's room, and the boys sleep in the yard. But in wet weather the boys spread their sleeping-mats on the floor of their father's room, the father and his wife occupying the bed. Most married men have a European bed on legs.

Sexual intercourse out-of-doors is an offence against the god of the place. Such intercourse, even between a man and his own wife on his own farm is an outrage against the farm and will spoil its fertility. Any third party witnessing such an offence has to report it to the '*ʃitʃe*' of the land, and the offender has to purify his farm and pacify the *dzeŋmawɔŋ* of the place.

Every man's compound has its head, or 'father'. The head

DIAGRAM III

A MEN'S COMPOUND OF THE HOUSE OF ABOITƐƐWE



of the *Aboitʃɛwe* compound that we are visiting is *Abo Kwaku Onukpa* (G.12), now getting rather fat because he is senior enough to go fishing very seldom.

This dwelling was built by the late *Nyado* (E.14) in his earlier days and he lived in it till he was made *Nyado* and removed to the origin-house. *Odɔtɔ* (G.8) also lived here till he became *asafoatʃɛ* and went to the origin-house, where he is now. But he is still often found with his 'brothers' in his old house.

Next door to this dwelling is another smaller one which is an overflow dwelling built fairly recently by *Tete Nukpa* (G.6), a younger brother of *Abo Kwaku Onukpa*, and two younger men, *Abo Diŋ* and *Tete Kwaʃi* (G.17 and G.18), one of whom had been a carpenter and did most of the actual building. The older man was fatally injured about two years ago in landing a huge *Nyanyakle* swordfish which pierced him through the eye. His place was taken by *Tete Tʃuru* (G.6), an old man who, though the son of an *Aboitʃɛwe* woman is not an *Aboitʃɛwe* man. In the great Temma disturbance (which shall be described later) *Tete Tʃuru*, like all the elders of the town, sided against the offender who started the disturbance, and was driven out of his home by his younger relatives, the friends of the offender. The *Aboitʃɛwe* people took him in, and he and the two young men he lives with are counted as members of *Abo Kwaku Onukpa*'s compound. Another similar overflow building, of only two rooms, houses *Abo Kwaʃi* and *Labi Mɛnsã* (G.21 and G.28). The two small overflow buildings will probably be enlarged, room by room, as occasion arises. Indeed, *Mante* (G.25) did start to build such a room but was too busy with his fishing to finish it before the rains washed it down again.

All these men co-operate in fishing. *Tete Tʃuru* is too old for sea-fishing with the canoes but he works hard at netting and often takes a cast-net to the *Tʃɛmu* lagoon or to the beach. They are all members of the same mess (which will be described later) except *Mante* and *Labi Mɛnsã* (G.25 and G.28). Though these two are grown up and married they are still '*yobii*'—women's children—and eat in the compound of *Tɔdi* (G.26) and her mother *Abotʃo* (E.23).[1] But *Mante* has a grown-up son's right to go and share the meals of his father, *Abofio* (G.25), at any time and he sometimes uses it. *Mante* also has to fish in a canoe owned by the woman *Tɔdi*. Women do occasionally own canoes,[2] but to work in a woman's canoe is an indignity disliked by any man, partly because it helps a woman to grow rich, independent

[1] *Labi Mɛnsã* (E.16) married his parallel cousin, *Abotʃo* (E.23).

[2] Women are often the capitalist owners of a great variety of things.

and uppish, and partly because it is *infra dig* in itself. However, both *Mante* and *Labi Mɛnsã* owe money to *Tɔdi* and her mother for marriage expenses—*Mante*, though only a youth, has two wives and is likely to have a third soon—so they are under these women's thumbs. There are, however, compensations. They are better fed by *Tɔdi* and *Abotʃo* than they would be otherwise, in fact, they are rather 'spoilt'. And as *Mante* happens to be one of the champion bruisers of the whole town nobody dare call them '*yobii*' to their faces.

Not far away is another large fishermen's house occupied by the old man *Abladu* (D.7) and some of his brothers' sons and grandsons.

Altogether the town contains about a dozen *Aboitʃɛwe* buildings—men's and women's.

In another part of the town there are three men all named *Mante*, the descendants of one *Ofio* (C.1). Exactly how *Ofio* was related to the other forbears has been forgotten, but everyone agrees he was a true *Aboitʃɛwe* man and his descendants have the right to come to all meetings of the House and to share in any spoils divided between its members. These three men live and go fishing with a group of men belonging to their mother's family, the House of *Amuitʃɛwe*, the House of the worshippers of *Akpitiɔkɔ*. The *Akpitiɔkɔ wulɔmɔ* is a member of their compound.[1]

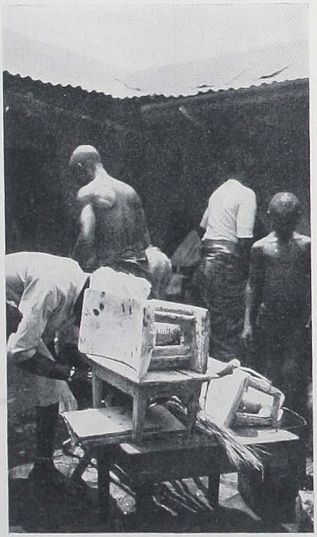
These three *Mantes* are on perfectly friendly, easy terms with the other *Aboitʃɛwe* people when they meet, but are not in the intimate circle of those we have noted already. I had known the *Aboitʃɛwe* people a long time before I ever even saw the *Mante Gazali* group.

This tendency for men to join the circle of their mother's men-folk is not an uncommon one, though it is no part of the Gã household system as the Gã themselves describe it if asked.

That these three men happen to be living with their mother's people is not, I believe, the reason why they are beginning to break away from the inner circle round the *Nyado*. The probable reason is simply the increasing size of the circle. We happen to be lucky enough to have caught the House of *Aboitʃɛwe* at a stage which the other two original Houses of Temma long ago passed. There are only two other sets of family names in the town and these two families have broken up into a large number of sub-Houses. But they are all agreed that this is simply because their numbers have become so great. Almost every one of these sub-Houses contains as many members as

[1] This compound, incidentally, contains one woman, a sister of the *Akpitiɔkɔ wulɔmɔ*. She occupies a whole room, just as if she were a man.

Group of kinsmen performing family ceremonial. (*See p.* 9.)



Sakumɔ's broom-washing. (*See p.* 17.)

The *mantʃe* in the capacity of *Tʃade wulɔmɔ* at *Tʃade*'s broom-washing ceremony. (*See p.* 17.)

the whole of *Aboitfewe*,[1] but they are quite unanimous that 'in the beginning[2] the whole town came from only three fathers', and the circumstantial evidence supports their testimony.

Other Housing Arrangements

The arrangement by which the men of one House live in men's compounds and the women and their daughters and granddaughters in women's compounds is the usual one, but it is not absolutely rigid.

Sometimes a rich man with several wives will build a compound and put them all into it together—or more often he moves into the new compound and puts them in an old one. For instance, two widows of *Mante Tawia* (E.7) live in one compound together with their daughters, daughters' children, and the senior wife's daughter-in-law and her children. The presence of the daughter-in-law is unusual in Temma but is the arrangement made when the daughter-in-law comes from a distant town and has no female relatives of her own near at hand. A young fisherman, the grown-up son of the junior widow, also occupies one room of the compound. The senior widow, who is head of the compound, also has a room to herself, but she is the *woyo* of the god *Tfemu* and is a considerable personage. This old lady, as head of the compound, decides who shall live in it. When she dies its new head will be whoever she appoints before her death. No one would go against her wishes in this, no matter to what strange woman she left her dwelling, but ultimately the compound is *Aboitfewe* property and the male heirs of *Mante Tawia* its ultimate owners.

Theoretically any man has the right, I am told, to demand of his wife that she shall live either with him or with his mother, but if her own mother were close at hand I do not believe any man would insist on it or succeed in retaining his wife if he did. When daughters live with their mother she shares the food that the daughters' husbands provide for their wives, so she does not encourage her daughters to leave her compound.

The Village Dwelling

Gã villages begin as squatters' camps, built by farmers from the various towns on beginning to suffer land-hunger near home or game-hunger if they have a liking for hunting. They do not regard the village as their real home, and every year at the time

[1] *Aboitfewe* is probably the least prolific of all the stocks which make up the Gã-speaking people.

[2] The beginning of the town, I have grounds for believing, was at the close of the eighteenth century.

of the religious festival—or more often if they desire—they return to their home town. Temma has little need of villages, for there is fertile land in plenty all round the town.

A new village household consists of a man and his wife and their children,[1] and the compound contains a minimum of two rooms and a kitchen. One room is for the man, the other for the women and children. When the sons grow up and marry each adds a room of his own, and his wife joins the women and children. When numbers get still greater a new compound is founded usually by two or three enterprising young men who themselves do the building. This is the nucleus of the first exclusively male compound and contains no kitchen. The original compound, where the kitchen is, in time becomes a women's compound.

In the village of Zenu, some four miles inland from Temma on the grassy plains, we find an *Aboitʃewe* colony. It was founded by *Kɔmi* (C.2), the son of *Nyado Kɔmitʃɛ Mɛnsã*. He is a medical practitioner of the best type, and likes a bush residence the better to collect his herbs. He is a highly respected man, a member of the Temma medical *Agbafo*, and comes to town whenever this society is sitting.

With him live his two sons, *Abo* and *Aʒa*, his brother *Tɛtɛ*'s son *Abo*, his own wife, his sons' wives, and their children. *Aʒa* is a hunter; the two *Abos* are farmers.

There are other Temma families colonizing Zenu, but *Kɔmi* founded the village and is its head. Any newcomer who wants to settle there must ask *Kɔmi*'s leave.

Daily Life of the Wulɔmɔ

On Thursdays the *Nyado*, the head of the House of *Aboitʃewe*, dresses in white calico and does not go to his farm, for Thursday is the day of worship of the family deity, *Na Yo*. Indeed, none of the members of his House may work on the land on Thursdays. They may fish in the sea on Thursdays but not in the *Tʃɛmu* lagoon. On all other days the *wulɔmɔ* works as hard—indeed, it seems to me, harder—than any other old man of his years. He has, in addition to his ordinary work, the special duties of the *wulɔmɔ*. Some of these recur regularly, others arise at all sorts of unexpected times.

The *wulɔmɔ* is not allowed to leave the town, to see dead bodies, to attend funerals,[2] or, on the day before a ceremony or a day of

[1] Actually I have never found such a household. In no part of the Gold Coast have I ever found a household consisting only of man, wife and their children except among Christians and then but seldom.

[2] When another *wulɔmɔ* dies he takes part in special ceremonies and does see the body, but he has to be purified before he does anything for his own god again.

worship, to engage in sexual intercourse. There are also special rules regarding his meals. But there is no pomp and splendour about him, only a pleasing, simple seemliness. The title 'priest-king'[1] would be eminently unsuitable. The pomp and ceremony of kingship was comparatively lately introduced into some of the towns in which the *wulɔmei* were, and are, the only rulers, and one of the lesser *wulɔmei* of the town became both *wulɔmɔ* and *maŋtʃɛ*.[2] The *maŋtʃɛ* was part of a new and military organization superimposed upon the old, and is no part of the essentially agricultural organization which is the tribal foundation. With the cessation of warfare the position of the *maŋtʃɛ* declined, and but for European influence would probably have died out.

Appointment of the Wulɔmɔ

The family god of *Aboitʃɛwe*, though supported by *Aboitʃɛwe* funds and cared for by the head of *Aboitʃɛwe*, is also one of the big gods 'for the whole town'.[3] The *Nyado* is time-keeper for the whole town and announces when the time had arrived for the annual town festival. At all big town ceremonies the *Nyado* 'makes one' with the priests of the other big town gods to bless the whole town. Every week on *Na Yo*'s own day, Thursday, the *Nyado* goes round the whole town at midnight and purifies it with *ŋmatʃu* smoke. Anyone who kills a sacrificial goat in his own compound sends a ritual share to each of the big *wulɔmei* of the town.

The town therefore has an interest in the appointment of the *wulɔmɔ*. His own family chose him from among their numbers, acquaint the town with their choice, and the town signifies its acceptance. His final investiture is carried out by the *wulɔmei* of the other three big gods of the town. I asked if the town had any right to object to the family's nomination, and my informants, with some bewilderment, agreed that it probably had the right but that they could not imagine its ever being exercised. Nor could they imagine themselves electing anyone to whom the town could possibly object.[4]

[1] I said in *Religion and Medicine of the Gã People* that the Gã 'were originally a theocracy and the only rulers were the priests'. One reviewer reported me as saying that the Gã had 'priest-kings'. I never used the expression priest-king, and for the reason that I consider it unsuitable.

[2] *Maŋtʃɛ* is often translated 'chief'. Its exact significance is discussed later in this volume.

[3] Every big town god is primarily a family god, but every family god is not a town god.

[4] The principle is no doubt similar to the English one, enunciated by Mr. Baldwin, that 'in the choice of the king's wife the voice of the people must be heard'.

The Family in Ceremonial

It were well to give a few actual examples of the kinds of ceremonial occasion when such a family as *Aboitʃewe* acts as a family.

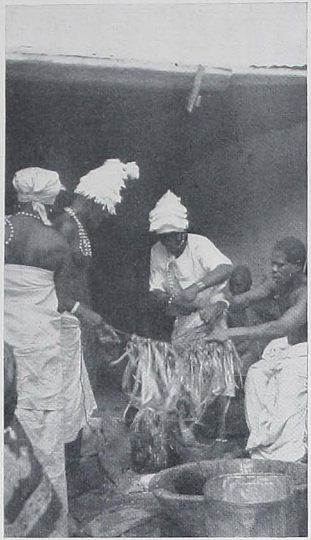
Our first example is a sitting of the *wulɔmɔ*'s court. In earlier days all cases were tried by the *wulɔmɔ*, but in these days the population has so much increased that the *wulɔmɔ* has delegated all the more mundane disputes to other courts and confines himself almost entirely to oath cases in which his own god has been specifically named.

The *Na Yo wulɔmɔ* is also the *wulɔmɔ* of the lagoon *Tʃɛmu*, whose original owners, a *Kpeʃi* family, seem to have died out. The case we are considering concerned *Tʃɛmu*.

It started, not in Temma, but in Gbugbla, a dozen or so miles away. The wife of a Gbugbla man died. He duly paid her funeral expenses and did all he should, but his wife's relatives refused, unlawfully, to surrender the child to him. In anger he went down to the shore of the *Tʃɛmu* lagoon and called upon the lagoon god, saying: 'If I have not done right according to custom, then may *Tʃɛmu* kill me. If I have done everything right then may *Tʃɛmu* kill the people who are treating me unjustly. If then, *Tʃɛmu* kill them and any *wɔyo* find out for them why they are dying, then may they pay thee, *Tʃɛmu*, fifty pounds and one sheep, and may they also pay me fifty pounds and one sheep'. Shortly after this, members of the unjust family started dying. They consulted a *wɔyo* and she revealed that a curse had been put upon them by the man they had wronged. Now, by the Native Administration Ordinance it is illegal to 'put another person in fetish',[1] and the family cursed to *Tʃɛmu* proceeded to spite the curser by summoning him to the registered tribunal and getting him sentenced to a fine of twelve pounds or imprisonment. He could not pay the fine, so went to prison, but his parents managed to collect the money and released him. The family under the curse continued to die, so they came and begged him to remove the curse. He said he would do so if they would refund the twelve pounds to his parents. They did so, and then both parties came to Temma to arrange for the *Tʃɛmu wulɔmɔ* to nullify the curse.[2]

[1] The British Government considers that to 'put another man in fetish' is to terrify him unduly, and makes this a punishable offence. It does not realize that the curser always puts himself 'in fetish' also. He is always a man who feels himself grieviously wronged, and he calls upon the god, not necessarily to kill his adversary, but to choose between the two and kill whichever one has done wrong. The cursed need feel no more terror than the curser unless he be conscious of guilt.

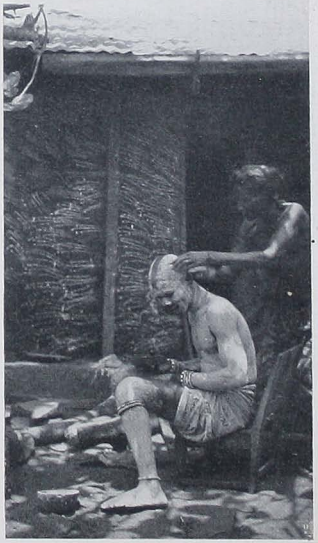
[2] Though Government can cause people to be fined for cursing others it cannot nullify their curses.



Last year's fringe of rushes is stripped off. (*See p.* 18.)

Wulomɔ blessing children. (*See p.* 18.)

The *Nyado* sends for the other *wulɔmei* and they bless the sprouted corn with rum. (*See p.* 18.)



He was smeared all over by *Dede* with a paste of white clay and given red tuŋ stripes on his head. (*See p.* 19.)

The court was held in the *wulɔmɔ*'s yard. The bench consisted of most of the adult males of *Aboitʃɛwe*, one of the most junior of them being chosen as *otʃame*,[1] together with the *Tʃɛmu wɔyo*, and three senior women of *Aboitʃɛwe*. The visitors were made the guests of the *maŋkralo*'s family and a member of that family acted as *otʃame* for them. Some of the town officials were also present to receive any moneys the *Aboitʃɛwe* family might think fit to share with the town. Though the family support their god out of their own pockets it is also a god 'for the whole town' and the family may, at their discretion, hand over to the town a suitable share of any takings.

The case was heard, and it was decided that the fifty pounds and one sheep promised to *Tʃɛmu* when the curse was called down must be paid by the family who had wronged the curser. It was also decided that they must pay fifty pounds and one sheep to the injured man. About four hours were spent in begging to have these sums reduced, and little by little the amounts demanded dwindled till the fee to *Tʃɛmu* reached twelve pounds and one goat and the fee to the injured man reached ten pounds and one goat. It was paid over then and there, and *Tʃɛmu*'s goat was slaughtered by the young men of *Aboitʃɛwe* after being held up towards the sky by the *Nyado* who called upon *Tʃɛmu* to accept it. Both parties dabbled their feet in the blood, and the right fore-leg of the goat was given to the man who paid for the beast. The *Nyado* called upon *Tʃɛmu* in a loud voice to cease from punishing the delinquent family who regretted their offences. The curser also called to *Tʃɛmu* to the same effect. The *Nyado* prepared a basin of holy water, both parties bathed in it and drank of it. The curse was then regarded as nullified and everybody went home.

On other occasions we find the *Aboitʃɛwe* god acting as the god of the whole town and the family gathering to receive all the officials of the town and to assist the *Nyado* in dispensing a blessing. Such an occasion is *Na Yo*'s *Bɔiahedzu* (washing of brooms), the first big ceremony at the spring festival of *Kpledzo*. *Na Yo*'s broom-washing and *Sakumɔ*'s broom-washing take place on the same morning, one after the other, each in its own yard. *Tʃade*'s broom-washing takes place the following day more publicly at *Tʃade*'s *gbatʃu* which stands in nobody's yard, but in the middle of the town with plenty of space round it.

[1] The *otʃame* of any body is always a junior member. The Committee put their heads together—literally—and whisper over each point, then the *otʃame* rises and says loudly what they have authorized him to say for them.

The populace attend *Tʃade*'s ceremony *en masse*,[1] but the yards of *Na Yo* and *Sakumɔ* are no longer big enough for that, and in practice few but the 'big people' of the town turn up at *Na Yo*'s and *Sakumɔ*'s broom-washing. The 'big people', however, are all very careful to do so.

The proceedings open with prayer for blessing by each of the four[2] *wulɔmei* in turn. Then the *Nyado* holds *nyanya* leaves up to heaven, prays, and uses them to prepare holy water in a wooden basin. *Na Yo*'s little drum is brought out and stood in the basin, last year's fringe of rushes is stripped off, and the drum is thoroughly washed and then repainted with fresh white clay, *tuŋ*[3] and *krɔbɔ*[4] perfume. *Na Yo*'s brooms and other insignia are treated in the same way. The woven rush hats of the *Kple agbefoi* are washed in holy water, rewhitened and sprinkled with fresh *tuŋ*. The *Aboitʃɛwe* family drums are brought, washed, and repainted. Then all the officials of the town, beginning with the highest, wash their faces three times in the water in which the various objects have been washed and each drinks three mouthfuls of it. Sick children and children recently recovered from sickness are bathed in the water. Bottlesful are taken away to wash invalids unable to come. Lastly corn-wine is drunk.

The preparation of corn-wine gives us another example of ceremonial work done by *Aboitʃɛwe* on behalf of the whole town. It is prepared in the women's *adebɔ* house. They first spread the corn on a shallow seed-bed of earth spread on a mat in a dark corner of the kitchen, keep it damp and let it sprout[5] till the shoots are two inches or so. Then it is taken to the *Nyado*'s yard and spread out there. The *Nyado* sends for the three other *wulɔmei* and they bless the sprouted corn with rum. It is given back to the women who check further sprouting by withering it in the hot sun for several days. Then the earth

[1] *Tʃade*'s ceremony of blessing was not held at all last year, not because the people had in any sense grown out of it, but because it can be performed only by the *Tʃade wulɔmɔ* who is also the *manʲtʃɛ*, and in the latter capacity had to attend the Gã State Council in Accra on the day on which *Tʃade*'s ceremony should have been held. That the Temma *manʲtʃɛ* is also a *wulɔmɔ*, and in his own town functions almost entirely as such, performing ceremonies which every single person in the town regards as important to the town's prosperity, is a point which has been sadly overlooked by outsiders.

[2] In the illustration facing p. 16, there are only three *wulɔmei*, as the *Awudu wulɔmɔ* had died a few weeks previously and his successor had not been appointed.

[3] Powdered red cam wood, mixed into paste.

[4] Sweet-smelling leaves, dried, powdered, and mixed into paste.

[5] One is inclined to wonder whether agriculture was not discovered by women who left damp grain lying about in kitchens rather than by careful observers of the wild corn out of doors.

is washed off the rootlets and they are boiled with water for a whole day in a huge iron pot. In the evening the brew is strained through a huge wicker basket set on logs laid across a great wooden bowl. The finished corn-wine is a brown, slightly sweetish liquid looking like old-fashioned black treacle much diluted.[1] It is poured into large spherical black pots and thence served for drinking in the small spherical black pots known as *alomii* and always associated with blessing.

On another ceremonial occasion we find the *Aboitʃewe* family assembled in the *Nyado*'s yard to 'take out' three youths of Teshi who had from their birth been in the ownership of *Na Yo*. When a woman fails to bear children she goes round from one god to another, first in her own town and then in other people's towns, and to whatever god answers her entreaties her child belongs till the time comes for 'taking the child's head out of the god' or setting him free from the god's influence.

The three youths in question brought gifts of goats, firewood, cloth, and money to *Na Yo*. These were received by members of the family and given to the *Nyado*, who held them up to heaven, one by one, and told *Na Yo* why they were being offered. *Nyanya* leaves were blessed in a similar manner and holy water was prepared. Then the head of each youth was shaved. The *Nyado* shaved off the first swathe of hair and then handed the razor to his 'sister' *Dɛdɛ* (C.19), who finished the work. The youth was next given holy water and sent to bathe himself. Then he was smeared all over by *Dɛdɛ* with a paste of white clay and given red *tuŋ* stripes on his head, and when dry and thoroughly grotesque was dressed in white calico and decorated with numerous bracelets and beads by the other women.

On another occasion we find some little girls, who are undergoing puberty rites, coming to the yard. *Dɛdɛ* first covers their faces, chests and arms with splashes of clay and *Krɔbo* perfume, and then they are passed on to the *Nyado* to be blessed.

The examples I have given are only a few out of many ceremonial occasions when *Aboitʃewe* acts as a family on behalf of others. The other families of the town have their own particular services to give in a similar manner, but the other families have become so huge that different branches of a family have taken over different duties, and these separate sections behave as ceremonial units as we have seen the whole *Aboitʃewe* family behaving.

[1] It is not, of course, alcoholic, but is regarded as a kind of concentrated essence of agricultural blessing. The older corn-wine, made of millet instead of maize, was alcoholic.

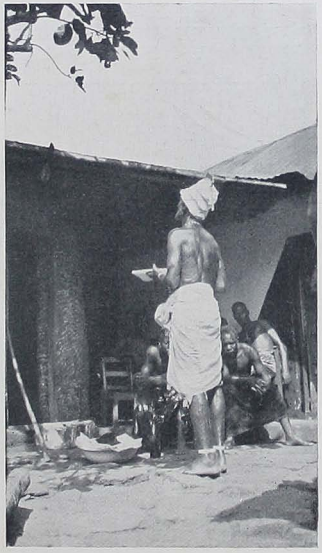
Family Pride

It is only slowly that a European begins to fathom the depths of the family pride of such a family as *Aboitfɛwe*. It was my interest in them *as a family* that took me, I think, nearer to their affections than any concrete services I could possibly have rendered them. The member who was my chief informant was a busy fisherman and farmer, but he used to appear eagerly every evening after his day's work to help me construct the family tree. Though he was quite illiterate he soon grasped the meaning of a genealogical diagram and memorized the position on my sheet of each person's name and would show me exactly where to insert fresh names. Once when I commented on the way he was sacrificing his rest after a hard day's work he said, 'This talk about my family and our Old Man is very sweet indeed to my mouth'. And he shed tears when my departure ended the conferences.

I recall an evening about a week before the *Kpledzo* festival when I was sitting over the remains of my evening meal, when a senior member of *Aboitfɛwe*, normally a quiet, reserved man, suddenly marched in unannounced and with an unusual lack of ceremony took a seat and began talking volubly. He was plainly drunk and I reflected with some vexation that I should have to send a messenger for a *posse* of his brothers to come and escort him home. However, his only symptom was a much loosened tongue and the theme of his oratory was but one—the glory of his House. He said how delighted he was that I should be staying in the town at the time of the Big Festival, for the Big Festival was unlike the festival of any other town, and the *Nyado* took a leading part in it. He hoped I should be careful to see it all and tell the people in England all about it because it was the finest of all the Gã customs, the *Nyado* was a principal performer and it could not take place without him. The *Aboitfɛwe* women, he said, would prepare the corn-wine; it was their privilege to do so, and he hoped I would see them prepare it because it was the corn-wine of the ancients and would be dispensed by the *Nyado*, and he hoped I would drink some and be blest. He was glad, he said, that I was privileged above all white men to be in Temma at the time of this great festival and to sit with the big people and the *Nyado*. . . . And so on interminably, all on the same theme. It was a clear case of *in vino veritas*; he was saying what he always felt. In the end I diverted, though I could not stem, the torrent of family pride by sending him to tell his brothers to be sure to call me as soon as preparation for the festival started.

Dede first covers their faces, chests, and arms with splashes of clay. (*See p.* 19.)

They are passed on to the *Nyado* to be blessed. (*See p.* 19.)



The gifts were given to the *Nyadɔ*, who held them up to heaven one by one. (*See p.* 19.)

Member of the house of the *Sakumɔ wulɔmɔ* marking a worshipper's face with the white stripes of blessing. (*See p.* 19.)

Very early in life does this family pride germinate. On the seashore one day a friendly urchin of about five came up and chatted. When I asked him his name he said, *Abo*. I said, 'Then you belong to *Aboitʃɛwe*'. 'Yes', he said with satisfaction, 'my father lives in the *Nyado*'s very compound itself. The *Nyado* is our own grandfather.'

On all sorts of daily minor occasions we see family pride coming in as a force of law and order. I remember an occasion when a rumour reached one of the youngest *Aboitʃɛwe* men that his wife had visited another man at night. Family pride was outraged. The young man's father drank himself into a frenzy and stormed about the street raging, 'Does she not know that this is *Aboitʃɛwe*? My son, if you do not drive that woman away and if you do not thrash that man to death you shall be no son of mine any more. . . . Compensation! What do we want with compensation? Is this not *Aboitʃɛwe*? Can things like this be done in *Aboitʃɛwe*?' His brothers, however, seized him and shut him indoors till he was quiet, and the town's appetite for scandals received no further satisfaction from that affair. The older male members of the House met in private *Kweʃi* the next day, and though financial compensation could have been claimed had they taken the case to a bigger tribunal they preferred their family dignity. Exactly how it was settled I do not know, and neither does anyone else outside the family. The offending wife and her partner in offence never showed their faces in the town again.

On another occasion I heard a very senior member of *Aboitʃɛwe* meekly accept a severe 'dressing-down' from a junior for committing a very minor breach of etiquette which he said nobody would have noticed if he had not been a member of *Aboitʃɛwe*. The offender had merely attached himself to a rather rowdy party of young people who went round the town on a kind of carol-singing procession several days before it was customary to do so. The procession came and visited me in the course of its round, and the *Aboitʃɛwe* member, in reprimanding his brother, reminded him that I knew quite enough about Temma customs to know that it was wrong: it was all very well for the other young people, but did he wish me to think that *Aboitʃɛwe* did not know how to observe its own customs?

I once stooped to exploit this family pride for the petty ends of the ethnographer. I had been finding it very difficult to time my arrival at any ceremony to coincide with the performance. An early arrival often meant waiting interminable hours; a

late found everything over. So I extracted a promise from all the *wulɔmei* that they would send for me just before beginning every ceremony. Of course they often forgot to do so, and one day when I was especially disappointed I said to the *Nyado* in the presence of the others, 'If the *wulɔmɔ* of a great Temma god does not keep his promises, how shall all the lesser people of the town know how to keep their promises?' The barb went home. The next morning he called on me and said that I had made him ashamed in the presence of the other *wulɔmei* but quite justly, because it was true that the lesser men looked to *Aboitʃɛwe* to learn how to behave. After that, not only did he always remember to call me to his ceremonies, but the other *wulɔmei* were equally careful.

Few escutcheons have no blots. When I had completed one of my family trees I asked my informant to rack his brains for omissions. He declared there were none. Then he added hesitatingly, 'There were some others once, but they do not belong to our family any more. They now live somewhere over there' (indicating vaguely the other side of the town) 'but they are not called by our name any more'. I did not press for the nature of the offence that had merited their banishment, for my friend was plainly bitterly ashamed of them; I only made my private guess. A part of his regret was no doubt that they had escaped the penalty which in earlier days would have removed them even more effectively from society.

As we shall see in detail later, when we come to examine the structure and government of the town, the town is managed and run by its 'big people', and these are all representatives of Houses and sub-Houses. Responsibility for law and order is inextricably bound up with family pride. We shall see again, when we come to examine the system of justice, that the family is collectively responsible for the behaviour of its individuals. There can be no doubt that the break-up of family organization would mean the break-up of the native government, and no doubt that most of the modern acts of lawlessness are committed by people living in strange towns away from the restraining influence of family reputation.

CHAPTER II

KINSHIP USAGES AND COMMON CUSTOMS

§ 1

LEGITIMACY

TWO things are necessary to make a child legitimate and give it the full rights of family membership. Firstly, its mother must have done her *kpemɔ* ceremony, and secondly, the child must have a *kpodziemɔ* or naming ceremony done for it when it is a week old.

The word *kpemɔ* really means to meet or receive socially and implies that the girl has been received into the society of grown-up women or female members of her father's family—in short, has undergone her puberty rites.[1] A child born of a mother who has not undergone *kpemɔ* is in a much worse position than a child who has merely an unknown male progenitor. The latter child can easily be adopted by its mother's father or any other man and become perfectly legitimate, but the former child cannot, has no rights in inheritance, succession or descent, is called a *mudzibi* (polluted child) and is derided by its playmates, who say to it, 'You are only a *mudzibi*: that is why you are so stupid'. In earlier days a non-*kpemɔ* mother and child were driven out of the town, but at the present day either the pregnant girl brings about an abortion or her family arrange a hasty and abbreviated form of *kpemɔ*.

Neither a non-*kpemɔ* woman, nor the child of such a woman, is entitled to the funeral rites that ensure an honourable reception in the next world. When the death occurs of a well-behaved girl who has for any reason omitted her *kpemɔ*, the rites are hastily done for the corpse before crying and weeping begin. The spirit of the dead person stays in the corpse and decay does not begin till crying has begun, and crying is never permitted till the corpse has been washed, perfumed, and grandly dressed. 'If you are dressed finely and received by the big people here, so will you be received by the big people in the place of the dead.' The serious consequences to a girl of omitting *kpemɔ* rites can therefore be circumvented at the time of death. But for the child of a non-*kpemɔ* mother there is no hope. He will be an outcast in the next world as in this.

[1] The various kinds of rites I have described in *Religion and Medicine of the Gā People*. I am not now concerned with the rites themselves, but with the social consequences of neglecting them.

The *kpodziemɔ*, or naming ceremony of a child, necessitates a 'father', but this father need not be the child's progenitor. The man in whose name the ceremony is done claims the child as his lawful issue.

The most usual person to father the child of a husbandless mother is her own father. When the male progenitor is unknown, has run away, is an undesirable stranger or an unsuitable associate for the family, then the child's maternal grandfather does its *kpodziemɔ* ceremony and names it as his own son or daughter. It now counts as his own child in all matters of inheritance and succession. Even if he be a *manʈfɛ* it is eligible to succeed him. In collecting the historical records of the Gã stools I have come across cases in which such a son became *manʈfɛ*.[1] But if the *manʈfɛ* himself were to beget an illegitimate son out of wedlock and do no *kpodziemɔ* ceremony for it, it would never be regarded as of his blood and could never succeed. An interesting case occurs in the history of the Asere stool. A woman lawfully married to *manʈfɛ Tɛiko Diŋ* (see Diagram X) committed adultery with a man of *Akuŋmadzei* and had a son by him. However, her legal husband did the *kpodziemɔ* ceremony for the child so that it was legally his son though the erring wife was dismissed and went away to *Akuŋmadzei* taking the child with her. The child was brought up and reached manhood there. When the *manʈfɛ* was in his old age war broke out, so he sent for the youth, whose name was *Akrama*, and ordered him to go to war on his behalf. *Akrama* went, distinguished himself as a warrior, and was eventually made *manʈfɛ*.

But it is not necessarily the father of the husbandless mother who fathers her child. It may be someone from the male progenitor's family. I well remember being present when a family council were sitting on the case of a troublesome boy of about eighteen years who had made a girl pregnant. The girl had told her parents, and they had asked the boy's family what suggestions they had to offer. He admitted the fault, which everyone condoned as a natural and common one, but the

[1] I also read recently a stool claimant's petition drawn up for him by an Europeanized lawyer. He based a part of his case against his rival on the ground that his rival was illegitimate as he was not born in wedlock. It was true that the rival was not born in wedlock, but he became the legitimate 'son' of his mother's father, and his claim in that respect was perfectly valid. On the other hand, in another recent stool dispute the pretender to the stool based his claim entirely on the fact that though his father was from another town and of slave blood his mother was the daughter of the *manʈfɛ*. This was true, but the *manʈfɛ* was dead before the boy was born to the *manʈfɛ*'s daughter and neither the *manʈfɛ* nor anyone else of that House ever fathered the boy or made him a member of the House. This latter fact was overlooked in examining the pretender's claim (if it ever was examined), and he quite illegally won his case.

question was, who was to father the coming child? The boy was earning very little, and in any case was not felt to be responsible enough to have a wife and child. The elder brother, already the married father of three sons, had some financial standing and at length consented to shoulder the financial burden of the situation. This brother then had three courses open to him. He could either pay the *kpodziemɔ* money on behalf of his young brother and let him name and be the legal father of the child, or he could pay the fee on behalf of himself and add the child to his own three children, or he could pay the fee on behalf of his own father and let the child become his own father's child. This last he decided to do. The child was duly born and was a girl; the old man named it as his second daughter (he already had one) and the young man who paid the expenses became its elder brother. The child's male progenitor pays its mother for its maintenance but does not maintain the mother as he would if she were his legal wife. If at any time in the future he were to save enough money to marry her he would be allowed and encouraged to do so, but the child could never become his child.

It is, however, not usual for the family of the defaulting boy thus to be allowed to father the child unless they can afford to let the boy marry the mother at once. Any child, even a fatherless one, is always a coveted possession, and the child of an unmarried mother is usually secured by her own family. The family of the male progenitor cannot insist on claiming it against the will of its mother's family without the payment of marriage dues. In any case, no negotiations are opened between the two families till the male progenitor has paid the girl's family a fee of one pound, called *kplemɔ da*—agreement wine—which is taken as an admission of guilt.

§ 2

DUTIES AND CONVENTIONAL ATTITUDES OF KINSMEN

A Man and His Wife's Mother

Between a man and his wife's mother exists a convention of extreme politeness, and each must behave with great decorum within sight and hearing of the other. The man may not treat his wife's compound (i.e. his wife's mother's compound) with familiarity and drop in and out when he likes. He must always give warning of his approach lest he find his mother-in-law insufficiently or improperly clad. When he wants to communicate

with his wife he sends a messenger if possible. When he himself arrives at the compound and after due greetings says, 'I have come to speak to So-and-so's mother' (naming his own child), the mother-in-law withdraws out of sight. If politely invited to eat in the compound he must decline, saying he has already eaten. If invited to drink, however, he may do so in moderation.

On *Homowo* day, when the husband must take his wife's mother his annual gift of rum, he takes it before daybreak lest later in the day he be drunk and ill-behaved. Whenever he takes her a present he must either send a messenger or be accompanied by a brother—never a sister—to act as spokesman, 'for there must always be someone between a man and his wife's mother'. If the son-in-law and his spokesman are invited to drink, the spokesman may drink his fill but the other may not.

If the wife's grandmother or classificatory grandmothers are present even greater politeness must be offered, and 'it is very hard indeed to drink'.

The wife's mother may not directly give her son-in-law any present, but if she wishes to express her approval of him she gives presents to his children and generally indulges them.

When the wife is absent her mother arranges who is to cook for the husband. When an undutiful wife has the connivance of her mother the husband has little control over her.

A Man and his Wife's Father

The relations between a man and his wife's father are supposed to be those of father and son. That is, the younger man is bound to be polite, deferential and obedient, but the father-in-law, unlike the mother-in-law, is under no obligation to be polite in return.

On *Homowo* day, when the young man has taken the annual gift of drink to his mother-in-law, he goes at once to his father-in-law with 'a proper bottle'.[1] The father-in-law takes some of the drink into his own mouth and transfers it to his son-in-law's, the two placing their lips together. This is the symbol of the transference of wisdom and is followed by concrete criticism of the young man's behaviour during the preceding year and advice on the next year's conduct. Any apologies due from the young man are offered. Friendly drinking then begins and the son-in-law may drink freely; if he gets drunk his father-in-law arranges to have him taken home.

[1] A bottle of imported whiskey or gin, not the illicitly distilled raw spirit of everyday use.

A man is always at liberty to accept a meal from his father-in-law if it be offered.

The relation between a man and his father-in-law is the most sociable of the contacts between the wife's family and the husband's family, with the exception of the relation between a wife and her husband's sister. The relation between the man and his wife is highly unsociable and seems almost impersonal. The children, of course, are a link, but a link is not the same as contact.

A Woman and her Husband's Mother

These two people have to be polite to one another. If the mother-in-law tyrannizes over her daughter-in-law she must do so politely 'in order to get politeness back'. The older woman never addresses the younger by her name without the title of *Na* or *Awo* (grandmother or mother). Frequently each calls the other *Awo*, but as soon as there is a child the young mother is both addressed and spoken of as 'So-and-so's mother'. When really kindly feelings exist between the two the mother-in-law will call the other '*Mibiyo*'—my daughter. In no circumstances does the mother-in-law—or any other woman in her house for that matter—ever address or refer to the daughter-in-law as 'So-and-so's wife' (naming her husband) though any friends, neighbours, and acquaintances outside may—and usually do. The husband would never use the expression 'my wife' nor the wife the expression 'my husband' in the compound of either of the two mothers-in-law.

Annually, in the *Homɔwɔ* festival, the daughter-in-law sends a gift of firewood (*'fayo lai'*) to her mother-in-law, firewood being the symbol of submission.

The mother-in-law has, theoretically, the right to order her daughter-in-law's life. She can order her to leave her own mother and come and live with her, carry firewood and water, cook, wash clothes, and generally be a slave. In practice, however, a wife is very rarely required to leave her own mother unless the mother is resident in another town, and even then she is allowed an amount of leave of absence which any European husband would regard as preposterous.

The mother-in-law has the right to reprove her daughter-in-law for any improper behaviour or neglect of duty. When any dispute between husband and wife comes to court and the man states that his wife has not done her duty by him, the first question the elders ask is, 'Did you complain of this behaviour to your mother and ask her to reprove your wife ?' If he admits that he

did not, the court refuse to believe that the wife's behaviour has been unsatisfactory.

The husband's mother also has control over the children and orders whatever treatment she thinks suitable for them.[1] When a child is sick its father's mother has a right to take it into her house to treat it, but children die so easily that any grandmother is usually only too glad to shelve responsibility and willingly leaves the child and its mother in the other grandmother's compound.

When a mother-in-law condescends to eat with her daughter-in-law this is a sign of great harmony and peace. But the two would never bathe together and only in the utmost need would the mother-in-law assist at her daughter-in-law's confinement. If the mother-in-law becomes ill, only in the direst need may the daughter-in-law perform any intimate services for her. All intimate medical topics are banned in conversation between the two. The pregnant daughter-in-law may say vaguely, 'I have belly-ache', but must withhold all gynæcological details, and in discussing ailments neither may dwell on those gruesome details of symptoms which make illnesses so enjoyable socially.

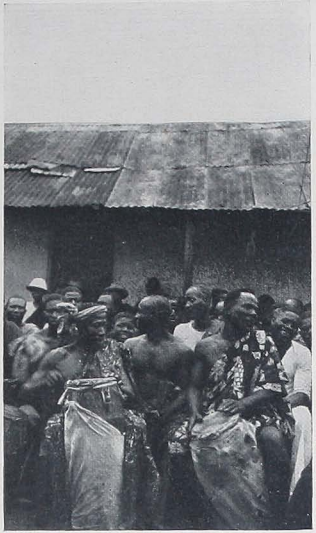
No improper behaviour or speech of other people may be described between a woman and her mother-in-law. In recounting, say, a shocking quarrel, the daughter-in-law may say, 'She insulted me', but may not quote exactly, saying, 'She told me I was a robber of latrines', or 'She said my father refused to sleep with my mother because she stank'.

A daughter-in-law may not borrow money from her mother-in-law or discuss money matters with her. Indeed, all discussion of money affairs is avoided between 'in-laws' as far as possible.

A Woman and Her Husband's Father

A woman must respect her husband's father as she respects her own, and though she maintains an air of great shyness towards him, there is often much kindly feeling between them. He keeps an eye on the way her husband treats her and to some extent on the way her mother-in-law treats her. When a wife feels that her husband is treating her unfairly she first confides in her husband's sister, and if the sister shares her indignation she passes on the complaint to the husband's mother, who

[1] Missionaries and other teachers of child welfare who frequently despair over the way in which young literate parents neglect careful teaching should remember that no parents have any say in the treatment of their child. Two groups of old women stand between the child and its parents.



The offender had merely attached himself to a rather rowdy party of young people. (*See p.* 21.)

The daughter-in-law sends a gift of firewood. (*See p.* 27.)

passes it on to the husband's father. The father deals with his son. Only as a last resort does the wife complain to her own family.

A Woman and Her Husband's Sister

The husband's sister is often spoken of as the wife's 'female husband'. Relations between the two depend on personality; the husband's sister may be to the wife a very ogress or she may be, and often is, her closest lifelong friend. She has the same right as the mother-in-law to order the young wife about, but she has the care of her if she is sick while staying with her husband's womenfolk. She must also see that the young wife has all the comforts reasonably due.

The two women address one another by their personal names, may sleep on one mat, bathe together in the bath-house, eat together, and suckle one another's babies.

A Man and his Wife's Sister

The younger sisters of a man's wife are spoken of as his 'small wives'[1] and must cook for him if she is unable. If a man's wife dies and he has been a good husband, her family often substitute a younger sister without asking any fresh payments from him. But he has no right to demand this, and usually, if he can afford it, he does pay full marriage fees and in any case has to send a gift of rum. When a wife turns out unsatisfactory and the husband has been a good husband, he has the right to demand that the family take her back and substitute another sister. If they are thoroughly ashamed of her they are glad to do this.

All this being so, a man and his wife's sister are rather more than potential mates, they are likely future mates, and as might be expected there is an atmosphere of restraint between them.

A Man and his Wife's Sister's Husband

Sometimes a man addresses his wife's sister's husband as *mi bi etfe*—my child's father. When a woman dies her children, if small, may be looked after by her sister, and this sister's husband will be spoken of as their father.

[1] 'Big' and 'small' is the literal translation of the words used in expressing classificatory relationships, but I think the meaning would be more fairly rendered by the words 'full' and 'partial'. For instance, a man's wife's sisters are his partial wives, in that they may have to cook for him as a wife does, but not sleep with him as a complete wife does.

There is always some rivalry between the husbands of sisters, for they compete for the favour of their joint mother-in-law. If the man married to one of the younger sisters wishes to assert himself unpleasantly he gives his mother-in-law a better annual present than does the elder sister's husband. On the other hand, there is often friendship and co-operation between the husbands of sisters. When the sisters live in one house the husbands often combine to repair the house.

A Woman and her Husband's Brothers

When a man dies his younger brothers are the right persons to inherit his widows and children. When he has only one wife his next younger brother should inherit her, but in certain circumstances any one of the brothers may do so. These men are therefore potential husbands of the woman and she must observe a polite shy attitude to them all and they to her. She addresses them as *Owura* or *Ata* (Lord or Sir) as she does her husband. The one who is her husband's probable successor she may speak of as '*midoku tʃɛ*' (my *Doku*'s father), *Doku* being the name given to the first child of a woman's second marriage.

Seduction of a brother's wife is a more serious crime than seduction of any other man's wife, but is not unforgivable.

Father and Child

The word for a father (*tʃɛ*) is also the word for an owner, controller, or head. The chief-of-the-fishermen is called father-of-the-fishermen; the owner of a house, father-of-the-house; a rich man, father-of-money; a medicine-man, father-of-tree-roots; a leopard, the father-of-the-forest; the coxswain of a canoe, the father-of-the-rudder. But I think there is little doubt that the primary meaning of the word is a male progenitor. If you ask any child of ten, 'What is a father?' he will say, 'The man who begat you'.

In spite of all the classificatory 'fathers' no child from the time he can walk is ever in any doubt about which is his 'big father'. Rarely a day passes from the day the child is born, but the father goes at sunset to the mother's compound, takes his child in his arms and perhaps carries it round the town and to his own compound. Some fishermen once asked me to photograph them in a group. I went to my quarters to fetch the camera, and when I returned one of the younger men was missing. In a few minutes he came panting up carrying his infant son, having raced to the other side of the town to fetch

him from his mother's compound. One evening at a story-telling gathering at which there were some dozens of people I saw a grandmother set down a child of not more than three, saying to him, 'Go to your father', and the child picked out the right person unhesitatingly.

It is the father who takes most careful interest in his children, both boys and girls. The mother usually seems to be interested in a child only while it remains the youngest. It is usually the father and not the mother who brings a child to me and says it has fever or belly-ache, and have I any medicine.

The father is responsible for the training of his own boys in farming and fishing, and they begin to carry tools or tackle to and from the farm or the beach as soon as they can walk, and when they are ten they can be trusted to spread the sail and the fishing-lines out to dry and prepare them neatly for the next day's work, folding up the sail and most beautifully winding up the dried lines. They all know how to repair a net by the time they are ten. Though the complete repair of a large net requires the help of all the men in the compound, the boys of ten all take their netting-needles and help. In any work beyond the skill and strength of the boy, he must stand by and fag for his father.

Kinship Terminology

Not only is the system of kinship terminology a classificatory[1] one, but kinship terms of address are often extended to people who cannot possibly be blood relatives. Anyone addressing a gathering of elderly people begins, 'Grandfathers and grandmothers'. Any stranger wishing to be respectful may address any old man or woman as grandfather or grandmother, or an old man or woman wishing to express affection may address a younger as 'my grandchild'. I have myself been addressed as grandchild by an old high priest, and as grandparent by various other people.

The eldest old man or old woman in a compound is spoken of as 'my senior grandfather' or 'my senior grandmother' by the young residents in the compound and the speaker's real grandfather may rank as 'my small grandfather'. Whether a boy speaks of his real father as 'my senior father', 'my small father', 'my intermediate father', or 'the senior (or junior) of

[1] 'Classificatory' is the word used by anthropologists to denote a system of kinship terminology in which a kinship term such as 'father' or 'mother' is extended to a number of people who are all called the 'fathers' and 'mothers' of the speaker.

my intermediate fathers' depends on his father's position in the compound.

When the speaker is a boy living in a men's compound 'my senior mother' means the father's senior wife, but when the speaker lives in a women's compound, 'my senior mother' may mean either the father's senior wife or the senior of the 'mothers' living in the mother's compound.

A parent may speak of a child whom he or she begat as '*mi musuŋ bi*'—my belly's child—and two whole brothers or sisters may say of one another 'we are of the same belly'.

§ 3

MARRIAGE PROHIBITIONS AND PREFERENCES

The Gã as we find them to-day are not one people but an amalgamation of different peoples. There are certain customs, mainly of a ritual nature, in the observance of which the separate fragments of peoples who came together have retained their clear-cut differences, but in the matter of the rules of marriage they have produced a compromise between all parties. The compromise is not entirely successful and one frequently meets not only with inconsistencies in the rules, but often a blatant disregard, in practice, of what they state to be the rules.

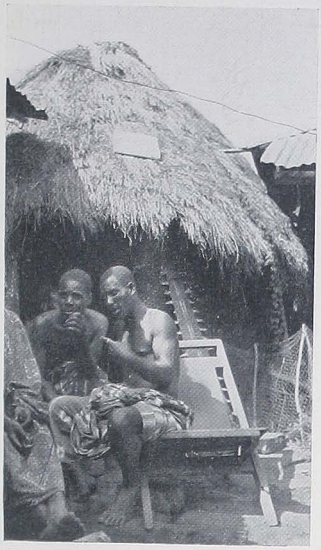
Prohibited Unions

A man may not marry his grandmother, mother, sister, daughter, or grand-daughter because this would be *musũŋ bɔ*—'shaming of the belly'.

Neither may he marry his mother-in-law or her sister 'because she is his mother', his father's wife 'because she is his mother', his mother's sister 'because she is his mother', his father's sister 'because she is his female father', his son's or nephew's wife 'because she is his daughter'.

In earlier days an incestuous man was punished with drowning (to avoid polluting the ground with unclean blood) and a woman by driving away into the bush. None of the relatives of the offenders were allowed to hold any post of seniority for one generation. In these days offenders are simply turned out of their town by their relatives, deprived of their family names, and not allowed by the townspeople to attend any public festival.

The rationalizations produced to account for the prohibition of incest are two. Firstly, it is good for the family to increase



The youth confides in some other youth. (*See p.* 38.)

When they are ten they can be trusted to spread the fishing-lines out to dry. (*See p.* 31.)

and spread out its connections as far as possible because this makes it stronger. If the woman has a brother and she marries him, then, when she is in distress, she has but one person to aid her. If she marries some other man, then she has two people to aid her. To marry inside the group keeps the group small and weak. Secondly, it produces socially incongruous situations; a man cannot say to his wife, 'You are my wife, you must obey me', if she can retort, 'You are my grandson, you must obey me'. Some of the socially difficult situations on the basis of which certain marriages are discouraged are discussed later.

Nearly everything that anthropologists could possibly find to say about incest they have said, but I might still be allowed to add that if the repulsion were instinctive the offence could hardly be so common. And common it is. I have heard of eight undoubted cases[1] and there must be many more which I have not heard of, for people conceal, if they can, from foreigners that of which they are ashamed. Several Gã people, however, have not hesitated to affirm that 'it is very common', though they disliked referring to specific cases.

Although there are certain clear-cut marriage prohibitions based upon consanguinity, any suggested marriage of two specific individuals is discussed on its own merits, and whether it be considered allowable or not depends upon specific circumstances such as housing. The housing system and the marriage laws are not, I think, a part of the same system and are not always compatible. The factors which are taken into consideration include the following:

1. Children who have been brought up in the same women's compound and 'have sucked the same breast, slept on the same mat and eaten from the same dish are brothers and sisters', though they may, so far as blood is concerned, belong to different families.

2. When a man sends for his wife to come to his compound to sleep with him, what other woman will be coming to the compound at the same time to sleep with his 'fathers', his 'grandfathers', or his 'brothers'? This question is always considered.

3. When a man goes to visit his wife at his mother-in-law's compound, what other men of his own house may be visiting their wives in the same compound at the same time? This also is considered.

4. When a woman 'cries to her husband for money to lend to her mother or her father' what House will ultimately be

[1] These are not cases of incest between mere classificatory relatives. Most of them are father-daughter cases.

impoverished? Father and son have no separate identity in the matter of money, nor have mother and daughter.

5. It is an important rule of succession that when the holder of an office, who should be succeeded by either a brother or a son, has only a sister or a daughter, the son of this sister or daughter takes the office. If the sister or daughter has married a man of her own House her son is also of her House and the succession does not then pass to another House.

In Nungwa and Accra, the homes of the immigrant *Gã Mashi* and *Gã Wo*, preferences and prohibitions are still strictly observed except in a few wealthy Accra families which have been both wealthy and literate for several generations. Such families, for the sake of keeping money in the family, frequently ignore the parallel-cousin prohibition which the other *Gã Mashi* and *Gã Wo* people observe strictly.

A man has the right to demand that his daughter shall be taken to wife by his sister's son, but if he wants to send her elsewhere he may. The sister's son, however, whether he marries his cousin or not, has always the right to demand certain wifely services such as cooking from her.

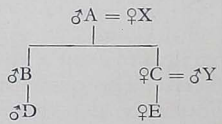
The prohibited cousin marriages are:

1. The son and daughter of a man and his sister respectively.
2. The son and daughter of two brothers.
3. The son and daughter of two sisters.

In Temma it is considered necessary to avoid the situations which might arise if such marriages were allowed, but it is not considered essential to avoid them by prohibiting the marriages.

Let us consider the situations which would arise out of such marriages.

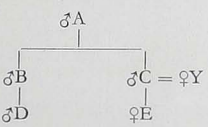
1. *Son and Daughter of a Brother and Sister respectively*



Here A., B., and D., grandfather, father, and son, are living in one compound. The three women X., C., and E., grandmother, mother, and daughter, are together in another compound. When the women go to their husbands at night X. and E., grandmother and grand-daughter, go to the same compound. The two old people feel that it is, firstly, *infra dig.* to be sleeping together in

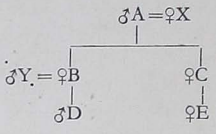
the same compound that contains their grandchildren sleeping together; the grandmother especially resents the presence of her grand-daughter; and secondly, they feel it improper, if not actually incestuous, that their common offspring should be sleeping together in the same house as their grandparents. Furthermore, there is a convention of even stiffer politeness between a man and his mother-in-law's mother than between him and his mother-in-law. The very subject of sexual intercourse would hardly be mentioned between them, and if they should chance to meet one another at the compound to which they both came with the open intention of practising such an act, the embarrassment would be overwhelming. Furthermore, even if by careful housing they overcame this difficulty the young man still has to visit the old lady's compound on formal visits to his wife and mother-in-law, and the old lady is head of the compound and entitled to profoundly ceremonial manners. But if she is also the paternal grandmother of the young man she has already indulged him more and spanked him less than has the maternal grandmother in whose compound he was born, and she cannot reconcile the position of indulgent grandmother with that of austere personage. And lastly, his mother-in-law is already familiar to him in the person of the aunt who frequently brought his grandfather's meals to him in the men's compound, and she was in his childhood his 'female-father'. To change these attitudes for new ones would be difficult and embarrassing, if not impossible.

2. *Son and Daughter of two Brothers*



In this case we have the two women, Y. and E., mother and daughter, living in one compound, and the four men, A., B., C., and D. in another. When Y. goes to sleep with her husband C., E. goes to sleep with her husband D. in the same compound. When D. goes to visit his wife in her mother's compound he may meet his classificatory father visiting in the same compound. Both situations are accounted embarrassing. Furthermore, if C. were to die B. might inherit his widow, and E. would then become his daughter. His son and daughter would therefore find themselves also husband and wife.

3. *Son and Daughter of two Sisters*



This case is full of awkward situations. If the two sisters B. and C. are daughters of the same wife of A. then their children, D. and E., will have been brought up as brother and sister in the same compound, and both mothers will be addressed as 'mother' by both children. If D. and E. were to marry, then both 'mothers' would be converted into mothers-in-law and easy relationships changed into stiff ones; the young husband would have to visit as a ceremonious son-in-law the compound which was his familiar home. Even if B. and C. have different mothers there is always the possibility that these two mothers might be required by their husband to occupy one compound. Also, when a wife is unable to cook for her husband her younger sister does so. 'All her sisters are his small wives.' They are also his potential full wives, for a widower marries his dead wife's sister if she be still free. The daughter E. is therefore Y.'s 'small' daughter and his daughter and his son should not marry. We have also the difficulties about visiting. The father and son, Y. and D., are in one compound, and when they send for their wives, they send for a classificatory mother and daughter, both from one compound, which the 'mother' would resent. Father and son, similarly, when they visit their wives are embarrassed by visiting at the same place; indeed, the father may be visiting his wife and the son visiting the same woman in her capacity as 'big' mother-in-law, or mother-in-law's elder sister.

In Temma, where the influence of the immigrant Gã is not so great, the regulations based on blood relationship are very few. Cross-cousin marriages are not specially preferred, and marriages of both kinds of parallel cousins are allowed. The reason given for this last state of affairs is that when the people came together into one town, the number of offices to be held by one House or sub-House was great and the number of people to hold them small and constantly being diminished by warfare. It was only by rather close inbreeding that the office could be kept in the House. It is an important rule of succession that when the holder of an office, who should be succeeded by either a brother or a son, has only a sister or a daughter, the son of this sister or daughter takes the office, and the male heirs of this sister's son in the *male*

line are also eligible for succession. If the sister or daughter has married a man of her own House her son is also of her House, and the office does not pass to another House.

The habit of inbreeding in Temma has quite outgrown the amount necessary to keep the various offices in their right Houses, but I suspect that the reason for this is the desirability of keeping wealthy women from marrying outside the family. The Gã have never been slow to adapt their institutions to changing circumstances. As examples of prudential inbreeding, we may look in our *Aboitʃewe* table at the following marriages of relatives. *Labi Mɛnsã* (E.16) marries his father's brother's daughter *Abotʃo* (E.23). *Kɔmi* (G.5) marries *Tɔdi* (G.26), his paternal grandfather's brother's daughter. Both *Abotʃo* and her daughter *Tɔdi* are wealthy women. But *Abotʃo* was a widow when *Labi Mɛnsã* married her, and neither of them had seniors in their compounds to be embarrassed by their union. *Tɔdi*'s husband also was dead when her mother married *Labi Mɛnsã*.

Other Preferences

It is universally held that two brothers ought not to marry two sisters 'because they would be quarrelling', but there is nothing else against it and it is not forbidden. Twins, however, are always encouraged to marry two brothers or two sisters, 'because they must always do things alike'.

§ 4

ACQUIRING A WIFE

Ordinary Procedure

When a young man reaches marriageable age his father is usually anxious to procure him a wife to keep him from 'wanton play'.

If the choice is entirely the father's, it is he who usually pays all the expenses. If the son dislikes his father's choice he generally accepts it till such time as he has saved enough money of his own either to pay the first wife off and dismiss her or to supplement her with a 'small wife' of his own choice. A wise father usually consults his son's taste, but in that case expects his son to share the expenses.

When a youth becomes acquainted with a girl he wishes to marry he first seeks out the girl alone and offers her some small inconspicuous gift—usually a penny. If she declines the penny

the matter is closed, if she accepts it she takes it home and shows it to her parents. The next day the young couple meet privately again and the girl brings the boy a titbit of food—some small dainty that can be carried inconspicuously. The youth next confides in some other youth, usually his best friend, and the friend is asked to spy on the girl for a matter of a month or two to make sure that she is not 'playing with some other man'. When satisfied on this point the suitor tells his own parents of his wish. If they are agreeable they send to the girl's parents two messengers—a man and a woman—bearing either two bottles of rum or one guinea, a shilling of which is returned as a receipt. This sum is called *agbo ʃimɔ da*—gate-knocking wine. The messengers are chosen for their ready wit and agility in meeting arguments, for the parents of the girl always make a show of reluctance, and their objections must be skilfully demolished. To signify consent the parents accept the rum, open the bottles then and there and give the messengers a drink. The messengers then go back and report.

The parents of the girl then call her and ask if she knows the boy; she always denies that she has ever set eyes on him. She goes on meeting him secretly, and to her parents makes at last a show of yielding to pressure.

The parents then send two messengers, one representing the mother's family and one the father's to say that they all consent.

Then two messengers are sent from the boy's family bearing fifteen pounds. Till this is forthcoming all negotiations are suspended. If the boy's family need time in which to muster the sum they say, 'We will come in so many months' time: please wait for us', but they never mention money. When the money is finally handed over, the girl's parents provide drinks for the messengers, and, if rich, may send a bottle to the boy's parents.

This fifteen pounds is the sum of four distinct items:

Kplemɔ da	£1
Yi nii	6
Hɛ nɔ to bo	4
Bladzu	4
	£15

The *Kplemɔ da* is the 'agreement wine'. *Yi nii* is head-money or bride price, *hɛ nɔ to bo* means 'the buying of the waist', or the buying of the right to sexual intercourse, *Bladzu* is the public announcement by the giving of a party to which 'all the young

girls come and play', and balls of *fotolii* (dough) are thrown.[1] In addition to the fifteen pounds the parents have a right to demand the money they spent on the girl's puberty rites (*Tuŋ*, *Afi*, *Dipo*, etc.) and to refuse to hand over the girl till it is paid in full, but they may, and usually do, either reduce it, let the sum be paid in instalments, or waive it altogether. When they do this they must be thanked with rum.

The money paid to the girl's parents is divided into three parts: a part goes to the father and his relatives, a part to the mother and hers, the rest to the girl for her trousseau.

When all payments and announcements are ended and the girl is ready to go to her husband, the man sends two women to her parents to say that he wants his wife. After sunset that evening her relatives come, all grandly dressed, and two of her mother's 'sisters' light two lanterns. This party is joined by all the young girls who care to come with lanterns, and it conducts the girl to the door of her husband's house. She is supposed not to laugh during this journey, but, as everyone tries to make her, the ceremony becomes an entertainment. When they reach the husband's door the two aunts knock and exchange greetings with him. He asks them why they have come and they answer that they have brought him a present. He then treats the party to rum.

This ceremony is called *Adzie lɛ gbɛ*—'they put her on the road'.

If the bridal night proves to the husband that the bride was a virgin he takes to her parents, on the following morning, a piece of new calico stained with the blood of the ruptured hymen. If he finds that she is not a virgin he has the right to demand of her parents a goat to be slaughtered to stain the calico. But in recent years this custom has almost died out, for, I am told, 'not one girl in a thousand is a virgin'.[2]

Minimum Procedure

When young people wish to marry but cannot get their parents' consent they usually go their own way and in due time tell their parents that the girl is pregnant. The youth then has to pay two bottles of rum as an admission of guilt. This takes the place of

[1] *Ayeɔ fotolii* is the correct name of this festivity. The word *Bladzu* or *Bradzu* is here wrongly used. *Bladzu* is the puberty rite by which the *Otublohu* girls 'wash themselves from girlhood into womanhood'. The Gã girls do not do this, but they do the rites of *Tuŋ*, *Afi*, etc., instead. These days, if their fathers are poor the *Tuŋ* rites are omitted, but the *fotolii* custom—miscalled *Bladzu*—at the time of the girl's marriage may not be omitted.

[2] Schoolgirls are said to be the least chaste of all and frequently sell their favours for small sums of money.

Agbo ʃimɔ da. The *Yi nii*, which is never remitted in taking to wife an innocent girl, is waived, but the *Henɔtobo* and the *Bladzu* fees must always be paid in full. When these are paid the girl is the lawful wife of the man and any children are lawfully his, provided he does the *kpodziemɔ* ceremony for them.

Betrothal of Unborn Girls

This is a part of the custom whereby two men may cement a friendship by making a pact. One of them will say, 'If your wife bears a boy it shall become my *bialɔ*. If she bears a girl it shall become my wife'. In either case the speaker saddles himself with all the expenses connected with the child from the time it is conceived. If it is a boy he takes it into his own family and in the matter of inheritance it is treated as the equal of his own sons. In everyday affairs it is favoured above his own sons—in fact they often make use of the *bialɔ* to 'get round' the father. In the matter of naming and succession the *bialɔ* belongs to his own father's House.

If the child is a girl she stays with her mother till she reaches marriageable age, but her future husband pays all the expenses of her upbringing and provides for her more lavishly than most girls are provided for. If she turns out unattractive her husband still makes a point of preferring her before any of his other wives. If, when she grows up, she refuses to marry her guardian but insists on some younger man, then the younger man has to pay the guardian everything he has ever spent on her, and her parents are grossly ashamed of her. If she is seduced before becoming her guardian's wife the seducer is treated as the seducer of a wife, but is charged more than the usual pacification fee because the guardian 'visited her every day when she was a child and no one could pay enough to discharge that debt'.

§ 5

ADULTERY AND DIVORCE

When a man wishes to rid himself of a wife who has never been unfaithful he can do so if he 'puts her on the road' with a compensation fee—usually of twelve pounds. The children, if any, remain his.

If the woman wishes to leave the man but has not been unfaithful to him her family must refund all the money paid to them in marriage fees. Usually in such a case the parents of the

woman say, 'We admit that we owe you this money, but please wait till we have married her to someone else when we shall have her new marriage fees to give you.' If during the interval between the girl's return to her parents and the refunding of the marriage fees she sleeps with any other man, the first man can claim the usual adultery compensation fee from the second. Once the marriage fees have been refunded the girl is no longer the man's wife, and if he dies she cannot be made to come and do the *kura* funeral custom which every wife has to come and do for a dead husband.

When a man knows that his wife has slept with another man he first sends to that man and claims a fee of one pound, which is known as *Dunsa*. The payment of *Dunsa* is an admission of guilt without which further proceedings cannot be taken. If the woman is pregnant by the interloper *Dunsa* is two pounds. After the payment of *Dunsa* a fee of six pounds known as *Ayifali* may be claimed by the injured husband from the guilty man. If the woman is pregnant the amount due is twelve pounds.

All these negotiations are made through the parents of the guilty wife.

Not only does the injured husband get the twelve pounds but he can also claim the child, and even though he did not beget it, it has full rights of inheritance and succession in his family even to the length of succeeding to a stool.

If the husband wishes to divorce his wife for adultery he cannot do so if he has claimed *Ayifali* unless he gives her twelve pounds to 'put her on the road'.

If he wishes simply to divorce her for her adultery neither party can claim anything from the other: she cannot claim 'road money', he cannot claim either *Ayifali* or the refund of marriage fees. Any children already born belong to the husband. The divorced woman is, however, still the man's wife in that when he dies his brothers have the right to make her come and do the *kura* ceremony for him. She cannot refuse to come, though she knows she will not be politely received.

In every case of separation the husband is the possessor of the children provided he has paid the full marriage fee to his wife's parents. If he has not, they claim the children.

The *Ayifali* and *Dunsa* fees I have mentioned are those paid when the injured man is of ordinary rank. But if he be an *asafoatfɛ*, *fipi*, *otfame*, or *manʏtfɛ*'s 'brother' the sums claimed as *Ayifali* and *Dunsa* are doubled. If the wife of a *manʏtfɛ* is seduced the *manʏtfɛ* himself claims nothing, but every *asafoatfɛ* and every *fipi* has the right to come and claim one guinea *Dunsa* and six

pounds *Ayifali*. If the woman is pregnant they all claim double *Dunsa* and double *Ayifali* 'because it is their father the *manʧɛ* who has been disgraced'. Also, because the stool is a magical medicine, the guilty man must bring two rams and two bottles of rum, one for the purification of the stool and one for the *manʧɛ*. The woman must purify her injured husband with one ram. 'If the guilty man runs away he will die, because he has offended the stool.' His father and his brothers must pay his fines if he absconds: indeed, it is they who are responsible for the payment even if he stays.

Such a case is judged publicly out of doors, and the *ʃipi* presides. The *manʧɛ* himself receives nothing except one ram for purification because 'the stool does not want money but it does not want disgrace'.

A stool is a specially big medicine, and the *ʃipi*, *otʃame*, and *asafoatʃɛmei* have an interest in it. But any man who has a 'medicine' in his house for which he makes an annual 'yam-feast', or any man whose household has charge of a god, even a small one, claims the cost of a sacrifice to purify these holy things from the pollution which the adultery brought into the family.

If a *manʧɛ* himself seduces another man's wife the man tells the *otʃame* and the *otʃame* the *ʃipi*. The *ʃipi* calls together all the *asafoatʃɛmei* and elders and all the united officials call the *manʧɛ* and caution him in private (*mudzɔ*) fining him not less than twenty pounds for his first offence. The husband of the woman seduced receives recompense according to his rank, and the *manʧɛ* has also to purify his stool. For a second offence he is fined more heavily, and for a third he is—or should be—deserted. But in these days, I am told, 'when a *manʧɛ* is deserted there is always someone on his side', and unless he is officially 'destooled' the Government recognizes him still. 'So it is now no use deserting him, but in the olden days if he was deserted he died of grief.'

An offending *wulɔmɔ* is treated like a *manʧɛ*, but as he is not, like a *manʧɛ*, a military personage, the military officers can make no claims. But his god must be abundantly pacified.

If an *asafoatʃɛ* or a *ʃipi* seduces another man's wife his insignia of office (the *tʃi*[1] and the *kplɛbi*,[2]) which are the receptacles of supernatural power, have to be pacified with rams and rum.

No *Ayifali* claim can be made against a brother or near relative. 'You can only claim *Ayifali* against your enemy, and it is not good that your brother should be your enemy.' But the elders who

[1] A short decorated sword.

[2] A kind of whip made of the stiff tendon of an ox split at the end into two thongs.

judge the case always order the offender to pacify his brother, and as the brother has been deeply offended the pacification costs more than an *Ayifali* fee. All such cases are dealt with by the family alone so far as possible and are held in *Kwefi* ('under the eaves')—in privacy. Any elder who holds a court in *kwefi* always makes a special effort that the parties shall leave his 'eaves' in peace.

§ 6

INHERITANCE

When a man dies all the elders of his family meet to decide how his property shall be distributed. If he has expressed any special wishes these are carefully respected.

There are no rigid laws of inheritance as a European understands codified law.[1] There are only certain very usual practices which the elders are at liberty to modify in any way they deem fit. They do not administer law, they administer what seems to them justice and wisdom. People receive what they are deemed to deserve. A next of kin who is unanimously voted a thoroughly worthless character may be disinherited entirely: a distant relative who has lived with the deceased and been a prop and comfort to him may receive something approaching a son's portion. An eldest son or brother considered stupid or less competent to manage property than his junior may be made to stand aside in favour of his junior brother. Nobody has a right to make any demands on the grounds of such-and-such a kinship relationship.

One right, however, every one has, and that is a right to a hearing. If he thinks he has been unjustly treated he can say so, but he has no appeal against the decision of the family. And one law is quite rigid: that is, that no decision of the family council is valid in the absence of anyone who has a right to be there. Whenever this point is neglected the most bitter strife is born.

We may now consider some of the very usual practices regarding the disposal of a dead man's property.

Wives

The proper and usual people to inherit a man's wives are his younger brothers. But if—as often happens—a man is past

[1] Most interpretations of Gold Coast 'Law' to Europeans have been made by English-trained lawyers, and most litigation that comes under the notice of Europeans is conducted by such lawyers. These lawyers always work on the entirely false assumption that there exists a body of rigid though unprinted native law which native courts are bound to administer.

middle age when he dies and his brothers are also getting on in life, it is felt to be a waste of time to allocate the younger of his wives to men who are likely to widow them again shortly. So far as possible the wives are allocated to men of their own age. It is sometimes not easy to find suitable partners for the widows of the older men, for a man may not marry his classificatory 'mother', that is, any of his father's or uncle's wives. Male relatives of the man on his mother's side are, therefore, often brought in. (See Diagram IV.)

But although a man may not marry his uncle's wife, he may take her to give to his own son as a wife.

The new husband becomes the 'father' of all the children of the wife he inherits. Any subsequent children born by that wife are counted as the children of the dead brother and continue the naming sequence where he left it.

The inheriting husband pays no fee for his dead brother's wife, but he kills a sheep for the ghost to separate it from the woman and 'make it go off her bed'.

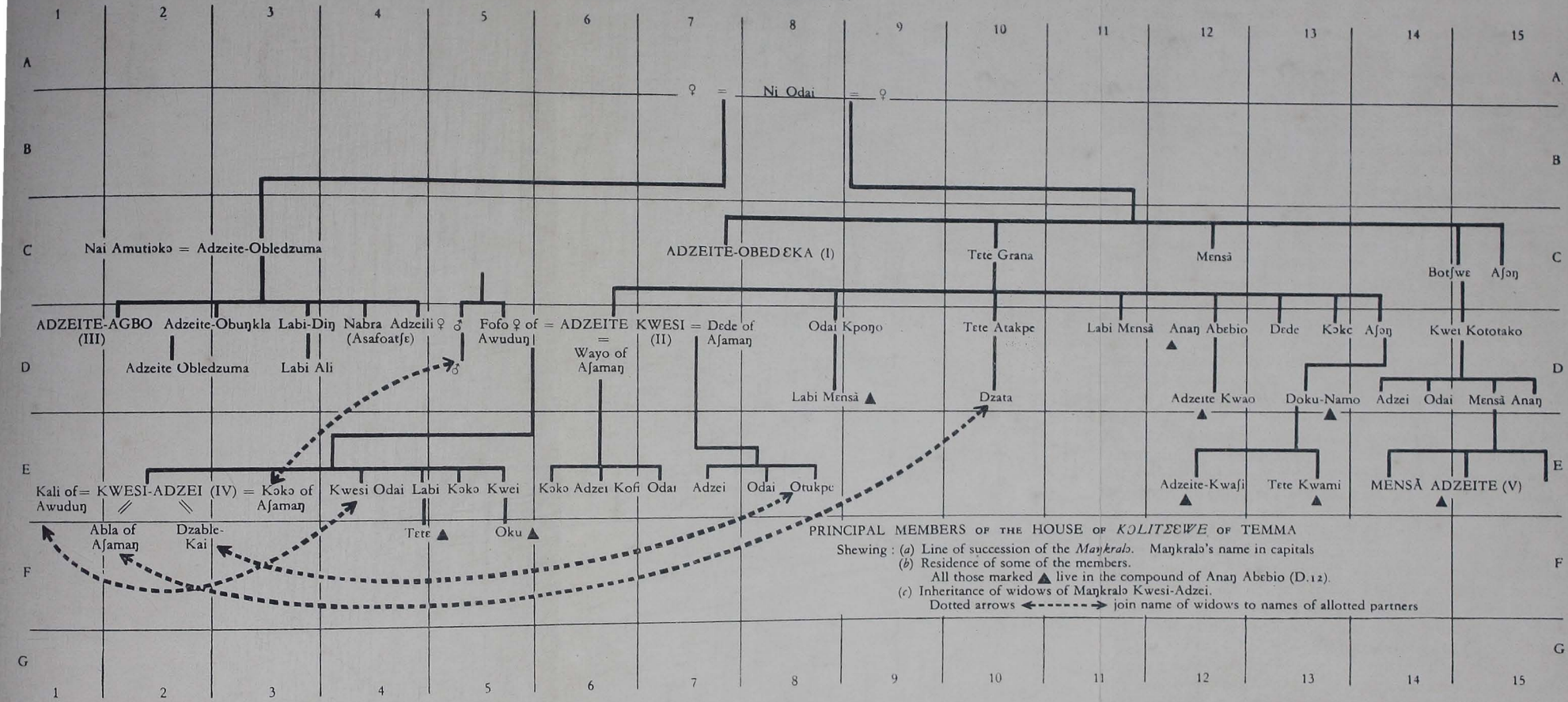
If the woman does not agree to marry the man assigned to her and goes elsewhere she may not take the children. These become the property of the man who was offered to her.

If a man does not wish to marry a widow whom it would be proper for him to marry, he can still demand certain wifely services of her, such as cooking.

An interval of two years is supposed to elapse before the woman goes to her new husband. If she is impatient and conceives a child with a third man in the interval the interloper is held to have wronged not the prospective husband but the dead husband. The brothers of the dead man report the matter to the woman's parents and they have to find out the name of the guilty man. If her parents are the first to discover her guilt they go and tell the rightful husband. This man send to the guilty man and claims '*Sisa Ayifali*'—Ghost's pacification fee—consisting of twelve shillings, a bottle of rum, and a goat. The family use this to invoke the spirit of the dead man and tell him that he has been wronged but recompensed. The guilty man must then bring a ram and twelve shillings to the parents of the dead man. After this the woman is free to go to her seducer and the dead man's family have no more to do with her. The children belong to the man she ought to have married.

If all goes well in the two years' interval, the prospective husband should be engaging in pleasant courtship of the widow. If he is impatient and takes her too early he too has to pay *Sisa Ayifali*, but 'they all laugh at him a little'.

DIAGRAM IV



PRINCIPAL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF *KƆLITƐƐWE* OF TEMMA

Shewing : (*a*) Line of succession of the *Maŋkralɔ*. Maŋkralo's name in capitals
(*b*) Residence of some of the members.
All those marked ▲ live in the compound of Anaŋ Abebio (D.12).
(*c*) Inheritance of widows of Maŋkralɔ Kwesi-Adzei.
Dotted arrows ←- - - - → join name of widows to names of allotted partners

[*To face page* 44.

If the widow refuses the husband assigned to her the dead man's family claim back from her family all the fees paid at her marriage and all the ceremonial gifts subsequently given by the husband to the wife's family. One reason why ceremonial gifts are always sent by a messenger instead of being taken by the giver is to provide a witness in case it should be necessary to claim them back.

Property

A man's goods are inherited by his brothers before they come to his sons. His sons indeed are a part of his property and are left to his brothers.[1] Consider three brothers, A., B., and C. The eldest, A., dies, and his sons join B.'s sons and make a group controlled by B. When B. dies A.'s sons and B.'s sons join C.'s sons and make a group controlled by C. On the death of C. whichever son is the eldest, whether he be the son of A., B., or C., becomes the head of the group of 'brothers' and is responsible for the care of the property if it be indivisible property, and for the distribution of the profits from it annually,[2] or for the division of the property when divisible. So far as possible property is not divided. For instance, a number of coconut trees, mango trees, or a cocoa farm,[3] remains as one unit. The senior brother then takes a larger share of the profits than he allows the younger brothers, but not so large as that allocated to the one who actually does the work associated with the property.

When a man has daughters as well as sons these receive shares, but the shares are smaller than a son's shares. When a woman has property which requires a man's attention—a fishing-boat or a cocoa-farm—either her younger brother or her son looks after it for her and receives such a share of the profits as the two agree upon. 'A wise man always keeps on good terms with his elder sister, for she can often do much to help him with money.'

Women's Property

Whenever property comes to a group of brothers, whether from a father or from an elder brother, if the brothers have any sisters these will receive shares, though smaller shares than the men. Of both divisible property and annual profits they receive

[1] The Gā word for a father is the same as the word for owner or controller.

[2] Annual distribution of profits takes place when the family gather for the big religious festival.

[3] There is no cocoa grown in Gā country, but many Gā people have bought or hired land in forest country where they spend a part of the year. Often cocoa land is let to Gā and other outsiders who pay no rent for it but hand over one-third of the crop to the owner of the land, usually an Akan chief.

a little. But when a woman dies her property or the annual profit from it is divided between her sisters and all her children, sons and daughters being treated equally. However, when the property is such that it does not deteriorate (such as a salt-hole) or when it is the income from some going concern, then a son's share of his mother's property is for his lifetime only, and at his death reverts to his mother's daughters or their heirs. When the woman's daughters are children her sister becomes their 'mother' and holds the property in trust for them till her own death. This sister's own children also receive shares when their mother dies.

§ 7

SUCCESSION

With the exception of Accra and Osu, which are older confederations than the others, all the Gã towns established themselves at about the same time—at the end of the eighteenth century, a generation or two before the Battle of Katamansu.[1] Detailed information about succession before that time is nowhere, except in Accra and Osu, available, but since that time very accurate records have been kept in the memories of certain old men whose duty and pride it has been to keep them.

Almost every holder of an important office at the time of the town formation founded a House, and from among the members of this his successors were chosen by the group of relatives.

All succession is a question of election by relatives not of inherent right. There are certain very usual customs which we shall examine, but there are no rigid rules. Custom is, of course, tending to harden into rigid rules of succession, and is being assisted to do so by lawyers who from time to time claim for their clients inherent rights. Native procedure has, however, only one rigid rule, namely, that the election of the successor shall be constitutionally carried out at a proper meeting of kinsmen.

The last such election I witnessed was after an old man's funeral when the relatives gathered to 'choose a new father'. On this occasion the man to whom the lawyers would have awarded the 'right' was not elected. But as the new 'father' succeeded to more obligations than privileges, no one minded except perhaps the successful candidate, who certainly looked far from cheerful when his juniors smeared him with the white

[1] The Battle of Katamansu, 1826, is a most useful datum line to the investigator.

clay of congratulation and raised him shoulder-high in acknowledgment of his new position.

Non-Rotating Succession

In some cases, where the first holder of the office had several wives, he founded several Houses, and the duty of providing the successor is taken by these Houses in rotation.[1]

The House of *Aboitʃɛwe* of Temma, which we have already examined, has never split into sub-Houses, indeed, its members have hardly been prolific enough for this to have been possible. The House of the *maŋkralɔ* of Temma (known as *Kɔletʃɛwe*, after a *kɔle* tree owned by its founder) gives another typical example of succession in a House which has not split into sub-Houses with a rotating succession. (See Diagram IV.)

The god of the House of *Kɔletʃɛwe* is *Awudu*, and its priest, the *Awudu wulɔmɔ*, combined the old post of *wulɔmɔ* with the newly created post of *maŋkralɔ* at the time when our table starts. Each of his successors has been concurrently *Awudu wulɔmɔ* and town *maŋkralɔ*.

The first *maŋkralɔ*, *Adzeite Obɛdɛka*, was succeeded by his brother's son, *Adzeite Kwesi*. Next came *Adzeite Agbo*, the son of *Agbo*, the son of the first *maŋkralɔ*'s half-brother. After him came *Kwesi Adzei*, who died, at the age of about sixty, at the time when I was compiling the *Kɔletʃɛwe* family tree.

The dead *maŋkralɔ's* uncle, *Anaŋ Abɛbio*, an old man of about ninety, the senior member of the family, had the biggest voice in deciding on the successor and in distributing the dead man's property. *Kwesi Odai*, the dead man's brother, who inherited his 'big wife', had had a paralytic stroke and was lame and slow of speech so was out of the running for election as *maŋkralɔ*. The remaining candidates were *Abledzuma*, the nephew of the third *maŋkralɔ*, an ex-soldier and a deservedly respected man in the town; *Adzeite Kwao*, a fisherman, the son of old *Anaŋ Abɛbio*, and *Mɛnsã Adzeite*, a literate employed in Accra. Personally I should have backed *Abledzuma* to be elected, but at his own wish he was passed over and the final choice lay between *Adzeite Kwao* and *Mɛnsã Adzeite*. There was a good deal of indecision between these two, but finally *Mɛnsã Adzeite* was chosen and the choice was approved by the rest of the town.

The *maŋkralɔ*'s House, unlike the *maŋtʃɛ*'s House or Houses, do not call their electoral body the *dzase* nor the senior member

[1] This system was probably introduced by the Gã immigrants. The *Kpeʃi* people—who are the holders of only one stool—viz. *Teshi*—do not follow this system.

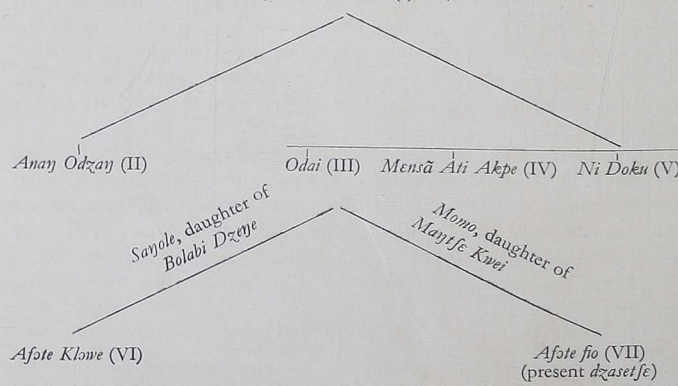
of that body the *dzasetsɛ*, but the situations are exactly alike and old *Anaŋ Abɛbio* has the position of the *dzasetsɛ*.

A *wulɔmɔ* is a man with many duties to perform. So is a *maŋkralɔ*; indeed, in the days when a *maŋkralɔ* took his stool to war he needed much physical vigour. In the cases of *wulɔmɔ*, *maŋkralɔ*, and many others it is obviously not advisable to elect a very old man. Therefore the true head of the House is often not the ceremonial head of the House. Old *Anaŋ Abebio* is the true head of *Kɔletsɛwe*, and the young *maŋkralɔ* has to do everything he decrees.

But where the holder of a post has only to act as an elder or judge he is often the oldest man of the group. That is to say, he is both ceremonial head and practical head. In such a case he is usually chosen for his weight of years and is more often followed by his younger brothers than by his sons. A case in point is the post of *dzasetsɛ*, the head of the House or Houses that supply the *maŋtsɛ*.

The *maŋtsɛ* may come from several Houses in rotation, but the *dzasetsɛ* always comes from one only of those Houses and usually succeeds a brother.

Consider the concrete example of the *dzasetsɛ* of Nungwa. He is defined as the senior member among the direct descendants of *Kwei Kuma*, the first *dzasetsɛ*, which descendants form a sub-House in one of the two Houses which in turn supply the *maŋtsɛ*. (See Diagram VIII.)



Other examples include the House of the *maŋkralɔ* among the Houses of the *Gbɔbu wulɔmɔ* of Nungwa (see Diagram V) and the

House of the *Dzasetʃɛ* within the Houses of the Temma stool (Diagram VII).

Rotating Succession

The post of *Gbɔbu wulɔmɔ* at Nungwa gives us a good example of rotating succession. (See Diagram V.)

The *wulɔmɔ* who was in office at the time of the formation of the town was *Bɔkɛte*, the grandson of *Bɔkɛte Lawei*, an earlier *Gbɔbu wulɔmɔ*. *Bɔkɛte* had three sons—*Bote*, *Bɔlabi Dzɛŋe*, and *Bɔkwei*, who founded three Houses, *Bɔtewe*, *Dzɛŋewe*, and *Bɔkweiwe*. But the post of *Gbɔbu wulɔmɔ* was in existence before the formation of the town and *Bɔkɛte* had a brother who left a son, *Osokrono*. *Osokrono* also founded a House, *Osokronowe*, which was given a status equal to those founded by his three cousins. The *wulɔmɔ* therefore is elected from these four Houses in rotation.

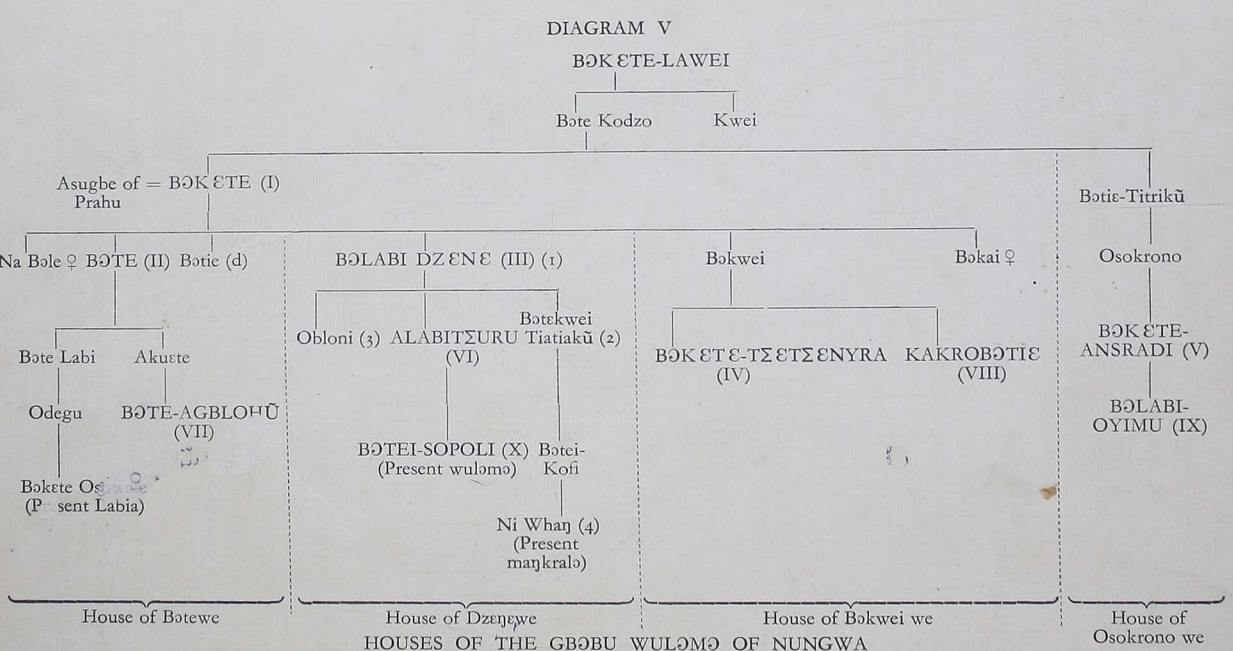
Whenever a new *Gbɔbu wulɔmɔ* is installed a younger man called the *Labia* is appointed in the next House. This *labia* will succeed the new *wulɔmɔ*, but during the lifetime of his predecessor he acts as his assistant and is trained in all his duties. At the same time there is a second *labia* in the third House and a third *labia* in the fourth House, and each is prepared to become *wulɔmɔ* when the turn of his House comes round.

The *wulɔmɔ*'s post is a rotating one and comes to the House of *Dzɛŋewe* once in every four changes of *wulɔmɔ*. But the Nungwa *maŋkralɔ*'s post is non-rotating and is always in *Dzɛŋewe*. *Wulɔmɔ Bɔlabi Dzɛŋe*, the founder of the House of *Dzɛŋewe*, made the first *maŋkralɔ*'s stool and gave it to his son *Bɔtɛkwei Tiãtiãku*.[1] The *Nungwa maŋkralɔ*'s post is a minor one and nobody but *Bɔlabi Dzɛŋe* had any share in creating it, so only his descendants succeed to it.

In rotating succession there is one seeming anomaly. When the holder of an office dies, leaving a younger whole brother, that brother succeeds and the office does not pass to a different House till all such brothers have succeeded. This is because, in matters of inheritance and succession, a younger surviving brother is identified with the dead brother. 'The brothers are one.' The

[1] I do not think he ever occupied it himself, or if he did, this was before he became *wulɔmɔ*. In other towns the posts of *maŋtʃɛ* and *maŋkralɔ* were given to minor *wulɔmei*, each of whom holds his *maŋkralɔ*'s or *maŋtʃɛ*'s post simultaneously with that of *wulɔmɔ* to this day. But the *Gbɔbu wulɔmɔ* of Nungwa is the chief priest of the town and not a minor *wulɔmɔ* and is too sacred to go to war, so he cannot be simultaneously *maŋtʃɛ* or *maŋkralɔ*. But the *Ofwei wulɔmɔ* of Nungwa is a minor *wulɔmɔ* and is also *maŋtʃɛ*.

DIAGRAM V



HOUSES OF THE GBƆBU WULƆMƆ OF NUNGWA

Names of Gbɔbu wulɔmɔ in capitals.

,, maŋkralɔ followed by English numerals.

dead brother is regarded as not dead but still active in his surviving younger brother.[1]

The table of succession to the Gbɛsɛ stool (Diagram XI) is a perfect example of the repeated operation of this rule. Most of the other stool tables illustrate the rule but less markedly.

Stool Succession

As indicated elsewhere in this volume, stool succession disputes are the curse of Gã politics, but it is probable that they would almost cease if agitators were certain that Government was acquainted with genuine native custom and resolved to see that it was followed.

Now succession to the post of *maŋtʃe*, like succession to that of *mankralo*, *wulomo*, *asafoatʃɛ*, or even 'father' of a humble compound of fishermen, is a matter of *election*. No one, however normal or probable his election would be, has any inherent *right* to succeed.

The appointment of *mantʃɛ* involves two elections: the election of a nominee by the members of the stool House or Houses (which group of people are sometimes called the *dʒase*) and the election proper by the group of military officers called the *manbii* who represent the whole town.

The *manbii* first send to the *dʒase* asking for a candidate. The *dʒase* meet under the presidency of the *dʒasetʃɛ* and elect a nominee. The *manbii* meet again and consider the nomination. If they reject the candidate they demand another. They go on demanding and rejecting till they get an offer they can accept. Differences of opinion in any of these meetings are put to the vote.

The elected candidate is privately enstooled by a small group of officials and is afterwards publicly exhibited to the town in his new capacity of *mantʃɛ*.

Succession through a Woman

Whenever a successor is being chosen and there is no suitable male available but there is a woman who would have been eligible had she been male, then her son is allowed to succeed instead of her provided that she is married to a man of her own House. In the case of stools—for which in the olden days there was little competition—the son of a daughter of the stool family was often allowed to succeed even when his father was a total

[1] This is illustrated again where the younger brother inherits the widow of the elder. Any children born to the widow by her second husband are counted as the children of the first, and are named in continuation of the naming sequence begun by the first husband's children.

stranger. Our tables of actual stools bring this out fully. If the succession in question happens to be to the post of *wulɔmɔ* of a big god, the woman's son may take the post only if his mother is married to the 'son' of a *wulɔmɔ* of another big god.

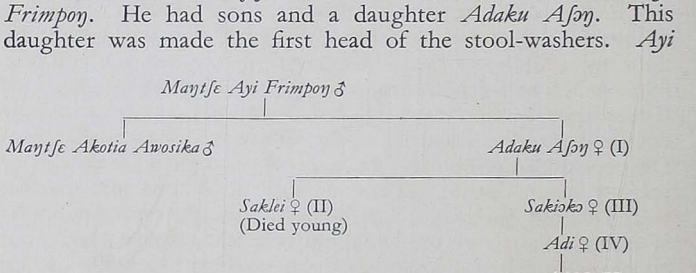
Women's Posts

Offices which are always held by women are usually passed down from mother to daughter. If the mother has a sister who has a daughter older than her own the older girl succeeds. Or if the holder of the office has no daughter her sister's daughter succeeds.[1]

A woman shares a compound with her mother, her mother's sisters, her own sisters, her own daughters, and their female children. Succession in the female line means then that a woman is succeeded by someone who has been brought up in her household and from earliest childhood has seen her carrying out her duties.

In illustration we may look at the succession to the post of Head of the Stool-Washers or Stool Mother[2] to the Asɛrɛ Stool.

The first Asere *maŋtʃɛ* to have a washable stool was *Ayi Frimpoŋ*. He had sons and a daughter *Adaku Aʃoŋ*. This daughter was made the first head of the stool-washers. *Ayi*



[1] For purposes of succession and inheritance the sons of brothers count as one set of brothers, and the daughters of sisters as one set of sisters. The term 'brothers' or 'sisters' thus applied to cousins is therefore rather more than a classificatory figure of speech.

[2] Stool Mother must not be confused with the Ashanti Queen-Mother who is the chief's sister and mother of his heir. The Gā stool succession is in the male line and there is no queen-mother. Political agitators in the Otublohu quarter of Accra have recently taken deliberate advantage of the fact that many Europeans having read Rattray's account of Ashanti are familiar with the term queen-mother, but ignorant of the fact that the Gā have a patrilineal system of succession. These agitators made an attempt to put the Stool Mother's son on the stool, calling the stool-mother 'queen-mother' and claiming that her son succeeds.

Frimpoŋ's descendants in the male line succeeded him on the stool, and *Adaku Aʃoŋ*'s descendants in the female line succeeded her as head of the stool-washers.

Since a woman usually marries a man of another House or quarter a daughter is rarely of the same House as her mother. Important ceremonial for one House may therefore be performed by a member of another House. In the case of the stool-washing posts of Accra, in which town there are several separate stools, a woman belonging to a stool-owning House of one quarter may be assisting in the most sacred rites of another stool-owning House. *Adaku Aʃoŋ*, whom we mentioned, married a man of the stool-owning House of *Alata*, an ancestor of the present *maŋtʃɛ* of *Alata*. *Adubi*, the present stool-washer, a very old lady, has had two husbands, both from *Gbɛsɛ*.

Women officials in connection with *Kple* religious rites, however, are usually chosen afresh in each generation from among the women-folk of the worshipping House. The old woman who 'stands for *Sakumɔ*' at the Temma *Dzradamɔ* ceremony, and the two Nungwa women who have charge of *Gbɔbu*'s corn, are examples.

The *wɔyei* who are the mouthpieces of important gods are chosen by the gods themselves. When a post falls vacant by the death of a *wɔyo* a new one is not appointed till the god sees fit to enter and possess someone else. Though the god is theoretically at liberty to choose anyone on earth he usually chooses someone either from the House which has the care of his rites or from among the daughters and granddaughters of the last *wɔyo*. One of the *Sakumɔ wɔyei* of Temma told me that there had always been a *wɔyo* in her mother's compound—that is to say, among her mother's relatives in the female line—but when she herself was young she became a Christian while staying in Teshi, and, learning that *wɔyo* possession was the work of the Devil, decided that whoever else in her compound became a *wɔyo*, she would not. However, when the then *wɔyo* died the *dzeŋmawɔŋ* started to 'trouble her' so that she suffered from what Europeans would call a nervous breakdown. She was several times possessed, and eventually yielded and became an official *wɔyo*. To-day there is no *wɔyo* in the town more jealously conscious of the prestige of her calling than she.[1]

[1] There are no stouter pillars of the ancient order than those who have been Christians and deliberately come back.

§ 8

WOMEN'S MONEY AND MEN'S MONEY

In the matter of money there are probably no people on earth whose women are in such an enviable position as the Gã. A woman's financial responsibilities are almost negligible, but the occasions on which she makes financial claims are legion. She also makes money by her trading, and no one can touch this money.

Let us consider what are a man's financial responsibilities from the time he attains manhood and at how many points they impinge upon the claims of women.

An unmarried boy has no property of his own. All his earnings belong to his father, and his father provides for all his needs.[1] The boy goes every day to work on his father's farm or with his father's canoe or nets. When he reaches the age of about fifteen his father gives him one day a week on which to 'make a farm' of his own. At harvest time he 'shows his profits' to his father, his father 'takes a little for tobacco' and gives the boy the rest. 'A rough boy who has no respect takes the whole for himself.' A fisherman's boy is given 'a boy's share' of the fishing profits but gives it all to his father. 'He does not grumble, for he knows that if he gets into trouble his father will pay his fine.' When he gets a little older 'there are other things he will need such as a gun[2] and a wife'. His father gives him a little more money and he is expected to save it. He should not ask his father for a wife, but his father looks round for one for him. If an impatient boy makes a girl pregnant while he is still 'in small money' the father will usually let him marry her, will pay the expenses and increase the son's share of the household income to a man's share, but the elder brothers will feel themselves imposed upon by the presumptuous younger and will make him work harder and do much extra fagging for them.

If a mother contributes anything towards her son's marriage expenses the boy's father must see that she is paid back.

When the marriage expenses (say, fifteen pounds plus seven pounds for *kpemɔ*) are handed over to the bride's parents, of this twenty-two pounds the bride's father may keep only one pound. This is said to be for a 'wetting cloth', and is to compensate the

[1] European employers of Gã labour do not often realize that it is unusual for a young man in his first employment not to hand over all his wages to his father and be given back but a small fraction.

[2] Every member of the *asafo* is expected to have, and to be able to use, a gun of his own.

father for the number of times his infant daughter sat on his knee and wetted his cloth. Her mother gets one pound for a similar cloth and all the rest of the money goes to the mother and her women-folk. Of this a certain sum is spent on the bride's trousseau and the rest divided between the mother, maternal aunts, grandmother, etc. The reason given for letting the mother have the lion's share is that 'if misfortune had come when the daughter was still in the womb the mother would have shared it and died with her. Therefore it is she who should have any good things that come on account of the daughter'.

But although the *kpemɔ* expenses, when refunded by the bride-groom to the bride's parents, are taken by the mother, it is the father who has to provide them when they are first paid out at the time of the girl's puberty rites.

The marriage completed, the husband has to provide his wife with her food, an annual change or two of raiment and all the requirements of her children. If he chooses to provide her also with a house she has the right to bring her mother, grandmother, and sisters to share it. He may pay her either in money or, if he be a fisherman or farmer, in kind, and she must trade for such ready money as she needs.

As soon as he is married the husband is expected to set his wife up in trade (*'ewo lɛ dzra'*—he puts her in the market). It is a part of every woman's normal occupation to engage in some sort of trade and every reasonable husband is expected to start her off, though I do not think she can insist on this service from him. When he does this for her she has to clothe herself out of her profits, but the husband has still to provide her food and give her a new cloth and head-tie at the time of the annual festival. When she is unlucky in her trading and loses her capital her husband is expected to set her up again, but if she loses her capital three times she is a bad manager and he has no further obligation in the matter.

When the wife's father dies, if she is his eldest daughter her husband pays for the coffin, but if the dead man has a son who is specially anxious to pay for his father's coffin, then the daughter's husband contributes only four guineas. When the wife is either a junior wife or a younger daughter (no father would let his eldest or his only daughter become a junior wife) then her husband pays only four guineas to the man who is providing the coffin. This sum is compulsory, but a dutiful son-in-law is expected to supplement this, as he is able, with a voluntary contribution to the drinking and drumming expenses of the funeral. If the husband is away travelling his parents pay on his behalf.

When the wife herself dies the husband is responsible for all her actual burial expenses, though other people help him with voluntary contributions. If he cannot afford to bury his own wife he is not allowed to claim her children, and these are given to her family who pay her burial expenses.

The wife has as many grand clothes for her funeral as for her wedding, and is buried in all her grandeur with money for her journey. All this the husband provides. Her family, however, are responsible for the entertainment of the guests with rum and for all the drumming and other fees connected with the *Yara* celebrations which take place some weeks after the burial, but a friendly widower is expected to make a substantial voluntary contribution.

The occasions on which a woman pays out money are few. When either of her husband's parents die she contributes two guineas 'because they have become her parents'. If the husband's grandparents die she pays either a guinea or half a guinea. If either a sister, brother, or cousin of her husband's dies she pays half a guinea and four shillings on behalf of each of her children. In earlier times the payment was not in money but in cloth or rum, two guineas being the equivalent of two pieces of cloth with two bottles of rum, half a guinea that of two yards of cloth with one bottle, and four shillings the child's equivalent of two yards of cloth with one bottle!

A man has no control over his wife's money, but any extra money she can extract from him for herself can never be reclaimed. A woman and her mother in the matter of money are one person, just as a man and his father are one. 'They have one money-bag.' If a woman obtains money from her husband to help her mother he can never reclaim it. If she obtains money from her husband to help her father the husband can reclaim it. This is one of the reasons given for a man's forbidding his son to marry his sister's daughter, for he says, 'If my sister's daughter then cries to her husband for money for her mother it will impoverish me for I and my son are one. It is I who will be giving money to my sister. But if my sister's daughter marries a man of another House and cries to him for money for her mother, her mother gets this money and may use some of it to help me because sisters often help their own brothers'. The general aim of prudential marriages is that 'a woman in your House should marry a man in another House for he cannot take her money away, but if she is clever she will get some of his'.

There is no financial identity between a husband and wife as there is between a mother and daughter or a father and son. I

have in mind the case of a man of substance who required a literate 'small' wife to add to his 'big' wives who were illiterate. He arranged with a man of another town to supply a daughter at a cost of nineteen pounds. He took the money to the man's town, but not finding him at home he gave it to the girl's mother. Shortly after this he married the girl, but she became dissatisfied and left him. He then sued her father for the return of the marriage fees, but lost the case because he had paid the fees not to the father but to the mother, which meant that technically he had never paid them at all.

§ 9

CHILDREN AS SECURITIES

When people are in debt or wish to borrow money and have no other security to offer they frequently send a son or daughter.

Usually the son or daughter is sent away in childhood and at first does light menial tasks such as all children do, but rather more steadily.

A boy when he reaches young manhood may have to work hard at fishing or farming for the creditor, and a girl either help the creditor's wife in her trading or simply be a menial about her compound, cooking, washing, and carrying firewood and water. A girl is always under the care and direction of the creditor's wife.

The work is regarded only as interest on the debt and does nothing to pay off the capital. The worker, however, if pleasant and willing, is well treated. Often great affection grows up between him and his master, and his master may give him one of his daughters in marriage or leave him some property. But he never becomes free till his parents or their heirs have paid off the debt to the creditor or his heirs, and he may be in bondage all his life.

People always prefer to send a daughter rather than a son as a security, for it usually works out more profitably in the end. A man who wishes to marry such a girl must release her by paying off the debt. If he does this the parents waive all the girl's marriage dues. The amount of the debt may be greater than the marriage dues or it may be less, but if it be less the parents do not demand the difference, 'because it would be a disgrace'. The daughter was in bondage and has been released by her husband. No more can decently be asked of him than that.

It is exceedingly common, indeed it may almost be said to be expected, that a girl away from her parents in these circum-

stances will be seduced, and then complicated proceedings will be set in motion.

If someone other than the girl's master or his son has seduced her, the master reports it to the girl's parents and they go to the seducer and demand to have the girl released. If the master's son is the seducer, his parents usually go to the girl's parents saying that their son would like to marry the girl and is willing to pay the difference between the marriage fee and the debt. If they refuse, the whole debt is cancelled, the girl comes back to her parents and neither party has any further obligation except that the seducer must pay a *Bladzu* fee, maintain the girl during pregnancy, and pay the birth expenses. The child is named by the girl's father.

If the master himself has seduced the girl and she is pregnant, his procedure and his reparation depend on his tact. If he is wise and wishes to conceal his misdemeanour from his wife, he goes privately to the girl's parents, confesses, asks to marry the girl and offers them a substantial sum in return for their consent to keep his wife in ignorance of the seduction. If they do not consent, they ignore the fact that the man himself has confessed, and a few days later they send a formal message to him saying that their girl has told them she has been seduced by him and is pregnant. He admits the fact, the girl is released and the debt cancelled, but 'there is trouble between the man and his wife'. The girl's parents may then send a second message asking if he would like to marry the girl. If he consents, he pays the marriage dues and names the child.

But 'if the master has not got sense and cares not for public disgrace, then when the girl comes to tell him that she has conceived he gets angry and denies with shouting. Then she goes and tells her parents with tears and says that her friends will laugh at her if she delivers a child with no father'. If the girl's mistress be wise and conscientious she sends a message to the parents as soon as she misses the girl, saying that she has disappeared. The parents reply that she has returned home and is not going back. If the mistress does not send a message reporting the absence of the girl, the parents keep her at home for a few days and then, pretending that they still believe her to be with her mistress, they either go to visit her or send a message, and then express great dismay at finding her missing. In either case questions are asked and accusation made. If the debt is cancelled, pregnancy-maintenance dues are claimed and the seducer also has to pay the *Bladzu* fee. The cancellation of the debt, however, is taken instead of *hɛnɔtobo*. The girl's father names the child and it is his.

A boy or a girl who has been in bondage on account of a parent's debt and has been released makes a sacrifice to the family god and wears a special bead bracelet signifying that he has been in trouble, has been delivered, and is glad. The last person I saw wearing such a bracelet was a young fisherman who had been ten years working for another fisherman before his parents redeemed him.

§ 10

DOMESTIC ECONOMY

Food and Meals

There are three meals daily. The first is called *fitɔ* and is usually taken at eight or nine in the morning after a certain amount of work has been done, but a man rising early to work in the cool of the morning will either eat a hasty snack before setting out or postpone it till his return at ten or eleven. The first meal is usually cold, consisting of kenki-balls[1] and fish cooked the previous day. It may, however, consist of plain boiled cassava root, hastily cooked, and not pounded into *fufui*[2] and not accompanied by soup.

The second meal, '*wonu*', is taken immediately after the midday sleep, sometimes not before three o'clock. This is a bigger meal than *fitɔ* and includes a stew or soup of chicken, meat, or fish and vegetables accompanied by several pounds of starchy food—cassava *fufui*, kenki, or *dzidzi*. This meal is quite elaborately prepared; the meat is often first fried in fat before being boiled in the stew, the hot red peppers, without which no soup is considered eatable, are boiled separately and then carefully ground in a wooden bowl before being added to the stew, the okros are par-boiled and then beaten into a slime before they are stirred into the rest. Red palm oil or pounded ground-nuts are often added, and sometimes hard-boiled eggs.

The evening meal, taken about 8 p.m., is similar to the midday. At the close of a heavier meal sometimes a light sweet

[1] Maize, ground and damped and allowed to sour for several days, then rolled into round dumplings encased in corn-leaves and boiled for several hours.

[2] Plain boiled cassava crumbles like floury potatoes, and when mashed is only to be distinguished from mashed potatoes by the presence of small woody fibres. Microscopically the starch granules are seen as clear-cut rectangular bodies which do not take an iodine stain. Pounding into *fufui* in a wooden mortar converts the whole into a heavy, gluey mass. Microscopic examination of this shows that the pounding has burst and torn the starch sacs letting out thick amorphous starch which does colour blue with iodine. Theoretically the starch is now more accessible to diastatic action in the mouth, but actually I doubt if it is more digestible as the gluey, heavy mouthfuls are swallowed whole, and very little of the mass comes in contact with saliva at all.

(*dadzemɔnii*) made of corn or roasted ground-nuts is taken. These more frivolous foods are used as tests of a girl's ability to make a good wife, and when a girl has an assignation with a youth she takes him some such dainty.

On the whole, the Gã diet is admirable and well balanced, and the people have a well-nourished, healthy, and vigorous appearance.

Sometimes fishermen will take a charcoal brazier and vegetables to sea with them and will cook fresh fish in sea-water with the vegetables: such food is called *Zɔri*.

A man has to provide his wife with food for himself, the children, and for her. In places like Temma where money is little used he gives her fish and vegetables from his farm. Sometimes he gives her nothing but fish or nothing but one kind of vegetable and she has to trade or barter to obtain other necessities. The food that she grows on her own farm is her own even when her husband has kindly helped her to hoe her land, and when she markets it the money is hers.

If a woman is a clever trader she prefers her husband to make her allowance in kind rather than in money. If he pays her entirely in money—which is rare except when the man is a wage-earner among Europeans—a sum of about five shillings a month is considered adequate for her keep.

A wife has to cook meals for her husband and sons, and send the basins of food to their compound by a child or a girl. When a man has two or more wives these take turns of about a week each. In Temma, where a number of men live in one compound, the wife of one of them will cater for the whole lot for a period of, say, two weeks; then she will have a complete holiday from men's cooking and the wife of another man will take over the work. In this way the women are freer to engage in their trading work. But in Nungwa, where the fishermen more often sell their fish to visiting 'strangers' than to their own wives, each wife cooks only for her own husband and his sons, and has no respite from this unless the husband has more than one wife. When several men in one house receive a meal apiece from different women they usually all gather round each man's dish in turn and share the meal, treating it as one of several courses. A man whose wife habitually sends ill-cooked or poor food brings shame on her husband and unpopularity on herself, and if her husband can find other and adequate excuse to get rid of her his brothers will advise him to do so. A conscientious wife, anxious to find favour, will often question the child who carries the food to the husband, 'Did they eat my food first? Whose food did they eat first?'

The boys gather round the dish with their fathers and 'small fathers', but they may not touch the meat or fish till an elder hands them a piece. It is not only to his own son that a father gives meat. A rude, lazy boy can expect little or no meat; a helpful, pleasant, popular boy receives plenty. Girls are similarly treated by their mothers and aunts. Any child's protein intake is in direct proportion to his popularity. One of the men, *Tɛte* of the *Aboitʃɛwe* House, has an attractive little daughter *Máŋko* of whom he is especially fond, and after every meal he may be seen in the street outside waving a chicken's leg or half a fish and bellowing for *Maŋko*, who comes racing up from the other end of the market-place.

But on the starchy food—the *fufui* or kenki which is eaten with the stew—there is no restriction except that it is not etiquette for a junior to have his hand in the dish at the same time as a senior. Only equals dip together. Of the starchy food everyone may eat as fast as he is able, and a child has attained the right to eat with men instead of with women when he can keep pace with them in eating *fufui*. The eaters twist off a bolus of the plastic *fufui* with their fingers, dip it in the gravy and swallow it.

The elders help themselves to meat and give some to their younger favourites just as they like; no one allocates portions, but a well-mannered man is careful not to take more than a fair share.

Sometimes when fish is very scarce the men will not send any of it to their wives to cook, but will have their boys boil it with vegetables and pepper in the men's yard and so be sure of having it. Such a meal is called *akrɔ*. The plain cooking of *akrɔ* is not *infra dig.* for a man, but the grinding of peppers and okros, the pounding of *fufui*, or any operation more elaborate than plain boiling would be derogatory to male dignity. I know a youth who quarrelled with his elder brother who was also his guardian. The youth ran away from home, but in a few days, subdued by hunger, came back in his brother's absence, went to the compound of his brother's wife and found her pounding *fufui*. He took the pestle from her hands and finished her work for her, cadging a meal as his reward. The elder brother was enraged and said he would gladly have forgiven and fed him had he come and asked pardon, but would never forget the disgrace of his brother's demeaning himself to pound *fufui* for a woman.

The Men's Earnings

The owner of a fishing-boat tries, so far as possible, to collect a crew (five) of his own 'brothers', but it does not always happen

that he can.[1] The owner of a boat may even be a woman who has saved enough money to buy it and has put a son, brother, or grandson in charge of it. My Temma neighbour, *Abo Kwaku Onukpa* (G.6), possesses a boat but does not often go out in it himself. The net used with the boat belongs to *Tɛte* (G.26) and he, with four 'brothers', makes up the crew. When fish comes in, it is divided into six equal parts, 'the boat' (*Abo*) taking one and the five others taking one each. Each of the four then give some of his to 'the net' (*Tɛte*) so that the net has about one-and-a-half times as much as each of the others of the crew. The fish is then handed over to the wives with orders that each wife is to pay a specified sum to one of the crew, called the *Fotrotʃɛ* (father-of-the-money-bag). 'The boat's' money is not paid into this bag but is kept by himself. 'The net', although he has had a bigger share of the fish and therefore more money than the other four, pays into the money-bag the same sum that each of the others pay, pocketing the extra. At intervals the five gather and share out the contents of the bag, and again 'the net' gets the largest share. The next senior member gets the next largest share, the most junior member the smallest. If 'the boat', *Abo*, chose to be also a member of the crew he would receive two-sixths instead of one-sixth of the total fish to give to his wife and would pay only half as much back into the money-bag as an ordinary member of the crew. If *Tɛte*, 'the net', chose not to be a member of the crew but to lend his net, he would still receive 'a net's' share of the fish and some money from each shareholder in the bag. The net is the most expensive item of the fishing gear and runs the greatest risk of being lost, for often a shark attacking the smaller fish caught in a net will completely destroy the net.

In farming every married man has his own farm though all help each in clearing, so problems of division of produce do not arise.

It is a woman's duty to trade any fish or food her husband produces over and above the amount required to feed husband, wife, and children. For instance, when a husband has a catch of fish he will say to his wife—or to each of his wives—'This is five shillings' worth of fish. Take it and give me (or pay into my brother's money-bag) five shillings in three days' time.' When the fish is to be smoked she is given a longer time. They haggle a little, the wife declaring that she will never make five shillings

[1] The economics and technicalities of the fishing industry have already been admirably described in Mr. A. P. Brown's pamphlet 'A Survey of the Fishing Industry', 1936. I am therefore giving less detail concerning these matters than I should otherwise have done.

of the fish. However, when she is too insistent the husband declares he will sell it to another townswoman or to one of the 'strangers' who come from Accra and inland towns on passenger lorries trying to pick up bargains in fish. At last a sum is agreed upon to be paid to the husband within a certain time. If the woman makes double the stipulated sum she says nothing of it but hoards her profits. If she hands over a penny less than the stipulated sum there are recriminations and even blows. I once saw a woman help herself to three fishes from her husband's basket. 'I shall come to you this evening', he said, 'for two glasses of *akpeteʃi*.' And I am sure he did and insisted on full measure.

A young man who has no wife to trade for him gives his fish or farm produce to his sister or, if he has no sister, to his mother.

A man cannot demand of his wife that she work on his farm, but when the two are on good terms she frequently does help him and finds it worth her while. She helps not only in harvesting but in clearing and planting. But it is her bounden duty, as a wife, to do all marketing or exchanging of farm goods for her husband. Usually he gives her a load of goods, saying, 'You must bring me such-and-such a sum for this', and she is free to keep any excess she can make. Sometimes he says, 'You must make at least such-and-such for this load and bring me all you make'. In this case she lies to him about her takings and makes her private profit all the same. The only Gã word for profit (*se namɔ*) means literally 'to take from behind', and carries an implication of underhandedness.

Although every farmer can, if need be, live on his farm handling hardly any ready money at all, very few people in Gã country to-day farm only for the food their own households require. The rest all send goods to urban markets for ready money. The hundreds of clerks and other employees who work in Accra for wages and live in Accra, Osu, and Labadi absorb large quantities of foodstuffs from the markets.

The Women's Earnings

Besides trading to convert her husband's goods into money or some necessary commodity, every woman carries on some sort of trading on her own account, even if she only buys large tins of kerosene and retails it out to her neighbours. Consumers rarely buy more than a pennyworth at a time of such commodities as soap, matches, charcoal, lump sugar, onions, salt and pepper, and they often buy them from a neighbour who lays in perhaps several shillings' worth at a time and makes several

hundreds per cent profit. Other women trade on a somewhat larger scale in cloth or head-kerchiefs, and hundreds of women do a secret retail trade in illicit spirit. Others cook kenki-balls, bread, and various sorts of fried cakes on a fairly big scale and sell them to people who are too busy or too lazy to cook for themselves. There is no woman who does not engage in some sort of trading.

The market in every town is run entirely by women. No trading except that initiated by foreigners is ever carried on by men. Most big European trading firms have literate male storekeepers who have to be capable of book-keeping and stocktaking, but in most towns there are several women each with a general store on her own, selling an indescribable miscellany of wares from Europe—fish-hooks, kerosene, Epsom salts, coloured shirts, enamel basins, bath towels, hair oil, coal-pots, and embrocation—and often licensed to sell wine and spirits.[1]

Many of the women are very shrewd and ingenious in their trading. One day when good catches of fish were coming in I saw a woman, who had no fishing men-folk, exchange a bowlful of fried *akpiti* cakes for a panful of fresh fish, and then hastily sell the fish to a 'stranger' who was trying to make up a load to take away. The sale of the fish brought her three shillings and fourpence. The sale of the cakes would have brought her one and sixpence. The materials out of which she made the cakes probably cost less than sixpence.

Women's Farms

Most women have farms and trees which they inherit usually from their mothers as they do other property. A woman is responsible for working her own farm and cannot demand of any man that he work it for her. But when she is on good terms with her husband or brother he will often do the clearing and harder work for her, but will expect a part of the produce in return. If a man consent to work on his wife's farm it is a sure sign of happy relationship between them.

[1] Schools and missions seeking for honourable careers for literate girls might well build on the deep-rooted idea that trading is women's work and train their girls to keep, under modern conditions of competition, the economic independence which illiterate women enjoy. As it is, one of the most popular 'modern' trades for girls is prostitution, quite unknown in the older society.

§ 11

MISCELLANEOUS DOMESTIC DETAILS

Only perhaps in a European city slum would it be possible to find people with so little material culture or so complete a lack of pride in their material surroundings as have the generation of the Gã which is now the senior. I do not know when or why the primitive's love of good craftsmanship was lost or why the Gã have lost it completely while their neighbours the Fanti and Ewe, who have had quite as much European contact in the last three centuries, have retained remnants. Walking on the beach among the fishing canoes, it is easy to pick out at a glance the canoes that belong to the visiting Fanti fishermen, for these are beautifully decorated, but the canoes of the Gã are either disfigured by weak and ugly scrawls or not decorated at all.

The fishermen, it must be admitted, take care of their nets and tackle and mend them with skill and pride, but I know of nothing else in the Gã towns that is well cared for and nothing made by the Gã themselves that is well made, with the three exceptions of a palm-leaf bag called a *kafo*, a palm-leaf fan, and a woven basket of which there are perhaps three living makers. The splendid fishing canoes are made in the forest country where the trees are felled, the domestic wooden bowls, dishes, spoons, and stools also come from forest country. The neat, serviceable, soft rush bags (called *flɔtɔ*) which every fisherman uses come from the Ada district; the pottery comes from the Odumasi district. Hand-woven 'kente-cloths', when worn at all, come from the Keta district. Nearly every other chattel comes from either Manchester, Birmingham, or Japan. Water is carried in petrol tins, even cooking is sometimes done in petrol tins.

It is, of course, no manifestation of unusual depravity of taste that people prefer petrol tins to beautiful water-pots. The users of these things are doing exactly what the users of beautiful hand-made pots and cloths in the Northern Territories are doing —namely using the cheapest and most easily obtained goods without thought of their rank in an absolute scale of æsthetic values.[1]

[1] That a maker of pots and cloth unself-consciously puts something of himself into his work so that beauty steals upon it unawares, is beside the point. The beauty is an unnoticed by-product. The pot is made because users demand something to put water in; the users are unaware of any beauty. Even the makers of beautiful pots make them because they are the only pots they know how to make. Once they have seen enamel basins and zinc buckets they often consider these more beautiful than their own. From the matter-of-fact sincerity of a primitive

Even so, I cannot explain why Gã users should not demand a higher standard of usefulness in many of the things they use. Their indifference is not an expression of general apathy or laziness, for the people are full of vitality and are highly responsive to stimulus. They simply seem uninterested in material efficiency. For instance, none of their thatched houses can properly be said to be thatched; slovenly bunches of grass are insecurely and untidily attached to the roof, and the result is seldom anywhere near water-tight. When a Northern Territory labourer wishes to make a screen round a bath-house he makes a strong and beautifully woven grass mat and fixes it securely upright. A Gã simply sticks up a row of coconut branches. The mud walls of houses are never finished off with a neat mud-plaster, but are left rough, admit rain to the crevices, and soon crumble. The men's yards are large and bare, and pleasant by reason only of their bareness, a great contrast to the smallness and overcrowded squalor of the women's compounds. In many of these women's compounds the kitchens and rooms open into the enclosed courtyard, which courtyard may be only a few feet wide, and when the overhanging thatch takes up another two or three feet of this sky-space, perhaps only a foot-wide strip of sky is visible. This is all the air and light the entire compound gets. The thatch drips rain into the middle of this yard, which is virtually the living-room of the women and children, and the resulting darkness, dampness, smoke, mud and squalor, all dimly viewed through a quivering mist of flies, is a thing that Northern territory primitives, coming from their trim, well-built compounds, might well shudder at.

But the people themselves are usually perfectly clean, taking great pleasure in their daily or twice-daily baths.

Wet, freshly-mixed cement is a substance which gives many people a sensuous pleasure to manipulate. Consequently many of the oldest of the men's courtyards which were very pleasingly paved with slabs of stone from the beach have now received a much-admired coating of 'siminti'.

Some men whom passenger lorries have enabled to visit the sophisticated parts of Accra and other towns now spend their spare money in building 'fine' cement-and-corrugated-iron houses on a more European plan. They do not of course live in them, but eat and sit outside them in less comfort than in the

craftsman making a carpet or a canoe because customers demand it, to the art and art-talk of European studios, is a far cry. Any artificial revival of native arts and crafts must draw its inspiration from some self-conscious outside source and be the product of a very different impulse from that of the tribal pot-maker.

old-fashioned yards. Some of the rooms are used as men's sleeping rooms, the bedsteads being the only useful furniture; the others are crammed with mid-Victorian junk—nicknacks and whatnots, china dogs and glass cats, mats and antimacassars, coloured prints of Balaclava or the Rock of Ages, and wicker chairs harbouring small fauna. These rooms are rarely entered and never cleaned, but their very uselessness gives their owner a feeling of great superiority.

Regarded in the same category as the china vases and woolly mats are 'educated' wives. They are fine things to possess and the sign of a man of substance, but not much use otherwise.[1] There are none, that I know of, in Temma or Nungwa, and few in Teshi and Labadi, but Osu and Accra have more. An educated daughter is rather a gamble. She may be either a white elephant or a gold-mine. If some rich man take a fancy to marry her he must pay, in addition to marriage fees, all that was ever spent on her schooling. When an educated girl is seduced the 'Standard' she attained in school is used in the assessment of the offence.

Though the men spend money on 'fine' compounds for themselves, very rarely do they spend anything on women's compounds, and the women themselves spend none of their own money on their material surroundings. The women spend less of their own money on personal adornment and 'bluffing'[2] than do the men, but naturally no woman is behind in the matter if a man can be persuaded to finance her splendour.

Of recent years, since passenger lorries have enabled people to see more of other towns, Temma and Nungwa people have been so much impressed by the superior cleanliness of the towns inside the Accra municipal area—and perhaps more by the boasting of the citizens of these clean towns—that they lately requested the Government to give them a sanitary inspector to tell them what to do to make their own towns 'fine'. The sanitary authorities first helped them to construct some men's latrines, and a tax of sixpence was levied on every grown man. The Temma women, however, refused to pay their own sixpences for their latrines, saying that public works were men's affairs. The men retorted that women's latrines were women's affairs, and that the women were richer than the men and might either pay their own sixpences or have no latrines. 'The women',

[1] A man once speaking to me of a woman neighbour said, 'She is a Christian, but she is not lazy'.

[2] The verb to '*blɔf*' or 'bluff' is, I believe, derived from the word *blɔfonyo*—a European—and means to swagger in fine clothes.

they explained, 'do not respect us. So why should we give them latrines?'

And at this deadlock the matter was resting when I last stayed in the town. The men, proudly and almost ceremonially, used to stalk off to their fine new latrines in ostentatious superiority, while the women slunk furtively off to the outskirts of the bush in the ancient fashion. What will happen when the sanitary authorities insist on women's latrines for the town I do not know.

Until a few years ago Gã women spent a good deal of their time grinding maize and various other pulverized food on a stone slab with a kind of stone rolling-pin. Nowadays in every town are two or three young men each possessing a small petrol-driven mill, and the women take their petrol-tins of maize or dried *kokonte* and have it ground at a few pence a tin. More and more do the women tend to spend their time on their trading and a part of their money on paying for articles which they would otherwise have to prepare for themselves. The market-places are full of vendors of such cooked foods as kenki-balls and boiled rice.

The women, in short, have already gaily flung off a good many of the shackles that European women are only beginning to complain about, and lady missionaries who want to establish a respectable Victorian domesticity will have to cope with as much unbridled modernity as stolid conservatism. Domesticity has never been a great tie to Gã women, and is less so now than ever. No Gã woman who wishes to leave her town for a few weeks' trading is ever prevented by domestic ties. There are plenty of other women in her compound who will cook for her husband and children in her absence—she will do the same for them some day. If she has an infant child it goes with her, sitting unnoticed tied to her back while she uses her hands or carries loads on her head. As for the husband, some other wife engages his attention. Let no one think that wives object to polygamy. To be sure, when a careless husband invites two wives to his compound for the same night there are often ructions audible to all the neighbours—the most spirited terms of abuse in my collection were garnered on such occasions—but carelessness will cause friction in any good institution.

Apart from cooking, very little domestic work is done by anybody. The big girls and young women fetch water and, except in the dry season when they may have to walk miles[1]

[1] Accra, Osu, Labadi, and Teshi now have pipe-borne water. In Labadi and Teshi they buy it at a farthing for four gallons. In Osu and Accra there are stand-pipes at the street corners.