BIRTH AND PUBERTY CUSTOMS

OF THE

GA-, TWI-, AND EWE-SPEAKING PEOPLES OF GHANA

AND THEIR RELATION TO

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

BY

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NOTES
ON THE ARRANGEMENT OF THIS REPORT

Sub-Division and Cross-Reference

Each chapter is sub-divided into Parts (designated A, B, C, etc.), Sections (1, 2, 3, etc.), Sub-Sections (a, b, c, etc.) and Portions (i, ii, iii, etc.).
All cross-references are given in terms of these sub-divisions and a key-reference is given at the top left-hand corner of each page, thus: B.2.c.iii

Footnotes

Footnotes are grouped separately at the end of each chapter and are indicated in the main body of the text by Arabic numerals in brackets, thus: (5).

Vernacular Texts

Original versions of phrases, prayers etc. of more than a few words in length are given in Appendix A at the end of the report. Where a vernacular version has been recorded, this is indicated in the main body of the text by means of an asterisk placed after the passage translated, thus:
" Hear me, Great God... ...take this wine and drink". *

Tables

Tables summarising data given in the text are placed at appropriate points and are designed so that they may be un-folded clear of the other pages and referred to while reading the main text.

Glossary

A short glossary is provided on the page next after this in order to explain certain terms which occur in the course of the Report but are not defined in the main text.

GLOSSARY

COWRIES : small sea shells, used as currency in many parts of Ghana before the introduction of modern coins and banknotes.

FETISH : in the opinion of the writer of Appendix B to Christaller's Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language (Basel, 1933) this appellation ought to be used only of objects of superstitious usage commonly called amulets or charms. I have tried to observe this distinction consistently, but informants (or interpreters) often used the term 'fetish' casually and, in cases where I failed to obtain a clarification, I have given the word in inverted commas.

GOD(S) : this word, spelt with a small initial letter except in cases where it is coupled with a qualifying term (e.g. 'Thunder God') I have used throughout to denote only deities or spirits traditionally associated with particular social groups (tribes, families &c.) or places (rivers, mountains &c). This usage corresponds to the Twi expressions 'oman - bosom ' and 'abusua - bosom'. The word is not used to denote a fetish, nor is it used of the demons or spirits of divination often possessed by medicine-men; nor is it used without qualification of spirits which have recently been 'imported' into towns and villages by travellers or strangers.

HOKA : a measure of cowries (q.v.)

MEDICINE-MAN : this English expression is used somewhat indifferently by Ghanaians to cover a wide range of practitioners and I did not always take sufficient care to ensure that my interpreters distinguished their meanings. The term 'medicine-man' may be applied simply to one who dispenses herbal medicines but more normally it is used to refer to one who diagnoses sickness in spiritual terms and whose treatments would be considered by Europeans to be 'more magical than medical'. Such a medicine- man usually has his own private demon or divining-

GLOSSARY
(Concluded)

spirit whom he consults before diagnosing and prescribing. The generic term for such practitioners in Twi is 'onisini'.

PRIEST(ESS) : I have used this term only of the guardians or servants of the traditional gods or godesses, and not of anyone who happens to possess a private spirit or demon.

RUM : this term is used by Ghanaians to denote any kind of strong liquor such as gin, schnapps, brandy etc.

NOTE ON SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION

In this report, vernacular words are reproduced by means of the conventional orthography except when the same word recurs frequently. In the latter case, the word is given in the conventional orthography the first time it appears in any section; thereafter it is typed in without the use of special letters but with an underscore.

In Appendix A, vernacular text are typed without the use of special letters, but modifications to individual letters are indicated by an underscore (as explained ad. loc.)

The following may serve as a guide to pronunciation:-

e	pronounced as	'a' in 'fate'
ɛ (or e)	"	" 'e' in 'berry'
d	"	between 't' and 'd'
ʄ (or f)	"	" 'f' and 'w'
ky	"	as 'ch' in 'cherry'
o	"	as 'o' in 'stone'
ɔ (or o)	"	" 'o' in 'hot'
ⱱ	"	between 'b' and 'v'
dz	"	as 'j' in 'jig'
ʃ	"	as 'sh' in 'shot'
ŋ	"	as 'ng' in 'ring'

I N T R O D U C T I O N

A. OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

This research work was undertaken in order to follow up one of the lines of enquiry suggested during the Conference on Christianity and African Culture organised by the Christian Council of the Gold Coast in May, 1955.

At this conference, the main theme of study was summed up in the question asked by Dr K.A. Busia at the conclusion of his first lecture: "Can the African be Christian only by giving up his culture, or is there a way by which Christianity can ennoble it?" In subsequent lectures, various speakers treated of different aspects of African culture in relation to Christianity. One such lecture, given by Mr J.H. Nketia, B.A., dealt with the subject "Birth, Puberty and Death" and, within the short space of fourteen pages (in the published proceedings of the Conference: Accra, 1955), Mr Nketia was able to give a remarkably wide and illuminating survey of the customs surrounding these events in the life cycle as they were practised throughout the Gold Coast.

It seemed, nevertheless clear that, if discussions were to be continued and decisions taken on particular points along the lines thus opened up by Mr Nketia and others, there was need for a more massive accumulation of facts and a more detailed assessment of the contemporary situation than these speakers were able to provide at the time. The work which is the subject of this report was undertaken in order to provide just such an accumulation and assessment, in respect of two topics only: birth and puberty.

The exclusion of 'death' from the research was made necessary by the limited time at the writer's disposal, though some justification can be offered for treating

separately the first two moments in the total life cycle. Birth and puberty link fairly naturally together, for puberty implies marriage in the immediate or not too distant future, and this brings us round again, in a foreshortened cycle, to birth. Death, on the other hand, stands somewhat, as it were, 'to one side' and involves a whole series of further beliefs and a complex of customs which could be more easily dealt with by (and, indeed, invite) a separate piece of research. Quite apart from this, it so happens that in recent years voices have been raised in certain more or less informed circles alleging the existence of certain parallels between the traditional birth and puberty customs and the Christian 'customs' of Baptism and Confirmation, and suggesting that these parallels offer hopes of a synthesis and reconciliation (in this respect) between Christianity and African culture. For this reason, birth and puberty customs seemed particularly to recommend themselves for immediate closer study.

B. TREATMENT OF THE SUBJECT

Birth and puberty, then, are the subjects treated. Investigations were made to discover:

1. The traditional form of customs surrounding these two events.
2. What developments or modifications in the traditional forms have occurred in recent years, and for what reasons.
3. What part is played in contemporary life and thought by:
   (a) the traditional customs, and
   (b) the Christian practices of Baptism and Confirmation.
4. How far the traditional customs are related to the Christian practices:
   (a) in the minds of the people practising them or seeing them practised, and

(b) in virtue of form and/or content.

C. METHODS USED.

1. Traditional Form

In order to discover as far as possible the traditional form of the customs, two methods were used:

(a) All available literature on the subject was studied.

(b) Informants were asked, in giving their accounts to distinguish traditional from contemporary practice. This was not always a foolproof method on those occasions when one's informants were older men and women who might be suspected of glorying in past traditions and of being most unwilling to admit that some of these were no longer followed! But more often than not, informants of the younger generation were also present to help draw the dividing line.

2. Contemporary Form & Relation to Christian Practices

Information concerning the contemporary form of customs, the part played by them and by the Christian practices in everyday life, and the relation between the two as conceived by the people themselves, was gathered in the course of fairly extensive field-work, as detailed below (Section 4). The question of a relationship, in virtue of form and/or content, between traditional and Christian practices is one with which I shall attempt to deal by means of deduction from the assembled evidence.

3. Written Accounts

As regards the written material available for research into the old traditions, all that need be said here is that, in respect of birth and puberty, it is woefully inadequate. Apart from articles in early missionary periodicals and letters which are difficult, if not impossible, to come by, the bulk of accessible literature on the subject can, once assembled be read through in the space of a week. Summaries of such material are given at the beginning of each chapter to which they are relevant.

4. Field-Work

(a) Areas Covered

The field-work mentioned above consisted in interviews with chiefs, elders, people and Christian ministers carried out over a period of fifteen months in a cross-section of the towns and villages of three peoples:
(i) Ga-, and (ii) Ewe-speaking people, as representing two distinct major language groups,
and (iii) the Twi-speaking people of the Akuapem Ridge, as representing the Akan language-group, but also as an example of a people who live in an area which, while still rural, has been subject to strong Christian influences for over a century. (A brief stay of one week in a small Ashanti town enabled me also to witness the puberty custom for girls which is still practised fairly vigourously in that part of the country, whereas in Akuapem, as will be recorded, such practices are nearly extinct.)

(b) Use of Interpreters

Having been initially disturbed by reading Rattray's condemnations of would-be anthropologists who undertake research without first learning the language of the people, the writer was subsequently reassured by the consideration that the general standard of English spoken by Ghanaians today is certainly higher than it was in Rattray's day. It would in any case have been impossible to learn, in a year, even one of the three languages involved sufficiently well to master the complexities which would arise in discussing the subjects under investigation. Over and above this, the art of distinguishing, for example, a genuine and unanimous tradition from an ad hoc theory or a reply representing a compromise reached between the elders before the linguist speaks on their behalf, is one which it must take a lifetime to acquire. In such a context, a co-operative interpreter who can sense the atmosphere of the

meeting and follow the whispered discussions may be able to help in far more than the business of translation.

It is true that it is possible for the stranger to learn fairly quickly how to assess the reactions of informants to his own suggestions. For example, if one hazards a theory concerning the significance of some particular custom, one's informants may respond, when the idea is translated for them by the interpreter, in one of three ways. In all cases, they may agree to the suggestion, but one does not take long to distinguish the enthusiastic "Aheeee! - Yes indeed!" which goes up from the gathering (indicating that the suggestion really has met with general approval) from the "Aheee" (which indicates that 'the suggestion is interesting and plausible, though it had not occurred to us before') and the "Ahe" (which indicates that 'really this is a lot of nonsense, but we must be polite to our visitor!')

It is also true that, even with the most rudimentary knowledge of the language, one soon learns to recognise what might be called the 'jargon' of the subject, that is to say, the words used for different ceremonies in a custom for parts of the body, for materials employed (such as foods and drinks consumed on special occasions), and phrases recurring during the pouring of libations. This is often very useful when one is attempting to trace an idea from one town to another and in cases where such 'technical' expressions were used or prayers were recited, one tried to get a written note made by the interpreter on the spot.

Quite often, of course, informants themselves could speak English and on occasions when an interpreter was simply not available (as happened often during the puberty customs in Osu) one had to work directly with English-speaking informants. But wherever possible, one sought the additional safeguard of an interpreter-cum-adviser! The value of such

a companion was brought home on one occasion in Ashanti when I was accompanied by Mr.Sam Akesson, himself a keen student of anthropology. An old woman was dictating the words of a song sung during the puberty custom (or rather she was dancing round the yard singing it over and over again, for without the assistance of music and movement her memory would have failed her!). At one point during the performance, Mr Akesson stopped her: he had taken down some words which, on the surface, seemed to have a fairly obvious meaning yet which did not seem to him to fit their context exactly. All the old people in the compound were gathered round to discuss the meaning of these words and it was discovered that they were used in an archaic sense which had been completely lost to Mr Akesson's own generation. After this experience which occurred, fortunately, right at the beginning of my field-work period, I used to try to make a habit of telling the story to new interpreters when I first set out with them for an interview, and on the whole I do not think it would be too presumptuous to claim that with the help of these friends I was able to obtain a fairly accurate account of what was said by informants.

(c) Choice of Informants

The informants were many and varied. Ideally one aimed at visiting a chief and persuading him to call together a representative gathering of old and young, male and female, Christian and pagan. It was among the Ewe-speaking peoples that one most often achieved this ideal. The people East of the Volta, even those in most of the coastal towns and villages, have not yet been caught up in the vortex of modern life to the same extent as their brothers further to the southwest. They are therefore usually quite prepared to spend a morning, afternoon and evening discussing their customs and beliefs. The contrast

should not, however, be overstressed. Certainly the Ga-speaking people seem on the whole to be much more preoccupied with their daily tasks - at least the younger generations; but the same is not as obvious on the Akuapem Ridge. It was probably therefore a combination of this with other factors - such as extraordinary good fortune in the speedy finding of contacts - which resulted in my covering, during roughly equal periods of two months, by far the most ground (nearly thirty towns and villages) among the Ewe-speaking peoples, a reasonable amount (about a dozen) towns and villages on the Akuapem Ridge and very little (only Osu, Teshi and Nungua) among the Ga-speaking people. In all cases, however, I avoided undertaking any major survey in larger municipalities (except insofar as Osu is officially part of Accra) due to the complexities which I knew I would encounter in such places. In fact, the majority of the population to which the Church ministers is still settled in the rural areas and the municipalities really demand a separate survey of their own.

(Some explanation should also be given of the fact that, whereas Chapters II and III cover a wide range of birth-customs among Ewe and Twi people, Chapter I deals only with the Outdooring custom of Ga-speaking people. The reason for this is that it was among the Ga's that the writer undertook his first field-work and he had not, at this stage, envisaged the possibility of investigating more than the one custom which has obvious superficial affinities with Christian Baptism. Later, it became apparent that it was both possible and advisable to throw a wider net; but insufficient time remained at the end to return to the Ga's.)

(d) Method of Questioning

A further reason for the somewhat disproportionate balance of the evidence collected in the several areas was the method of approach which I used. Instead of coming

with a prepared list of questions, I preferred, on the whole, to ask informants to narrate, in convenient sections, all they could of what happened from the moment a child was born (or, in some cases where time permitted, was conceived) up to the age of puberty (and, sometimes, marriage). At the end of each section I would go back over it, querying details and asking for explanations on certain points.

This method recommended itself for two reasons: firstly, I had not really sufficient background knowledge to be able to compile a list of questions which would cover all aspects that might emerge (though, of course, as time went on in each area, such a list formulated itself and could be used in later stages); and secondly, I believed that informants would thus feel more free to speak and would mention the elements which they believed to be important (because these would be uppermost in their minds) and one could always check in the questions at the end of each section whether certain points had been omitted through forgetfulness or because they had no place in the peoples practice and beliefs.

The disadvantages of this method were that informants might ramble on for nearly an hour on a subject which seemed to have little relevance to the investigation, so that one found at the end that insufficient time (and insufficient patience on the part of informants - often a deciding factor!) remained to put all the questions which should have been asked. But the value of patient waiting on the part of the research worker certainly proved itself on one striking occasion at Wane to which reference will be made later (Chapter IV).

(e) Attendance at Actual Performances of Customs

As in the learning of languages, so in the study of customs, there is probably no better way of getting to understand and appreciate the subject than actually living with the people and taking part in (at least to the extent

of being present at) their rites and celebrations. But where birth and puberty are concerned, this is not always an easy matter. In the first place, there is the rather obvious difficulty that birth and puberty cannot be 'laid-on' to order! Where, as among the Ga-speaking people, I was staying relatively central to one area for a considerable time it was possible to 'keep a watching brief' for births; and I was in fact able to attend several Ga Outdoorings of infants. But where, as among the Ewe's, I was moving rather rapidly over a wide area, it was not so easy, and in fact I was only able actually to attend one 'live' Outdooring in the Volta region. (On the other hand, my Ewe hosts seemed to have a great love of dramatics and on several occasions I was entertained by a 'mock' ceremony with the baby represented by a pillow, a block of wood or even, on one occasion, a live infant requisitioned from a mother in the audience!) Among the Akuapem Twi's, as will be recorded, Outdooring and Naming are not today performed as frequently or with as much ceremony as in the past. Moreover, news of projected performances always seemed to reach me just too late for me to be able to attend! This may simply have been due to an unfortunate series of co-incidences, though the official midwives in the area (who were doing their best to let me know of customs that I might attend) told me that many parents are somewhat unwilling that strangers should attend their family celebrations. I encountered the same difficulty in connection with the puberty customs of Ga-speaking people, and, as a result, it took me over a year to establish sufficiently friendly contacts with an Otofo family for them to welcome my presence during the performance of the customs.

D. CONCLUSION

This report, then, is the fruit of many happy months spent among three peoples in modern Ghana. There is a regrettable number of lacunae in the assembled evidence and the writer would not dare to claim for this report the status of a scientific work of anthropology. Nevertheless, it is a sorry fact that this collection of data on birth and puberty customs is one of the first to be made which covers such a diversity of areas. As such, the writer offers it in the hope that it may prove useful both to Christians who desire to follow up the ideas of the 1955 Conference and also to future generations of Ghanaians who may wish to know more about the customs of their forefathers. It is clear that many old customs are already lost and forgotten and it is highly probable that this trend will continue. Now is the time to "gather up the crumbs that nothing be lost"; and here are a few of those crumbs.

C H A P T E R I

INFANT OUTDOORING AMONG GA-SPEAKING PEOPLES

A. CUSTOM IN THE PAST

1. BOHNER

The earliest written references to Outdooring among the Ga's to which I was able to obtain access are in Bohner's Im Lande des Fetisches (Basel, 1890; p. 142). Bohner describes how a young man holds the new-born baby under the eaves of the roof and sprinkles water three times on its head, saying: "Behave yourself as well as I behave myself. Honour your father and mother; do not be a loafer, but be active and work. The women around desire this. Regard the wife of an elder as your father's wife. Do not become a sick man, but be healthy so that you may work. Behind you is darkness, before you light." The head of the family then addresses the baby, saying: "You came here on one hand (1), we greet you with two."

This is all the information we obtain from Bohner.

2. FIELD

Our main source of reference is Dr M.J. Field's Religion and medicine of the Ga People (O.U.P., 1937). Although this book was published only just over twenty years ago, those twenty years have seen immense changes in all spheres of

Ghanaian life and we have to recognise that this work, together with Dr Field's other book, Social Organisation of the Ga-speaking People, represents virtually our only full-scale account of Ga custom prior to the present epoch. Her account of Outdooring, given on pp.171-175 of the said book, will now be summarised:-

Kpodziemɔ, or Outdooring is, in Dr Field's own words, "the seal of respectable paternity". In Social Organisation, she explains that, provided a woman has done her Kpeme ceremony (c.f. Chapter VI of this Report), all that is necessary to make her child legitimate is that it should be named. Even if a woman begets a child by a man other than her husband, so long as the husband consents to name the child it becomes his legal heir. If the baby dies before it is eight days old, it is considered as never having been born; but once Kpodziemɔ has been performed, the child is a member of the family and has assumed its own name. (In point of fact, a baby is virtually 'born into' its name, for each family has its own set of names which recur in alternate generations according to fixed rules; but the baby is not entitled to the name until it has been outdoored.)

The procedure at Outdooring is as follows:-

i. At about 4.0 a.m., two women of the father's family go to bring the baby from its mother's to its father's house.(2)

ii. An elderly person (male or female, according to the sex of the baby), chosen for his or her admirable character, asks a blessing in 'rum'.

iii. He or she then takes the baby in his or her arms, lifts it upwards three times and makes a speech, of which there may be many variants. (Dr Field gives a specimen text, reproduced below: B.2.vi.)

iv. The baby is then laid naked on the ground (or, in eminent families, on a special slab of stone under which "something was buried long ago") and the Officiant, taking water in a calabash, flings it three times on the roof of the house so that it trickles down like rain on the baby. This is to introduce it to earth and rain.

v. The Officiant then blesses the baby, saying: "Mi dzɔ.bo - I bless you" three times, and then: "Ohe adzɔ bo ni ona hedzɔlɛ da: - May you be blessed and receive blessing always". To each of these phrases the assembled company respond "Yao - Amen".

vi. The Officiant then kicks the child gently, first with the left, then with the right foot, saying: "Mi ʧwao nane - I am striking you with my foot" (i.e. 'I am impressing you with my character'); "Kɔ mi nane - Take hold of my foot" (i.e. 'Become like me').

vii. Finally, he takes the baby in his arms again and makes an extempore speech, recounting the good (and, "out of modesty", some bad) points in his own character for the child to imitate (or avoid!).

viii. A second representative of the father's family now comes forward and recites the Dzɔmɔ - Blessing. These speeches, notes Dr Field, seem to consist mainly in fragments left over from the earlier speech (c.f. iii above) and to be interchangeable with it.

ix. All then share (after giving some to the ancestors) in the corn wine and rum provided, and the custom is concluded.

B. CUSTOM TODAY

Field-work on this custom was carried out at Osu, Teshi and Nungua. Osu, although a part of the Accra municipality, is in fact a quite distinct town as far as traditional life is concerned. My informants here were the Mantse's uncle, the Mankralo and several private individuals, one group of whom invited me to attend a family Outdooring in the Mowore quarter of Osu. Teshi and Nungua are two fishing towns eastwards eight and ten miles respectively from Accra. In the former, my informants were the Mantse and his elders; in the latter,

private individuals. At Nungua also, I was able to be present at an Outdooring.

In addition to this field-work, reference will be included under this heading to two contemporary accounts of Kpodziemo, the first being a broadcast talk by Mr E.A. Anteh, and the second a small booklet published by Mr E.A. Ammah.

1. FIELD-WORK

All the ceremonies mentioned by Dr Field may be found in Outdooring customs as performed today, but the first thing which becomes immediately obvious to the investigator is that, in practice at any rate, the custom has no one specific and fixed form. Of the three separate accounts given by informants and the two actual performances of the custom witnessed, not one followed exactly the same pattern. We shall start therefore by giving a synthesis of all the information gathered, noting the source of each element and discrepancies between sources.

a. Day and Time

All are agreed at least on this: that the custom should take place on the eighth day after the baby's birth - "war, rain or death, nothing may interrupt" said an elder at Teshi, and the reason for this, according to

Nungua informants, is that the baby must be named on its own birth-day (i.e. the day of the week on which it was born).. Giving the reason for waiting eight days, Mr Anteh said: " The child is then held to have survived seven dangers and is worthy to be called a person" and added that a child who dies earlier than the eighth day is not held to have been a member of the family.

All are agreed, furthermore, that the custom must take place before daylight. Teshi informants explained that this was in order that the child might be held up to see the moon and the stars. At Osu, this ceremony was performed during the outdooring I witnessed, but an old man told me that it was a practice borrowed from Accra and not an integral part of the Osu custom. No informants other than those at Teshi mentioned it.

b. Place and People Present

All agreed that the traditional place for the custom to be performed was the father's house, though Teshi informants said that today it is more normal for the baby and its mother to remain at the latter's mother's house and for the custom to be performed there.

Friends and relatives are invited, the number depending on the importance or financial status of the

family. It is not uncommon nowadays for important families to distribute invitation cards specially printed.for the occasion as for a wedding! But the custom does not wait for the guests and on both occasions when I was present the performance was started as soon as the essential people were present, most of the guests arriving quite late - though in time for the serving of the drinks!

c. Officiant

There was far less unanimity among informants as to who should officiate at the custom. Those at Teshi agreed with Dr Field's informants that the ceremony should be presided over by the senior man or woman (of the father's family) according to the sex of the child. But informants at Nungua and Osu said that the main Officiant must always be a male, those at Osu adding that a second Officiant is however chosen from the same sex as the baby (c.f.d.iv. below). Yet in both cases, practice differed from theory. At the custom which I attended in Osu, the Officiant proper was an exceedingly old man and a younger man attended upon him the whole time, relaying all his words (apart from prayers) to the people present. This younger man was a cousin of the baby's father and, besides

playing the part of the second Officiant, he also performed several other functions (sprinkling the water and putting the wine on the baby's lips) which, according to theory, the old men should have performed. Again, at the custom I attended in Nungua, practice conflicted with theory. It so heppened that there was a big wake-keeping in the town during the night and, as a result, when the time came for the Outdooring, hardly anyone was present. The child's father himself therefore performed most of the functions of the Outdoorer and a woman carried out the sprinkling with water.

Too much emphasis should not be laid on these divergences between theory and practice, but they do help to show that, while the people have quite definite ideas as to how the custom should, ideally, be performed, there is no rigid adherence to the exact details as if these were sacrosanct, nor any idea that the "validity" (to borrow a term from Western theology) of the custom is impaired by a failure to adhere to the minutiae of tradition.

d. Procedure

i. Introductory Libation

Only at Osu did informants specify a proper libation

at the beginning of the custom. At Nungua, the Officiant holds up the two bottles of drink supplied by the father and prays aloud, without, however, opening the bottles and pouring some on the ground. In both cases, the purport of the prayer is simply to invoke the ancestors (and any other God or gods, according to the officiants wishes) to attend and bless the custom. The text of the opening prayer used at the outdooring I attended in Osu was given to me afterwards by one of the participants:

"Agoo!" (repeated thrice, the gathering responding: "Amee!"(3))

"Grandfathers and Grandmothers! come and take some drink. Bless us with a good blessing in the custom we now come to perform." *

ii. Sprinkling Water on the Baby

At Teshi, the Outdooring starts off with the Officiant laying the baby naked on the ground and sprinkling it three times with water. The same is done (after the preliminaries described) at Osu and Nungua and, although the Nungua people sometimes put a small whisk-type broom under the baby's head as a 'pillow', none of those I asked had heard of the special stone slab referred to by Dr Field's informants. The ground on which the baby is to lie will, however, be carefully swept beforehand.

The water may be thrown on the eaves of the house (so as to drip down thence onto the baby) if these are

conveniently low, but this is not necessary and normally the water is simply sprinkled with the fingers from a cup or calabash. No special words need be spoken during this ceremony. Its purpose, according to Teshi informants, is twofold: firstly, to test the baby's vigour by watching its reactions to the cold water; and secondly to introduce the baby to experience of the elements (rain and earth). At Nungua, this second point is further emphasised by the Officiant's dipping his hand in the mud formed by the falling water and smearing this on the baby's body. An elderly man at Nungua added that the water, "being cool and good", is also a sign of blessing (c.f. Chapter II, B.3, (b)viii, last paragraph).

At this point, for the Nungua baby the custom is over. His grandmother picks him up, washes the mud off in a calabash and returns him to the house. At Osu and Teshi there is more to be done to the baby.

iii. Lifting-up of the Baby

As has already been mentioned (Sub-section a, above) this is only an integral part of the custom as practised at Teshi. The Officiant here faces east, raises the child upwards and lays it down on the ground again three times, saying:

"We are showing you sun and moon, sky and earth;

Come and settle down; respect the world." *

(Informants pointed out that the purpose of this custom is to show the child where the moon, stars &c. are and not to present the child to the celestial bodies. But see further Mr Ammah's theory Sub-section 2.ii, below.)

At the performance of the custom in Osu, the lifting-up was done before the sprinkling of water and no words were spoken.

iv. Stepping-Over and Tapping Baby with Foot

We saw that Osu informants specified a second Officiant. It is at this point that he or she comes forward and steps three times back and forth over the child, (4) tapping it gently as he goes, first with the left, then with the right, and once again with the left foot. This done, he or she makes a speech similar to that described by Dr Field, urging the baby to be discreet and to imitate the good points in his or her own character. The baby is then taken back into the house.

According to Teshi informants, however, the Officiant simply taps the child gently three times with the sole of his right foot and three times with the sole of his left foot, saying "Kɔ mi nane - Follow my footsteps." He does not step back and forth over the baby.

v. Putting Wine (and Water) on Baby's Lips

Of the three groups of informants, only those at Teshi specified this ceremony as an integral part of the Outdooring. According to the Teshi group, it should be performed as follows:

The Officiant dips his finger in corn wine and touches the baby's lips, saying: "Kɛ onu hu onu ko - If you hear, act as if you have not heard"; then he dips his finger in water and touches the baby's lips again, saying: "Kɛ onu hu eka dze onaa - If you hear again, let it not come out of your mouth".

The purpose of the custom, these informants said, was not only (as is obvious from the words spoken) to tell the child to "have his lips sealed", i.e. to be discreet, but also to teach it to distinguish wine from water. I suspect however that this latter interpretation has come in from the Fante form of the ceremony (c.f. Chapter III, Section B,3,d,iv) for, as we shall see below, (Section 2) Messrs Ammah and Anteh agree upon a different and much more suitable interpretation. Moreover, although my Osu informants did not mention the ceremony at all, yet at the Outdooring which I attended in Osu it was performed - but with wine only (as Ammah and Anteh say it should be)

and without water.

vi. Main Libations and Serving of Drinks

We now reach, for Osu the second, for Teshi and Nungua the first, pouring of libations. The actual number of libations poured at this point differs from place to place. Osu informants said that one libation should be poured from each bottle supplied by the father; Teshi informants, that six libations are poured (three by paternal and three by maternal relatives of the baby); Nungua informants, that three libations are poured (two by senior relatives on the father's side and one by the senior of the mother's family). (A full text of the libation prayer used by the Officiant at the Mowore Outdooring is given and discussed at Sub-section 2,vi., below). For present purposes it will be sufficient to note that the prayers are mainly concerned with (a) the moral and spiritual welfare and growth of the baby, and (b) the solidarity of the family.

The drinks are then served round to those present by two young representatives of the father's family.

vii. 'Naming Drink'

One bottle, however, is not yet broached. This is the "Gbɛiwoo Dãa", or "Naming Drink". When everyone is

comfortably settled and conversation has been humming for a while, the Officiant calls upon one of the Servers to 'announce' this Drink.(5). The Server holds up the bottle and announces "This bottle has been presented by X. for the naming of his son." The Officiant then receives some of the spirit in a small glass and announces to the gathering "The baby is called Y." or "This is the drink for Y.", whereupon he takes a sip from the glass and passes the glass to the person on his right - and so the glass passes the whole way round the gathering, being replenished from time to time by the Server.

viii. Offering of Gifts

During the serving of the drinks, either before (Nungua) or after (Osu and Teshi) the presentation of the Naming Drink, the friends and relatives present offer gifts of money. At Teshi, a plate is laid in the middle of the circle of participants and each comes forward to put in his gift. At Osu and Nungua a pair of young representatives of the father's family (preferably a different pair from the Drink-Servers) go round collecting the offerings in order of seniority, starting with the Officiant. The name of each donor and the amount of his donation is called out by one of the collectors and

everyone present joins in a cry of " *Oyi wala dɔŋŋ* - Thank you!"

The exact amount of each donation will, of course, depend both on the status of the family and the importance of the donor himself. In the case of an ordinary family of no great status, the Officiant himself may give several pounds, while minor friends and relations may give two, four or six shillings. Before the gathering disperses, the gifts will be counted up and the total realised announced. Sometimes, also, a shilling or two may be changed into coppers and these (or, alternatively, boxes of matches) will be distributed to the donors as 'receipts'.

Practice appears to vary concerning who should receive this money. At Nungua, the whole sum is given to the mother; informants at Osu and Teshi said that it should be divided equally between the mother and the father; but Mr Anteh (himself a native of Teshi) said that it should be divided one-third to the father and two-thirds to the mother.

(It would probably be appropriate to record at this point that most informants mentioned a further gift: from the father to the mother, usually in cash rather than in kind. But this gift is made privately, not as part of the public custom; a contrast to Twi and Ewe practice, where

such gifts play a large part in the public custom).

ix. Mixing of Mud

At Osu and Nungua, a ceremony is performed which involves the mixing of mud, though this is done differently and used for a different purpose in the two places.

At Osu, after the collection has been taken, the second Officiant pours a short libation ("Tʃwa, tʃwa, omanye aba.") with corn-wine at the feet of the baby's father. Then, making circles in the dust with his hand, he mixes a little mud which he smears on the Father's forehead. This, according to my informants, is a sign of warning to the father that "children bring plenty of trouble".

At Nungua, on the other hand, it is the Drink Server who pours the libation, using, not corn wine but the spirit remaining in the glass from which the Naming Drink was shared. He mixes the mud with the forefinger of his left hand and then puts some on the fingers of the Officiant's left hand. The Officiant passes this to the left hand of the person seated on his right, but the mud does not pass round the whole circle in the same way that the Naming Drink did, for the Server also gives some to the person on the Officiant's left side, and this person passes it round to his left so that the mud is being passed

around in two directions until the circle is closed somewhere on the other side opposite the Officiant.

We have already encountered one use of mud at Nungua - when some was rubbed on the baby after it had been sprinkled with water. The only 'explanation' offered by informants for both these ceremonies was that "Earth is that on which and from which the child must live". A guess might be hazarded (but it can be no more than a guess) that this particular Nungua ceremony of passing round the mud is really a preparation for the ceremony which follows immediately upon it and which we shall now describe.

x. Kpɔsamɔ - Rubbing (of Hands)

This ceremony was referred to by Osu and Nungua informants but not by those at Teshi. At Nungua it is performed as follows:

The Officiant announces: "Nyɛ ba; wo kpɔsa - Bring it; rub it". All present stretch out their hands in front of them and rub the palms together, saying: "Owura, owura kosee ". This last phrase is untranslateable as it stands; some informants suggested that it is simply a declaration of assent, but Mr Anteh believes that the "owura" is a corruption of " awulaʃi ", meaning "ended", so that the complete phrase might be translated: "It is ended", it

is finally [kosɛɛ] ended". Lastly, all cry "Bɛdzina-oo!" which is a Twi expression addressed to new-born babes and meaning: "Come and stay!", i.e. "do not return to the spirit world whence you have come, but remain on earth with us".

When asked for an explanation of the rubbing ceremony, Nungua informants said: "The evil that we cannot see we rub away", and this perhaps links up, as I suggested a moment ago, with the ceremony of passing round the mud. Mud, we are told, is a symbol of the baby's basis and means of life; but there are evil things in life, so we rub the mud between our hands as we might winnow a head of wheat to eliminate the chaff.

An Osu informant, on the other hand, said that although the word "Kposa" is normally used of 'rubbing', the stress, in this context is on the <u>bringing together</u>, the <u>uniting</u> of the two things to be rubbed and that the ceremony is really concerned with emphasising the Baby's <u>unity</u> with the rest of the family. Certainly, at the custom which I attended in Osu, this piece of ceremonial was performed in a different manner from that of Nungua. The Officiant led off by calling out thrice: "Agoo, awomɛ kɛ ataamɛ! - Are you there, grandfathers and grandmothers?" (all present obligingly responding, on behalf of the deceased: "Amɛɛ! -

We are here!"!). He then ordered: "Nyɛkɛ baa - Bring it" and everyone stretched out his hands forwards with the palms upward; then the command: "Nyɛ kposa - Rub it", whereupon everyone rubbed the hands together; next, saying "Owula kosɛɛ" they made a motion as of throwing something back over their shoulders; finally, saying "Ba damo ʃi - Come and stay (lit: stand on the ground)" they shook their hands above their head,(a symbol, I was told, of calling down blessings on the baby).

There is some confusion here because my informant told me that after the rubbing of the hands the people should make an embracing gesture as if gathering the child into one's bosom; this would certainly bring out the emphasis on family unity which this informant stressed, but as it happens the people did not do it. Perhaps they just forgot. Whether or not the apparent conflict of interpretations of this ceremony can be reconciled we shall discuss more fully below (c.f.2.x below).

xi. Closing Ceremonial

When all the drinks have been consumed (apart from some which may be set aside for friends who were unable to attend but who will call in later on (6)), the donations added up and receipts given, the Officiant leads the final greetings

or prayers.

These will usually consist of "Tʃwa, tʃwa, omanye aba" repeated two or three times and followed by the question "Dzee wɔgbe kome - Are our voices one?". Those present respond "Yao!" as usual. The Officiant then thanks them all for coming and concludes with further series of "Tʃwa, tʃwa, tʃwa...&c", with the final addition (at Nungua): "Wɔ hole wɔ he nɔ - we are rising up", (i.e. 'we are dispersing').

2. CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS

We turn now to a consideration of the two contemporary accounts of the Kpodziemɔ custom mentioned earlier. Mr E.A. Anteh, who gave a broadcast talk on this subject in the Ghana Broadcasting System's series "Our Homeland" (July? 1956), is a native of Teshi. His late father was interested in traditional customs and took many notes in the vernacular to which Mr Anteh was good enough to refer for me from time to time. Mr Anteh is an enthusiast along the same lines as his father, besides being a Ga poet of some repute. Mr E.A. Ammah is a native of Accra and well known in anthropological circles. I was introduced to him soon after I had started field-work, at which time

he had produced a cyclostiled article entitled "The Ga Form of Baptism, - Its Religious Significance". This document he lent to me and we had some discussion on the contents. More recently he has published a printed booklet which is in effect a revision of the earlier article and bears the less equivocal title "Infant Outdooring in Ga Society" (Accra, 1958). It is to these sources that we shall refer in the following paragraphs.

By comparison with the material gathered on field-work, Mr Ammah's account of Kpodziemo seems extraordinarily 'formalised'. Thus, he opens by stipulating eleven official participants for the performance of the custom; describes a most complex series of libations(including one poured by the 'president' at every door of the house); and throughout prescribes ceremonial of considerable complexity to the accompaniment of fixed recitations. By comparison, Mr Anteh's account seems much closer to the sort of thing one experienced on field-work. But in saying this, I do not wish to suggest that Mr Ammah is going further than the facts allow; it may well be that some families or quarters in Accra have indeed evolved and preserved over the years a far more splendid and formal ceremonial for Outdooring of babies than obtains in other places. We shall

return to this theme later (Part C.1, below). For the time being, however, we note that Ammah and Anteh describe and explain many of the ceremonial elements we have already met. We therefore refer to them now in order to see what help they can give us in clarifying the data outlined in the preceding section.

1. Introductory Ceremonial

Mr Ammah distinguishes a Presentation of the Ceremonial Drink (the President presenting two bottles, the Vice-President presenting a pot of corn-wine) from the introductory Libations (poured by the President at every door of the house, first in corn-wine, then in alcoholic liquor). The prayer accompanying the libations expands on the theme of calling the ancestors to take part in the custom which, at Nungua accompanied the holding up of the bottles, and, at Osu, the first (single) libation. Thus, the actual presentation of the drinks, which, in other places is either accomplished privately before the custom begins or at best is only adumbrated in the holding-up of the bottles, is seen by Mr Ammah as a ceremonial element standing in its own right

The opening libation prayer is given by Ammah as follows:

"What is today? Today is Monday [or whatever the day is], Grandfathers' Monday, Grandmothers' Monday. Today we will show the stranger that sojourns with us to the Morning Star; may it respect the world; may you [the ancestors] receive some of this wine and drink, that you may bless it." *

ii. Lifting-up of the Baby

In contrast with the main group of Teshi informants, but in conformity with Osu practice, both Ammah and Anteh place the lifting-up before the sprinkling with water. Each gives a different text for recitation during the lifting-up and, whereas Mr Anteh holds that the words indicate that the heavenly bodies are being shown to the child, Mr Ammah holds that the child is being shown to the "Morning Star". The texts they give are as follows:

Anteh: "I take you out repeated thrice ; I show (to you) sun, moon, rain and the four winds. May you come and stay long in the world." *

Ammah: "What is today? Today is Monday [or whatever day it is], Grandfathers' Monday, Grandmothers' Monday. Lo! today we are showing the stranger

that sojourns with us to the Morning Star." *

iii. Sprinkling Water on the Baby

Neither of these sources add anything on the actual sprinkling. Mr Ammah, however, says that the sweeping of the ground before laying the child down is a "symbolic act of cleansing" (whatever that may mean) and that "at some places" the spot is marked out with a circle of white clay powder. (He cites Osu and Tema - though this was certainly not done for the outdooring I saw at Osu.)

iv. Tapping Baby with Foot

Mr Ammah does not mention such a ceremony. Mr Anteh confirms what the other Teshi informants said - that the child is tapped gently thrice, with the words " Kɔ mi nane - Follow in my footsteps."

v. Putting Wine on Baby's Lips

We have already mentioned that both Ammah and Anteh insist that it is only wine (and not water) which is touched against the child's lips. In this, both their accounts agree with that of Teshi informants. Mr Ammah further confirms that part of the symbolism of this act is concerned with the idea of 'sealing the child's lips', i.e. teaching it discretion; but there is also an emphasis on respect, and, further, an idea of

introducing the child to the staple diet of the Ga: corn. The full text given by Mr Ammah of the words spoken at this point is as follows:

"Come and eat Ga corn; the humble Ga person's lips are sealed! Let the wind blow before you speak! Be respectful to the world; when you see something, behave as though you have not seen it; when you hear something, behave as though you have not heard it. Let father always be father, and mother always be mother." (Mr Ammah gives no vernacular text of this version of the speech. Vernacular text and translation of the version given in his earlier article are included in Appendix A* .)

In contrast to this complexity, Mr Anteh gives one simple sentence: "Ganyo lɛ able oyeɔ - Ga man this is the corn you eat." The stress is all on the idea of introducing the child to corn. But then, Anteh adds, there follows immediately the speech from the outdoorer to the child in which he (the outdoorer) recounts, and exhorts the child to follow, his own virtuous characteristics. This is the speech which, Osu informants and Dr Field in her account associate with the 'tapping' of the baby. Mr Ammah makes no reference to such a speech.

vi. Main Libations (14) and Serving of Drinks

Mr Ammah's account agrees with those of other informants in placing the pouring of libation and the recitation of the main Outdooring prayer (known as Dzɔɔmɔ) after the putting of the wine on the baby's lips. He agrees with Nungua informants (against those of Teshi) in saying that the libation is poured three times (in the same manner each time): first by the senior man of the father's family, then by the senior man of the mother's family and finally by another elder of either family (i.e. the President, Vice-President and Assistant President, according to Ammah's system of classification). Corn-wine is used for these libations and, when they have been poured, the three pourers are served with 'strong drink', after which the corn-wine and drink are served in turn to the whole gathering.

It will be appropriate at this point to consider in greater detail than hitherto the content of the Outdooring Prayer. For the purposes of comparison, I give here three texts: (a) that recorded by Dr Field; (b) that given by Mr Ammah in his booklet; and (c) that used by the Officiant at the Outdooring I attended in Osu (Nowore Quarter):-

(Note: the response "Yao!", being roughly the equivalent of "Amen", is made to each of the petitions that follow, except where otherwise indicated.)

Line	(a)	(b)	(c)
27.	May he come to respect the world.	(c.f. line 16)	(c.f. lines 11 & 40)
28.	Upon his mother's head, life.	(c.f. line 13)	
29.	Upon his father's head, life.	(c.f. line 12)	
30.	If we should join to make a circle, may our chain be complete.	(c.f. line 6)	(c.f. line 6)
31.	If we dig a well, may we come upon water.	(c.f. line 7)	
32.	If we draw water to bathe our joints, may they be refreshed.	(c.f. line 8)	(c.f. line 8)
33.	If we see white, may it be white clay.		
34.	If we see black, may it be our slave.		
35.	Circumspect Ga, like the blowing of the wind, be better than your word.	(c.f. Sub-section 2.v., above.)	The wind blows before a circumspect baby speaks.
36.	You see, but you have not seen.	" " " "	If you see, you have not seen.
37.	You hear, but you have not heard.	" " " "	If you hear, you have not heard.
38.	A circumspect Ga does not lie.		
39.	If you lie down, think about your work.		
40.	(c.f. line 27)	(c.f. line 16)	You must be respectful in the world.
41.		(c.f. Sub-section 2.ii., above)	Attention please! What is today? Today is Monday, Grandfathers' Monday, Grandmothers' Monday.
42.	Today, if any witch or sorcerer is passing and asks what we are doing and they tell him and he says any evil word or wishes that the child lying here shall die, shall this blessing be to bless him? (Response:) No!	(See Footnote 9)	If any passer-by asks and says "What is being done here?" and says "Apakpo and Afia have had a child and are outdooring it" so that he takes something or a hot stone and puts it down for the mother or father, if we bless, do we bless him? (Response:) No!
43.	May Wednesday and Sunday kill him (R:)let him die!		May Wednesday and Sunday kill him (R:) Let him die!
44.	Let us hoot upon his head (R:) Shame!		Let us hoot upon his head (R:) Shame!
45.	Hail, let happiness come.		
46.	Are our voices one?	(c.f. Sub-secn 2.x.)	
47.	Hail, let happiness come.	Strike, strike, strike,	Strike,

Line	(a)	(b)	(c)
1.	Hail(?), hail, hail, may happiness(?) come.	Strike(?), strike, strike, may there be peace(?).	Strike, strike, strike, may prosperity(?) come.
2.	Are our voices one?	Strike, strike, may there be peace.	
3.	Hail, may happiness come.	Strike, may there be peace.	Strike, may prosperity come.
4.		May our seats(8)be thick.	May our seats be thick.
5.		May our brooms(8)be thick.	May our brooms be thick.
6.	(c.f. line 30)	May our circle be intact.	May our circle be intact.
7.	(c.f. line 31)	May we find water when we sink a well.	
8.	(c.f. line 32)	May the water when drunk give our shoulders ease.	Let us scoop and drink, that our shoulders may be eased,
9.	The stranger who has come, his back is towards the darkness.	(c.f. line 14)	The stranger who has come, his back is dark.
10.	(c.f. line 15)	(c.f. line 15)	His face is clear.
11.	(c.f. line 27)	(c.f. line 16)	May he be respectful in the world.
12.	(c.f. line 29)	To the father of the newcomer, long life.	
13.	(c.f. line 28)	To its mother, long life.	
14.	(c.f. line 9)	Its back is dark.	His back is dark.
15.	His face is towards the light.	May its front be clear.	His face is clear.
16.	(c.f. line 27)	May it respect the world.	(c.f. lines 11 & 40)
17.	May he work for his father.		May he come and work for his father.
18.	May he work for his mother		May he come and work for his mother.
19.	May he not steal.		
20.	May he not be wicked.		
21.	The children of his family forgive everything that can be forgiven.	May its kinsmen be enabled to provide for its needs.	May his family and descendants be able to borrow things to lend him.
22.		May it work for us to enjoy	
23.		May its back be fruitful.	
24.		May some survive that others may come.	
25.		It came with black (hair), may it return with hoary.	
26.	May he eat by the work of his five fingers.		

In giving these versions, I have reproduced Dr Field's and Mr Ammah's own translations, while the translation of the third column has been made by Ga students at a distance from their patria and is therefore not altogether satisfactory. The result of this method is to create the impression of a greater disparity between the versions than actually exists (c.f. the vernacular originals in Appendix, and footnotes 7, 8 and 9). In point of fact, the most remarkable aspect of these versions, proceding as they do from such different sources, is their degree of unanimity. The only major differences between Mr Ammah's version on the one hand, and those of Dr Field and Mr Anteh on the other, is that the former contains no words addressed directly to the baby (as, e.g., lines 36 - 41). This is explained by the fact that in Mr Ammah's account of the custom, all such exhortations are made during the touching of wine to the baby's lips (c.f. sub-section v., above). Apart from this, it will be seen from the cross-references in the body of the text that 33 of the 47 clauses are paralleled in more than one version. (It is also interesting to note that we can trace the ancestry of at any rate two clauses back to 1890: lines 14 and 15 are clearly parallels of the words quoted

by Bohner; c.f. A.1., above.)

But more important than mere statistical co-incidence is the over-all parallelism of intention expressed in these prayers. Each may be seen to have three main concerns:-

Concern for the Baby:

petitions are offered that the child may have an unimpeded path through life (lines 10, 15 & 25), that he may grow morally mature (lines 16 - 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, 38 & 39) and discreet (lines 35 - 37).

Concern for the Baby's Parents:

petitions are offered in all the prayers that the child may grow up to support his parents (lines 17, 18 and, indirectly 22 & 23); in Dr Field's and Mr Ammah's versions there are also explicit prayers for the mother and father (lines 12 & 13, 28 & 29).

Concern for the Whole Family:

Dr Field's version opens and closes with the challenge "Are our voices one?" which Mr Ammah and other informants place during the Kposamo or during the closing prayers (c.f. Section 1.xi., above, and x., below). Quite apart from this, however, there are other petitions which lay stress on the idea of family solidarity. Thus (i) according to Ammah, the 'seats' and 'brooms' of lines 4 & 5 are

metaphors for the male and female members of the family; (ii) there is the petition that 'our circle be intact'; (iii) to 'find water when we sink a well', Ammah tells us, is interpreted by the older generation of Ga-speakers as a petition that sexual intercourse may result in the birth of children, i.e. that the family line may be continued; and finally (iv), however much our translators seem to vary in their treatment of line 21, it is clear that once again the stress is on the inter-dependance of the individual members of the family. Dr Field's version and the Osu version include, further, imprecatory petitions against 'outsiders'. More has been said about these in a footnote (9) and it is only necessary to remark here that this is one more example of concern with the family unit.

These three aspects of the Outdooring Prayer will be recalled when we come to analyse Kpodziemo as a whole.

vii. Naming Drink

Mr Ammah's account surrounds this moment with considerable ceremony. The President, acting through the 'Grand Master of the ceremony', presents the bottle to the strong drink server who announces: "The president says this is the Naming Drink; the stranger's name is X."

This announcement is made twice, first to the male circle, then to the female (for in this account, the two groups are seated separately). One glass only of the drink is then passed round the male circle, each man repeating the name of the child before sipping and the last man finishing what remains in the glass; the same is then done for the female circle. What remains in the bottle (pace all other informants!) is given to the female circle.

As we have remarked, Mr Anteh's account makes no explicit reference to libations but it would seem to be implied that one libation is poured, and this by the Officiant; the glass of drink is then passed round to the right as usual. One half of the bottle is reserved for the mother and what is left of the other half is reserved for friends dropping-in later in the day.

viii. Offering of Gifts

Both Mr Ammah and Mr Anteh place the offering of gifts at this point, immediately after the serving of the Naming Drink. Besides making a cash donation, the President should, according to Ammah, offer two further bottles of drink "in gratitude to all those who have come to this ceremony" and this is presented and served

as soon as all the cash donations have been collected. During the consumption of this further 'refreshment', the donations are counted by four or more representatives of the paternal and maternal families. Ammah does not say who receives this money; Anteh, as we have already recorded, states that it is divided, two-thirds to the mother, one-third to the father.

ix. Pouring out Remainder of Corn-Wine

In Mr Anteh's account(14), no ceremony intervenes between the offering of gifts and the Hand-Rubbing, viz. the place occupied by the mixing of mud at Osu and Nungua. Mr Ammah, however, describes at this point a ceremony called Dasifotemɔ - literally, 'wine-remainder-pouring' - which is performed as follows:- the Corn-Wine Server squats in front of the Drink (i.e. Rum) Server, holding out the "ceremonial calabash" (there is no other reference to this article in the booklet). Into the calabash, the Drink Server pours any corn-wine that may be left over, reciting "the special prayer of the ceremony" (i.e. presumably, the one used for the main libations - c.f. vi. above). The Corn-Wine Server then takes the calabash in turn to the President, Vice-President and Assistant President, each of whom sips the

wine. Finally, the Corn-Wine Server returns to the empty corn-wine pot and himself recites the prayer again (all squatting), whereupon the pot is removed.

Mr Ammah gives no explanation of this ceremony and I was not able to see him again to ask him, so we must leave the matter remarking only that a tenuous connection with the mud-mixing ceremony of Osu might be discerned in the pouring of corn-wine at this point; and an equally tenuous connection with the Nungua ceremony, in that it is the 'ʃiʃi' (remainder) of the Naming Drink which is there used to mix the mud.

x. Kposamɔ

Both Mr Ammah and Mr Anteh describe this ceremony. According to the former, the President first says:

"Strike, strike, strike, may there be peace (Response:) Amen
"Strike, strike, may there be peace (R:) Amen
"Is our voice not one? (R:) Amen (i.e.'It is')
"Strike, may peace come (R:) Amen
"Shall we look up?" *

He then leads the gathering in rubbing the hands together and placing them first on the back of the right shoulder, then on the back of the left shoulder (all saying, the while: "We take it on the back") and finally on the breast.

(Mr Anteh's version is shorter, omits most of the introductory ejaculations and reverses the order of the motions. As we have already seen in his account the people say, not "We take it on the back", but " Owula kosee " - c.f. Sub-Section 1.x., above.)

Mr Ammah's explanation of this ceremony is as follows: the whole ceremony is concerned with the solidarity of the family, both within itself and with God; (and into this solidarity, as I understand Mr Ammah to mean, the child is being received c.f. "We take it on the back"). Thus, after the challenge "Is our voice not one?", the gathering looks upwards ("Shall we look up?"), i.e. it looks to God. Finally each position of the hands has a symbolic reference: the right shoulder to the paternal line, the left shoulder to the maternal line and the breast to the whole extended family.

It will be noted that, details apart, this interpretation accords well with both the details given by informants and the actual practice of the ceremony in Osu (c.f. 1.x., above) where the stress, in theory and practice, was clearly on the unity or solidarity of the family. There remains, however, the problem of Nungua.

The only element in the ceremony (as described by informants in that town) which might be said to have some reference to this idea of family solidarity would be the exhortation to the baby to "Come and stay". Apart from this, the whole Nungua interpretation differs considerably from that of Osu and of Mr Ammah: for Nungua, the chief concern is with the elimination of evil; for Osu, it is with the incorporation of the child into the family. We might epitomise these two stresses by saying that the one (Nungua) is 'backward-looking' and the other (Osu & Ammah) 'forward-looking'. Obviously, in both cases, there is a concern for the welfare of the baby, but it will serve no purpose to attempt to synthesise further the two stresses; indeed, when we come to a consideration of Christian baptism, the distinction may be found to have considerable relevance.

xi. Closing Ceremonial

It will be noticed that Ammah's account blends into the Kposamɔ most of the words which other informants gave separately as constituting the closing ceremonial (c.f. 1.xi.). Anteh's account does the same and he, in fact, considers the Kposamɔ to be, itself, the closing ceremony. Ammah, however, adds an announcement by the Drink Server:

"Here ends the rite of initiation" [no vernacular text given] to which the Corn-Wine Server responds "with an exclamation of assent". He continues: "They - the Servers or someone else? then thank the male circle by shaking hands with them saying 'May it survive'. Next they thank the female circle. Representatives of the female circle would come round and thank the male circle saying 'May it survive'." Finally, the President presents 8 bottles of lemonade and eight shillings to a representative of the female line as 'farewell drinks'. The only comment which I need make on this is that to go round thanking people for coming to one's custom would be a fairly normal thing for any Ghanaian to do, though I never saw it done in this formal manner.

C. COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS

Two major questions remain to be answered. Firstly, How far has the Kpodziemɔ custom undergone changes from a more primitive form?, and secondly, What is its purpose and meaning for people today?

1. COMPARISON

Unfortunately, it does not seem possible to give an altogether definite answer to the first question. Our only full-scale documentation prior to the present-day period is Dr Field's work, and this, though extremely valuable in itself, has for our purposes two limitations:

(a) That it only takes us back just over twenty years, and

(b) That it gives only one account of the custom and does not make clear whether or not any variations of the custom existed at that time and, if so, what these were.

We have already given some qualification of the first objection, recognising that at least the radical changes of the present period had not started in 1937. Nevertheless, we must allow it to be possible - and even probable - that modifications of one sort or another may have been occuring as a result of contact both between the various groups who make up the present-day Ga-speaking people and between these people and the Europeans who have been present in the Accra area on and off for at least four centuries. Before Dr Field, we have found only Bohner as our guide. Of his short account, at least this much may be said: that it <u>does</u>

adumbrate certain features of the custom as it is found in more modern times, such as the sprinkling of the baby with water and the concern for it to develop into a useful member of the community. He also gives us, as we have noticed, our earliest quotation of a phrase still to be found in modern Outdooring prayers (c.f. B.2.vi., first paragraph after the texts).

But Bohner's account shares to an even greater extent in the limitation of Dr Field's: that he gives us no idea as to whether or not all Ga-speaking people practised the custom in the same form. There would, however, seem to be a prima facie case against any suggestion that the various forms of Outdooring to be found in the Ga-speaking towns today are all derivations from a once universally-accepted norm. The Ga-speaking people are by no means a single people or tribe in origin, but rather a multitude of groups which came originally from different parts of West Africa and were only welded together - even in their separate towns, let alone as a state - by the necessities of self-defence (10). What seems far more likely, therefore, than the postulation of a primitive norm for Outdooring is that, just as the various groups have

gradually developed a common language (11), so their Outdooring customs were originally much more distinct and are today, by a process of each group borrowing elements from its neighbour (12), converging towards a common form.

Nothing more definite can be said, then, as regards possible modifications in the detail of performance. More generally, the tendency (especially notable among literate people) towards taking a special pride in the performance of this traditional rite should be recorded. On many occasions, friends have remarked to me that, whereas twenty to thirty years ago the literate sections of the community were tending to neglect the old traditions, today it is considered almost a point of honour to see that one's child is properly Outdoored in the traditional manner. This phenomenon is paralleled by the revived popularity of the Kente cloth, and both are clearly symptoms of a healthy nationalistic pride.

2. ANALYSIS

But clearly Outdooring still has, at any rate for the majority of the people, more significance than that it is a fine old custom! It is true that on countless

TABLE A

THE COMPONENT CEREMONIES OF GA OUTDOORING CUSTOMS

CEREMONY \ ACCOUNT GIVEN BY:	BOSMAN	Dr FIELD	Mr ANNAN	Mr ANTEH	OSU INFORMANTS	TESHI INFORMANTS	NUNGUA INFORMANTS
1. Drinks Presented Ceremonially	-	-	i	-	-	-	i
2. Introductory Libation(s) Poured	-	i	ii	-	i	-	-
3. Baby Lifted Up	-	ii	iii	i	ii ? (sometimes	ii	-
4. Water Sprinkled on Baby	i	iii	iv	ii	iv	i	ii
5. Baby Blessed (verbally, i.e. without libation)	-	iv	-	-	-	-	-
6. Mud Smeared on Baby	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
7. Baby Laid on Ground and Tapped with Foot	-	v	-	iii	iii	iii	-
8. Baby's Lips Touched with (a) wine (b) wine and water	- -	- -	v -	iv -	iv -	- iv	- -
9. Outdoorer Exhorts Baby to Imitate His Own Example	ii	vi	-	v	-	-	-
10. Prayers of Blessing (Dzoomo) -with Libation	-	vii	vi	vi	v	v	iv
11. Drinks Served to Assembled Company	-	viii	vii	vii	vi	vi	v
12. Naming Drink (Sbeiwoo Dēe) Presented and Served	-	-	viii	viii	vii	vii	vii
13. Gifts of Cash Made to Parents	-	-	ix	ix	viii	viii	vi
14. President Offers 'Thanksgiving Drink'	-	-	x	-	-	-	-
15. Libation Poured with Remaining Corn-Wine (Daahishifotemo)	-	-	xi	x	-	-	-
16. Mud Mixed (a) and smeared on father's face (b) and passed round gathering	- -	- -	- -	- -	ix -	- -	- viii
17. Hands Rubbed (kposamo)	-	-	xii	xi	x	-	ix
18. Closing Prayers and Exchange of Greetings	-	-	xiii	-	xi	ix	x

occasions when they are asked to explain the reason for performing a particular ceremony, people may reply "We came to meet it" (i.e. 'It is part of our tradition'), but this does not mean that the significance of the ceremony has been irrevocably lost, nor even that the people themselves are not, in an intuitive way, still aware of that significance. In point of fact, as we have seen, an explanation of some kind or another can be provided for almost every element in the custom and if these appear sometimes to be unsatisfactory or conflicting, nevertheless (as we shall now show) the main meanings and intentions of Kpodziemo are reasonably clear.

Mr Ammah, in his unpublished article on Outdooring referred to earlier (B.2.), divided his account under three main headings and these same headings appear to serve equally well for an analysis of every one of the accounts we have recorded. Table A (opposite) shows, in the first column, the various elements to be found in different accounts of Kpodziemo. The subsequent columns show which of these elements are included in each of our sources' or authorities' accounts, and in what chronological order (indicated by Roman numerals)

each places them. A first glance at this Table may well underline our earlier impressions of the disparity of the evidence, but we shall now show how Mr Ammah's headings enable us (13) to draw all the accounts together:-

1. Kponoŋmee - Showing (the Child)

Leaving aside the purely introductory elements (Nos. 1 & 2 on the Table), it will be seen that, in one way or another, between Nos. 3 and 9 (inclusive) provision is made for the baby to be shown or introduced to:

(a) the assembled family, inasmuch as this is the first time the baby has appeared in public;

(b) the circumstances of everyday life, inasmuch as:

(i) it is laid on the earth and sprinkled with water [all accounts].

(ii) its body is smeared with mud [Nungua account only].

(iii) it is lifted up to see - or, as Ammah would have it, be seen by - the sky and the heavenly bodies [Ammah's, Anteh's and Teshi accounts only; but sometimes practised at Osu].

(iv) Its lips are touched with palm-wine [Ammah's, Anteh's and Osu accounts; at Teshi, with wine and water].

(v) it is given its first moral instructions, i.e. an introduction to the rules of life of the community [Bohner's, Field's and Anteh's accounts as a separate element; Teshi account attaches it to the touching of wine and water on baby's lips. The tapping of the baby with the foot (Field, Anteh, Osu & Teshi) also connotes moral exhortation].

ii. Dzɔɔmɔ - Blessing (or, Prayer)

There are, as we have seen, many elements in the Outdooring which one interpreter or another would have us understand as signs of blessing: the sprinkling of water on the baby, its lifting-up, and so on. This is only natural when it is remembered that the Ghanaian knows of no sharp distinction between religion and life such as has had such damaging effects on European thought. Nevertheless, there is a point in the Outdooring custom at which the ever-present desire for help from and communion with the supernatural powers finds its most explicit articulation. That point is, of course, the main pouring of libations (No.10 on the Table) and the traditional name for these prayers

is Dzɔɔmɔ . We have already spent some time analysing these prayers (B.2.vi) and need only recall our conclusion that all the texts are unanimous in expressing concern for (a) the baby itself, (b) the baby's parents, and (c) the whole family.

Dzɔɔmɔ , then, is that part of Outdooring in which the baby and the world to which it has just been introduced are now explicitly commended to the gods and ancestors for their blessing and protection from evil.

iii. Atuuheremɔ - Embracing (the Child)

This third heading might not appear very appropriate to the literally-minded, for the consensus of opinion among our authorities and sources is that the child has been taken back into the house long before this stage in the custom is reached. However, just as an embrace sets the seal, as it were, on one's welcome to a friend, so in the ceremonies which follow the Dzɔɔmɔ (Nos.11 to 18 on the Table) do the people confirm and set the seal upon the welcome which they are extending to the new baby.

This is particularly true of the Naming of the baby which all accounts (except Bohner's and Field's which do not mention Naming at all) agree in placing at this point

(i.e. after Dzoŋmɔ). It is by the conferring of a name that any society recognises the existence of an individual as an individual with a specific part to play in its life; thus, in the Ga Naming ceremony we can see one way in which each member of the community expresses his acceptance of the child by repeating its newly-given name as he partakes of the Naming Drink.

Then again, there is the offering of gifts (a universal means of expressing goodwill) whereby the participants in the custom acknowledge their indebtedness to the mother and father for having provided the community with a new member. Again, there is the Kposa ceremony which we discussed at so great length (B.1.d.x & B.2.x.) and of which we can say that, at least in some places, this is a further way in which the people signify their desire to welcome the child. Finally, we should not omit mention of the sharing in the ordinary drinks (i.e. other than the Naming Drink), for is this not also a universal means of expressing communion and fellowship of intention?

3. CONCLUSIONS

Dr Field described Kpodziemɔ as setting the "seal

of respectable paternity", for since the father is responsible for initiating the performance of the custom (by calling in the necessary officiants and providing the drinks and other necessaries) he thereby acknowledges his responsibility for the child. But it is more than a recognised father that the child acquires through this custom: he acquires an entire family, in the widest sense of that word (i.e. including the ancestors - c.f. the Dzɔɔmɔ).

Modern maternity services have not yet had such an impact on contemporary Ga society as to eliminate entirely (if, indeed, this ever can be done anywhere in the world) the element of 'chanciness' in the birth and early life of babies. A baby is, therefore, still required to show some evidence of intention to stay in this world by surviving the 'seven dangers' (c.f. B.1.a.) before the community extends its welcome; and it is interesting to note that, the further we move out of Accra, the more we find people concerned with 'eliminating the evil' (c.f. especially B.2.x.).

But, by and large, it may be said that the main emphases in Kpodziemɔ wherever it is performed are 'forward-looking': the child is being introduced to its

new life and accepted into the community in which it will live, it is hoped, as a useful and co-operative member.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. "You came here on one hand..." This is, presumably, a reference to the baby's being caught by the midwife.

2. Among the Ga-speaking people it is still common for the wife and husband to continue to live after marriage in their respective family compounds. In any case, a woman would not have her baby in her husband's house but would return to her mother's when the time of labour drew near.

3. "Agoo!" This is an expression often used for calling a meeting to order and means something like "Attention please!" The people respond "Amee! - We are listening!" But in this particular context it should be realised that it is not only the men and women present who are being called upon to pay attention but also the ancestors. cf. B.l.d.x., fourth para.

4. cf. Chapter II.B.3.b.x., where an Ewe ceremony, similar in some respects to this one, is described. (But the explanation given there would not fit the Ga ceremony.)

5. This ceremonial was described by Nungua informants. At Osu and Teshi, the Officiant himself does all the announcing. At Osu, the Server hands the glass to each of those present and repeats the baby's name to each.

6. Teshi informants stipulated that half the bottle of Naming Drink must be reserved for the mother.

7. "Hail/Strike": The word 'tʃwa', which occurs in the vernacular version of all three texts, means, literally, 'strike'. Dr Field was no doubt seeking an expression which would be more meaningful when she chose the translation 'Hail', but Mr Ammah explains that the full sense of the phrase is "If we strike [i.e. put our hands to any task], then may 'omanye' come. "Happiness/Peace/Prosperity": the word 'omanye' really connotes all three of these ideas. In his booklet, Ammah decides for 'peace', but in his earlier article he translated "peace with prosperity".

8. "seats", "brooms": Mr Ammah explains that these two expressions refer to the males and females (respectively) of the family.

9. Mr Ammah mentions that an imprecatory section is used in some places and cites Osu as an example. In his earlier article, he gave an example of such a section which parallels those given in the main body of the chapter:-

"If anyone says 'Look, Ayi and Dede are performing an Outdooring', as we bless, do we bless them? [Response:] No!

"May Wednesday and Sunday kill them! [R:] Let them die!

"Hoot at them! [R:] Shame! *

The implication of the first phrase, Mr Ammah explained to me, is that the passer-by is making these remarks in a sneering manner or 'with an evil intention'.

10. cf. Field, Social Organisation of the Ga People, p.72: Tema, Nungua, Labádi and Teshi were none of them formed more than a generation or two before the Battle of Katamansu (1826), though Osu and Accra were founded more than a century before.

11. Even today, I am told, there are to be found considerable local variations of Ga vocabulary and grammar.

12. See, for example, the statement made by the old man at Osu (B.1.a.) to the effect that the lifting-up of the baby was not a part of traditional Osu practice but had been copied from Accra Outdoorings.

Also, as will be shown later (Chapter VI) a great deal of mutual borrowing of ceremonies has been taking place between various groups in respect of puberty customs. This adds weight to the theory that the same sort of process has been taking place between the same groups in respect of Outdooring practices. At the same time it should be recognised that certain individual elements in Outdooring must have a considerable history behind them. Dr Westermann's account of Outdooring among the Glidyi-Ewe (who, according to him,

came from Ga country to their present home near Anecho around the end of the seventeenth century) displays certain clear parallels to present-day Ga practice. cf. Chapter II.A.3.γ.b.

13. While acknowledging my indebtedness to Mr Ammah for the phrases here used as headings, I should point out that he is not to be held responsible for the way in which I interpret and use them!

14. Whether by an oversight on my part, or whether because the broadcast necessitated extreme compression of the subject, I discovered that there was no mention of the pouring of libation in my notes of Mr Anteh's radio talk on Outdooring. In recent correspondence with Mr Anteh, however, I have remedied this deficiency and obtained the further information here summarised.

Mr Anteh stresses that it is not strictly accurate to call the petitions offered at Outdooring "libations". He points out that, although it is true that the petitions are made during the pouring out of drink on the ground,

i. the traditional name for these petitions is Dzɔɔmɔ -Blessing, and that a separate word altogether (nKpaiyeli) is used for 'libation'.

ii. nKpaiyeli means, literally, 'prayer' and, as such, is explicitly offered to the gods and ancestors. But in the Dzɔɔmɔ , no mention is made of any god or ancestor.

Mr Anteh concedes that the drink poured out is traditionally intended for the gods and ancestors (i.e. even though they are not addressed by name), but he suggests that because no explicit mention of them is made, the Dzɔɔmɔ can be recited by Christians as well as pagans, the pouring being understood as "a sign or symbol" -by which I take him to mean that it is a symbol of offering to the Supreme God.

With reference to the pouring of Dzɔɔmɔ at Outdooring, Mr Anteh gives the same details as Mr Ammah, including the final pouring of the Daʃiʃifɔtemɔ (cf.2.ix).

C H A P T E R I I

BIRTH CUSTOMS OF EWE-SPEAKING PEOPLES

A. CUSTOMS IN THE PAST

Evidence from the past about Ewe customs is certainly more profuse than was that relating to Ga customs. Moreover, a greater precision by most writers concerning the areas to which they refer provides us with a more satisfactory 'background' against which to trace modifications that may have occurred since these accounts were drawn up. But this same precision reveals also that there are large areas of Ewe country completely undocumented in respect of traditional practices in days gone by. (One of these areas is Tongu, the country along the banks of the lower Volta, in which the present writer was able to conduct fairly widescale research, but for which there is unfortunately no 'background' at all.)

The earliest accessible descriptions of Ewe customs are to be found in The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of Africa by A.B. Ellis (London, 1890; pp.153-155). But, unfortunately, this writer is distressingly elliptical in his remarks and also very imprecise concerning the areas of which he is writing.

The next authority after Ellis (in chronological order

of publication) is Jakob Spieth, whose careful and detailed work must be the joy of all research-workers in this field, but in his case we come up against the second drawback mentioned above, in that his massive tome, Ewe-Stämme (Berlin, 1906), for all its bulk deals only with a small area within the radius of approximately 30 miles from the town of Ho. In the summaries given below, I draw only on Spieth's material (pp.198-206) from Ho itself (which town I myself visited) together with the supplementary notes on customs he found among the peoples of Akoviewe (pp.614-616) and Kpenoe (pp.692-694). These I include because of the parallels to them which I encountered during field work in other areas.

A further book by Spieth, Die Religion der Eweer in Sud Togo, was published in 1911 (Leipzig) and gives a few further details (pp.228 f.) of birth customs.

One final work which is of relevance is Dr Diedrich Westermann's Die Glidyi-Ewe in Togo (Berlin 1935; pp.1-10). According to Dr Westermann, the Glidyi-Ewe came originally from Ga country in groups, the largest of which (though probably not the first) left the Aucra area after the Akwamu invasion of 1680. This people is now settled in the area north of Anecho and to the east of the lagoon, i.e.

in 'French' Togoland. I did not visit this area personally, but the Glidyi must have passed through some of the areas which I did visit and I give summaries of Dr Westermann's accounts in virtue of their obvious relevance to the general situation.

1. CUSTOMS DURING PREGNANCY

α. ELLIS, opening with the somewhat sweeping assertion that Ewe customs are much the same as Twi customs, goes on to note that:

On discovering that she is pregnant, a woman will "...offer sacrifice to the gods - especially to the protecting ñoli of her family."

β. SPIETH describes three customs with which we still meet today:

(a) 'Tolugba':- an old man who has begotten many children mixes 'swish' (red laterite mud), dips a knife in it and draws a circle therewith on the forehead of the pregnant woman and on that of her husband. (Beyond stating that this is called the "pregnancy sign", Spieth offers no explanation of the custom)

(b) The 'wizard' [Zauberer] binds certain charms [Zauberschnüre] in the hair and round the waist, neck, arms and feet of the pregnant woman. These charms are compounded of the hairs of the 'groundnut rat' [Erdnuszratte] and the feathers of the

'time-bird' [Stunden‚vogel].

(c) 'Blatso':- shortly before the baby is due, the 'wizard' comes and ties up the woman at seven points (from ankles to head) with fibre-grass strings. When labour starts, these strings are cut away with the intention of 'releasing' the woman and enabling her to bring forth. The string which surrounded her waist is then cut into seven sections. These are placed in a pot of water to make a medicine which is used to wash the baby when it is born and with which the mother also will sprinkle herself after bathing. (This custom is reported only for Kpence).

(d) The only taboo which Spieth reports is that forbidding a pregnant woman to sit on a stool unless she first turns it upside down.

γ. WESTERMANN

(a) speaks of two kinds of charm worn by pregnant women among the Glidyi. Both are worn round the waist, the first ('aypɔbo') being for protection against the possibility of being seen by a chameleon (which 'would cause the baby to shrivel up inside her'), and the second ('atikesikaa' or 'atikesibo') for protection against the fever. These charms (and also some wristlets) are removed just before labour starts, but there would not seem to be any good reason for identifying

this procedure with the Blatso custom described by Spieth and others.

(b) The woman must observe certain taboos during her pregnancy and in certain cases she eats special foods.

2. CUSTOMS DURING BIRTH

α. ELLIS gives no information on this subject.

β. SPIETH gives the following details (for Ho, unless otherwise stated):-

(a) If the Blatso custom (c.f. l.β c.) does not seem to have had the required effect, a medicine compounded of dzemadọ leaf and pepper may be administered (orally).

(b) At Kpenoe: the midwives prepare the mother by washing her abdomen with the juice of certain sticky leaves. They also give her a bottle into which she blows during labour.

(c) The mother bears kneeling.

(d) The midwife receives the child and, using the sharpened rib of a palm leaf, cuts the umbilical cord. (For this service she receives 5 hoka if the baby is a male, or 4 if it is female)

(e) The baby is washed with soap and warm water and its face is bathed with a herbal preparation (unless Blatso has been performed, in which case, as we have seen, it is bathed all over with the Blatso medicine).

(f) The baby is then fed with a very fine maize gruel.

(g) A medicine is prepared by pouring palm-wine over certain leaves. With this the midwife washes her own face and the mother's. She then places the medicine out in the yard, and any women coming to visit the mother must first wash their hands in it.

At Akoviewe, a similar medicine is prepared and used by the midwives for washing their hands after the delivery. They are specifically forbidden to roast corn until they have done so (1). Visitors are only required to wash their hands if they are going to touch the baby.

(h) The placenta from a woman's first delivery must be carefully buried.

(j) The child is usually named at birth, though some parents "wait for a favourable day for it"; unfortunately, Spieth does not expand further on this point.

(k) Female visitors are admitted (having washed their hands as described above) as soon as the delivery is over. Their first words on seeing the mother are "Thanks be to your protecting / spirits."

WESTERMANN gives the following details for the Glidyi-Ewe:-

(a) It is the woman's own mother (called in by her husband) who normally cares for her during the final stages of pregnancy. When labour begins, two further women, usually of the same family, are sent for.

(b) If possible, the expectant mother is moved to the bath-house. She bears kneeling, supported from behind by one of the midwives.

(c) When the baby is born, its body is rubbed all over with corn-meal - 'otherwise it will have a bad odour in later life' - and laid on a mat. Then, when water has been heated, the baby's body is rubbed with ointment, washed with hot water and rubbed with ointment again.

(d) The placenta (2) is buried in the bath-house.

3. CUSTOMS AFTER BIRTH

A. ELLIS

(a) As soon as the child is born, a priestess takes charge of both mother and child, and offers sacrifice to the god Legba 'to prevent his interfering or doing harm' (3).

(b) Seven days after giving birth the woman is 'purified with lustral water'.

(c) Amongst 'easterly tribes', who have "acquired a hazy notion of metempsychosis from their Yoruba-speaking neighbours", the Bukono, priest of Ife (God of Divination), is sent for soon after the birth to declare what ancestor has sent the child. Eight days after birth, the priest

confers upon the child its **nyi** or birth-name (as distinct from the **nyi-sese** adopted later in life). This **nyi** is normally that of the ancestor who has sent the child, though there are special names for twins. As he confers the **nyi** upon the child, the priest bathes its forehead thrice in water. (Ellis comments that this "combination of purification with naming" is not practised "on the Gold Coast").

(d) Day-Names (i.e. names conferred on children in accordance with their sex and with the day of the week on which they were born) are only in use amongst 'westerly tribes'. This, according to Ellis, is because these tribes alone have names for the days of the week "which they seem to have borrowed from their Ga-speaking neighbours".

β. SPIETH

(a) Records two regulations observed both at Ho and at Akoviewe during the period of five or more days which elapses before the umbilical stump falls from the baby's navel:

(i) The mother may not leave her room.

(ii) The father may not go to work in the fields.

The reason given for the latter prohibition was that,

should the father inadvertently cut a worm in two with his hoe, this would cause grievous harm to his child.

(b) After three weeks, if the child is healthy, the father goes visiting members of the family (only) accompanied by a young girl who carries the baby. The girl who performs this service must be one after whose birth her mother suffered no miscarriages because, Spieth explains (p.200, note 2), "it was her good disposition [Gesinnung] which brought the girl out of pre-existence and this has proved itself in the fact that none of the children born after her has died."

(c) After two months, the mother dresses up in her best cloth, with pearls and a silver chain round her neck. She then goes out thanking everyone who helped her during her pregnancy and labour, and they reply: "We thank your protective gods". Only when she has done this may the woman start cooking for her husband again. (But Spieth notes that the custom is falling into disuse because of the high cost of procuring the ornaments.)

In Die Religion der Eweer in Sud-Togo, Spieth adds:

(d) The first time the mother leaves the house, she goes

to a priest to 'look behind her', i.e. to give thanks for safe delivery.

(e) She then consults the priest to discover what ancestor (if any) has been re-incarnated in her child. If a case of re-incarnation is established, the ancestor in question will (through the priest) appoint a living relation of his to represent him. This person then has the responsibility for performing a custom in which he decorates the baby - in the presence of the whole family - with some special beads (provided by the baby's parents), one red, one blue, and one gold. Thereafter, he takes the baby to his own house and brings it up, continually admonishing it to follow in the footsteps of the ancestor of whom it is the re-incarnation.

γ. WESTERMANN

(a) For eight days after the birth, one of the midwives comes daily to rub down the mother's body with a hot damp cloth.

(b) On the eighth day:

(i) Palm wine is brought and a feast is prepared.

(ii) An old woman of the mother's family comes to the house early in the morning and, the relatives being

assembled outside, brings the child out and holds it under the eaves of the house.

(iii) An old man of the father's family takes water in a calebash and says: "May the child that has come into the world remain healthy. We ban illness; we ban discontent (Verdruß) ; may it be obedient and strong and bring well-being to the house into which it has been born." He then throws the water onto the roof and the child is held so that the drops fall on it.

(iv) While the water is still falling, the child is named: palm-wine is poured out and someone says: "X [name] may God help him that he may remain healthy and not become sick."

(c) Some time afterwards, the woman takes the child on her (own) back and goes round visiting her friends and receiving their congratulations.

(d) At about the same time, a medicine man prepares a very elaborate medicine in which first he, then the woman and finally all present wash their faces. The woman herself must continue to use this medicine for seven days.

(Westermann notes that a 'purification' of this kind is common to all types of convalescence.)

(e) Concerning re-incarnation, Westermann notes that, although instances are believed to be common, most people do not bother to consult the priest to identify re-incarnations in their children. In important families however, the practice is normally followed.

(f) Concerning Day Names. Westermann (writing as he does, nearly half a century after Ellis) says that these are now in general use among the Ewe's. He, however, believes them to be derived directly from the Twi's and not as Ellis suggested through the Ga's. He explains that "the greeting-name is that of the protecting spirit which presides over (vorsteht) this day" (i.e. the day of the child's birth).

B. CUSTOMS TODAY

Most of the information given in this Part is based on field-work carried out during May and June 1958. In all, twenty-five towns and villages were visited. Eight of these were in the Tongu region: five (Adidome, Avakpedome, Dugame, Mebiawe and Tsawala) in the Mafi tribal division and three (Bato, Dabala and Mefe) representative of further tribal divisions in the same area. Eight towns

and villages visited were in the central area of Togoland: a town and a village of the Dzolo division (Dzolo Gbogame and Dzolo Kpuita), Have, Ho/Dome, Hohoe, Klewe, Kpandu and Kpedze. Six were in the Anlo area: Anloga, Avenofeme, Denu, Dzita, Dzodze and Keta. Three non-Ewe towns in Central Togoland (Amedzofe, Wane and Santrokofi) were also visited for purposes of comparison.

Of these three areas, Tongu might perhaps be said to have been the least influenced by modern ways of life. Despite the existence of the Volta ferry at Tefle/Sogakope, the continual stream of 'foreign' influences which this implies appears to have had remarkably little impact on the ways of life of the people round about. Even the great new mission hospital at Adidome has not yet produced any obvious changes in the general pattern of life. The peoples' mixed economy of agriculture (by extremely inefficient methods in an area so potentially fertile), stock-raising and fishing continues much as it must have done in former centuries.

Central Togoland contains several large market-towns, some of which (including Ho - the administrative capital, Kpandu and Hohoe) were visited, besides smaller places less

subject to modern influences (such as Kpedze, the Dzolo's and Klewe).

In the Anlo area, Keta stands out as the most sophisticated of the towns and both Anloga and Denu are important centres. But Dzita and Dzodze (despite their proximity to Anloga) together with Avenofeme are three smaller towns whcih preserve a more authentically traditional atmosphere.

Thus, the towns and areas visited may be claimed to represent a very fair cross-section of contemporary Ewe society. Besides actual field-work, I have had the opportunity of studying an unpublished account of the Ewe Customs of the Life Cycle prepared by Mr. Vincent Ayivor as a thesis for presentation to the Institute of Education in the University College of Ghana. With the writer's kind permission, I include reference to this work at appropriate points.

1. CUSTOMS DURING PREGNANCY

Customs very similar, if not identical, to all those described by Ellis, Spieth and Westermann are still to be found practised by Ewe people today, though not in all areas nor always in the areas where former investigators found them. We may summarise these customs under six headings

a. 'Blatso'

As we have already learnt from Spieth, this is the name given to the custom in which a pregnant woman is tied up with fibre-grass and then released just before labour begins - a mimetic performance designed to effect the 'release' of the baby from the mother's womb. Spieth recorded this custom as being practised only (in his area of research) at Kpenoe. I was not able to visit this particular town but did visit other towns in Spieth's area (Ho and Klewe) and ascertained that the custom is not performed there. On the other hand, a little further to the north at Dzolo Gbogame and much further to the south at Anloga, Dzita and Dzodze, informants all stated that this custom was performed almost exactly as described by Spieth (4). In an article on the Bato-Ewe (5), Father Huber reports that these people also perform Blatso though in a more complex manner than we meet it elsewhere. He explains that the parts of the woman's body which are tied up are considered to be the 'seven principal parts' and says that the Bato-Ewe's repeat the tying-up and releasing seven times at different places, two of the more important being the place of the water supply (where the woman frequently goes and is liable to attack by magic forces) and near the public latrines. (Presumably these people perform the custom fairly early and not just as labour commences!)

Finally, at Keta I was told that a custom very similar to Blatso is still performed by many mothers (including Christian ones), but here it is carried out under the supervision of a 'juju-man' from Dahomey and not by any local priest or elder.

It is interesting to note that whereas Spieth reported the practise of Bltaso only at Kpenoe, a town whose people are of Avatime origin and not pure Ewe's, we find it known and practised today over a wide area. But the evidence is too slight for us to be able to ascertain whether this custom was originally an Avatime one copied by the Ewe's or vice versa

b. 'Fuka'

This is the name given to the protective cord worn around the waist by pregnant women and probably to be identified with the "Zauberschnüre" described by Spieth (c.f. A.1.β.b., above). According to informants at Dzodze and Avenofeme, their fuka is made from the fibres of the Bo tree, into which are incorporated charms and such things as the feathers pf the Avese (time-bird) and the tail of a squirrel (=Spieth's "groundnut rat"?). But it may be a much more simple affair, as at Kpandu where it is simply a length of black thread.

In some places, it is the priest or medicine man who supplies a woman with her fuka; in others any elderly

person in the family may be called upon to make it. It is usually prescribed for wear from about the middle of the gestation period and in most places there is a regulation forbidding its removal thenceforward until labour commences, though in a few places the woman is allowed to slip it off (upwards, over the head) when taking her bath. According to Ayivor (op.cit.) "It is generally believed that unless this fuka is removed by the woman in labour her child will not be born because it 'locks the door of the womb' keeping the child within safe and sound ... To remove the fuka is to open the door of the womb and let out the child," Thus, when it is finally removed, the fuka must be slipped downwards: another piece of mimetic magic similar to the Bltaso custom.

Informants at Avenofeme said that the cord might be worn round the wrist or arm instead of the waist. This may suggest some link-up of ideas with the protective wristlets mentioned by Westermann (c.f. A.1.γ.a., above) which do not sound as of they were part of a Blatso custom, since they were worn some time before labour began. The use of the fuka appears to have been at one time widespread, for informants in Kpandu, Have, Dzolo and Ho besides those in the Anlo area (Anloga, Dzodze, Denu and Avenofeme) all spoke of it. Today its use is becoming obsolete in some places (Kpedze, Have and Ho), but at Keta many people are still reported to

wear a similar protective girdle - manufactured once again, by the Dahomey 'juju-man'.

c. 'Tonugba Dzedze'

Informants in six towns described a custom bearing this name. It is clearly related to the custom described by Spieth (A.1.β.a.) and called by him "tolugba". But it would seem that that writer was somewhat confused when he translated this word as "pregnancy sign" and described it as being made on the woman's forehead. According to my informants, the word "tonugba" denotes that part of the cheek immediately in front of the ears and it is with this (and only with the forehead, so to speak, as an "extra") that the custom they perform is primarily concerned. The verb "dze" means 'to scratch" ("dzedze" = "scratching").

There was considerable divergence of opinion among informants as to who performs the custom, for whom it is performed and exactly how it is performed.

At Kpedze, a married man whose wife has had no miscarriages and none of whose children have died goes to the house of the pregnant woman early one morning during her third month. Taking a knife, he pretends to make a cut on each of her tonugba and on her forehead. He then smears a small portion of red palm-oil (mixed with cornflour and salt) on each of these places.

At Dzolo Gbogame, the pregnant woman's father-in-law arranges with an elderly man (whose wife has lost no children) to perform the custom. The young couple are not told of this. The elderly man comes to their house while they are still asleep, walks straight into the room and dips a knife into a pot of red palm-oil provided. He then wakes the young couple, smears the oil on the tonugba of the woman and her husband (c) and goes out again without saying a word.

At Have it is again a happily married man who performs the custom, but here the young couple go to his house and not he to theirs. They go early one morning in the woman's fourth month and are forbidden to speak to one another on the way. When they arrive, the older man pretends to scratch the woman's tonugba (it is never done to the man) and puts a drop of red palm-oil on each tonugba and one drop on her forehead.

At Ho, informants knew of the custom but said nowadays it was only performed in the Tongu area;(7) but at Klawe (a little village only just outside Ho) informants said that it was practised! Here, a special person who inherits the post from his father is responsible for performing the custom. It is done early in the morning and for the pregnant woman only. The officiant takes a knife and points it at the woman's tonugba; he then makes three circles in palm-oil on each side.

Only at Kpandu did informants state that the tonugba are really scratched, and here it is the pregnant woman's husband only for whom the custom is performed. The officiant is the Odikrohene of the town. He takes a broken palm-nut shell and makes three scratches on each [illegible] of the man's tonugba. He does not apply oil or any other substance.

Informants at Dzodze knew of the custom but were of the opinion that it was only done by the worshipper of certain trɔwo (gods). That this may be the case in Dzodze today I do not question, but it is clear that in most areas 'Tonugba Dzedze' is not associated with devotion to any particular god.

So much for the practical details. It remains to seek an interpretation of this custom.

To deal with the Kpandu form of the custom first, informants there said that its purpose was "to open man's ears to hear wisdom and the responsibilities of fatherhood". At Have, the custom was said to "open the woman's ears to hear good things". Informants at Dzolo Obogame were anxious to develope a complete thesis on the point; they said:

(i) The ear is connected with the idea of obedience (c.f. the fact that, in most vernaculars, the same word is used for "hear" as for "obey");

(ii) Red palm-oil is often used as a sign of honour (e.g. in the custom performed for a girl just before her marriage);

(iii) 'Tonugba Dzedze' is therefore primarily an honouring of the ears which have heard and obeyed the moral injunctions of parents (The custom, they said, would never be performed for a girl who conceived before marriage.) But it is thought of secondarily as the administering of a medicine to keep away evil spirits during pregnancy. (8)

I reported this explanation to informants at Dzolo Kpuita (9) and they were not at all happy about the first part. They considered that the only purpose of the custom was the 'medical' one: to drive off evil spirits. One would be tempted to discount the first explanation as a piece of rationalisation or moralising, were it not for the fact that Dzolo Kpuita is the younger and Dzolo Gbogame the older of these two settlements. There is also one other piece of evidence which suggests that the custom is associated with social morality (whatever additional ideas may be included): at Klewe, information stated that while the custom is being performed the woman must call out the name of the the man whose child she is bearing; she is thereupon "rewarded for her honesty" (and faithfulness?) by the officiant who gives her a sum of money to buy meat and cook herself a meal. In the light of this, I think we may conclude that the dual interpretation of the

custom given by the Dzolo Gbogame informants was not necessarily far fetched.

(d) Dedication to Trõwo

'Trõ' (plural: Trõwo) is the normal Ewe term for a local or family god. Ellis, in his description of Ewe customs, mentioned only one practice common to Ewe women in pregnancy and this was the offering of sacrifice to the gods, especially to the family one (called by him 'holi'). Today, however, the gods seem to have fallen from favour. Informants in seven towns were all in agreement that it was unusual for sacrifices to be made to a god during pregnancy and that if a woman did so, it would be in order to dedicate her child to the trõ in return for his promise to bring it safely to birth. This would only be done in special circumstances, e.g. if a woman had been barren for a long time, if she had had many miscarriages or if many previous children had died in infancy. Kpedze informants explained that a god might impose stringent regulations on the mother (such as forbidding her to indulge in sexual intercourse for up to three years after the birth of the dedicated child) which would discourage most mothers from consulting him except as a last resort. Informants at Kpandu agreed that the dedication of children to a god was an unusual practice

(they estimated that only some 10% of children born were so dedicated) but added that a man might insist on its being done if he suspected his wife of infidelity because it is required here (as in 'Tonugba Dzedze' at Klewe) that a woman should confess before the god the name of her child's father. (10)

Dedication is normally carried out by visiting the priest of the god and either making or pledging certain offerings. The priest then gives details of regulations which the parents must observe and he may give the mother a cowry necklace (as at Dzolo) or a special cloth, sklaku, to be worn round the waist (as at Dzodze) or a special bath and some powder to be used for 'polishing the belly' (as at Klewe) or even a full course of medicines to be taken during pregnancy (as at Ho).

At birth, a child who has been dedicated receives a special name; the most common appear to be Klu or Donko for boys and Kosi or Abuia for girls. Two or three months later, the parents will bring the child, together with their (pledged or further) offerings (11) to the priest. A ceremony is then performed which is thought of as in some sense releasing the child from bondage to the god, though, according to Ho informants, the child is still expected to

remain a devotee and to bring regular offerings and it will retain its special name throughout its life. Kpandu informants said that the child might be specially re-dedicated on this occasion in order to obtain the god's further protection. The day may also be the occasion for the child's first haircut, for in most places the parents are forbidden to cut the hair of a dedicated child until the priest has given permission. This he does, at Dzolo Gbogame, by taking a new, unsharpened knife (provided by the parents) and laying it on the baby's head. Only when he has done this may a sharp knife be applied (12).

Informants at Dzolo told of one final ceremony whose purpose is to determine whether or not the mother has observed all the regulations imposed by the priest when she first went to consult him. Together with their other offerings, she and her husband bring two fowls and five grains of maize. The maize is placed on her head and the priest holds the fowls up and watches to see whether or not they will take all the grains. If they do so, the woman is guiltless (13).

(e) Other Precautionary Measures

The customs outlined in the preceding sub-sections are the only ones which, in one form or another, are practiced

over a wide area. There are, however, many others which have a more local and restricted use.

A large group of these are connected with the preparing and eating of food. Informants at Kpandu spoke of a custom whereby, on the same day that the 'Tonugbs Dzedze' is performed, the young couple take certain foods - oil, salt, three yams and two fowls - to the Odikrohene. The latter ceremonially touches some of the oil and salt (considered to be particularly important elements in the diet of a pregnant woman) to the young woman's lips. The couple then go to the house of an older woman (who must have lost no children) whose task is to cook the food and send her own daughter to serve the pregnant woman. The daughter, informants explained, will bring good luck because she is one of a group of offspring who have all flourished (c.f. Spieth's reference to the young girl who carries the baby, A.3.β.b., above; and also B.3.b.xv., below). A similar custom was reported by informants at the neighbouring town of Have, though here it is the wife of the man who performs the Tonugbs Dzedze who does the cooking and also shares in the meal with the pregnant woman. The Have custom, it will be noted, contains no expression of the town's official interest (as represented, at Kpandu, by the Odikrohene's

playing a part), but the over-riding idea which seems to be expressed in both these forms of the custom is that the community as a whole has an interest in and a responsibility for the woman who is about to add to their number (14).

Other customs connected with food are more frankly magical in character. In one of these, described by informants at Dzolo Gbogame, the pregnant woman herself prepares a meal (consisting of maize and 'a certain vegetable'), over which a medicine man comes a pronounces a spell. The woman then eats part of the food and, taking the remainder in a pot on her head, carries it round the town scattering portions of it along the streets as she goes. This is said to protect her and her child from the miscarriage which would follow if she were looked upon by the possessor of a certain kind of 'fetish' (15). At Kpandu, in addition to the custom described in the previous paragraph, the priest may come to bless certain foods which it would otherwise be taboo for the woman to be seen eating.

Ayivor records a further custom designed to protect the pregnant woman against 'witches': "...she washes herself in a bath containing some powerful herbs and small pieces of every kind of food. In this bath will be the particular food of the witch. The belief is that as the pregnant woman uses this bath she receives protection against

witchcraft. A witch cannot hurt her without hurting herself."

Besides these fairly clearly defined customs there are, of course, a multitude of little charms and amulets which pregnant women may wear (16), a large variety of medicines (17) which they may take and, finally, a list of taboos which they must observe.

(f) Taboos

Writing of taboos, Ayivor (echoing in a remarkable way Rattray's account of Twi practice: c.f. Chapter III, A.1.β.a & b.) says that at least from the moment of conception, if not before, a woman must observe her husband's taboos because the child within her belongs to her husband's family. During the first few months of pregnancy she must remain all day in the compound and, if she goes out (late in the evening or early in the morning) must cover her head and take with her a young girl attendant. It is believed, Ayivor explains, that the future child's characteristics will be determined by the external influences acting upon the mother during this period; she must therefore avoid looking at ugly things, people or animals and she must not be allowed to see acts of violence or be shocked in any way. (The same explanation is given by Rattray: Religion and Art in Ashanti, p. 54)

A list of taboos given by informants at Anloga was fairly representative of those encountered throughout field-work and may serve as an example:

A pregnant woman may not

(i)expose her abdomen in public

(ii)drink from a bottle (else her breathing and her delivery will be obstructed), nor from a gourd (else her baby will develope naval hernia)

(iii)eat in a public place

(iv)respond to greetings while she is in the house or in the bath-house.

(v)sit on a stool without first turning it upside down (i.e. sitting on the feet of the stool)

The third taboo in this list was that most frequently mentioned by informants. At Anloga a fascinating explanation was offered which is worth recording in full, though without comment: "If a man sees the woman eating, he might wish to share her food but would be too modest to ask permission. His spirit, however, would not be subject to the same restraints and might look evilly upon the woman."

Numbers (iv) and (v), informants said, applied only to the women of certain clans. For No. (iv) they could offer no explanation. For No.v(which, it will be

remembered, was recorded by Spieth at Ho) the explanation given was that if the woman brought forth suddenly while sitting on the stool, she would defile it (i.e. ceremonially, as well as literally). Why this taboo should apply only to the women of certain clans I could not discover.

g. Concluding Remarks

This completes our account of present-day customs during pregnancy. In conclusion, it is interesting to note the fact that, even where modern influences are strongest in Ewe-land, at least some of the old customs seem to be followed with almost as much enthusiasm as in the more 'out-of-the-way' places. We have recorded examples of this phenomenon in Keta and it might be added that, according to a doctor on the staff of the hospital at Adidome, hardly a single pregnant woman is admitted there who is not wearing a fuka or similar charm. The only place where informants spoke of an almost total abandonment of the old ways was Dzolo Kpuita (9) and I cannot but suspect that they may have been exaggerating a little for the benefit of the present writer! (c.f. the fact that in the towns all around - Dzolo Gbogame, Kepdze, Have - things seem to be going on much as they did in the past). There does, however, appear to be a certain amount of

'conscientious objection' on the part of Christians in some places. Thus, at Kpandu, informants said that Christians did not practise any of the old customs apart from an occasional 'vaccination' (c.f. Chapter III, B.2.d. and Footnote (11) to that chapter). At Anloga also, informants said that Christians did not practise any of the customs they had described. "We think they are foolish not to take these precautions, but we do not ostracise them for it", they said. The category "Christian", however, is a very vague one for the majority of folk and is often used as a synonym for "literate" (c.f. B.3.c.iv, below). Against the above evidence for Christian abstention should be set the statements of a group of Presbyterian church people in Keta who told me that many Christian women still practise the old customs in secret.

Certainly, then, the old customs are not dead and the situation is very much in the balance.

2. CUSTOMS DURING BIRTH

We now reach a more complex matter, involving far more variety from town to town than we encountered in the previous section. Echoes of the accounts given by Spieth and Westermann will be heard at several points and we shall draw attention to these en passant, but it will be better from the point of view of clarity if

we start with details of the attendant circumstances and then work straight through the process of delivery in order.

a. Midwives

Apart from the towns of Klewe and Anloga, where it was stated that males might on no account be present during a woman's labour, informants at nine other towns said that not only might men be present but that in many cases the most experienced 'midwives' are elderly men. At Dzolo, even the father of the baby may, if properly trained, assist during his wife's delivery. (The expression 'midwife' will therefore be used hereafter of women or men who assist at confinements.)

A fixed scale of fees for these midwives appears to be laid down in each town and usually consists of a stated amount of wine or spirits and/or (more rarely) cash and foodstuffs. In some places the midwife has (as will be seen later) functions to perform which extend for some time after the actual day of the birth and in these cases, of course, his or her fees will be proportionately greater than in other places. The fees are sometimes paid beforehand, sometimes immediately after the delivery and sometimes not until the Outdooring of the baby.

Most midwives take the precaution, therefore, of pouring a libation at the beginning of the mother's labour. Ayivor states further that, as soon a labour starts, the woman is obliged to call out the name of the father of her child. If she has been guilty of adultery, this c confession will be especially necessary, for if she does not admit it, she is almost certain to have a difficult - if not disastrous - labour; but even if she is innocent, it is said that the calling out of the father's name will facilitate the birth by giving the child extra vigour. If, after this, there are still difficulties, these may be ascribed to the woman's having 'wronged a local fetish', in which case the father or some other relative will be called to pour libation (using dzatsi - cornflour and cold water (58c)) to the aggrieved spirit.

If, by any chance, the woman dies, she is considered to have 'killed herself and the child' because it is believed, Ayivor explains, that it must be the result of some sin which the woman has committed but failed to confess. If this happens, the foetus will be removed from the woman's body and the child (if it survives) will be called Afede (male) or Afedomesi (female). The mother herself will be treated in the same manner as

a warrior who has fallen in battle (18): her body will not lie in state and she will be buried outside the town.

In the Tongu area, there is the corollary to this that, if the baby is successfully delivered, the cornmeal gruel which is first touched against the baby's lips (cf. iii, below) is then throuwn over the mother's feet with the words: " Avadeo dza na mi - You who have been to battle, we greet you". (This was the traditional manner of welcoming a warrior who returned victorious from battle.)

ii. Cutting the Umbilical Cord

It is a widespread belief, encountered in all three areas visited, that the umbilical cord may never be cut with a metal instrument. In Ho, Kpedze, Kpandu and Avenofeme, it was said that this taboo is not always observed today and a razor blade seems to have become the favourite instrument. But informants in eight other towns stretching from Hohoe to Denu all insisted on the importance of the old taboo. Some explained it by saying that "iron is poisonous" and, if it be doubted whether this explanation was the original one, it is nevertheless easy to imagine that cases of blood-poisoning resulting from the use of iron knives may have given rise to the prohibition in the first place (19). Where razor blades are not

approved, the instruments normally used for severing the cord are a piece of broken glass or (as in Spieth's day) a sharpened palm-rib. The sharpening of the palm-rib gives, in some places, an opportunity for intimating the sex of the new-born baby to those waiting outside the place of the confinement (c.f. e.i., below). At Kpandu, the midwife receives a special fee known as 'fofoni tsotso' (= 'cord-cutting').

When the cord has been cut, a ceremony is performed which, with a vast number of variations, was reported in all nine towns where I enquired about it. The end of the cord which remains attached to the placenta is touched against the forehead and/or heart and/or breast of the mother and (except at Dzolo) the child. The person doing this addresses the mother and child in turn, usually with exhortations to mutual sympathy and consideration such as (at Kpedze):-

To the Mother, "Whenever you hear your child weeping, feel for it and go and fetch it".

To the Child, "When you grow up, have sympathy for your mother and care for her."

This ceremony, together with the text, would seem to explain itself and most informants said simply that it

encouraged the mother and child to love one another. Klewe informants, however, while accepting this explanation, added that "It brings peace and encourages the mother to bear more children". Lenu informants, moreover gave rather different words to be spoken during the ceremony:

To the Mother: "When you deliver a child, deliver the placenta also"

To the Child: "As a child, you are not known by your mouth" *

The first of these speeches would seem to be more in line with the Klewe idea that the custom is really concerned with the mother's good health and (therefore) fruitfulness. The second speech echoes the words spoken to Ga babies at Outdooring (c.f. Chapter I.B.1.d.v.) and is in line with a proverb addressed to talkative Ewe children and quoted by Ayivor: "Who is this child who talks so much? When your mother bore you, didn't she [sic.] touch your mouth with the placenta?" * (20)

iii. Drink and Food for Child and Mother

If the child is not breathing when born, the following methods may be used to revive it: pouring on cold water, spitting, rubbing it with salt or making a loud noise. A drink, such as is customarily offered to strangers, may then be touched to the baby's lips. In the Tongu

area, at Dzodze, Kewe and Avenofeme, this drink is usually cornmeal gruel. Informants at Klewe said that, although the baby could not eat the gruel, it was a sign and promise that he or she would be fed with solid food later; for the time being, the baby is immediately breast-fed by any of the women present. At Dzodze, the gruel offered to the baby is afterwards poured in libation. At Hohoe, water is given to the baby at this point; in no other town is anything offered to the baby until it has been bathed.

After the bathing (cf. vi)at Kpedze and at Dzolo Gbogame, the paternal aunt takes a roasted palm-nut (at Kpedze, with flour and salt) and squeezes oil from it onto the baby's tongue. As she does this, she says (at Dzolo Gbogame (21)):

if it is a boy: "If a man is born, he eats palm-nut. Therefore you can eat and no harm will come." (22)

if it is a girl: "When you marry, your husband will grow palm-nuts and it is your duty to gather them."

At Have, cornflour, oil and salt are put on a leaf of devidevite (23) and touched to the baby's lips on the day after birth. I did not meet similar customs elsewhere.

At Dzolo Kpuita, in contrast to Gbogame, an old man offers a prayer of thanks and then touches a few drops of

water (five for a boy, four for a girl (24) on the baby's lips, pouring the rest of the calabash from which he took the water out onto the ground. At Dzita, water is given (in unspecified quantity) to mother and baby and a libation is poured with the remainder.

At Anloga, no drink is given but a few drops of lemon juice are squeezed into the child's mouth - not as a sign of welcome but to clear the throat of phlegm. Avivor states that the mother also is given a drink: formerly a herbal preparation but today more usually gin, brandy or beer.

iv. Words Spoken to Baby and Use of Day Name(25).

We have already mentioned that in many places special words of welcome are spoken to the baby. In several such cases, the baby's Day Name is used when addressing it: thus at Avenofeme, the person administering the gruel says "Kofi[or whatever the name may] be you are welcome!"; at Kpedze also, the paternal aunt uses the Day Name when giving palm-oil to the baby. At Dabala(Tongu), as soon as the baby has been delivered, the attendant who receives it is asked by the others "What is born?" and she, having ascertained the sex of the child, replies "Kodzo/Adzo is born". Altogether informants in eight of the eleven towns

where I asked the question replied that the Day Name of a child was used from the moment of its birth.

On the other hand, an elderly informant at Denu, one of the select group of men who perform the Outdooring custom in that town and a 'midwife' of many years experience, told me that although the Day Name often is used, the traditional rule was that it should not be until the eighthday after birth. Informants in a few towns supported this, those at Bato and Kpandu saying that the baby was always referred to and addressed during its first week as 'Vi - Child'. At Dzodze, informants said that the Day Name might be used but that the elderly man or woman who poured libation at the time of birth used the words "A stranger has come; you are welcome!"

It seems possible that a prohibition of the use of the Day Name during the first week may once have been more commonly enforced than it is today, but the rule cannot be of very great antiquity if it is true (as the accounts of Ellis and Westermann suggest) that Day Names themselves have only been acquired by the Ewe's in the comparatively recent past.

v. Prayers Offered - Metaphysical Aspect of Childbirth.

Besides the libation which, as we have said, is often poured privately by the midwives before undertaking a delivery, more prayers may be offered when the child has been born. (Ayivor only says that they are offered to 'fetishes' if any have been consulted and, in cases of difficult labour, to Mawu.) Libation is poured in a variety of liquids such as ordinary water (as at Dzolo Kpuita and Dzita), dzatsi (as at Dzodze and Avenofeme - though here spirits also are poured after the dzatsi) and spirits (as at Anloga). I did not record specific examples of any of these prayers but was told that they are all concerned with thanksgiving for the safe delivery and, in some cases, intercession for the continued health of mother abd baby. (At Avenofeme, an imprecatory petition is included against evil-wishers).

Hoping to discover more of the people's beliefs concerning the metaphysical aspects of childbirth (and in particular, what power or spirit was believed to be responsible for sending the child to the parents in the first place), I asked to whom these prayers were addressed.

Very few informants mentioned (without prompting!) the Supreme God, Mawu. More mentioned lesser gods and the ancestors. Some mentioned only the ancestors. In the Tongu area, the prayers were addressed to "Sodza and his wife, Earth". Sodza, one informant told me, was another name for Mawu, the Supreme God; but others disagreed. (See, for futher discussion of this point and of prayers in general, 3,xvi, below.) I was not able to devote much time to questions of metaphysics and in most places, indeed, informants confessed that they themselves did not know the traditional teaching concerning the supernatural origin of babies. The Chief of Adidome, however, spoke at considerable length on this subject and what he said is reproduced here almost word for word:-

'It is recognised that the parents themselves provide the fleshly body for the child. This is known as the ŋutila. But into the nutila Mawu and his wife Earth send the liwɔ - roughly the equivalent of the English 'spirit'. The liwo is not to be confused with the kpɔ̃li for, although they are similar, the kpoli has the form of a body. It is this (kpoli) which sometimes tries to separate from the nutila so that a person becomes

sick. At night, if you look carefully at a person sleeping, you will see that he has two shadows. One is his ordinary shadow, the other is his kpoli.

The term luvɔ is given by Dr G. Parrinder in his West African Psychology (Lutterworth, 1951; pp. 38 f.) as corresponding to the other Ewe words sɛ, sɛlindõ and lindõ, and he suggests that the most normal rendering of these words is 'spirit'. The term 'kpoli' Dr Parrinder does not give at all, but it would seem, from the Chief's definition, to correspond to the terms yɛ or sɛmɛdõ which Parrinder translates 'soul' and of which he says that it "... is called the longest, most profound shadow of the body, or rather an unknown quantity in the heart of the shadow and not identical with it. During the whole of life the shadow accompanies the body; when a man lies down the shadow is still there - it is not apparent in the darkness, but if a light is brought it is seen to be still present; so it is with the soul." (This sounds very much like what the Chief was trying to explain.)

Dr Parrinder notes that the Togolese Ewe New Testament uses 'liwo' not of 'spirit' but of 'soul', yet it is clear that, insofar as a distinction can be made at all (and the New Testament itself often appears to use the two words interchangeably) the concept of the 'liwo' corresponds more closely than

does that of the 'kpoli' to the 'spirit' or 'breath' which the writer of Genesis, for example, describes the Creator as breathing into man's body. The concept of 'kpoli', on the other hand, would seem to correspond very roughly to that of the 'soul' where this has reference primarily to a man's fundamental selfhood. In short, and at the risk of over-simplification, we might say that the term 'liwo' suggests the thought of man viewed in his relation to and dependence upon the Creator, while 'kpoli' suggests the thought of him seen rather in vacuo as a spiritual entity or 'ego'.

The Chief, then, produced a theory of the metaphysics of childbirth which closely parallels the Hebraic view; and I think it probable that in doing so he was repeating the ancient traditional beliefs of his people. But it was clear, from conversations with other informants, that most people today are not greatly concerned with questions of the ultimate origin of the baby but think more of the ancestors as being the immediately responsible agents for the child's appearance in this world. At Dzodze and Avenofeme, informants quoted a proverb which, they said, was always included in the prayer of thanksgiving used when a baby is born:

" Ne ati kua ati ta de wòtona. - If a tree withers, a

new shoot must come". Ayivor gives an expanded version of this saying (which he says is used at the ceremony for welcoming and naming a baby believed to be the re-incarnation of an ancestor): "When an old tree dies, a new tree grows from its stump. You are the stump from which the new child must grow." These words are addressed, through libation, to the ancestors and make quite clear that the ancestors are thought of as the source of the baby's life. But beliefs in several other intermediaries or agents in the baby's transmission to this world are also current in some places (cf. Footnote (37) and 3.d.iv with Footnote (83)).

vi. Attentions to Baby

The washing of the newly-born baby is carried out with great care, though the belief (recorded by Westermann) that if it is not done carefully the child will have a bad odour in later life was not expressed by many informants. Only at Dzodze did informants report the practice (also mentioned by Westermann) of rubbing the natural salve off the baby's body with cornmeal before using soap and water. In most places, soap and water only are used, though oil or shea butter may be applied after the bathing. Special 'medicines' are used to bath the child only at Dzolo Gbogame or, at other places,

where the baby has been dedicated to a god.

Informants at Dzolo Gbogame described a most extraordinary procedure said to be followed when bathing the child. The midwife sits down and calls for the following articles: one penny, some cornflour, palm-oil, salt and the herb avafatsa. A very large calabash full of water is placed before her and she puts into this the herb and some of the flour and oil. (The remainder of the flour and oil, together with the salt and the penny are her 'fee'.) Then, standing up, she takes hold of the baby's feet in one hand and its hands (behind the back) with the other and, holding it upside down, swings it in circles (five for a boy, four for a girl) over the calabash. Finally, laying it on its back in the water, she says to the baby: "Grow up and fill the calabash".

In several places in the Ho and Anlo areas, informants spoke of the 'strings' which bind the new-born baby's tongue. It is believed that unless something is done to 'clear' these strings the baby will have an impediment of speech (or, alternatively, a bad singing voice, c.f. chapter III, B,2,d) when it grows up. To obviate this, the midwife puts her finger into the baby's mouth

and pulls it round under the tongue. Whether or not she actually tears the frenum (which, in the case of some baby's really is attached too far forward on the tongue and can cause an impediment of speech) my informants did not make altogether clear. In some cases, though there is a basis in physical fact for the belief, I had the impression that the 'strings' of which informants were speaking were 'spiritual' ones.

A further practice, mentioned by informants at Ho and Klewe, was that of moulding the baby's head to a handsome shape if it happens to be born distorted. This is, of course, a far more dangerous practice from a medical point of view than the one just mentioned. But the midwives must be reasonable expert at it (or else do not attempt any startling transformations!) for no cases of consequent trouble are reported. Since returning from fieldwork, I have been told that this is a common practice in other parts of Ghana as well.

d. Tidying Up.

1. Handwashing.

In most of the towns visited, (though not, for some reason, in Have) great attention is paid to the washing of their hands by the midwives. In several places (Hohoe Klewe, Denu) the father provides 'rum' or palm-wine to be

used for this purpose. At Ho, there is a preliminary washing in fresh water and a second washing in water containing palm-wine or gin. At Dzolo Gbogame, the same medicine is used for handwashing as was used to bath the baby. When he has finished washing, the midwife should, according to Ho informants, dip his finger in the liquid and draw it across his eyebrows, saying: "This will give me power to see"; he may not go to his farm - even to collect food - until the handwashing wine has arrived and been used. The reason for all this care, (as given by Klewe informants) was that 'it is necessary to remove the scent of the blood', and one may recall the belief in connection with the washing of the baby that if this is not done thoroughly and right away it will have a bad odour for the rest of its life.

ii. Disposal of Placenta.

Considerable importance is also attached to the disposal of the placenta. It seems to be very general belief (26) that the placenta possesses fertilising powers, and in most places it is given to a barren woman to bury. Only at Have and Dzita (out of twelve towns where the matter was investigated) did informants say that it was immaterial

who buried the placenta. At Dzodze it was said that the burial was performed by a women who had been losing children. At Avenofome, by way of contrast, it was said that task must be performed by a man or woman whose children were all living!

The placenta is normally buried in the bath-house - not simply, Klewe informants explained, because the birth takes place there but because there would always be someone around in the compound to see that no dog or other animal started to dig it up again. (Should this happen, the child would fall sick.) According to Ayivor, if no barren women wishes to bury the placenta, it is buried under a tree (and will cause the tree to bear much fruit) but most of my informants said that it was the umbilical cord which would be disposed of in this way (see 3.a.ii., below).

There are also certain widely accepted regulations as regards the way in which the placenta should be buried. It is normally said that it must be done with the end of the umbilical cord uppermost and the usual explanation given for this regulation was that unless it were observed the mother (who has just born it) will become barren.

(Informants at Avenofeme, however, and one at Anloga offered the less ominous prediction that the child would have breathing difficulties and 'snuffle' while sleeping!) At Have and Ho it was said that the placenta must be wrapped in gourd leaves (at Have: five for a boy, four for a girl - c.f. c.iii. and Note 24).

According to informants at Anloga and Denu, the placenta may not be buried until the day after delivery, when it has become cool for "it would be a sin to bury it alive". At Avenofeme and other places, however, the burial is carried out immediately. Informants at Hohoe and Klewe confirmed that the placenta is still today (as in Westermann's time) sometimes referred to as 'vixolo - the child's friend', though the more normal word is 'vigolo - child-bag', the belief being that the baby was at a time inside the placenta. They added, however, that the former term did not imply a belief that the placenta had some sort of individuality - "it is not a part of the mother' person as the nutila and kpoli (cf. c.v.)." (This statement appears to be somewhat in conflict with the idea put forward by Westermann's informants (2) - that the placenta is a spirit which forms or delivers the baby).

Informants in most places (Anloga being an exception) said that when the barren woman buries the placenta she must urinate upon it. At Kpedze and Dzolo Gbogame they added that she should also be sure to laugh or smile "to show that she doesn't care" (sc... that she is barren). Several theories were offered by Ho informants as to how the act of burying the placenta helps the barren woman to become fruitful and I give them here without comment except to say that no one of them was accepted by the whole gathering:-

"If a barren woman buries someone else's placenta, she must have one for someone else to bury."

"The woman's urine connects her with the placenta and she sees what she has to produce."

"as she urinates on the placenta, so her baby will urinate on her back."

e. Additional Points

i. Announcement of Baby's Sex

In one or two places there is what we might call a special 'code' for announcing the sex of the newly-born baby to the people outside the room. In those towns (Kpandu, Have, Klewe and Dzolo Gbogamo) where a sharpened palm-rib is still used to cut the umbilical cord, the rib

is not sharpened until the baby is born. Someone is waiting outside the room with a knife and the palm rib until the senior midwife calls out "Use your left hand" or 'Use your right hand". By this means the sex of the baby is announced, for if it is male the left hand must be used to sharpen the rib and if female, the right.

At Bato (Tongu) informants spoke of quite a different 'code'. Here, if a boy has been born two men, and if a girl, two women indulge in a wrestling match in front of the house!

ii. Preliminary Outdooring - Interim Precautions

At Dabala, as soon as the baby has been bathed, a messenger is sent with the sum of 1/3d to call an Outdoorer (c.f. 3.b.iii, & Footnote 36). This official comes immediately unless it be night, in which case he comes at daybreak. He takes the baby out of the room in which it has been born and holds it up once towards the East, saying: "This is for the evil people", and once towards the West, saying:"This is for the good". (This part of the custom is, as we shall see, an anticipation of the Outdooring proper.) He then returns the baby to the room and reminds those present that they must wait for him to return in eight days' time. Before leaving, he

hangs across the doorway a 'curtain' of date-palm fronds, from the fringes of which he suspends grains of millet, pieces of charcoal (27) and the herb amá (48). All who enter the room will rub against this curtain and it serves to sweep away from them all evil influences.

Dabala was the only town visited where this preliminary Outdooring was mentioned, but informants in both Anloga and Dzita spoke of measures taken to guard the doorway of the baby's and mother's room. At Anloga in the old days they used to hang the doorway with grass strings; today a medicine man comes and lines the doorstep with ash over which he prays. At Dzita, wooden posts are driven into the ground, one on either side of the door, and the medicine man spreads akplĕ (corn porridge) across the doorstep. Informants here (at Dzita) added that the purpose of the custom is not only to keep evil spirits out but also to keep the mother and baby in!

f. Concluding Remarks

This completes our account of present-day practices at childbirth. It will be remembered that in Ewe-country, unlike some parts of Ghana, very few women are able to go to a hospital or clinic to be delivered of child. Instead,

mothers, fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers take control of the situation when the moment of labour arrives - and this must in no small measure account for the fact that so many customary practices are still known and followed.

In contrast to the preponderantly 'magical' customs connected with pregnancy, it will be noticed that those surrounding the delivery would be open to objection on medical and hygenic grounds more than on religious ones and, in point of fact, no informants reported abstentions from the customary practices by Christians. In such a time of crisis, after all, a mother has little say in the matter of how her midwives behave (1) - and one Christian among a group of midwives might be able to exercise little influence. The people most likely to scruple would be the very small section of highly educated mothers - and these would probably make every effort to go to a hospital or clinic for their delivery, thus avoiding the whole question.

These traditional customs, then, like those discussed in the preceding section, are still very much 'alive' today.

3. CUSTOMS AFTER BIRTH

a. During the First Few Days

1. Restrictions Governing Mother and Baby

During the first few days after the baby's birth, both mother and baby are hedged about with protective regulations. It was a universal rule in all areas visited that neither of the two might leave the compound during these days and usually the baby may not even leave the room, though the mother is permitted to go out to the bath-house and latrine. Informants at Anloga said that no one outside the family might visit either the mother or the child; at Dzodze, that no one at all might handle the child until the Outdooring custom had been performed. At Ho, visitors may come to see the mother but may not look at the baby during their visits. They greet the mother with the words: "We thank God".

ii. Restrictions Governing the Father - the Umbilical Stump

It will be remembered that Spieth recorded a regulation forbidding the new baby's father to work in the fields until the baby's umbilical stump had fallen. Informants in all the towns visited in Central Togoland (28) referred to this prohibition but, except at Kpedze, they said that it was enforced up to the day of the baby's Outdooring, whether or not the umbilical stump fell before that time. All informants, however, gave the same reason for this regulation as that given by Spieth, viz. that if the father worked in

the fields and inadvertently cut a worm in two, his baby would suffer. (Hohoe informants said that it would cause the baby's navel to start bleeding and that it would eventually die.) Informants at Ho said that everyone observed this regulation though some did not know the traditional explanation for it. This explanation they gave as follows:

"The worm is the mother of the earth. Man is also made of the earth and the umbilical cord of each baby is its mother worm. All worms rejoice when a baby is born and they naturally expect the parents to do the same. They realise, of course, that a man may accidentally damage a worm when he is digging, but if he does this at a time when he ought to be making merry instead of working the worms will be annoyed and take their revenge on him by attacking his baby."

Klewe informants were substantially in agreement with this explanation except that they insisted that the umbilical cord is <u>not</u> the baby's mother worm "for the placenta is the mother of the baby". Obviously there is some confusion of thought here, but the fact that people see some sort of connection between worms and childbirth is particularly

interesting in that it provides a link with early neolithic cultures in other parts of the world where the worm is thought of as a fertilising principle - the 'consort' of Mother Earth.

Informants at Anloga spoke of a special dressing (compounded of aflã (48) leaf, salt and cornflour) which is applied to the baby's navel to hasten the process of healing.

When the umbilical stump has fallen, it is buried (at Kpedze, mixed with ash). Informants in most places said that the burial should be done under a tree; the palm, the silk-cotton and several fruit trees were nominated by different groups. But a tree is not always insisted on and at Avenofeme informants said that the stump would be buried under a half coconut shell. In those places where a tree is chosen, that tree is believed to acquire a special connection with the child. At Hohoe it was said that as soon as he is old enough the child must be shown the tree and warned never to uproot it (but these informants could not tell of anything specific that might happen if the child did uproot the tree!). Mefe informants said that the tree is a sign to the child that this town where it is planted is his home town (29); if he dies away from home, some part of his body or some earth from his grave must be brought

back and laid under the tree.

iii. Fetching of Water by Mother

At Hohoe and Kpandu, on the third (30) and eighth days (respectively) after her delivery, the mother must go to fetch water. If she fails to do this, it is said that she has "died in childbirth", which, as we have already seen, is a disgrace. Hohoe informants, however, pointed out that a friend of the mother might bring the water for her right up to the entrance to the compound so that there was not much danger of her failing to carry out her obligation! On the other hand, in the non-Ewe town of Santrokofi where the same regulation is enforced, the mother must herself take the water to the house of the senior woman in her husband's family.

iv. Preparations for Outdooring

During these first few days, the husband is busy gathering together the gifts which he will have to present to his wife and the baby and all the other necessaries for Outdooring such as food and drink. In most places he also has to send out invitations to the Outdooring, but at Kpedze he sends a large calabash full of foodstuffs together with 7½d (the equivalent of 60 cowries) to the midwife and it is she who is responsible for going round inviting

relatives to the Outdooring. At Avenofeme, the father must send edza (a gift of cornflour and some cowries - or coppers) to invite the old man who made the mother's fuka (cf. B.1.b.) or another elder of his family to come and act as Officiant at the Outdooring.

b. Outdooring - Analysis

(NOTE: In this Section, the various details of Outdooring as it is performed in different towns are grouped together, described and discussed under appropriate headings. This treatment has the effect of confusing, to a certain extent, the outline of the custom as it may be performed in any particular town. To clarify this matter, Table B (opposite p.169) sets out the relevant data in respect of each individual town. In Section c., the over-all purpose and significance of Outdooring in Ewe-country are discussed.)

1. Day

It is often assumed that the Outdooring of babies on the eighth day after their birth is a tradition common to all the peoples of Ghana. This is not, however, true in respect of Ewe-country, though it does seem that the eighth day is coming to be accepted as the standard one for this purpose.

In the Tongu area, the eighth day is fully established and if there were earlier and different traditions these have been forgotten. At Hohoe there is a divergence of practice

between (what informants described as) "ordinary people" on the one hand, and "rich people and Christians" on the other. The former group practices one custom (asserted to be 'the' traditional one) on the third day after the baby's birth; the latter group practices a different custom (alleged to have been 'imported' from the Anlo area) on the eighth day. At Ho, where (as we learnt from Spieth) the baby was not, in the past, taken out of the house until three weeks had elapsed, an eighth day custom has now been generally adopted. Similarly at Anloga, Dzita and Dzodze (where, in former times, the mother stayed in the house for from four to six months and then went out 'thanking' as in the old Ho custom) a modern, eighth day custom is now performed (though, according to Dzita and Dzodze informants, some mothers still observe a four-month 'confinement' after the Outdooring). In most other towns in the Anlo area an eighth day is established.

At Kpedze, a transition from a traditional fifth day to an eighth is now virtually complete. But at Avenofeme a traditional fifth day is still observed and at Dzolo Gbogame - and even at Dzolo Kpuita (so 'modern' in many respects!(9)) the Outdooring is performed on the ninth day and this is claimed to be the traditional one!(31).

The Kpedze tradition of Outdooring on the fifth day was clearly linked up with the old market-week of four days (Asitoegbe, Domegbe, Asiamegbe and Afeneagbe), for thus the baby would have been outdoored on the same day as that on which it was born (32), but it is less easy to see how Dzolo's ninth day or Hohoe's third day fit in with this pattern. Indeed, informants at the latter town explicitly denied that their 'third day' reckoning had anything to do with either a 7 or a 4- day week. Instead, they gave the following explanations: (i) the child's umbilical stump "always falls by the third day"; (ii) the number 'three' is a special one, used, for example in blessings and in invocations before libation ("Mawu Sodza, Aha Gbɔnɔtsu, Mawugã"); (iii) their proverb says "Etɔ̃ enye agbe - The third is for life". (But when I asked whether this meant that a child who survived for three days was sure to live, the gathering was not very enthusiastic - "We do not know".)

In most places there is no great concern about holding the Outdooring on <u>exactly</u> the right day. Thus, informants at Bato, Kpedze, Dzolo Gbogame, Ho and Avenofeme all said that the Outdooring would be postponed if the mother or baby were sick or (in places where the custom includes the

carrying of the baby on someone's back, cf. xiv.) if the baby's navel had not healed. Informants at Ho (where the eighth day has now become standard) said, however, that if a postponement were necessary, it would be by multiples of seven days so that the performance of the custom might fall on the baby's birth-day (33).

Reasons given for the adoption of the eighth day for the performance of the custom were mainly practical. Informants at Ho, asked why they no longer waited three weeks (as in Spieth's time), replied that they had not so much spare time as their forefathers: parents today could not afford to take three weeks' holiday. Several informants said that it was simply that the eighth day was easier to remember. Others pointed out that an 'octave' (my expression) was observed in other customs, such as funerals. Bato informants volunteered that "If one is bitten by a snake and he survives eight days, then we know he will be all right." This last explanation came nearest to that found in other parts of Ghana (34) (viz. that eight days constitute the necessary 'probationary period' for a child who has come to this earth to show that it intends to remain) and, since Bato is in the westerly Tongu area, it is

probable that the observance here of the eight day period has been adopted, together with the explanations of it, from Twi or Ga/Adangbe neighbours. Further into Central Togoland the observance of the eighth day is making headway against older traditions, but here the practice has preceded the explanations of the practice. The observance of an eighth day in the Anlo area is almost certainly to be attributed to Ga influence, working in particular through the movement of the Glidyi Ewe's who, as we have seen, (cf. Introd. to Pt.A.), came originally from Ga country and must have passed through Anlo territory in order to reach their present position east of Lome. Westermann, as we have seen, records these people as reckoning an unequivocal eight days before their Outdoorings and if, as is probable, Ellis carried out his research in the coastal areas, we have fairly good evidence (35) for supposing that the eighth day has been established in the Anlo area also for a considerable time.

ii. Time

As regards the time at which Outdooring is performed, there is only one major divergence in practice: in the Tongu area, at Hohoe and Ho, and in the Anlo area, Outdooring

takes place in the morning (in some places very early, in others, not until quite late); but in a small group of towns visited (Have, Kpedze and the Dzolo's), Outdooring is not performed until the early evening. It so happens that this small group of towns lies in close proximity to the Avatime towns of Amedzofe and Wane and the people of these towns also perform their Outdooring custom in the evening, but the evidence is too slender for us to be able to decide whether this is a case of the Ewe's following Avatime practice or vice versa.

iii. Place, Officiant and Invitees.

The custom is of course performed at the house where the baby was born. As we have seen, this may be: its father's house; its maternal grandmother's house; or its maternal great-grandmother's house.

The person presiding over the custom as Officiant may be: (a) the senior man (hereafter referred to as the 'paternal grandfather') of the father's family (as in the whole of the Tongu area except at Dabala; at Hohoe, Kpandu, Ho and Anloga); (b) the medicine-man or priest who has been generally watching over the mother during her pregnancy and delivery (as at Dzita, Dzodze and Avenofeme); (c) the senior midwife (at Kpedze and, if the midwife was

a male, at Denu also); (d) a man specially appointed for the job (36) - not necessarily a member of the family - (as at Dabala and, sometimes, Denu); or even (e) the baby's own father (as at Klewe).

In addition to the Officiant, several people may play leading parts in the custom. The midwife (not being Officiant), the paternal - (and in one case maternal) aunt, a young girl (whose siblings are all living) and a person of the same sex and born on the same day of the week as the baby are the most important of these additional functionaries - besides, of course, the baby and its parents themselves!

The relatives (both paternal and maternal) are always invited to the custom and also, in most cases, friends of the family. All these assemble outside the compound at (or after!) the appointed time. According to informants at Adidome, the paternal and maternal relatives should sit in separate groups; but this convention is by no means universally observed.

iv. Preliminaries (37)

Preparation of Drinks. At nearly all Outdooring drinks are needed for pouring libations and for serving to the

assembled guests. Before the custom begins, therefore, the bottles must be assembled and palm-wine, if required, fetched from the farm. (At Hohoe, indeed, informants said that the custom might even have to begin as late as 9.0 a.m. because fresh wine was essential.)

Preparation of the Father's Gifts. Not everywhere are the father's gifts officially presented to the mother and baby during the custom (cf. xi., below), but they may be put on display and must in any case be gathered together by this time. In places where there is to be an official presentation, the gifts are laid out on the ground - sometimes round a little bed (made of cushions and old cloths and covered with a new white cloth) on which the baby will be laid (cf. vi.)

Preparation of Medicines. In several places, special 'medicines' compounded of herbs etc. are used during the custom. (I use the word 'medicine' here without inverted commas, it being understood that I refer to magical or herbal concoctions and not to pharmaceutical products!) The ingredients for these must be collected and in some cases the medicines are prepared right at the beginning of the custom (cf. xiii.)

Dressing of Baby and Mother. If her husband gives her new cloth (as he is bound to do in some places) the mother puts this on, laying aside the old cloth which she has worn ever since her delivery. She also puts on what ornaments she can afford or borrow. According to an informant at Adidome, these ornaments should be predominantly white and the baby also should be dressed in white and decorated with white beads on neck, waist, wrists and ankles. But in some places the dressing of the baby takes place later in the custom (cf. xi.).

v. Introductory Libation or speech

In the Tongu area (except at Batc), at Kpandu and at Anloga, the custom opens with the pouring of libation by the Officiant. At four of the Tongu towns (Adidome, Tsawala, Dabala and Mefe) this is simply an introductory libation and the main libations are poured later in the custom. At the other towns listed this is itself the main and only libation poured. In no other towns did informants state that a libation was poured right at the beginning, though nearly all reported a libation at one point or another in the custom. The introductory libations (i.e. those which are to be followed by further libations later in the custom) are usually poured privately by the Officiant. At Mefe, pouring to the Supreme

God, Mawu, to minor gods and to the ancestors, the grandfather tells them "Today we are going to outdoor this child for all to see". I recorded no other texts of these introductory libations but gathered that they are all concerned simply to draw the attention of the inhabitants of the unseen world (38) to the fact that an Outdooring is about to be performed and to ask for their assistance. Texts of full libations (whether poured at the beginning of the custom or later) are given and discussed below (xvi).

At Hohoe, there is no introductory libation but the Officiant opens the proceedings with a short speech, recounting the events which have led up to this day and explaining the purpose of the gathering: e.g. "My wife bore me a son, Kofi, and he took a wife, Afua, and she has borne him a son in turn. Now we have come to outdoor the baby." (This is virtually what the Officiant tells the gods in those places where he pours an introductory libation.) A similar but very brief announcement is made at Nefe after the holding up of the baby to East and West (cf. vii).

vi. Blessing the Baby's Bed - and other Precautions

At Nefe, immediately after the pouring of libation, the Officiant kneels down by the little bed prepared for the

baby and shakes his head over it three times from East to West, using the formula (which we meet over and over again in this area cf. vii): "East for the evil ones; West for peace". He then spits (39) thrice on the bed and prays that thereby some of his spirit may pass into the child. (Because he has to do this, informants said, the parents must be sure that the Officiant is a man of good character. Normally, as we have seen, the paternal grandfather is automatically chosen (at Wefe) as Officiant, but if there are any doubts about his character he may be passed over!) Besides transferring the old man's spirit to the child, informants added, the spittle also drives away any evil that may be intended against the child.

At Dabala, where, as recorded above (iii. and Footnote 36), the oversight of Outdoorings has passed into the hands of 'professionals', the custom seems to have become much more complex and 'ritualistic' than in most other places. Here, the Outdoorer, having first poured libation at the entrance to the compound, proceeds to take elaborate steps to keep the mother and baby safe from evil influences: taking some cornflour and some palm-oil, he mixes them together, scatters a little of the mixture all round the compound and then uses it to describe a line along the doorstep and a circle round the mother and baby as they sit in the room. (cf. also first paragraph of viii and

Footnote (41). He then comes out again and prepares a special herbal bath (cf. xiii) before returning to the room to bring out the baby (cf. vii).

vii. Bringing Out Mother and Baby
- and Holding Up to East and West

(The ceremony to be described is performed in the whole of the Tongu area. Outside this area, it was mentioned by Denu informants only - with additions as noted below.)

The Officiant now goes into the room and brings out the baby in his arms, the mother following him. He (or, at Mafi Dugame, an old woman) then holds the baby up towards the East and West, once or a number of times.

Each town has its own variations on this theme. At Mafi Dugame, the old woman holds up the baby once only, first to the East then to the West. At Adidome, the baby is held up three times to the East, three times to the West and finally once directly upwards. At Avakpedome, the baby is swung seven times from East to West. At Mefe, Bato and Mebiawe it is swung similarly, but only three times. At Dabala, it is held up once to the East, but seven times to the West.

Each town (and probably each outdoorer) has its (or his) own variations also on the words spoken during this ceremony. Here are some examples:-

from Mafi Dugame

"Grandfathers, Grandmothers: evening child reaches to evening; let peace come so that he may remain with us and not return back, and so that he may fetch us water to drink." *

from Adidome

(to the East) "This is for the evil ones"

(to the West, 1st and 2nd times) "Ours is the evening"

(to the West, final time) "Evening child reaches to evening"

(upwards) "God, I show you this child" *

from Mefe

(swinging the baby from East to West, three times) "Sunrise - Sunset"

(then, once) "May the child be healthy and bring prosperity"

(finally, once, holding the baby still in the arms) "Today our brother 'X' [Day Name] is born. Today we outdoor him in the name of God. May he be healthy".

At Dabala (where, it will be recalled, this ceremony has already been performed once before, cf. 2.e.ii) the Outdoorer simply counts "One, two, three . . . . seven" as he swings the baby.

At Denu, before bringing out the baby, the Officiant first fetches the mother and, holding her by the wrists, leads her in and out of the compound seven times. This done, he fetches the baby and carries it in and out seven times also. Coming out for the seventh time, he holds the baby up once to the East and once to the West, saying: (to the East) "To the evil ones" and (to the West): "Ours is the cool of evening" *

Ayivor gives an account similar to that of the Denu informant, but with a very different text. According to Ayivor, the Officiant takes the mother by one hand (she holding the baby in the other arm) and leads them both together in and out seven times, saying each time:

"A person is not born to enjoy only the warmth of the four walls of a room, he must get out into the open air and enjoy the warmth of the world outside".

(Similar words are used by the Outdoorer at Dabala when he mixes the medicine -i.e. just before he fetches the baby out of the room. cf. xiii)

So much for the details of the ceremony. What now is its significance? In the first place, it clearly serves to emphasise the fact that the mother and baby are now officially released from their enforced sojourn in the room.

This is particularly clear in the Denu form of the ceremony and in Ayivor's account, together with the text he gives. But why is the baby held up to East and West? The Chief of Adidome said that the East represented the paternal ancestors and the West the maternal, but this theory was not substantiated by any other informants (nor does it appear to make much sense of the texts in which it is said that the East is for the 'evil ones'), and can probably be discarded. The general idea which emerged from other explanations given was this: that as the sun only sinks in the West after it has lived a full day's span, so the child held up must live its full life span and pass away 'to the West'; he must not die right at the beginning of his life 'in the East', for it is only the evil doers who are cut off in the morning of their life (40).

In the modern (8th day) form of the Outdooring custom performed by some people at Hohoe and in the custom generally performed at Dzodze, the baby is carried in and out seven times, but is not shown to East and West. In both towns, it is a person of the same sex and born on the same day of the week (and having, therefore, the same Day Name as the baby) who does the carrying in and out.

viii. Sprinkling Water on Baby

In Ayivor's account, when the Officiant has brought out mother and baby for the seventh time, he takes the baby, lays it on the bare ground under the eaves of the house and sprinkles veve (unparched maize flour, mixed with red palm-oil) round it on the ground (41). He then throws a little water onto the roof so that it trickles down upon the baby. As he does this, he says: "A person is born for all weather, clement and inclement, warm and cold. He is born for the rough and tumble of life in this world."

With the omission of the veve sprinkling, the custom described by Ayivor was reported with slight variations by informants at Kpandu, Dzodze and Denu as forming part of their present-day Outdooring practice. It is also performed by those who outdoor on the 8th day at Hohoe and by a similar group of alleged 'modernists' at Bato. With the exception of this group at Bato, it is not performed in any other of the Tongu towns I visited - which is a little surprising in view of the fact that the Tongu towns are nearest to Ga/Adangbe country (where sprinkling the baby with water is a fairly common feature in Outdoorings).

According to a Bato informant, when the water falls on the baby and it begins to cry, the Officiant tells it:

"Rain is customary, it kills no one, you must get used to it." Kpandu informants also said that the purpose of the ceremony was to get the baby used to rain.

At Denu, the Officiant (having first held up the calabash of water to East and West, using the same words as when holding up the baby) throws the water on the roof and says: "We pray thee, Thunder God; we pray thee, Earth (you are our heads or leaders): Let him not be affected by any diseas when the rain beats upon him in the bush."* My informant here (at Denu) said explicitly that if this ceremony were not performed, the baby would become sick the first time rain fell on it.

We have here, then, two ideas about the sprinkling of water: (1) that it is simply to 'acclimatise' the baby; (2) that it is to prevent him from falling sick. In connection with this latter interpretation, it is interesting to note that those informants at Bato who said that they did not perform the sprinkling as part of the Outdooring stated that it was customary, when a person was sick, to lay him under the eaves of the house and cause water to fall on him in this manner. This latter custom was also reported at Hohoe.

But why does the baby or sick person have to be laid under the eaves? Why should it not (as among some of the

Ga-speaking people - c.f. Chapter I.B.1.d.ii.) be sprinkled directly onto the child or patient? Mr Nicholas Agble, a very old inhabitant of Hohoe, produced an explanation of this which sounds very convincing and also serves to link up the two uses of sprinkling (sc. for babies and for sick people). In the old days, Mr Agble explained, a symbol of the household's protecting god (consisting of a bunch of sticks) was always fixed in the thatch of the kitchen roof to protect the food from evil spirits. The baby or sick person would, therefore, always be laid under the eaves of the kitchen roof and the water would be thrown up in such a way that it trickled over the god's emblem. Thus the water (which is in any case a standard symbol of coolness in heat and refreshment in thirst - hence, of blessing) came to convey also the special blessing of the god.

ix. 'Losing and Finding' the Baby.

Returning to Ayivor's account, we find that he proceeds as follows: When the water falls on the baby, it begins to weep, whereupon a person of the same sex and born on the same day as the baby (usually a member of the family, selected for his admirable character) comes along, picks up the weeping child and says: "I discover a person, whose is it?". The mother (who, apparently, has retired into the room

again) then comes forward with a few relatives and says: "It is our child". The finder rejoins: "If it is your child, you must learn to care for it and not leave it helpless and unprotected in the open." The mother is then required to 'buy' the baby back from the finder - usually for a sum of one shilling.

Similar ceremonies were described by informants in the Anlo area only (42). At Denu and Dzodze it is performed very much as described by Ayivor except that at Denu a third party 'redeems' the baby for the mother: she may not do it for herself. Informants at Anloga said that a similar ceremony once formed part of their Outdoorings but has now become obsolete. In the old Anloga form (which, according to informants there, was still in use at the beginning of this century), when the mother came out to claim her baby, the person who had 'found' it offered a prayer and told the baby that it might now go wherever it pleased (43). At Anloga today, as soon as the introductory libation has been poured, the custom starts straight off with a person having the same Day Name as the baby bringing the baby out of the house. Standing in the compound, he or she speaks to the baby (using now the Special Name chosen for it by its parents - c.f. xviii.y.) and tells it that it

may now go out anywhere it pleases. The mother then comes out of the house and the Outdoorer repeats to her his declaration that the baby is now free to go out; she receives the baby and returns to her room where all those who have come to the Outdooring visit her and offer gifts.

The official commitment of the baby to its mother's care and her public acceptance of responsibility for it which are symbolised in these ceremonies are, in some other parts of Ewe-land, represented by a more or less ceremonial presentation of the baby to its mother which will shortly be described (xii).

x. Stepping Over the Baby by Mother

This ceremony was described by informants at Avenofeme only. It is performed right at the beginning of the custom practised in that town. The Officiant collects the baby from its mother in the room and brings it to the doorway, where he lays it on the ground. The mother then steps four times back and forth over her baby and then goes to sit down outside.

Informants explained that this ceremony was symbolic of a 'second birth' that the child must undergo: as it was born from the womb into its mother's room, so now it must

be born from the room into the world outside; "the child must pass a second time between its mother's legs". The four times that the mother steps back and forth are symbolic of the four months of her pregnancy that elapsed before she was given the fuka to wear (cf.B.1.b.)

Avenofeme was unfortunately the last town I visited in Ewe-country and I was not able to return to other towns to seek further instances of this fascinating custom. Certainly none of my informants in the other Ewe towns gave any hint of such a custom and the nearest parallel I can think of is in the ceremonial stepping over the baby practised by some Ga's (cf. Chapter 1.B.1.iv. & 2.iv). But in the Ga ceremony it is a man who steps back and forth and the whole interpretation given is quite different.

xi. Ceremonies Connected with the Father's Gifts.

We mentioned earlier that it is the father's duty to provide certain gifts for his wife and baby. Most towns have a fixed inventory of the necessary articles and this will usually include: a cloth (though in some places only a carrying-cloth (44) is compulsory) for the mother; a mat, towel, soap, sponge, powder, pomade and other toilet articles for the baby. To these, some towns add a gift in cash,

headkerchiefs and other garments for the mother, but naturally the scope and value of the father's gifts will vary with his financial circumstances. In only one town (Hohoe) did informants mention the requirement (traditional among the Akan peoples, cf. Chapter III.B.3.d.iv.) that the father should provide one of his own (old) cloths to be used as swaddling for the baby.

At Hohoe, in the 3rd day custom, the father's gifts (for mother and baby) are presented to the mother by the father's sister (i.e. the baby's paternal aunt - an important functionary in some other customs, cf. xv), right at the beginning of the Outdooring - that is, as soon as the Officiant has made his introductory speech.

At Have the father himself presents his gifts to the mother during an afternoon feast.

At Dzodze, only the new carrying-cloth (44) comes in for special attention. After the 'Losing and Finding' the Officiant takes this cloth and holds it once to the East, once upwards and once to the West, saying "Sun is rising, sun is at noon, sun is gone to rest"? He then 'offers' (45) the cloth seven times to the mother, after which she receives it and puts it on. The carrying-cloth is also specially

treated (with medicine) at Dzolo Gbogame (cf. xv)

At Denu, the Officiant presents the gifts to the mother, after the 'Losing and Finding' ceremony. Before presenting the gifts, he speaks a blessing over them which, an informant said,"gives the mother authority to use them". (But this informant, himself an Outdoorer, said that he did not know the meaning of the words he used for this blessing).

In half the towns visited in the Tongu area (Mebiawe, Tsewala, Mefe and Bato) informants described a ceremony which brings the baby's clothing and toilet articles into considerable prominence. After the showing to East and West, the Officiant lays the baby either in its mother's lap or on the little bed prepared for it (cf.iv & vi). He then takes each article in turn and touches it against the baby's body saying: "This is the soap we wash with here...This is the sponge we rub with here...This is the towel we dry with here... ..&c". (He actually applies the powder and pomade (4c)). Finally, he may dress the baby in a new white jacket (or whatever garment may have been provided).

This very vivid ceremony for introducing the baby to the business of living in this world does not seem to be practised over a wide area in other parts of Ewe-country. It

may possibly have been derived from similar practises among the Twi's recorded by Rattray and Field (cf. Chapter III A.3.β.c.ii. & γ.c.iv. and v.). The nearest parallel I encountered in Ewe-country was at Dzodze, where Outdooring concludes with the baby's being given a bath, after which the powder and pomade are applied to its body for the first time. Ayivor includes a similar bath and use of powder and soap (for the first time) in his account and precedes it with a ceremony in which a small quantity if the baby's hair is cut and its forehead is shaved - a ceremony which again echoes Twi practice as described by Field (ibid) and also forms part of some Ewe circumcision customs (cf. ChapterIV).

At the conclusion of the Outdooring I attended at Mebiawe, the mother's sister came forward to collect the father's gifts from around the baby's bed, checking carefully to see that all the required articles had been provided.

xii. Presentation of Baby to Mother.

At Dzita, this ceremony virtually constitutes the Outdooring custom. The medicine-man who came at the time of the baby's birth (cf.B.2.e.ii., above) returns on the 8th day and haggles with the parents for his fee! This matter decided he removes the 'barrier' (the wooden posts and the akplɔ̃)

which he erected on the day of birth. He then enters the room, picks up the baby and presents it to its mother. That is all: the mother may now take the baby out wherever she pleases. A fewclose relatives may be invited to witness the ceremony, but there is no feasting or drinking, nor any special naming ceremony. Informants added that some Christians will not perform this ceremony (because of the involvement with the medicine man) but that they perform no alternative form of the custom.

In towns of the Mafi Division of Tongu and at Dabala, the Officiant presents (45) the baby to the mother after he has shown it to the East and West. He speaks no words as he does so. At the other two Tongu towns visited (mefe and Bato), he does not present (45) the baby until after the ceremonial delivery of the father's gifts (cf xi.), but when he does so he says:

(at Mefe:) " 'X' 'Y' [the baby's Day name and Special name cf.xviii] , we give you back to your mother."

(at Bato:) "Mother, we give you 'X' 'Y' today."

The mother receives her baby, saying "I can maintain it", and proceeds to give it its first (public) breast-feed, having first sucked the breast herself (47).

At Avenofeme, after the stepping back and forth described above (x.), the Officiant picks up the baby from the doorway and hands it to the mother, saying "I have outdoored the child for you today" and she replies "I have received it".

At Hohoe, in the traditional 3rd day custom, the baby is brought out and given to the mother by its paternal grandmother after the official presentation of the father's gifts (cf.xi). In the 'modern' (8th day) custom at Hohoe, there is no presentation: the baby is returned to the room by its paternal aunt after it has been sprinkled with water and does not appear again.

At Kpedze, where the custom is performed in the evening and includes none of the ceremonies described hitherto, the baby is eventually (after ceremonies described in subsections xiii - xv, below) presented to the mother by a young girl. At Have and the Dzolo's, where the customs are similar to that of Kpedze, there is no presentation of the baby to its mother; nor is there at Kpandu, Ho or Klewe. (At Ho, indeed, the baby does not appear in public at all. Instead, it is outdoored very early in the morning as described below: xv).

xiii Medicines for Mother and Baby

At various points in the customs of several different towns, special medicines are prepared and administered to the mother and/or baby. It has seemed to me best to gather all these instances and treat them together under one heading.

We start at Kpedze, one of that group of towns where Outdooring takes place in the evening and whose customs we have not hitherto had occasion to describe. Here, the preparation of a medicine marks the starting point of the Outdooring. The mid-wife, as Officiant, calls together several women and they squat together round a large calabash of water. She gives to each woman some leaves of her amá (48) and some grains of maize. The leaves they place on the palms of their hands which they hold outstretched over the water. The maize they chew in their mouths and then spit out on top of the leaves. Then all together raise and lower their heads seven times, spit (39) seven times and finally pull their hands back sharply, causing the leaves and maize to fall into the water. Immediately, they all wash their faces and arms in the medicine, sip a little and spit it out again. Now the midwife takes a leaf from the medicine and uses it to 'wash all the bad luck off' the

mother's back, breasts and lap, and as she does so, she wishes the mother health and "many babies to sit on your lap". She then goes into the room, brings out the baby and washes it in the calabash before handing it to the young girl who performs the next part of the custom.(cf. xv).

A medicine is also used at Dabala. The Outdoorer prepares it just before he goes to fetch the baby from the room. It consists of a bath of water containing the herbs gbevevɛ, adefotsi, akadi, madze and afla (46). Into this the Outdoorer spits, saying "Come out, come out! If a child is born, he does not bask by the fire but in the sun to get strength." He says this twice, (flexing his arms at the words "get strength"!) The second time, he adds "May the mother be healthy!" When he has brought the baby out shown it to East and West and presented it to the mother (cf. vii and xii above), the Outdoorer proceeds to wash his own face and arms in the medicine. He then takes the mother's hands and dips them thrice in the medicine whereupon she uses it to bathe her baby's face and hands. She will keep this medicine and bath the child in it once a day - or more often if the child falls sick - for a further week.

At Dzodze, as at Kpedze, the medicine is prepared right at the beginning of the Outdooring. The medicine-man

or priest who is acting as Officiant takes a bran-new clay pot and puts into it ahami, adefotsui, amadze, amayi, akadi and tokoe (48) together with red palm-oil. He then slaughters a fowl and adds some of its blood to the mixture. Finally, he makes the spitting sign of blessing and adds water. Later on (after the presentation of the carrying-cloth, cf. xi), the Officiant takes the mother's hands and, holding them together, holds them to the East, directly upwards and to the West, saying (as with the carrying-cloth) "Sun is rising; sun is at noon; sun is gone to rest". He then 'offers' (4o) the mother's hands seven times to the medicine and finally dips them in, whereupon he and she both drink from the palms of their hands. Shortly afterwards, the baby, (having been fed with a brew of lumoe and fiawofoxe and from its mothers breast, and having had a hot, wet compress applies to the crown of its head, cf. xiv) is bathed in the medicine. This medicine bath (and the hot compress) are continued daily for four months.

At Denu also, a medicine is used to bathe the baby at the end of the outdooring - and for a further week afterwards. This medicine is prepared from pieces of xe ('candlewood') which have already been used in another ceremony (cf. xiv),

together with herbs which my informant did not specify. He did say, however, that the medicine must by no means be allowed to touch the baby's head - otherwise, "it would swell up".

The only other medicine mentioned by informants was that used at Dzolo Gbogame to sprinkle the carrying-cloth (cf. xv). It is prepared by the baby's paternal aunt and consists of avafatsa leaves, palm-wine and water.

So much for the ingrediants and use of the medicines. It remains to enquire what is their intended function. Ellis, as we saw (cf. A.3.α.b.) spoke of the mother being 'purified with lustral water' on the seventh day. Spieth records no special use of medicines in connection with Outdooring. But Westermann does refer (cf. A.3.γ.d.) to a medicine in which the Officiant, the mother and all present (he does not make clear whether this includes the baby) wash their faces on the eighth day and which the mother continues to use for a further week. This he explicitly calls (like Ellis) a 'purification' and he notes that similar 'purifications' are common to all types of convalescence.

Of the medicines described in the preceding paragraphs, that used at Kpedze might be said to be most clearly

'purificatory' in function, for it is intended, as informants said, 'to wash all the bad luck off' the mother. Dabala informants, on the other hand, when asked whether their medicine was intended to 'purify' the baby or mother, said "No. The only purification necessary is the washing of the baby and mother at the time of birth" (49). Their medicine, they said, was intended to protect the baby from evil influences. At Dzodze, the medicine was drunk by the Officiant and mother but was used to bathe the baby. The addition of the blood of a slaughtered fowl gives this medicine a pacificatory aspect (for the slaughtering of an animal is a feature common to many pacification rites), but informants did not give any explanation of the intended function of their medicine, so this can be no more than a guess. At Denu, the purpose of the medicine - bath (as, indeed, of the whole Outdooring custom according to these informants) was said to be "to keep the child healthy".

We may perhaps come closest to a rationale of this matter by realising that, in the customary view, all evil comes ultimately from external sources - spirits, spells or evil intentions on the part of people who bear a grudge against the family or the child. From this point of view, all medicines are used with the intention either of

'neutralising' or 'washing away' evil influences supposed to be hovering around or inside the mother and child or of applying, as we might say, a 'protective coating' through which the evils cannot penetrate. (In one case only was a medicine said to have also a 'positive' purpose, cf. Footnote (48) re. the herb amá.)

One thing is certain: that none of these ceremonies has in view the washing away of any evil thought of as inherent in the child or mother (as in one aspect of Christian baptism).

xiv. 'Hardening the Crown'.

This custom was encountered only at Denu and Dzodze.

Informants at Dzodze explained that it was believed that, while in the womb the baby had been breathing through the soft patch on the crown of its head; now it was necessary for that patch to be hardened. These people certainly seem to take this matter very seriously: three times during the Outdooring is attention turned to the'hardening of the crown'! At the begining, the medicine man takes a small pebble and agokotologui (the fruit of the royal palm tree) and uses them to tap gently the baby's head. Then again (as has already been mentioned), a hot damp compress is applied to the baby's crown. Finally, after the baby

has been bathed (cf. xiii), tokoe (camwood powder) is put on its crown. The treatment with the hot compress is continued daily for a further four months.

At Benu, there is no hot compress but another very elaborate treatment. A stick of xe ('candlewood') is cut into twelve small pieces and these are charred in the fire. The Outdoorer then takes each piece in turn, chews the charred part and spits fragments onto the crown of the baby's head.

xv. Carrying of Baby by Young Girl

Informants in all the towns visited in the central area (from Kpandu down to Ho) described ceremonies in which, during the Outdooring, the baby was placed on the back of a young girl.

There was general agreement between all groups of informants as to the qualifications required of this girl. She must come of a mother whose children are all healthy and none of whom has died and she must not have reached the age of puberty. The belief is that such a girl brings good luck to the baby and mother but she also has the very practical qualification that her waist is sufficiently slim for the baby to be tied on her back without straining its little legs! Informants at Kpedze said that the reason why

the young girl must be below the age of puberty was that "she is still pure", and they also pointed out that it was appropriate that the girl should be young "because the baby is entering the society of young people". The girl usually receives a small fee (1d, 2d or, in some cases, a share of the gifts she collects) for her services. Her precise duties vary from town to town.

At Ho, she is very important for it is she and the maternal aunt alone who virtually outdoor the baby. This is done at about 6.0 in the morning - i.e. before any of the guests arrive. The aunt brings the baby out of the room and puts it on the back of the girl who carries it once round the compound (only) and then returns it to the room. This is the only time the baby comes out on the eighth day. Later, when relatives arrive for the feasting, they are allowed to visit the baby in the room and to offer gifts. The following day, the young girl returns, the baby is put on her back again and she goes with the father (and the mother if she is strong enough) visiting and thanking friends and relatives in the town.

At Klewe too, the baby is carried round by the young girl before the feasting begins, but here the girl takes the baby

right into the town to visit (and collect presents from) relatives. There is, therefore, no further visit to the town on the ninth day.

The young girl also plays a prominent part in the customs of every one of that small group of towns where the Outdooring custom is performed in the afternoon or evening: Kpedze (eighth day), Have (eighth day) and the two Dzolo's (ninth day).

At Kpedze, after bathing it in the medicine (cf. xiii), the midwife puts the baby on the girl's back and she carries it round the gathering, saying to each person "A young man/girl is born into our family today; he/she comes to greet you". The person then welcomes the baby and may offer a small gift of money. Having completed her round, the girl presents the baby and the money collected to the mother. (Part of the money is given to the girl. The remainder if sufficient, is used to buy a laying-hen - which will serve as an 'investment' against expenditure on the baby.)

At Have, a feast is held in the afternoon at which prayers are offered and gifts made by those present, but the baby is not brought out of the room until the evening. The paternal- (not, as at Ho, maternal-) aunt then fetches the baby, ties it on the back of the young girl and sends

them off to the town greeting people and collecting gifts from those who did not come to the feast!

At the two Dzolo's, the paternal aunt first sprinkles the carrying-cloth with medicine (at Dzolo Gbogame only, cf. xiii), then spits on the baby's buttocks, telling it not to soil the back of the person about to carry it, and finally fastens it, 'offering'(45)five times, on the girl's back. The girl is then instructed as to which houses she must visit in the town. At each house she must announce the baby's Day Name (which has hitherto been used only within the compound) to the people living there and they will offer small gifts of cash which are later 'invested' as at Kpedze. This one ceremony alone constitutes the entire Outdooring custom performed in these two towns today; there is not even any feasting (though informants at Dzolo Kpuita said that drinks might be served at the baby's home to anyone who cared to call). It will be noticed that what is done here qua Outdooring corresponds virtually to what is done at Ho (cf. fourth paragraph of this sub-section) as a sort of 'Appendix' to Outdooring. Moreover, the Ho 'appendix' is performed on the day after Outdooring, i.e. the ninth day, while the so-called Outdooring at the Dzolo's is also

a few moments on the back of the young girl. She then removes it again and returns it to the room. (But the girl receives 7½d, the equivalent of 60 cowries - a larger sum than in other places where she does more work!)

xvi. Libations, Drinks and Feasting.

Where there is a gathering, there drinks must be served; and where drinks are served, the gods and ancestors must be given their share, i.e. libation must be poured. This is a fair summary of the traditional practice in most parts of Ghana. At one point or another in a town's Outdooring custom therefore, we might expect to find libations being poured. There were, however, among the Ewe towns visited, no less than five exceptions to this general rule.

Three of these exceptions were of no particular significance. Two were the Dzolo's where, as we have seen (cf. xv), the Outdooring is completed in one single ceremony. And at Dzita (cf.xi), Outdooring is even more simple than at the Dzolo's, so that the absense of libation there causes no surprise.

More surprising is the omission of libation from the customs at Kpedze and Dzodze. Unfortunately, I failed to obtain an explanation of this omission from informants of either town. It is noticeable, however, that in these two towns the preparation and use of medicines takes up

a larger proportion of the custom than anywhere else except at Dabala (cf.xiii). But at Dabala the only libation poured is a 'private', introductory one and it seems a possible explanation that in these three towns the pre-occupation with protective medicines has shifted the emphasis away from dependance upon the gods and ancestors for their protection - a protection which is sought, in other towns, through libation.

We have already mentioned the fact that in certain towns the main (and only) libation is poured right at the beginning of the Outdooring (cf. v). In all other towns where a libation is poured, this is done towards the end of the custom, before or during the serving of drinks and (where this occurs) the feasting. We shall consider here some texts of Outdooring prayers recorded in the various towns. (Further texts are given at Footnote 58.)

from Mafi-Dugame

"O Thunder God and his wife, Earth: we thank you for the person you have sent us; let the child live long, that he may grow and not die, so that he may fetch us water to drink.

"Grandfather Kolie and Avakpe: take this wine and drink, and do your best to help us that this stranger who has come to us may remain with us, so that he may fetch us water to drink.

"Grandfather Gbe (or Grandmother Gbe): take this wine and drink, and do you best to help us...[etc., as last sentence]."

from Mebiawe (Mafi-Kumasi)

"O Earth that no man can jump over; god Odzobo - hammer it quickly and get a reward (51) - thou to whom good men and women are dedicated - if you refuse, I will refuse; if you give to me, I will give to you (51); ....(52a)...; anvil god that hammers steel to become soft; hunting god that sits on a stool.... (52b)... that resembles another stool; Kolie, god of man [i.e. of the community]; Veno ... (52c) ...; Avakpe, spirit of millstones and of Gbe; ...(52d)...; Aklakpa and Todze (53); Akpo dzedam (53); ....(52e)...; the child whic you [literally: 'they'] have brought for me I am Outdooring in your [literally 'their'] power.

"Let not those who charm look upon the child [i.e. with intent to harm it].

"Let no witch look upon the child.

"If anyone wishes to destroy the child, let death kill him."

from Bato

"Attention please! (54) [three times].

"Grandfathers, your is the cool evening [three times].

"Recently my son's wife conceived and Mawu [the Supreme God] assisted her body; she delivered it a week ago today. I have called the mother's and father's families to perform the Outdooring. Today the child's father has brought two bottles of wine in order to send prayer to you Tongu [gods] Danyiowo, Agbadzo, Tsimo, Atigo, Dzole, Mawy, Egbe, Tuta, Bas, Ga, Atiebale, Kqui and Vui. Take this wine and drink." *

from Hohoe

"O Thunder God, Messenger to all gods, speak to the Great God. Let all the grandfathers also hear that He may help this child to live and remain among his people, and protect him so that no evil befall him, so that any person who wishes him evil may be brought as low as the ground on which the child will walk.

"In the name of all the grandfathers and the Great God, let evil be far from the child and good near." *

from Ho

"Attention please! (54) [three times]. Hear me, Great God. Attention please! It is not for any evil purpose

but because 'A' and 'B' [names of great grandparents (56a)] begat a child and that child begat 'C' [name of baby's father]. You ancestors declare that your house should multiply and so 'D' [name of mother] conceived and brought forth coolly, without being heard by two or three pairs of ears (56b). The elders have met today to perform the Outdooring ceremonies for the child, and they have given me liquor to give to you through libation. You will drink the first portion and we will drink the remaining one. We beseech you (56c) that you drink this liquor to the health of the child and parents, that they may all be healthy and that the child may grow and walk. Let the parents beget twins and triplets, that you may increase (56d). The verandah when it smells is not bad (56e).

"O Great God, here is your liquor. We beseech you." *

It is often said that traditional libations always contain a three-fold invocation: to the Supreme God, to minor gods and to the ancestors. But clearly the people of Tongu and central Togoland either do not know of such a tradition or donnot set much store by it. Of the prayers given here, that from Ho alone contains an explicit address to the 'Great God' [Mawu gãa] and informants told me that by this expression they meant "the Mawu that every human being regards as the maker of heaven and earth".

There is also an address to Mawu in the prayer from Adidome (58a) The prayer from Hohoe sends a message to God but does not address Him directly. In the Bato form, He is referred to but not addressed either directly or indirectly. The Mafi-Dugame form contains an address to the Thunder God (Sodza), who, according to some informants, is to be identified with the Supreme God. At Hohoe, however, the Thunder God is called 'Sogblas' and is thought of (as we see from the prayer) as merely the "Messenger to all gods" -presumably because of his great voice!. An Ewe friend from the Anlo area tells me that the Thunder God is often thought of as the supreme god of heaven -hence the coupling of his name with that of "his wife, the [goddess of] Earth". In other words, the evidence does not seem to suggest that the Thunder God is thought of as "supreme" in the strictly monotheistic sense. The Mebiawe prayer contains no address even to Sodza, though his 'wife' is mentioned.

All the prayers except that from Ho contain addresses to minor gods, though the emphasis on these is clearly greater in the Tongu area (cf. first three prayers) than in central Togoland.

Not all the prayers contain obvious addresses to the ancestors. In the Ho, Hohoe and Bato forms, there are clear instances of such addresses (but it is interesting to note that although the Bato prayer speaks to the ancestors at the beginnigs

it offers the wine only to the minor gods!). In the prayer from Mafi Dugame, we find addresses to 'Grandfather' (Togbe) Kolie and Avakpe, and these might be assumed to be the names of ancestors; but "Togbe" is also a title and form of address for a chief and, in point of fact, Kolie and Avakpe are both well-known minor gods in the Tongu area - and are referred to as such in the prayer from Mebiawe (57). There remains (in the prayer from Mafi-Dugama) only one more address and this is to a someone called 'Gbe'. (Informants said that they were not sure of the sex of this person and therefore address him/her both as male and as female: 'Grandfather', 'Grandmother'!) It is just possible that 'Gbe' may be the name of an ancestor, but apart from this one doubtful instance there are no other addresses to the ancestors in either of the prayers from Mafi towns.

It would certainly be unwise to attempt to build too many firm conclusions on the basis of such a small collection of prayers, but at least this much is clear: that it is left to the pourer of the libation to decide to whom he will address his prayers and that, while in Central Togoland preference is shown for the ancestors, in Tongu more attention is paid to the minor gods.

Concerning the content of the prayers, there is natur-

ally a certain amount of unanimity: they all contain petitions for the protection of the baby. (The Hohoe form contains no explicit petition, but it is implied that the prayer is being offered with this intention.) On the other hand, only in the prayer from Ho are any petitions offered on behalf of the baby's parents. Attention, during this part of the custom at least, is very emphatically concentrated on the baby alone and in this respect these prayers display a marked contrast to the prayers used at Outdoorings among Ga-speaking people. (cf. Chapter I.B.2.vi). A further contrast is to be observed between the consistent phraseology of the Ga prayers and the freedom of expression employed by the Ewe pourers of libation.

Drinks are served to all who attend the Outdooring in those towns where libation is poured (and they may be served also at Dzolo Kpuita to anyone who cares to call at the baby's home). In former days, a feast may also have accompanied the Outdooring in many places (as was the case, for example, at Anloga (43))but today this is only retained as a normal practice at Kpandu, Have, Ho, Klewe and Avenofome. The scope of the feast will naturally be determined by the family's financial position, but informants at Ho said that the slaughtering of a sheep for this feast was not unusual.

At Ho, where the baby has been brought out of doors and returned to its room very early (cf. xv), the feasting starts around 8.0 or 9.0 in the morning. The food is prepared separately for the mother, the midwife, the children and the relatives and is served out, with the drinks, in order of seniority (grandfather, mother, midwife.... & c.) after the pouring of the libation and the announcement of the baby's special names (cf. xviii). When the midwife receives his or her portion of drink, he or she pours a special libation, asking God to help him/her deliver more living and healthy children. Informants at Klewe also mentioned that the food should be served to the gathering in order of seniority and added that a special dish is sent to the maternal grandfather, who does not attend the Outdooring.

Informants at Bato said that they liked to make Outdooring a very big occasion; the drinking would be accompanied by dancing and singing, and, if the baby was a boy, the father would fire a ceremonial gun shot.

xvii. Donations to Mother and Baby.

It is the custom in many towns for friends and relatives to present gifts to the baby (or to the mother, for expenditure on the baby) at the time of the Outdooring. In some places, as we have seen, these donations are made to the

young girl who carries the baby round (cf. xv); in other places (eg. at Anloga and Ho) they are made by people when they visit the baby in the room (c.f. ix & xv). Elsewhere, the gifts are offered during the serving of food and/or drinks.

Informants at Mefe said that these gifts might comprise such things as firewood, corn, meat, etc., but in most places nowadays gifts in cash have replaced gifts in kind. But a reminder of the old practice is often contained in the words accompanying the gifts. Thus, at Bato, a person making a gift of cash says "Take this and buy ointment / powder...etc." In several places, also, it was said that if the donations were sufficient, the mother would use the money to buy a laying hen or some animal for breeding - 'as an investment' against some of the baby's requirements.

xviii. Naming.

This subject has been left until the end of our analysis because it is not at all certain that the naming of an Ewe baby should be considered as an integral and essential part of its Outdooring. Indeed, at Mafi-Dugame, Kpedze, Have, Dzita and Avenofeme (a very fair cross-section of all the areas visited), informants stated explicitly that the Outdooring was not an occasion for a special naming of the baby. Moreover, at several other places, while it was said that the baby's names "might be announced" at such-and-such a point in the custom,

there was no insistence on the matter. It is important to distinguish here between Day Names, Ancestral Names and what I shall call 'Special' Names.

α. The Day Name, as we have seen (cf. A.3.γ.f.) must have come into general use among the Ewe's over the years 1890 (when Ellis' book was published) to 1935 (when Westermann's book appeared), during which same period, presumably, the seven-day week was gradually ousting the traditional four-day week as a practical method of reckoning time. Since it is automatically determined (by the sex of the baby and the day of the week on which it is born) the Day Name requires no special divination to discover it, nor, strictly speaking, any public announcement; and, in practice, most people address a baby by its Day Name from the moment of birth (cf. B.2.c.iv.). But several groups of informants held that this was not really 'correct' practice and there are, in fact, several towns where some place is given, in the course of the Outdooring, to a more or less formal announcement of the baby's Day Name.

Thus, at Adidome and Avakpadome, informants said that after he has touched the father's gifts against the baby's body (cf. xi), the Officiant may announce its Day Name, together with any 'Special' name. Again, we have seen (vii) how, at Nefe the Officiant makes the announcement of the baby's Day and 'Special' Names after the holding up to

East and West and repeats the names again when returning the baby to its mother. The Day Name is also used at Bato when the baby is returned to its mother. Further, we have recorded (vii. & ix) the fact that at Anloga, Dzodze and (in the 8th day form of the custom) at Hohoe, it is a person bearing the same Day Name as the baby who brings it out of the house; (or, in the case of Anloga, 'finds' it). This too, as informants pointed out (59), constitutes an acted 'announcement' of the baby's Day Name. Finally, at Dzolo Kpuita, we saw how the young girl who takes the baby round the town is instructed to announce the Day Name at each house they visit.

β. An Ancestral Name may be given to a baby if it is believed that he or she is a re-incarnation of an ancestor or even simply because the parents choose such a name. The present writer's own field-work tends to confirm what both Ellis and Westermann said on the subject of re-incarnation: that the people have but a hazy notion of metempsychosis and that no great importance is attached to identifying every child that is born as a re-incarnation of one of its forebears. Only at Dzodze, Dzolo Gbogame and Avenofeme did informants speak of a special custom to discover which ancestor had been re-incarnated in a baby and only in the first of these towns was it assumed that every baby must be a re-incarnation of someone or other; at Avenofeme, on the contrary, informants

said that re-incarnations were the exception rather than the rule. The conferring of the Ancestral Name in these towns is done at further ceremonies, some time after Outdooring, and these will be described below (d.v).

At Dabala, informants said that one of the main reasons for the Outdooring was that the baby might be a re-incarnated ancestor and that it was therefore important to give him a proper welcome; but no provision is made in the custom for identifying the ancestor or conferring his name on the baby. At Hohoe and Kpandu, on the other hand, it was said that the father might choose to give his baby the name of an ancestor, but that this was not because the baby was supposed to be a re-incarnation. In the case of Hohoe, such a name (if desired) would simply be mentioned by the libation pourer during his prayer.

At Kpandu, however, the announcement is made with a little more solemnity and takes place near the beginning of the Outdooring, as follows:-

When libation has been poured, the paternal aunt brings the baby out of the room and gives it to any man who gives it in turn to the Officiant. The midwife then comes forward and puts a little salt on the baby's lips (eO), which done, the Officiant spits thrice on the baby and calls upon its father to announce the name he has chosen. They then proceed to

the sprinkling with water (cf. viii) and the name is later, as it were, 'confirmed' by all those present when the baby is passed round the gathering (cf. xv & Footnote 61). As has been noted (xv), the baby's grand-mother ties some beads round the baby's wrists after it has passed round the gathering and she does this also (for first babies only) at Hohoe, but informants said that this had nothing to do with the naming, but was simply a sign of welcome (62).

y. The 'Special' Name, as I have called it, is any name which may be chosen by the parents or friends to commemorate some circumstance or event attendant on the baby's birth or the early days of its life, or, alternatively, a name which expresses some wish for the child. For example, a baby may be called Dzefi which means 'salt-gathering place' and indicates perhaps, that the mother had just returned from that place when her labour commenced; or it maybe that the baby will be called Seku, which means "death from God" and expresses the wish that the baby should not die through any witchcraft &c., but only with God's permission(63).

For the most part, these 'Special' Names are announced incidentally in the course of the Outdooring (e.g. at Anloga, where the Outdoorer uses the baby's special name to address it when he brings it out of the house, cf.ix). But informants

TABLE B

EWE OUTDOORING CUSTOMS

ACCOUNT GIVEN BY INFORMANTS AT:- / DETAILS AND CEREMONIES	TONGU: MAFI Dugame	Adidome	Avakpedome	Mebiase	Tsawala	MAFE	MATO	DABALA	CENTRAL TOGOLAND: HOHOE (a)	HOHOE (a)	KPEDZE	KPANDU	HAVE	DZOLO Gbogame	DZOLO Kpuita	HO	KLEWE	ANLO AREA: [illegible]	DZITA	DZODZE	DENU	AVENORPEME	KETA (c)	Mr Vincent AYIVOR
I. DAY AFTER BIRTH	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	3	8	(b) 5/8	8	8	9	9	8	8	8	8	8	8	5	8	8
II. TIME OF DAY	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	? a.m.	a.m.	? a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	?	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	a.m.	a.m.	? a.m.	? a.m.	? a.m.	? a.m.	? a.m.	? a.m.	a.m.
III. OFFICIANT:																	(d)							
A. Midwife											✓	(e)	?										?	
B. Paternal Grandfather	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓			✓hr	✓		✓
C. Medicine-Men or Priest								✓											✓	✓	✓			
1. MEDICINES PREPARED								iii			i			i						i	xi			
2. SPEECH EXPLAINING PURPOSE OF GATHERING						v			i							iii								
3. LIBATION(S):										(f)													(f)	
A. Introductory		i			i	i		i																i
B. Full	i	iv	i	i	iv	viii	iv		v	iii		i	iii			iv	iii				ix	iv	v	vi
4. MOTHER LED IN AND OUT SEVEN TIMES																					i			ii
5. BABY BROUGHT OUT BY:																	i		(g)					(h)
A. Officiant	ii	ii	ii	ii	iii	iii	i	iv			iii						1				iii	i		ii
B. Father's sister												ii	iv	ii	i									
C. Father's mother									iii								2							
D. Mother's sister																i								
E. Person having same Day Name as baby										i										iii			i	
Carried in and out seven times										✓										✓	✓		(k)	✓
6. BABY HELD UP TO EAST AND WEST	iii	(j) iii	iii	iii	iii	iv	ii	v													iii			
7. BABY SPRINKLED WITH WATER							(l) iii			ii		iii								iv	iv		ii	iv
8. BABY 'LOST' and 'FOUND'																				v	v		iii	v
9. BABY STEPPED OVER BY MOTHER																						ii		
10. FATHER'S GIFTS:																				(m)				(m)
A. Touched against baby				iv	v	vi	v													xi				vii
B. Ceremonially presented									ii				ii								viii			
C. Blessed, or otherwise specially treated						ii(n)								ii(o)						[illegible]	vii			
11. BABY PRESENTED TO MOTHER	iv					vii	vi	vi	iv		vi									vi	vi	iii	iv	
Given first public breast-feed	✓						✓													✓				
12. MEDICINE								ii(s)																(n) iii
A. bath for mother								vii			ii													
B. drink for mother																				viii				
C. bath for baby								viii			iv									x	xiii			
D. treatment for 'hardening crown' of baby																				[illegible]	xii			
13. BABY PUT ON YOUNG GIRL'S BACK																(p)								
A. and taken round houses in town													v	iv	ii	vii	ii							
B. and taken round greeting those present											v					ii								
C. and removed again (q)												iv												
14. FESTIVITIES:							(r)								(t)									
A. Drinks served	v	v	iv	v	vi	ix	vii		vi	iv					iii						x		v	viii
B. Drinks and feast served												v	i			v	iv					v		
15. RELATIVES AND FRIENDS VISIT BABY IN ROOM																vi								
16. GIFTS OFFERED FOR BABY (u)		v				ix	vii			iv	v		iav	iv	ii	vi	iii							viii
IV. DAY ('D'), ANCESTRAL ('A') or SPECIAL ('S') NAME																								
A. announced with some ceremony		D or S	D&S	S									A			S								S
B. mentioned incidentally (w)						D&S			A							D							S	
C. made known in virtue of 5.E., above										D														
E. conferred later at separate custom																								

GENERAL NOTE: Small Roman numerals indicate the order in which the various ceremonies to[ok] place.
Small letters in brackets refer to special notes given below.

NOTES

(a) The two columns given for Hohoe represent divergent practices in that town.
(b) The traditional day for Outdooring at Kpedze was the 5th; but today the custom is normally performed on [th]e 8th.
(c) The details given for Keta are of the custom as practised by Christians in that town.
(d) At Klewe, it is the baby's own father who presides over the feasting.
(e) At Kpandu, the midwife plays an important part in the Outdooring but is not actually Officiant.
(f) Hohoe informants said that Christians might omit the pouring of libation. Keta Christians said that liba[ti]on often was poured in their form of the custom.
(g) At Dzita, the baby is not brought out of the house as part of the custom. The Officiant simply gives the [m]other permission to take her baby out of doors.
(h) According to Ayivor, the baby is held by the mother and is thus taken out of doors at the same time as sh[e]
(j) At Adidome, the baby is also held directly upwards.
(k) The baby is carried in and out three times (not seven times) according to Keta informants.
(l) The sprinkling of the baby with water is practised by only a few people at Mato.
(m) At Dzodze and in Ayivor's account, the gifts are not touched against the baby as a separate ceremony but [th]e soap, powder etc. are used for the first time when the baby is bathed at the end of the custom.
(n) At Mafe, the Officiant blesses the baby's bed (and thus, the gifts which are laid round it) at the beginn[in]g of the custom.
(o) At Dzolo Gbogame and Dzodze, only the carrying-cloth is specially treated.
(p) At Ho, the baby is not taken round the town by the young girl until the day after the Outdooring. The fi[rs]t time the girl takes the baby on her back is early in the morning on the 8th day, before the guests arrive for the feasting.
(q) The baby is removed from the girl's back immediately because it has already been passed round (and thus [i]ntroduced to') those present
(r) At Mato, the sharing in drinks is accompanied by dancing and singing.
(s) At Dabala and in Ayivor's account, veve (parched cornflour mixed with red palm-oil) is sprinkled round the baby (Ayivor) or round the mother and baby (Dabala).
(t) At Dzolo Kpuita, the serving of drinks was said to be optional.
(u) The gifts are offered during some other part of the custom; hence the re-duplication of Roman numerals on [t]his line (16).
(w) The baby's name may be mentioned incidentally, e.g. during a prayer or speech.

at several places in the Tongu area said that if anyone wished to give the baby a 'Special' Name, he would pay the mother 1/- or more as a sign of this and a bead (of any colour, but not white) might be tied on the baby's wrist (64). At Ho, it was said that if the parents wished to give their child 'Special' names, the grandfather would announce this after pouring libation and would himself pay a small sum of money to the parents 'to seal the name'. Ayivor, in his account, describes a more formal ceremony for conferring a 'Special' Name on a baby (65), but none of my informants described such a ceremony and it seems clear that the naming is not considered by many to be a particularly important - still less, an essential - element in the Outdooring custom.

c. Outdooring - Synthesis.

i. Explanation of Tables B & C (66).

In the preceding section, we have attempted to study individually the various points that arise in connection with Outdooring and the various ceremonies that may be performed in the course of the custom. This treatment has inevitably tended to obscure the outline of each individual town's customary practice; it has also made difficult an assessment of the extent to which the several ceremonies described are (or are not) practised throughout the area investigated. It is hoped that Tables B and C will help to clarify both these issues.

Table B summarises all the data considered in the preceding section. On the first three lines (I, II and III -

sub-divided into A., B. & C.) are set out: in the left-hand column, the various points concerning the day and time of performance and the person who acts as Officiant; and , in subsequent columns, the details of practice in these respects as reported by informants in the several towns (whose names head these columns). (The last column gives the details of the Outdooring custom as described by Mr Ayivor.)

On subsequent lines (numbered 1-16), the left-hand column designates the ceremonies which may occur during an Outdooring while subsequent columns show which of these ceremonies are practised in each town; an indication is also given (by the small Roman numerals) of the order in which the ceremonies occur in each town.

The final line (IV. A-D) indicates in a similar manner the incidence and nature of naming in the several towns' customs.

Thus, e.g. if we wish to know about Outdooring at Mebiawe, we find the fourth column from the left (headed "TONGU/MAFI/Mebiawe", -indicating that Mebiawe is in the Mafi Division of Tongu); then reading down this column, we learn:

Line I - the custom is performed on the eighth day

Line II -it is performed in the morning

Line III.B (marked with a tick ✓)- the paternal grandfather acts as Officiant.

We then look down the rest of the column for the Roman numerals:

i (on Line 3.B) indicates that the custom opens with the pouring of a full libation.

ii (on Line 5.A) indicates that the baby is then brought out of the house by the Officiant.

iii (on Line 6) indicates that the baby is then held up to East and West.

... and so on. From the final line (IV.A) we learn that during the Outdooring the baby is given a 'Special' Name ("S") with some ceremony.

The same method may be used for tracing the outline of the Outdooring custom of any given town. Deviations from the

TABLE C

INCIDENCE OF CEREMONIES

IN EWE OUTDOORING CUSTOMS

(being an Analysis of Table B)

CEREMONY \ AREA	TONGU	CENTRAL TOGO	AVLO	Average
1. Libation poured	100%	62%	50%	70%
2. Baby brought out of house	100%	100%	100%	100%
3. Mother led out ceremonially	NIL	NIL	15%	5%
4. Baby held up to East and West	100%	NIL	15%	38%
5. Baby sprinkled with water	12%	25%	50%	29%
6. Father's gifts touched against baby	50%	NIL	17%	22%
7. Baby presented to mother	50%	25%	100%	58%
8. Baby 'lost and found'	NIL	NIL	50%	17%
9. Baby placed on young girl's back	NIL	88%	NIL	29%
10. Medicines used	12%	12%	33%	19%
11. Feasting and/or drinking	88%	88%	50%	75%
12. Gifts offered for baby	38%	88%	12%	46%
13. Baby's name announced (whether incidentally or ceremonially)	50%	50%	38%	46%

normal pattern are explained in Notes (indicated by small letters in brackets - (a), (b) etc.)

Table C constitutes an analysis of Table B and is designed to show how common (or uncommon) are the several ceremonies in the three areas. Thus, e.g. if we wish to know how common is the use of medicines in Outdooring, we find Line 11 ("MEDICINES USED") and see that 12% of the towns in Tongu, 12% of those in central Togoland and 33% of those in the Anlo area include the use of medicines in their custom. The final column indicates that this represents an average 19% usage over the three areas. (66)

ii. The Purpose and Significance of Outdooring.

Hitherto we have been concerned to study the nature and significance of the individual ceremonies which occur in the course of different Ewe Outdooring customs. Our task now is to enquire as to the purpose and significance of these customs as wholes and to ask what themes are common to the customs of all the three areas investigated.

One of the surest ways of attaining to an understanding of peoples' thoughts and intentions is to observe their actions, and so the greater part of this enquiry can be conducted simply through reflection on the data we have already gathered concerning the constituent ceremonies of Outdoorings; but we may supplement our reflections by a consideration of what informants themselves had to say about the general purport of their customs.

A short study of Table B would suffice to remind us that in one or two Ewe towns (e.g. Dzodze and Dzita) the Outdoorings performed are of an extremely simple nature. Nevertheless, in trying to assess the purpose and significance of the custom for the Ewe people as a whole, it is necessary to generalise to some extent. Therefore, while fully recognising the dangers of 'averages' and of statistical analysis in general, the writer has drawn up Table C to help in this process of generalisation. But this table requires careful handling! At first sight, indeed, it does not appear to help us very much: the lonely incidence of a '100%' on Line 2 of the 'Average' column only tells us with certainty what we might have guessed already - that a baby is taken out of doors at its Outdooring (67)! Moreover, the average figure of '38%' on Line 4 is deceptive, as a glance at the Area columns will show; and the same may be said, to a lesser degree of the figure on Line 7. But if, instead of seeking unanimity in the detail of ceremonial practice, we consider what the several ceremonies signify, then we begin to see certain ideas emerging which are common to Outdooring in all three areas. These ideas or themes may be summarised in seven headings:

OUTDOORING IS AN OCCASION FOR:-

1. Introducing the Baby to the Circumstances of Life on this Earth.

This is borne out by the practice of all three areas inasmuch as the bringing of the baby out of the house is, in itself, an introduction to a wider world. But in the Tongu and Anlo areas, the idea is expressed more forcibly in two further ceremonies: in the Tongu area through the touching of the father's gifts against the baby's body (with the words "This is the soap we wash with...&c"), which is practised in 50% of the towns visited in this area; and in the Anlo area, through the sprinkling of water (= 'rain') on the baby (50%). The latter ceremony is also practised in central Togoland, but not very widely (25%).

In connection with this theme, we may recall what informants at Avenofeme said of their ceremony in which the mother steps back and forth over her child - that the baby is hereby being 'born again', into the world. Informants at Mefe also laid considerable stress on this aspect of Outdooring. "The custom", they said, "is to show the child that this is his home where he belongs and that this is how life is lived". They recalled also what they had said concerning the preservation of the umbilical stump in order that the child may have a permanent indication and reminder that this

is the place where he belongs.

In this stress on the idea of 'belonging', we find our idea of an 'Introduction .....to Life on this Earth' being deepened and expanded: it is not simply that the people are giving the baby a few practical demonstrations (as a sort of first step in its education), but rather that an attempt is being made to give the child a sense of stability by showing it has a place in the physical context of life.

2. Introducing the Baby to the Community.

This theme is brought out specially (88%) in central Togoland when the young girl carries the baby round greeting people (whether at the gathering or in the town itself). The announcement of the baby's name also constitutes a means of introducing it and this is a fairly common practice in all areas (average 46%). Last, but not least, the pouring of libation is the means whereby the baby is introduced to that greater (though unseen) part of the community which is made up of the ancestors and minor gods (68); and the pouring of libation is an all but universal practice (average 70%).

In spite of these facts, however, the suggestion that the purpose of Outdooring was to 'introduce the baby to the community' provoked somewhat negative reactions among some informants. For example, those at Adidome and Avakpedome objected that "The child belongs to the father from the moment of its

conception" and that, even if a child died before the eighth day, the whole clan would be notified - implying that the baby is already, before the Outdooring, reckoned a member of the community. At Anloga too, informants insisted that "the child belongs to its family and to the whole town from the moment of its birth"; but they went on to say that only members of the immediate family might visit the child before its Outdooring. At Dzodze, the rules are even more strict: no one except the mother and the midwives may touch the baby before the eighth day. Such regulations surely imply that the baby is not in fact fully accepted into the community before its Outdooring; and the balance of evidence certainly went in this direction.

Thus, informants at Bato and Dabala disagreed with those of the other two Tongu towns (Adidome and Avakpedome) quoted above. If a child died before the eighth day, they said, the fact would not be publicised; only the immediate family would be informed. Dabala informants said explicitly that up to the eighth day they reckoned the baby 'a stranger' and that one of the main purposes of the Outdooring was to welcome this 'stranger' (69). No one at all would be informed if the 'stranger' died during the first week. At Hohoe also,

this view was upheld. Informants here said that unless a child is outdoored it is spoken of as having 'died at birth' - i.e. it is not reckoned a member of the community at all. "If the custom is not performed", they added, "the baby will say 'I have not been well received' and will fall sick". Informants in central Togoland confirmed what we have already deduced from their ceremonial: that the welcoming of the baby by the extended family and the whole community is reckoned one of the most important aspects of the Outdooring custom. At Denu and Anloga, informants used the illustration (already encountered at Avenofeme) of Outdooring as a 'second birth', laying particular stress, in this case, on birth as an introduction to the people in the house and Outdooring as an introduction to the community at large.

As in the theme previously discussed, so also here it will be seen that a more than superficial 'introduction' is involved. In most writings on the subject of Outdooring, we find stress being laid on the custom's function as a transition rite. Thus, for example, Mr Ayivor writes in his account: "For the first seven days after birth, the child is regarded as a 'ghost child' who may return to the land of spirits at any time....If it is alive after the seventh day, it is

said to have survived seven dangers and is worthy to be called a person and given a name." I have underlined this last phrase because this seems to me to be the key to the whole theme now under discussion: the giving of a name to a the baby effects its transition from a nonentity (literally!) to a person (70). We have noted, it is true, that the ceremonial conferring of a name on the baby is not by any means common in Ewe Outdoorings; but whether or not a new (Ancestral or 'Special') name is given at the Outdooring, the baby already has one name (its Day Name) from the moment of birth so that it is as a person - and not as a nonentity - that it is introduced to the wider community on the day of the Outdooring. So it is that this introduction effects a further increase in the baby's stability: not, this time, in the physical but in the social context of life on this earth (71).

3. Seeking Protection and Other Blessings for the Baby

This is a dominant theme in all areas. It is expressed, in the first instance, either through the prayers accompanying libation or (in the small group of towns where libation is not poured) through the use of medicines. But besides this,

each area has its own special ceremonies which express the same theme. Thus, in the Tongu area, particular concern is shown (100%) to obtain the blessing of a long life for the baby: expressed in the ceremony of holding it up to East and West. In Central Togoland, the placing of the baby on the back of a young girl from a healthy family is widely practised (87%) and is intended (over and above any actions which may follow) to convey to the baby the girl's good luck and health. In the Anlo area, the sprinkling of water, though not so very common (40%) also expresses the idea of blessing (i.e. in addition to its other implications).

Informants at Kpedze and Denu laid particular stress on this aspect of Outdooring, those of the latter town going so far as to say that "to keep the baby healthy" was the 'be-all and end-all' of the custom. It could, indeed, be argued that they were right; for, insofar as full health and wholeness are dependant not only on protection from physical harm but also upon the establishment of satisfactory personal and social relationships and the supply of personal needs, all the themes which we have been and shall be discussing here under separate headings might be held to be related ultimately to the health of the child. But the people themselves do not (consciously,

at any rate) see the matter in this light; and it will, in any case, serve better the purposes of clarity if we retain a few distinctions. For the majority of people, then, it would be more accurate to say that they regard the obtaining of health for the baby as an important but not as the exclusive function of Outdooring.

4. Communal Rejoicing

This theme is unmistakeably expressed in the sharing of drinks (and, sometimes, feasting) which form part of the Outdooring in most towns (average 75%). Once again, we must remember that it is the whole community which is thought of as joining in these celebrations, for the ancestors are associated therein through the pouring of libation.

Informants in all Tongu towns, and in many others besides, obviously felt they should make it clear to the investigator that (whatever other abstruse interpretations he might be searching for) he should realise that Outdooring was, after all, simply an occasion for people to get together and celebrate the latest addition to their number!

The four themes so far discussed were the only ones to which informants drew explicit attention when asked what they considered to be the main purpose and significance of Outdooring. But in order to gain a more complete picture we can, on the basis of our reflection on the constituent ceremonies, go further and discern three additional themes commonly expressed in the custom.

OUTDOORING IS ALSO AN OCCASION FOR:

5. Public Committal of the Baby to Its Mother's Care

This theme is expressed ceremonially only in the Tongu and Anlo areas. In Tongu, the ceremonial presentation of the baby to its mother is reasonably common (50%); in Anlo, it is, apparently, a universal practice and the theme is further - and dramatically - expressed in many places (50%) through the 'Losing and Finding' ceremony. Thus the community, having accepted the baby as one of their number, commit to one particular person the responsibility for caring for it on their behalf.

6. Public Acceptance of Responsibility by Father

But a woman alone cannot take full responsibility for the child; a man also must play his part. So we will recall

(though the fact is not recorded on Table C) that it is the father of the child who is usually responsible for making arrangements for the Outdooring and always for providing the gifts of toilet articles and other necessities for the baby. In these two ways he publicly expresses acceptance of his share of responsibility for the child's well-being. Informants at Adidome gave indirect testimony to the importance of this aspect of Outdooring when they said that, if by any chance the father was not married to the mother and if he refused to come forward and play his part, then the mother's brother would be responsible for seeing that the custom was performed. In other words, the fact that the custom is performed ensures that some male member of the community, even if not the real father, comes forward to accept responsibility for the baby.

7. Communal Sharing in Responsibility for the Baby

Although the community leaves the main task of bringing up the baby to its parents, people do not forget that they too have a relative responsibility for the child's well-being and this they express through the offering of gifts to help the mother provide for her baby's needs. This practice was mentioned by most informants in central Togoland and is

probably more common in the other two areas than the figures (Tongu 38%; Anlo 12%) suggest (66).

These seven ideas, then, would seem to be the dominant themes in Ewe Outdooring customs. We noticed, in our study of libation prayers (cf. xvi), and we now find our first impression confirmed: that in these customs attention is concentrated almost entirely on the baby itself and only on other people in their relation to the baby. The idea met with, for example, in Twi areas (72) that Outdooring is a custom concerned also with the mother and with her 'purification' and re-instatement in the community, finds very little ceremonial expression in Ewe practice and was mentioned by no informants. Only in a very few towns - and these in the Anlo area only - is the mother led ceremonially out of the house; and only in one single town did informants describe a ceremony that might be accounted a 'purification' of the mother (73). So, although it is true that the mother is virtually re-instated in the community on the day of the Outdooring (inasmuch as she is allowed henceforward to move freely outside the compound (74)) this cannot be regarded as one of the main themes of the custom.

A further point that we remarked earlier in our study (75) was that, in the customs of some towns, the use of medicines preponderated over all other ceremonies - sometimes, even, to the exclusion of libation pouring. In such cases, it does seem that the Outdooring acquires a rather different 'tone' and emphasis from what is more normal: not only because the baby's health, strength and so on are being sought through the more 'automatic' means of medicines, but also because the exclusion of libation implies a narrowing down of the traditional concept of the community as a unity of the living, the departed and the gods. Yet, with strict reference to the Outdooring itself, it is still true to say that none of the seven themes discussed above is totally absent from the customs of these towns.

In respect of the (majority of) towns where libation is poured, one further question may be asked: To what extent might it be argued that these libations constitute a 'dedication' of the baby to the gods and/or ancestors? We have discussed already the small group of cases where mothers dedicate their babies to a god during pregnancy (76) and it is not with this that we are here concerned. But we have also considered the texts of prayers used at Outdoorings of ordinary (i.e.

undedicated) infants and we did not find in these any expressions which could be construed as dedications of the baby. More generally, of course, the prayers do express a natural desire that the 'senior members of the family' should play their part in receiving the new child, and it is assumed (equally naturally) that the part played by them (sc. by the gods and ancestors) will be, proportionately to their status, the more important. But the general impression that emerges from these prayers is that we are concerned here more with a general commendation than with an explicit dedication such as is involved in the dedications to the gods mentioned earlier or, for that matter, in Christian baptism.

We may sum up our conclusions, then, as follows:

THE PURPOSES OF OUTDOORING (in all areas) ARE:-	Particularly Stressed in:
1. To give the baby stability in relation to	
a. other people; b. material circumstances	a: central Togo b: Tongu
2. To convey blessings to the baby, such as	
a. health; b. long life	a: c. Togo & Anlo b: Tongu
3. To express the community's	
a. joy; b. acceptance of relative responsibility	a: all areas b: central Togo
4. To commit the baby to the particular care of	
a. its mother; b. its father (or proxy)	a: Anlo b: all areas

iii. Comparison with Custom in the Past

Any general comparison of 'Ewe Outdooring of Today' with 'Ewe Outdooring in the Past' is made impossible by the obvious variety of ceremony which exists today and must have existed in the past. We can, however, form some sort of a picture of the processes of modification and developement which have been taking place over the years.

As far as the writing of Ellis (cf. A.3.α) is concerned we find little in his account that we might recognise, from present-day practice, as an 'outdooring custom'. He refers, indeed, to a purification of the mother, but we have found a similar ceremony in only one of the twenty five towns visited (73). The 8th day naming ceremony he describes bears some faint resemblance to those performed in a few towns today in cases of re-incarnation (cf. diii., below), but not to any of the naming ceremonies performed in the course of Outdooring itself.

Although Westermann (cf. A.3.γ) was not writing of a people with whom our own investigations were directly concerned, it is of interest to note that the Glidyi custom of sprinkling water on the baby which he describes is practised also in the Anlo area - as well as among the Ga-speaking people further West still. Moving into the interior of Ewe-country, we do not find this ceremony practised at all widely; neither is it

to be found among Twi-speaking people. In other words, the sprinkling of water on the baby during Outdooring appears to be a ceremony especially typical of towns along a considerable length of Ghana's coast-line.

The only town for which we have both sufficient background and also sufficient knowledge of present-day practice to be able to make a direct comparison is Ho. Here we have found that major developments have taken place since Spieth (cf. A.3.β) wrote his book at the beginning of this century. In those days, it appears that no ceremonies were performed until three weeks after the baby's birth when the father went, with a young girl carrying the baby, to visit members of the family. Today, that ceremony is still performed - but on the 9th day after the baby's birth, and ___ preceded, on the 8th day, by a miniature form of the same ceremony (when the young girl takes the baby round the compound) early in the morning and, later in the day, by a full-scale feast with libation and naming ceremony.

As far as the essential themes of Outdooring are concerned we find only one of the seven outlined above (cf.ii) expressed in the ceremony recorded by Spieth, viz. the idea of introducing the child to the community. But in the Glidyi-Ewe custom described by Westermann, most of our themes are to be discerned. It must be remembered that Westermann wrote in the comparatively

recent past, yet, if the Glidyi brought their Outdooring custom with them from Ga country (and the sprinkling with water provides at least one clear parallel with contemporary Ga practice) it is a possible conjecture that the coastal people have had a developed Outdooring custom for some time and that their practice has acted, especially over the last 50 years (77), as a stimulus to the developement of fuller Outdooring customs in the interior (78).

iv. Attitude of Christians to Outdooring

The tendency to use the adjective 'Christian' as a synonym for 'literate' is especially noticeable in Ewe-country where, up till very recently, the only schools have been mission schools and the missionaries have usually insisted on baptising the children committed to them for instruction. By a further development, the 'Christian' often comes to be thought of a 'modernist' and an innovator, a person who throws overboard the traditional practices. We encountered one instance of this attitude at Hohoe where informants said that the "Christians and rich people" (the latter being, probably, civil servants - ie. literates and therefore also Christians!) had introduced a modern, 8th day, Outdooring custom. Yet, in themselves, the ceremonies which take place during Outdoorings do not (with the exception of the uses of 'medicines' and the hotly debated question of libation) seem to contain much to which

a Christian would be expected to object on religious grounds. A conversation at Bato with two Christian gentlemen (who were not literates) disclosed, however, that it is not simply the Outdooring ceremonies themselves which cause some Christians concern.

Here at Bato, they said, if either of the baby's parents was a pagan the traditional Outdooring would normally be performed. But if the whole family were Christian, the pastor, catechist or elder would be called in to offer prayer the day the child was born and would return again on the 8th day to offer further prayers. About three months later, the baby would be baptised and the parents would receive friends at their home and serve drinks as after a traditional Outdooring, but this was the only feature of customary practice that would be observed (79). When I asked why Christians should not perform Outdooring in the customary way, but simply substitute Christian prayers for libations, both informants agreed that there would be no objection to this in principle. But the older (and less travelled) of the two felt that Christians really ought to doscard all the old customs "...to show that Christians are different"; if it ever became practicable (as it was not at present because Christians were so few) they should move away and found a new town altogether. The younger informant, who had lived for some years in Accra, felt differently and wished that Christians in Bato might restore Outdooring "...as the

Christians do it in Accra". One suspects that before long a situation will arise in Bato similar to that in Hohoe today!

Christians at Mefe expressed a different attitude again. The traditional form of Outdooring itself they condemned as "mixed up with the fetish" - presumably, in the libations, but they said that they omitted all the customary ceremonies (such as holding up the baby to East & West and touching the father's gifts against its body) and simply offered prayers, gave presents and shared drinks. But they did not feel as did the old man at Bato about all traditional customs. For example, some of them perform the puberty ceremony for their daughters in the same manner as the non-Christians. (cf. Chapter IV.).

Some non-Christians informants showed considerable understanding for the point of view expressed by the Old Christian at Bato and were even prepared to justify it to me! Thus, for example, at Avakpedome, I was told that the over-riding rule was that the custom of the baby's father's people must always be followed so that, if the father was a European, the baby must be baptised and not outdoored, for baptism was the custom of his ancestors. (But the people of this little pagan village did not seem to envisage the possibility that an African father might be a Christian!)

It is apparent, however, that not all Christians take the dogmatic attitude of our Bato friends. This was particularly clear in two of the larger towns in central Togoland (80).

At Hohoe, the Christians' 8th day custom retains most of the traditional characteristics: the father still has to provide the gifts (including one of his old clothes) for the child; water is thrown on the roof so that it trickles onto the baby - a symbol, informants assured me, of the Christian God's blessing!; people offer gifts, and a pagan member of the family may even be allowed to pour libation! Again, at Ho, it was said that Christian people perform the same Outdooring custom as anyone else - including the pouring of libation "...for the prayer used is addressed to Mawu alone" (81). In the Anlo area also, some Christians appear to have developed their own modus vivendi. At Denu I was told that "Christians do the old custom; the priest [a European] does not know, so he does not object!" But the phrase itself betrays some scruples and at Keta we find that the Christians have evolved their own Outdooring custom which retains many of the traditional ceremonies (e.g. sprinkling with water and 'Losing and Finding') but provides also that the person who brings the baby out of the house should offer ex tempore prayer before laying down the baby for the sprinkling with water.

It seems probable, then, that more and more Christians who at present shun the traditional custom may gradually come to follow the example of their brethren in other parts and introduce their own forms of Outdooring.

d. Customs After Outdooring

i. Giving of Thanks by Mother (82).

A protracted confinement of the mother to the house (such as that mentioned by Spieth) seems to have been fairly universally practised in the past. Today it is usually ignored (74) and for most mothers the Outdooring marks the end of the compulsory confinement. But the traditional interval of four months may still be observed before the mother goes on her ceremonial 'thanking'-visits to friends who assisted or sent presents at the time of the baby's birth. For this occasion, the mother dresses up in her best clothes and goes out accompanied by small girls (or, sometimes, older friends) who are also finely dressed and one of whom carries the baby.

It may be recalled that Spieth forecast an abandonment of this custom in view of the great cost involved in obtaining the necessary ornaments for the mother, and it is a fact that no informants in central Togoland mentioned the custom. But in the Tongu area this custom, known according to Mefe informants as 'Do Nu' (83), is fairly generally practised and informants in one or two Anlo towns also mentioned it. Perhaps mothers in these areas do not indulge in the hire of too many costly ornaments!

ii. Mother's First Visit to Market (Dzodze only).

At Dzodze, though the mother may go out of the house after the Outdooring, she is not allowed to fetch water or to go to the market for four months after giving birth. A medicine man supervises her activities and those of the baby during the whole of this period and one of the regulations enforced is that the baby must be fed from a copra calabash. At the end of the fourth month, the mother dresses up in her best cloth, putting white clay and a scent called aʃiwoi round her neck and goes to make a ceremonial appearance in the market place, thus proclaiming the end of the period of restriction.

iii. 'First Times' for the Baby (Have only)

Have informants mentioned two little ceremonies performed for the baby during the first few months of its life which may be noted here for comparison with similar Twi ceremonies (cf. Chapter III,A.3.β.e. & B.3.e).

After the baby's first visit to the market place, the mother collects mud from the market and puts it in the baby's bath water in the evening. "This", said informants, "is to teach it to get used to big crowds".

When it is about three months old, the baby is taken to the farm for the first time. On arrival, the mother lays the baby down under a tree and feeds it with cornflour and palm-oil.

iv. 'Dismissing the Ghost' (Dzodze only)

Dzodze informants described a short ceremony performed some time during the four month period after the baby's birth. The mother takes a paw-paw, cuts it in half and stuffs the interior with bread. This, together with some liquor, she sends to the priest who takes them to a cross-roads outside the town and lays them on the ground for the ghost kpɔmedoda who is supposed to have brought the baby to this world (84), giving him thanks and calling upon him to go now and leave the child in peace.

v. Customs concerned with Re-Incarnation

As we have already seen (b.xviii.), the majority of Ewe people does not seem greatly concerned over the possibility that a new baby may be the re-incarnation of an ancestor. At Dzodze and Avenofeme (85) informants showed considerably more concern with such questions and described certain relevant customs. But even so, only at the former town was the belief expressed that every baby is the re-incarnation of an ancestor; at Avenofeme, on the contrary, informants said that cases of re-incarnation were the exception rather than the rule. Ayivor, however, gives considerable space (87)

in his Ewe Customs of the Life Cycle (Chapter VII) to an account of customs connected with these beliefs and it may be that such beliefs and practices are more common than my own field-work led me to believe. At any rate, we find in these customs far more parallels to the ceremonies described by Spieth (cf. A.3./β.d & e) than we found in contemporary acccunts of Outdooring. It will, therefore, be well worth our while to note here the details given by informants.

At Dzodze, the first thing to be done is to discover the identity of the ancestor who has been re-incarnated in the baby. To this end, the mother goes to consult the priest, taking with her four lumps of akplẽ (corn porridge), a vegetable and some tɛgɔ fish covered with red palm-oil. The priest then calls on the ancestor to declare his identity. The ancestor tells him and also indicates the person whom he wishes to perform the naming of the baby.

On the fourth or seventh day after the 'dismissal of the ghost' (cf. iv), the family and friends gather together and the Officiant named by the priest comes, bringing with him some special beads (2 called hlɔkɔ which are obtained from Hausa traders and two called gblotsi) which he has threaded on a twisted leaf of the royal palm tree. The

parents, for their part, have provided a fowl (of the same sex as the baby), other food for a feast and a pot of palm-wine.

When all are ready, the baby is held in a sitting position with its feet carefully placed together. The Officiant then lays the beads just in front of the baby's feet and pours water on them (the beads). As the water trickles towards the baby, its feet are pulled apart so that the water does not touch them. This is done three times to the accompaniment of the singing of Dzomemewobia(complimentary songs) and the offering of prayers to the re-incarnated ancestor. The beads are then tied round the baby's left wrist and the ends of the leaf-thread are cut off and placed in the sponge which will be used when the baby is next given a bath. Feasting follows and the people offer gifts which (as in other places at Outdoorings) will be used to invest in a laying hen or an animal for breeding on behalf of the child,

The purpose of this custom, said informants, was to welcome back the ancestor. If it is not performed, the child will die.

At Avenofeme, the possibility of the baby's being a re-incarnated ancestor will only be considered if the child

exhibits definite 'symptoms' (such as weeping and suffering from fever during the night). In such a case, a 'diviner' is called in to investigate and, if he diagnoses a case of re-incarnation, a custom known as Trofedede will be performed. This custom is similar to that just described for Dzodze. A party, consisting of members of the family only, goes to the house where the re-incarnated ancestor lived during his last life-time (86). A member of the paternal line (if the baby is a boy; if a girl, of the maternal line) provides beads (exactly the same as those used at Dzodze) and bearing the same names), but he or she simply ties them, without any intervening ceremony, to the child's right wrist. Apart from this, unless the ancestor was a drummer, in which case the band in which he used to perform will be called in to play, there are no further celebrations at Avenofeme.(87)

The similarity of these customs to those described by Spieth will now be apparent. The only outstanding difference is that in Spieth's day, apparently, the officiant at the naming custom afterwards took the baby to his own home and brought it up. This is not a general practice either at Dzodze or at Avenofeme, though (as in many parts of Ghana) an uncle may, if he wishes and the parents agree, take the child into his home and see to its education and general upbringing. But this would not normally be done until the

child was older.

Of the two towns whose customs we have here described, it will be noticed that at Dzodze considerable prominence is given to the welcoming and naming of the re-incarnated ancestor. It may also be recalled that at Dzodze no feasting or pouring of libation accompanied the Outdooring. In view of these facts it seems a very probable hypothesis that we have here an example of a more primitive pattern of birth customs (cf. Spieth's accounts) in which the Naming custom has not been overshadowed by Outdooring to the same extent as it has been in most parts of Central Togoland.

C. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We have reviewed many customs in considerable detail and, since each section or sub-section has concluded with its own particular summary, there is not very much that need be added by way of a general conclusion.

It is clear that the Ewe people retain today a great body of customary practices and that the variety in these practices is much greater than that which we found in the Ga towns. There, the variations from town to town were mainly in the detail of ceremonial while the shape of the Outdooring custom as a whole remained recognisably the same everywhere. By contrast, the Ewe's are seen to have a number of virtually <u>different</u> customs and it is only by reference

to the inner content, to the significance, of these customs that we are able to discern their underlying unanimity. As concerning the form of the custom, this might be said to be the outstanding contrast between Ga and Ewe Outdooring.

As concerning the content, there is much that is common to the customs of the two peoples. In both cases, the customs are concerned with the introduction of the baby to its place in life and in society and also with the seeking of blessing for the baby - whether through prayer, medicine or symbolic act. Insofar as any contrast may be pointed it is in respect of the relevance of the Outdooring to persons other than the baby. In the Ga customs, the Dɔɔmɔ prayers all include several petitions for the parents and for the extended family. From the Ewe prayers recorded such petitions are conspicuously absent, but, on the other hand, the Ewe customs as a whole show more concern to impress a sense of responsibility upon the baby's parents than do the Ga customs. It would be wrong, however, to lay too much stress on this contrast and it would be totally misguided to deduce either that Ga parents are less responsible than Ewe ones (because they have no ceremonies like the Ewe ones) or that Ewe parents are less responsible than Ga ones (because they need to have the ceremonies performed)! But it may be argued

that the Ewe ceremonies such as that in which the child is committed by the community to its mother's care (cf. c.11.5) constitute an expression of communal solidarity which, in a more sophisticated society (such as that of the Ga's in the Accra area), tends to disappear or to find expression in other ways.

In respect of customs other than Outdooring, we can make no general comparison with Ga practice, for we only studied the one custom among the Ga's. But, looking forward to to the next chapter, we may say that the Ewe's, living in a part of the country which is as yet comparatively 'undeveloped' and where the vast majority of births still take place in the home, have retained a considerably greater number of traditional practices than have the Twi's of the Akuapem Ridge. Yet at the same time it will become apparent that the customs which <u>are</u> still practised by the Twi's bear witness to the same sort of fundamental attitudes and beliefs as those held by the Ewe's. In both areas there remains the firm conviction, which is, after all, a very biblical one, that "... our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers, --- against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places". (Eph. 6.12. R.V.)

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. This prohibition is also recorded for Ho, but only in the case of births of twins. It is said that if the midwives fail to observe the rule the twins will fall ill.

2. The placenta is known as "Man's mother" or "the child's friend" Menschenmutter; des Kindes Freund and Westermann suggests that there may be some connection of ideas between this and the spirit or force referred to by some Ewe's (though not by the Glidyi themselves) as xɔlɔ̃xɔlɔ̃e , literally, "a friend, a friend it is". This spirit is thought of as forming (not creating) the child inside its mother's body - or, alternatively, as receiving the child from God and putting it into the mother.

3. The people of the Gbugbla quarter of Teshi (a Ga-speaking town near Accra) have a god named Ligble. In speaking of their final women's initiation custom, Aʃiɛ , informants there said that one of the purposes was to release the candidate from bondage to Ligble, to whom she had been 'devoted' since her conception. Is there possibly a connection between Ligble and the 'Legba' referred to by Ellis? And, if so, does it suggest that Ellis was writing of the Glidyi people who came originally from the Ga area?

4. The only differences from Spieth's account were (i) that at Dzolo Gbogame the medicine is made by placing the string (cut into seven sections) from the woman's waist into a shallow tray and pouring over it palm-wine and water; (ii) nowhere did informants agree (with Spieth) that this medicine should be used to bath the baby: the custom was concerned with the mother alone.

5. H. Huber: Schwangerschaft, Geburt und frühe Kindheit im Brauchtum der Bato-Ewe; Annali Lateranensi XXI, 1957; pp. 230-44; reported in African Abstracts Vol.10, No.2, April 1959, P.65.

6. The custom is only performed for the husband if the woman is his first wife and if this is her first pregnancy by him. After the performance, the pot of oil must be given to an old woman past her menopause. If it were used by a younger woman, she would become barren. (So said informants at Dzolo Gbogame; but at Kpuita they knew nothing of this regulation.)

7. A man from Nyete (Tongu) who was present among my informants at Ho said that, in his town, if a pregnant woman was attacked by spirits and started to act strangely, a medicine (differing, according to the prescription of the practitioner) would be rubbed on her tonugba (and those of her husband) by a medicine-man. Informants from Ho itself then said that they had the same custom, though it was performed for the woman only.

8. It is certainly true that many medicines are administered by scratching the skin and rubbing them in -c.f. Chapter III, Footnote (11). See also footnote (21) of this chapter with reference to the use of palm oil as a 'protective medicine'. Informants at Ho spoke of another custom connected with the tonugba and known as asɔkɔrdɛ : when an elderly man dies, part of his cloth is burnt and the ashes thereof are rubbed on the tonugba of his grandchildren "to make them grow as old as he".

9. Dzolo Kpuita is a fairly recently founded village about one mile away from Dzolo Gbogame and at the junction of two fairly important roads. The people here are mainly young (though they have a very ancient chief!) and many of the customs practised at Gbogame are not practised here. Unfortunately I only met a group of the (very few) older men, but they made no attempt to conceal the fact that most of the old customs had fallen into disuse amongst them. When asked, they said that they did regret the passing away of these traditional practices but that they would prefer someone else to perform them rather than they themselves! In any case, they said, no one in Dzolo Kpuita was sufficiently

instructed in the old traditions to be able to give the necessary directions for ceremonies!

10. Ayivor places such a confession at the commencement of labour: c.f. B.2.c.i.)

11. A typical list of offerings was given by Dzolo informants: one sheep or fowl (of the same sex as the child), a bottle of drink, cornflour, eggs and a piece of calico. The calico appears to be an important feature and each god has his own favourite colour!

12. c.f. the ceremonial first haircut described by Rattray and Field: Chapter III.A.2.β.f. & 3.γ.c.i. But in some places the child's hair is not cut until much later in life and is meanwhile hung with cowries or beads. A ceremonial haircut may also, at one time, have formed part of the puberty rites for boys. c.f. Chapter IV. . .

13. One cannot imagine that many women find themselves in trouble on such an occasion (!); and I suspect that my informants may have confused this with another very similar ceremony described to me at Kpedze. The purpose of the Kpedze ceremony (which is performed during the woman's pregnancy) is to discover the sex of the baby in her womb. In about the sixth month, the woman goes to the riverside, taking a cock, a hen, some salt and some maize. A medicine-man or diviner accompanies her and, after casting lots with cowry shells, he makes the woman kneel down and places the grains of maize on her head. Then he holds the fowls, one in each hand, to see which will peck at the maize first; if it is the cock, the baby will be a boy, and if the hen, a girl. A gourd is then broken and the woman washes in the juice. She hands over the cock, a bottle of strong drink and 60 cowries (7½d) to the medicine-man and returns straight home without looking behind her. The hen will be reared and may be sold to buy things for the baby when it is born, but the family must not slaughter it themselves.

14. A similar custom is practised in the non-Ewe town of Santrokofi, north of Hohoe. Here it is a group of women who prepare the meal for the pregnant one and she shares it with a group of young children. (c.f. the ceremony in the Ashanti puberty custom described by Rattray (Religion and Art in Ashanti, pp.69ff.): here, the candidate, having her head covered with a white cloth, is given a dish of food and young children are called to scrabble in the same dish of food while the girl tries to grab their hands. The belief runs that the sex of her own firstborn will be indicated by the sex of the first child whose hands she catches. The people of Santrokofi may have received this custom from their Twi ancestors and assimilated it to the custom of their Ewe neighbours.

15. Informants pointed out that certain kinds of 'fetish' make their owners dangerous to pregnant women through no fault of their own and even if the owner himself has none but the best intentions towards the particular woman. But not all 'fetishes' are like this: the medicine-man who pronounces the spell over the woman's food will also possess a 'fetish' but not one of the same dangerous kind.

16. Kpandu informants also described a 'charm', consisting of a castor-oil leaf with some pepper on it, placed on a stone outside the pregnant woman's door to keep out witches and to neutralise all evil influences.

17. Many of these medicines are prepared from the barks or roots of trees - Dzodze informants mentioned exe, dɔdemakpowoe, gboloba & ahatsi - and have perhaps, in some cases real medicinal properties.

18. To die in battle is considered, not honourable but shameful. Informants at Hohoe volunteered the interesting information that similar opprobrium has come to be attached to those who die in lorry accidents. They, like the warrior fallen in battle and the mother who dies in childbirth, are

given the (expensive and) shameful type of burial. Rattray records that the Twi's also consider it a disgrace to die in childbirth. cf. Chapter III, A.2. .b.

19. Ayivor records a rather puzzling parallel to this prohibition:- in the ceremony for naming a baby who is believed to be a re-incarnated ancestor, beads are tied on the baby's wrist with raffia and there is a rule that the raffia may not be cut with a knife but only with a piece of broken glass. Is it in case the knife slips and cuts the baby (thus, once more, risking the occurrence of blood poisoning)? Or is there some more profound significance in these regulations? Rattray records (cf. Chapter III.A.3.β.c.iv) that among the Ashanti's no metal instruments may be used to feed the baby before the 8th day; but there may be no connection between this and the Ewe regulations.

20. Exactly the same proverb exists in Twi: c.f. Chapter III. B.2.c.

21. At Kpedze they say "X' [day-name], when a man is born into this world he has to work, to feed, to take oil and salt. You must do the same."

22. The produce of the palm tree, said informants at Dzolo Gbogame, is useful for neutralising all kinds of evil; they added "everyone eats from the palm in some way". I would hazard a theory as to the origin of this belief somewhat as follows: to the compact groups of a primitive society, every stranger is, literally, strange - and, as such, a potential enemy. But the fact that a stranger eats the same kind of food as one's own group at least establishes some sort of a link between you, and to that extent diminishes the stranger's strangeness. c.f. also Ayivor's description of a custom for protection against witches (B.1.c., fourth paragraph): because the woman has used the witch's food, the witch cannot hurt her without hurting herself.

23. Devidevite: Westermann's Dictionary translates this as "Kinderjams" i.e. "child's Yam". It is a vegetable with little tubers growing at the leaf axils.

24. The association of these two numbers (five and four) with the two sexes (male and female) echoes Spieth (c.f. A.2.β.d) and occurs agin in ceremonies at Dzolo Obogame (c.vi, second paragraph) and Have (d.ii, third paragraph).

25. Re. Day Names, see further B.3.b.xviii.α.

26. Dr Field (Religion and Medicine of the Ga People, p.169) records a similar belief and custom concerning the placenta and its powers. They are also known on the Akuapem Ridge (cf. Chapter III, B.2.c.).

27. On the use of charcoal as a prophylactic against evil, see Chapter III, Footnote 11.

28. The ban on the father's working in the fields until his baby's umbilical stump has fallen is also observed by non-Ewe's at Wane, Amedzofe and Santrokofi who give the same explanation for it as their neighbours in central Togoland. It is not known in the Tongu or Anlo areas.

At Kpedze, the midwives also are under a restriction until the baby's umbilical stump falls: they may not pound corn. I did not discover any explanation for this prohibiton, but note that it is reminiscent of that recorded by Spieth: viz. that the midwives (at Akoviewe) were not permitted to roast corn until they had performed the handwashing. cf. A.2.β.g. & Footnote 1.

29. Among Twi-speaking people the mother preserves her baby's umbilical stump and it is believed that this gives the baby stability in later life. cf. Chapter III.B.2.c.

30. The third day is, as we shall be seeing, the traditional day for Outdooring at Hohoe.

31. But the Outdooring in these towns is nothing like as elaborate as in most places and it may be that other ceremonies were once performed before the 9th day, cf.eighth paragraph of Sub-section xv, (p.153).

32. Informants at Kpedze further complicated the issue, however, by saying that the first two days of the old (four-day) week were considered unlucky. This meant that if the 5th day after birth were a 'bad' day, the Outdooring would have to be postponed to a 'good' day. Thus, the Outdooring might have fallen as late as the 6th or even 7th day after birth. The Avatime people of Amedzofe also have 'bad' days. Their normal practice is to outdoor the baby on the 7th day but if this is a Tuesday or a Friday ('bad' days) the baby is outdoored on the 6th day. The people of Wane, another Avatime town just at the foot of the hill on which Amedzofe stands - have yet another practice: they outdoor girls on the 6th day and boys on the 7th - and they have no 'bad' days.

33. i.e. the day of the week on which it was born. The same rule is observed by the Akuapem Twi's - c.f. Chapter III B.3.d.iii. and Footnote 14 to that chapter.

34. cf. Chapter I.B.1.a. and Chapter III.A.2.β.e. & 3.β.b.

35. cf. Part A.3.α.c. & γ.b. of this chapter.

36. At Dabala, the Chief introduced me to an old man whom he described as 'the' Outdoorer (Videdegoto) of the town. It later transpired that this man was only one of several such; there is at least one per clan. They are not specially 'commissioned' for the work but are said to acquire the necessary power and skill hereditarily. They do not, however, take up the work until they are fairly old. For preference, a family calls in an Outdoorer from its own clan but this is not considered absolutely necessary. If there is more than one Outdoorer in the same clan, they call in the one with the best reputation - i.e. with the largest

'score' of children surviving his Outdoorings!

57. Informants at Klewe described an old custom (now no longer practised) of making an offering to the 'Gbetsi Nolimeno' (the spirit which was believed to have brought the child to the mother) in order to dissuade it from interfering with or trying to harm the child when it grew up. At about 4.0 a.m. on the day of the Outdooring, the baby's paternal aunt went out to the farm and collected three pieces of firewood and a sample of every kind of crop grown there. Returning to the house, she laid the foodstuffs down on a mat behind the building and the wood (arranged with the three ends meeting at a point - as for a fire) on the ground beside the mat. The belief was that the Gbetsi would come and cook the food for itself and thus be pacified. (But it seems that this ceremony was not always completely effective, for these informants went on to describe a further custom for 'driving-out the Gbetsi' in the event of a young girl's first menstruation failing to occur when she reached the proper age. cf. Chapter IV).

Such offerings to the Gbetsi Nolimeno were mentioned by two further groups of informants. At Have, the custom for 'driving out the Gbetsi' in the event of a delayed menstruation is performed as at Klewe. Informants at Ho (where the spirit is called the 'Bomeno', though I was assured that this was just another name for the spirit referred to by the people at Klewe) said that the custom would not be performed on the day of the Outdooring but later in the baby's life - and only then if the child showed definite signs ('such as waking up suddenly and starting to cry') of being troubled by the spirit. If this happened, a raised bed of earth would be prepared on the outskirts of the town and on this would be laid groundnuts, beans, corn, yam and nine pieces of firewood, the latter being tied in bundles of three and laid out 'to resemble a human figure' - i.e. (presumably, for there do not seem to be many possible

permutations of pattern that can be effected with three straight lines) in the same manner as at Klewe, though informants there did not make use of this interesting comparison. The Bomenọ would then come to cook, eat and be pacified.

38. "...inhabitants of the unseen world" - I use a deliberately vague expression because, as will be seen later (Sub-section xvi), the prayers may be addressed to any or all of the following: the Supreme God, minor gods and the ancestors.

39. I use the word 'spit' as the nearest possible description of an action which occurs in many different customs (not only in Ewe country but also in Ga and Twi towns). In reality, it is a sort of hard out-breathing which diffuses only a small quantity of spittle. I encountered two different explanations of the practice:

i. An old man at Mefe explained that saliva is part of a persons's spirit but that it only has special power when accompanied by prayer (i.e. it has no particular significance, for example, when a man simply spits on the ground as he walks along). "When I spit on the bed", he said, "I call upon God and His wife the earth to give me power to make my spirit go into the baby so that he may become a person like myself".

ii. But at Dzodze, informants said that when the Officiant is preparing medicine at the beginning of the custom (cf. Sub-section xi) and spits into the pot, his spitting has the effect of 'calling the spirits".

Is the spitting, then, to transfer one's <u>own</u> spirit or to call <u>other</u> spirits? It would be wrong to seek a hard-and-fast definition where the symbolism is so clearly ambivalent. Even at Mefe, informants added that, besides transferring some of his spirit to the child, the old man's spittle also serves to drive away any evil that may be intended against it (sc. the child). Again, at Kpandu, everyone present spits on the baby in turn at one point in the custom (cf. Sub-

section xviii.). These people are surely not each one trying to make the baby resemble himself (!) but neither, on the other hand, are they calling on specific spirits to enter the baby; rather, the spitting is, as informants there explained, simply a general sign of blessing - and as such it should probably be interpreted in most other ceremonies where it occurs except when a different explanation is given.

40. Bato informants gave a rather different explanation of the significance of the Cardinal Points. "When the sun rises", they said, "you do not know what will happen; but towards evening, when no evil has come to pass, the sunset symbolises peace". Thus, the East represents the unpredictable, the possibility of evil, while the West symbolises happy fulfilment. (This association of evil with the unpredictable is extremely significant, for it typifies the background of fear against which a people must live when their traditions can speak to them only of small gods and spirits who act capriciously and without any fundamental or permanent concern for man's well-being.)

The lifting of the baby directly upwards (with the words "God, I show you this child") was mentioned only by Adidome informants and is possibly an accretion to the custom adopted from Ga Outdooring customs (cf. Chapter I A.2.iii and B.1.d. iii & 2.ii); but we do encounter one other instance of a lifting upwards of the carrying-cloth at Dzodze (cf. B.3.b.xi., fifth paragraph).

41. Uses of 'veve': Besides the two instances of the use of veve recorded in the text, (at Dabala, before the mother and baby are brought out of the room; in Ayivor's account, outside the house just before the sprinkling with water), informants at Dzodze reported that a custom similar to that described by Ayivor was once practised in their town though it has now become obsolete. In this custom, the baby was laid on a

piece of cloth by the roadside and the Officiant used veve (with the addition of salt and camwood powder) to describe a circle round it on the ground. He then told the baby that it might go wherever it pleased, and himself withdrew. There followed a 'losing and Finding' ceremony similar to those described in Sub-section x.

42. But this custom also has clear affinities with one described by Dr Field (Ga Religion and Medicine, pp.177-8). If a baby is born whose elder siblings have all died in infancy, it is taken out early one morning and laid naked on a pathway for anyone to find. Usually, arrangements have been made with an uncle or other relative for him to 'find' the baby. He comes along, picks up the baby and then seeks out the parents in order to buy the child from them (they, meanwhile, protesting loudly that they do not want it anyway!) The uncle then takes the baby away and names it. Later he may smuggle it back to its own parents!

43. A cock and a hen were then slaughtered and a feast was prepared, some of the food being laid aside on some leaves from the avia tree as an offering to the ancestors who had helped to bring the baby to this world.

44. A 'carrying-cloth' is a strip of cloth used by mothers to fasten their babies on their backs when they go out. At the Dzolo towns, this is the only gift which the father is strictly required to present to his wife for the Outdooring. By contrast, Ayivor gives in his account an enormous list of gifts which the husband may provide: clothing, toilet articles, ornaments, buckets, kerosene lamps, matches, etc.

45. Such ceremonial 'offering' occurs in many customs and in many parts of Ghana. It consists simply of holding the object out towards the person about to receive it and then drawing it back again a number of times. The person thus 'offering' may count as he does so "One, two, three...etc."

/Note continues.

45 (concl.) At Dabala and Mefe, informants said that the Officiant solemnises his presentation of the baby to its mother by 'offering' it seven times.

46. Informants at Mefe added that if the baby were noticeably thin, a special fungus called tsoui would be included among the toilet articles and the Officiant would touch it against the baby, saying "This tsoui is to make you grow fat". A further herb recommended for thin babies is described in Footnote 48.

47. The public breast-feed was mentioned by informants at both Mefe and Bato. It also forms part of the Outdooring at Dzodze (cf. xiii). The mother's first sucking her breast was mentioned by Bato informants only. They explained that she must do this for the same reason that one sips a drink before offering it to a stranger: to show that no harm will come to him from drinking it.

48. Amá, said Dabala informants, is a sort of cactus. Kpedze informants explained that because it was so tough and fleshy and seemed to grow anywhere, it was used in their medicine in order to make the baby grow strong and fat. According to Westermann's Dictionary, amá is frequently used as a poison and in magic.

Tɔkoe is camwood powder. It is used also by some Ga-speaking people in their initiation rite for women (Tuŋ ; cf. Chap. VI).

I was not able to trace all the herbs and roots mentioned by informants, but give here those mentioned in Westermann's Dictionary:

afla - sedge [Riedgras].

madze - a herb similar to afla and used as a poison.

adefotsi - (= ? adeflotsùi or ? adefetsu) a species of foxglove (ocimum canum).

gbévevĩ - ocimum viride, a strongly smelling herb used for poisons, etc.

49. But I am not altogether satisfied that my interpreter on this occasion was not conveying the idea of purification in terms too exclusively concerned with bodily cleansing, i.e. simply the business of removing the blood from the hands . At the same time, however, it must be remembered that in some places the cleansing after the birth is extremely thorough (cf. e.g. Dzodze: B.2.c.vi) which suggests that something more than an exterior purification is intended there.

50. Informants stated quite explicitly that they knew of no other ceremonies performed at Outdooring. But in support of my theory it will be noticed that the one ceremony which is performed at the Dzolo's is more elaborate (c.f. the use of medicine on the cloth and the spitting) than similar ceremonies in other towns. This suggests that the ceremony has been expanded to compensate for the omission of other elements.

51. It is not quite certain whether these phrases are titles of of the god addressed or whether, as seems more probable, they are exhortations interpolated by the one pouring the libation.

52. This whole prayer (from Mebiawe) presents considerable translation difficulties. The informant who dictated it stated that he himself did not know the meaning of many phrases. A correspondent in Tefle (Tongu area) has written suggesting certain new points, but even he could not translate the whole prayer. Possible translations of certain phrases are given here:-

a. Vernacular reads: "Osefia Adofia"; translator reads "O Sefia Adofia" and translates: "O Chief Creator", suggesting that 'this is the name of an imaginary god supposed to create human beings'.

b. Two phrases here have defeated all attempts at translation.

c. The phrase omitted here means literally "Twins' mother who never meets the mother of Atsu and the mother of Tse" (Atsu and Tse being the names given to male twins). Translator suggests that this is a title of the god (-dess?) of mothers of twins.

d. The phrase here omitted might be translated "The young man of Matse [name of a tribe near Ho] is like the babbab tree with crooked legs", but is more probably the name and title of a further god.

e. Several more phrases which have defeated all attempts at translation are omitted here.

53. Aklakpa and Todze are the names of two Tongu rivers venerated as gods. Akpo is a creek at Bato similarly venerated.

54. The phrase here rendered "Attention please!" is "Agoo!" - an ejaculation which has two common uses: it is said when one approaches and wishes to enter a compound; and it is used for calling meetings to order. In this context, it is clearly used in the second sense.

55. Proficient pourers of libation introduce considerable drama into their performance. Informants at Hohoe called on one of their number to demonstrate for me. At the first phrase ("Thunder God") the pourer poured a small quantity of drink on the ground, inwards towards his feet; after "messenger to all gods", a further, larger pouring inwards; after "...Mighty God", a very large pouring. He then recited the remainder of the prayer without further pourings until the final words when he flung the remainder of the drink down suddenly in a fourth inward movement and made the spitting sign of blessing. All present cheered him (as they do at a real Outdooring): "Do afe loo!-Well done!" (see also Footnote 58c.)

56. a. The prayer may be elaborated at this point into a sort of 'family tree', tracing the generations back on both maternal and paternal sides.

b. The meaning of this phrase is, apparently, that the woman did not cry out in pain during labour and illustrates the statement that she "brought forth coolly". (Ellis recorded that, among the Twi people, a woman was considered to be disgraced if she cried out during labour.cf. Chapter III.A.2.α.b.).

c. The exact meaning of the word "kusekuse" which occurs twice during the prayer and which is rendered here "We beseech you" is not known.

d. The phrase "ne miawo", here rendered "that you may increase" is obscure. It may possibly mean "in order that we may perform further ceremonies so that, in the course of them, you may receive more drink, (i.e through libation)".

e. i.e. When the babies are soiling their 'nappies' all over the house this is a cheerful sign!

57. These two gods are also addressed in the prayer from Adidome (cf. Footnote 58a). Avakpe is supposed to reside in a hill near the town which bears his name, Avakpedome. I did not find out any more about Kolie, though his name was mentioned by many informants in Tongu and I visited one of his shrines at Mafi-Dugame.

58. a. A further text was given by the Chief of Adidome but is not included in the main body of the chapter because of its similarity to the others. It is as follows:

"O God, take this drink. Grandfather Kolie, Grandfather Avakpe, Grandmother Lingo and gods of the countryside, all of you come and get drink. It so happens that our son Kofi and his wife Akosiwa married each other; with your permission, the woman conceived and delivered the child we see today. As custom demands, I am outdooring the child today and I am sending prayer to you all to help the child's body to grow and become strong and get riches to help the household." *

b. At Mefe, two libations are poured (ie. in addition to the introductory one. In the course of the prayer, the pourer says:

(if the baby is a boy) "May he grow, cut trees and get bush-ropes, so that he may be a man and build a house."

(if the baby is a girl)"May she grow and grind corn for dza-we ."

("Dza-we" is the first portion of any food which is offered to a god.) The third libation is poured from a new pot of wine. It opens with a long address to each of the gods (e.g. "Earth-having-a-horn-people-think-it-is-an-ant-hill...."!) and concludes "...take this and drink and let the child be healthy."

c. At Avenofeme, the method of pouring libation was demonstrated for me. The Officiant uses dzatsi (cold water mixed with corn-flour) for the main prayer and he pours this down in three lines running from East to West along the ground. He prays, pouring the first line, for life (for the baby); the second, for strengthh; the third, for wealth. Finally, he takes liquor and pours this down to the side of the three lines, saying: "If there are enemies here, we do not know of it, but anyway this is for them"!

Ayivor quotes a libation prayer (used at the naming of babies believed to be re-incarnated ancestors) which explains the respective uses of dzatsi and liquor. Pouring with dzatsi, the Officiant says:

"We do not invoke your blessings with drinks [i.e. alcoholic liquors]; drinks are meant to invoke you against our enemies. We invoke your blessings with cold water, ours is cold water for peace and tranquillity."

59. But Anloga informants indicated that this was part of the modern for of their custom: in the past they did not use Day Names.

60. Kpandu was the only town where this practice of putting salt on the baby's lips was mentioned. It is the midwife's last task. When she has done it, she receives gifts of money and food-stuffs (in consideration of her services) from the baby's parents.

61. The 'confirming' of the baby's name by each person present is reminiscent of a ceremony performed by some Ga-speaking people with their Naming Drink. cf. Chapter I.B.2.vii. and Footnote 5 to that chapter.

62. Beads are used in some places in connection with Special Names and also at the naming of babies believed to be re-incarnations of ancestors. cf. xviii.y. & d.v.

63. Other examples of Special Names are:
Senanu, which means "God gives" and is an expression of gratitude for the child's birth.
Adbedanu, which means "a trick of life" and is a humorous comment on the birth.
Ekedzogbe, meaning "This is what happened today" - another touch of humour!

64. A baby at Mebiawe now bears a name that he was given in commemoration of my presence at his Outdooring! I gave the mother a small sum of money and she spoke to the grandfather who, having asked my name, announced that the baby was to be called "Duncan evagbe - Duncan came today"!

65. Ayivor describes a naming ceremony as follows:-
the Officiant, having poured libation, places his right hand on the baby and says "Your name is 'X'. If you have come into this world to be a prosperous person, may God give you long life and make you very great. You do not come to show yourself for a few days and then go away. Live and continue to grow in health and strength."

66. The details given in Table B are simply taken from descriptions of Outdooring given by informants (and only in one or two cases from enactments witnessed by the writer). There may therefore be certain details omitted from the Table which would not be omitted at an Outdooring. But at least one can be fairly certain that the details given are those which seem most important to those who perform the custom (since these were uppermost in informants' minds). Less excusable are the places marked by question marks (?) which indicate that the writer failed to verify certain points!

Since Table C is an analysis of Table B, the statistics given therein are subject to the same limitations as Table B and no more than an indicative value is claimed for them.

67. And even this conclusion we reach only by 'stretching a point', for at Dzita the baby is not brought out of the house as part of the custom (cf. B.3.xii).

68. An informant at Ho said explicitly that the ancestors, "as the parents of the offsprings, should be invited in one way or the other" to the Outdooring. The minor gods also are traditionally considered to be just as much a part of the community as the ancestors -cf. the common use of the form 'Togbe', meaning 'grandfather', for addressing a chief, an ancestor or a god.

69. Dabala informants gave a further piece of information which may serve to underline this aspect of the custom as the receiving of a 'stranger'. If a Tongu baby is born abroad, they said, no Outdooring need be performed for it ("...unless the god of the foreign country insists that a custom be performed..."); but when the baby - or the grown man or woman - returns home, a special custom must be performed in order to receive him or her.

70. Informants at the non-Ewe town of Santrokofi put this idea even more forcibly when they said that, among them, a baby

is not reckoned to be 'alive' until it receives a name on the eighth day. But even after Outdooring, a baby is not yet considered to have achieved the full status of a human being. Informants in several towns illustrated this by saying that, whether an infant had been outdoored or not, this would make no difference in the form of burial he would receive if he died. Full burial rites would only be accorded to a child some time later - though as to how much later the regulations differ from town to town. In the Tongu area, the burial rites change after the child has learnt to walk; at Anloga, informants said that a child would not receive adult burial if it died below the age of three years "...because it is not known by many people before this"; at Denu, an informant said that a person would not receive adult burial below the age of puberty.

71. It will hardly escape our notice that this concern for 'stabilising' the baby witnesses to a considerable psychological insight: for it is just such a sense of stability and security that is vital for an infant's health and growth during the first months of its life.

72. cf. Chapter III B.3.c.iii

73. i.e. at Kpedze. cf. B.3.b.xiii, second paragraph.

74. We have noted two occasional exceptions to this general rule: at Dzita and Dzodze where some mothers do still, according to informants, remain within the compound for a further four months after the Outdooring. (cf. B.3.b.i, second paragraph.)

75. cf. B.3.b.xvi, third paragraph.

76. cf. B.1.d.

77. The accelerated development of customs during the past half century may in part be due to the building of roads and the introduction of motorised transport. cf. Chapter III C.1.

78. But this is not to suggest that the people of the interior did not have other customs which expressed, in their own way, themes similar to those of present-day Outdoorings. It will be remembered that Spieth, besides recording the simple Outdooring ceremony at Ho, also describes customs for identifying re-incarnated ancestors and naming the baby accordingly. It is especially significant in this respect that at Dzodze today, such 'reincarnation customs', performed some time after the eighth day, seem to feature more prominently in the peoples' life than their very simple Outdooring ceremony. It may well be that Dzodze has retained a pattern of customs which was once more common in the interior of Ewe country. cf. d.v, especially the last paragraph.

79. But other informants in the same town said that Christians had the baby blessed in the church on the eighth day and then came home. Here, drinks would be served and non-Christian members of the family would perform the traditional Outdooring ceremonies. Clearly, each Christian family has, to some extent, to work out its own form of compromise.

80. At Dzolo Gbogame too, the (very simple) Outdooring custom was said to be performed by pagans and Christians alike, though the Christians were said to omit the sprinkling of the carrying-cloth with medicine.

81. But I notice that this is not quite true - the prayer given by Ho informants (cf. b. xvi) contains a perfectly clear address to the ancestors!

82. Informants at Avenofeme said that the parents of all children should go to the 'diviner', taking with them a gift of edza (cornflour and coppers) as a thanksgiving to the gods. But this was the only exception I encountered to the general rule that only the parents of children who have been specifically dedicated to a god (cf. B.1.d) make any explicit thanksgiving over and above that expressed in the libation prayer at the

Outdooring. The Avenofeme custom does, however, parallel that described by Spieth (cf. A.3.β.d) and probably such special thanksgivings were once more common.

83. The same name is given, at Mefe, to the puberty custom for girls: cf. Chapter IV.B.

84. Only at Dzodze was this ghost, the Kpomedoda, mentioned as the agent responsible for bringing the baby to this world. I naturally enquired whether the people knew anything of the Nolimeno or the Bomeno (mentioned by Klewe and Ho informants cf. Footnote 37). They replied that they did speak of a Nolimetasi which may meet the vigolo (= the placenta, which, we may recall, is thought of as the bag in which the baby is carried) on its way to this world and will then declare any deformities or defects from which the child may suffer after birth. But, they said, no ceremonies can be performed to avert the troubles declared by the Nolimetasi. (Contrast Ho and Klewe - Footnote 37.)

85. At Dzolo Gbogame, informants mentioned that if the baby was to be given an ancestor's name, the 'oracle' would first be consulted; but unfortunately I did not have time to follow this question up.

86. To go to the house of the baby's grandfather for the performance of the naming ceremony is customary also among the Ashanti cf. Chapter III A.3.β.d.iv.

87. The custom described by Ayivor is similar to, but contains more ceremonial than, that performed at Dzodze. In Ayivor's account, the beads are first held up to the East, directly upwards and to the West, and libations in palm-wine, liquor and dzatsi (cf. Footnote 58 c, second paragraph) are poured upon them, the prayers being addressed to all the ancestors. This is done at the entrance to the compound. The Officiant then comes right in to join the rest of the gathering, repeats the prayer

(adding some words addressed specifically to the re-incarnated ancestor), holds the beads up to the East and West again and finally ties them, offering seven times, on the baby's left wrist. Drinks are then served to all present. At the end of the custom, the Officiant takes the mother and baby a little apart from the gathering and pours more dzatsi, palm-wine and liquor on the ground towards the baby's feet. The mother holds the baby in a standing position in front of the Officiant and lifts it each time so that the liquid does not touch its feet. As he pours the liquids, the Officiant speaks words which may help to explain this otherwise mysterious ceremony: "When you knock your foot against a stone, may that not be to you a bad omen; may it be to you a good omen, bringing you good luck..."

Before the gathering disperses, the Officiant gives a shilling or two to the mother for the baby and all present follow suit. The parents then thank them all and the custom is ended.

CHAPTER III

BIRTH CUSTOMS OF TWI-SPEAKING PEOPLES

A. CUSTOMS IN THE PAST

Tribes speaking one or other variant of the Akan language are to be found spread over most of southern Ghana, excluding Accra and the south-east. Besides this common language, there are to be discerned among these people certain other broad cultural similarities such as the pattern of matrilineal inheritance and the stool-system. But there is this difference between language, patterns of inheritance and political institutions on the one hand; and birth and similar customs on the other: that, whereas the former might be said to correspond to the stitched seams holding together the strips in a kente-cloth, the latter correspond rather to the patterns in the individual strips; the former are essential to the maintenance of inter-tribal stability, while the latter can be varied considerably without adverse effect on the unity of the whole. It is quite possible, in fact, that the more intimate customs with which only the family-group

(or, at most, the village community) is immediately concerned, might, in the course of time undergo certain modifications as a result of particular groups of Akan settlers either borrowing ideas from the aboriginals of the area in which they settle or being forced by natural circumstances to introduce new elements into the customs.(1)

For such reasons as this we need to be careful, when considering written evidence from the past, that we do not assume a homogeneity over a wide area which may in fact never have existed. My own field-work was, for reasons given elsewhere, virtually restricted to the Akuapem Ridge. For this area there must surely exist (e.g. in missionary letters and other records at Basel) accounts of the traditional customs going back, perhaps, over a hundred years. But to such records I have not had access and, in default of them, must needs draw on published works in order to sketch in some sort of a background for the information which I myself collected. These books, however, cover an area different from and much wider than that in which I worked, so that, for purposes of comparison, the information now to be summarised has only a qualified value.

The earliest published records accessible are contained in A.B. Ellis The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast (London, 1887). After this comes Rattray's monumental work on Ashanti culture, of which his volume Religion and Art in Ashanti gives considerable details of birth-customs. This book was first published in 1927, but page references given here are to the 1954 edition. Finally, Dr M.J. Field's Akim Kotoku, a fairly recent work (published 1948 by Crown Agents for the Colonies) gives a certain amount of information in respect of this people who, although of Akan stock, were traditional enemies of Ashanti. The information from these three books is summarised here under convenient headings.

1. CUSTOMS DURING PREGNANCY

α. ELLIS (page 232) tells us that when a woman discovers she is pregnant, she "offers sacrifice to the tutelary deity of the family, and the priestess binds charms about her wrists, ankles and neck, at the same time invoking the god to avert ill-fortune". (These 'charms' are strings of the black and white beads worn by priests, (2).) It is believed, he explains, that childbirth would be unfortunate if this ceremony were

to be omitted

β. RATTRAY (pp.50-56)

(a) makes no mention of special charms, but stresses the belief that, during pregnancy, a woman is particularly susceptible to evil influences - especially during the first three months, when she must not leave the compound without first covering her head with a cloth.

(b) A woman will normally observe the taboos of her husband's ntóro (3) from the time of their marriage, but sometimes such observation is enforced only from the moment when she conceives a child by him.

(c) After the sixth or seventh month of pregnancy, a ceremony takes place for the 'propitiation' of the husband's ntoro :-

The man presents his wife with a white cloth and gold ornaments; she in turn presents him with a fowl and some eggs, saying, "You of 'X'ntoro, take this and give to your ntoro that my child may come forth well and sound." The husband then takes the fowl into the corner of his sleeping room and makes the offering.

γ. FIELD (page 135)

beyond noting that "the new shrines are usurping a

certain amount of responsibility for the unborn.... child", gives no details on this subject and indeed states that "there is in Akim.... very little antenatal ceremonial".

2. CUSTOMS DURING BIRTH

α. ELLIS (Pages 232-3)

(a) tells us that the expectant mother goes to her own mother's home in order to be delivered.

(b) She bears seated on a stool and surrounded by "a number of female visitors", before whom she would be disgraced should she cry out in pain or impatience.

(c) The day-name is conferred on the baby from the moment of birth.

(d) Immediately it is born, the baby is washed, and

(e) charms are bound round its limbs "to avert ill-fortune".

β. RATTRAY (pages 56-58)

(a) also reports that the woman goes (in the eighth month) to the village of her own abusúá (i.e. her (3) family on the maternal side), and explains that this is done primarily so that, if any monstrosity is born, the fact may be kept a secret and her husband's family not be offended.

(b) He records also that the woman bears seated and in

the company of several (four) elderly women. One of these supports her, two hold her arms and the fourth sits facing her. No men may be present. If complications arrive during delivery, these may be attributed to the husband's ntóvɔ being 'cruel' or 'hard' and various medicines may be administered; but it may also be attributed to the woman's having committed adultery since conception. In the latter case, it is believed, confession by the mother may mitigate the results of her evil deed, but if she refuses to confess, the midwives shout out names in the hope of guessing with whom she has had the presumed intercourse.

It is considered a disgrace for a woman to die in childbirth and, if this happens, every pregnant woman in the town brings a newly-cut and budding plantain leaf and a knife. Pointing the leaf (like a gun) at the corpse, she says: "Bang! Begone with yourevil, you have been unable to bring forth, you have been unable to fight, you have fought only to die." Then pointing with the knife, she says: "We told you to fight, but you could not fight." (c.f. Chapter II B.2.(c)i., where a similar attitude to childbirth among the Ewe's is recorded.)

(c) The parallel with Ellis is continued in that Rettray tells us that as soon as the baby has been delivered, all present address it by its day-name, saying "Hail, 'X'!" The umbilical cord is immediately cut against a piece of wood.

(d) The baby is then washed in un-boiled water (4). Then all present say: "'X' has arrived, let him/her sit down with us (i.e. settle down with us and remain alive)". Lime-juice may then be used to clear the baby's throat.

(e) Anklets and armlets of baha (dried plantain fibre) are then bound round the baby's limbs. These are regarded partly as protective charms, but partly also as a sign of contempt - they are really a very poor sort of ornament! - because the people do not yet like to show any signs of rejoicing at the baby's birth lest the 'ghost-mother' recall it to Samandow - the spirit-world. (If a baby dies during these first few days, some say that it is because this ghost-mother has been on a journey and, not wishing to take the baby with her, sent it to earth for a few days, but re-called it on her return. See further: 3.β (b) below.)

(f) A small tuft of the baby's hair (known as sāmāŋ hwí - ghost's hair, c.f. 3. (c), below) is cut off and placed in the mother's work-basket, and a portion of its excreta ('ghost's excreta') is rubbed against the wall.

(g) The placenta is thrown on the kitchen midden.

γ. FIELD (page 135)

as has already been said, records few details on this subject. She does, however, report the binding of raffia on the new-born baby's joints, saying only that this is done "to keep them temporarily strong".

3. CUSTOMS AFTER BIRTH

α. ELLIS (pages 233-4)

(a) says that for seven days after delivery, the mother is held to be 'unclean' and may touch nothing.

(b) After seven days, she may take up her domestic duties, but may not go to the town nor visit friends.

(c) On the eighth day, Outdooring and Naming of the baby take place as follows:

i. The father, together with friends goes to his mother-in-law's home, where they all sit down in a circle in front of the entrance.

ii. The baby is brought out and handed to its father who "returns thanks to the tutelary deity".

iii. He then gives the child its second name and, as he does so, squirts a little rum from his mouth into the child's face. (Ellis says that the second name given to the child is usually that of a friend or of a deceased relative, though he was told that, formerly, male babies always took the name of the maternal grandfather and females that of the maternal grandmother.)

iv. Rum is then poured on the ground as an offering to the 'asrahmanfo' (=, presumably, nsâmânfo - departed spirits) of the baby's ancestors.

v. Sacrifices are made to the tutelary deity and the day concludes with festivities.

(d) After three months, the mother, dressed in her best clothes and ornaments, goes out with a band of women to pay visits to friends and neighbours. As they go, they sing songs of thanksgiving directed, not only to the tutelary deity, but also to all the inhabitants of the town or village; for the fact that the mother has been safely delivered and has made a good recovery is considered a proof that all wished her well and that none has "invoked the anger of a

suhuman upon her ". (The meaning of this last phrase is not clear: 'suhuman' is presumably Ellis' spelling for sumay, but this word is, according to Christaller's Dictionary, normally used of a charm or amulet "...worn as a remedy or preservative against evils or mischief", and not of a power which might be 'invoked against' anyone.)

β. RATTRAY (pp.59-61)

(a) states that both mother and child are considered to be 'unclean' and must remain in the house up to the eighth day after the birth.

(b) During the first week, great care is taken not to make any open claims to ownership of the baby, lest the 'ghost-mother' should be tempted to re-call it. An old rag is provided for the baby's bedding and, if water or pap are fed to it, they are administered from a banana skin or the shell of a nut and not from a proper calabash or spoon. The baby is not encouraged to feed at its mother's breast, though if it shows signs of wishing to do so this is permitted, and the desire is considered a good omen. All the same, many mothers call in a

wet-nurse during these first few days. Should the child die before the eighth day (or even right up to adolescence), its corpse will be maltreated and buried without ceremonial, the parents taking care to show no signs of grief, lest some evil spirit should observe their distress and prevent further babies from coming to them.

(c) The Outdooring (pages 61 ff.), Ntetea (5), is normally held on the eighth day, though it may be postponed if everybody or everything is not ready. The father, in particular, must make considerable preparations, for he must provide:- for the mother: cloth, meat and fish; for the baby; a metal spoon, two metal bowls, a new mat, a pillow, a wooden comb, and a funuma ntama (which Rattray translates, without explanation, 'umbilical cloth').

The procedure for the Outdooring is as follows:-

i. Very early in the morning, the maternal grandmother comes to her daughter's house and collects the baby together with a portion of its excreta. She carries them to a spot some

way out of the village where she casts the excreta away, saying: "Now I have taken your child away, together with your ghost-child's excreta!". She then goes back to the village, carries the baby from one end of the village to the other and returns finally to the compound.

ii. Here the baby is "disguised": its eyebrows are blackened with charcoal and three spots of white clay are marked on either temple in a triangular pattern, apex uppermost. Its body is then rubbed over with shea butter and it is laid on its new mat and pillow out in the sun "to take away the cold air of the spirit world". The baha anklets and armlets are replaced by strings of special beads (gyanie, abia and nwansana 'ti) interspersed with charms and gold nuggets.

iii. The mother, clothed in her best and with breasts and shoulders smeared with white clay, bends over the baby and murmurs: "I thank you for not having caused my death."

iv. The baby is then fed with pap from the metal spoon. This is the First Time that metal

implements may be used for its feeding;

(c.f. (e) and (c)v., below).

(d) Rattray makes the point (not referred to by Ellis) that the Naming is a ceremony distinct from the Outdooring, although, provided the Officiant is available, it will normally follow immediately:-

i. The baby is bathed and is then given a new cloth by the father, who then presents the mother with a fowl.

ii. The parents then take the baby to the house of the paternal grandfather (if it is a boy) or of a female relative of the paternal line (if it is a girl) after whom he or she is to be named.

iii. <u>If the grandfather is still alive</u>, he performs the Naming himself. The mother lays the baby on his knee, and he spits in its mouth (thereby transferring to it some of his spirit), saying: "Father and God 'Z' [name of the <u>ntóro</u> division to which he and the child belong] , my child 'N' has begotten a child and he has brought him to me, and now I call him after myself, naming him 'M'; grant that he may grow up and

continue to meet me here, and let him give me food." He then makes the baby such a gift as he may be able to afford.

If the grandfather is dead,

the baby's own father performs the custom (sometimes in the ruins of the grandfather's hut) by pouring a libation in wine, saying: "Receive this wine and partake. I place your grandchild before your face and give him your name; see that he does not lack food."

(e) Rettray also records various 'First Times':-

i. After Outdooring, the baby may be carried on its mother's back for the first time.

ii. Forty days after birth, the baby is made to sit up for the first time, and the mother prays, saying: "Supreme Being, we thank you that forty days have fallen upon the child and we now take the child's buttocks and set them upon the ground."

iii. The mother also has a special First Time when she resumes sexual intercourse with her husband.

γ. FIELD (pp. 135 ff.)

describes the following customs from among the Akim Kotoku people almost exactly as Rattray described them for Ashanti twenty years before:-

(a) The seven-day confinement. The reason for this, as given by her informants, was that the baby "may, in mere childish mischief, be paying but a flying visit to this world and may slip away at any moment."

(b) The ill-treatment of the corpse of a baby dying during the first week.

(c) On the eighth day, the ceremony called Oyiniedi (5) is performed. The purpose of this custom says Dr Field, is to take the baby out of the world of ghosts and to introduce it to this world. This explanation echoes that given by Rattray's informants for laying the baby in the sun "to take away the cold air of the spirit-world", but the details of the Akim-Kotoku custom differ from those of the Ashanti and must be given in full:

i. The mother sits in the yard with the baby on her lap, while its father (or some male relative representing him) cuts a bunch of hair from its head; (c.f. 2.β.(f), above).

ii. A woman who acted as midwife during the baby's delivery now washes the baby and smears its body with clay and with a special, perfumed paste. Strings of beads are tied round the baby's neck, waist, wrists and ankles - round the waist, two strings: one to protect the baby from sickness, the other to make it 'sit down' (i.e. stay in this world). These beads have been worn previously by an infant who has thrived. Should the present wearer not thrive, the beads would not be used again.

iii. The midwife then takes the bunch of hair cut by the father and chars the end of it in the fire. While it is still smouldering, she holds it among the baby's growing hair and says three times: "I take you out from the world of ghosts. Do not be sick, settle down, and may you have work!".

iv. She takes next a new cloth given by the father and lays it, folded, against the child's body, saying: "Here is a cloth for you, and now a pillow, and now a bed; receive these to take you out of the world of ghosts. Settle down,

and may you have work!" (6)

v. Sometimes, the midwife will also give the baby a ceremonial drink from a special spoon. This spoon, made of silver in the case of 'big people', is called a **sawa**, and Dr Field quotes a proverbial expression addressed to stupid children: "Have you not drunk of the **sawa** of your fathers?"

4. GENERAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CUSTOMS

Discussing the nature of these customs in another part of Religion and Art (pp.188 ff.), Rattray concludes that they are "clear 'separation' and 'reception' rites". In pregnancy, the mother is to some extent withdrawn from the world for her own safety - and also for that of the child; this is why she observes her husband's ntɔ́rɔ taboos, for it is the ntɔ́rɔ which is instrumental in moulding the child in her womb. When the child has been born, both mother and child enter into a 'marginal period' and continue to be hedged about with regulations. But now, Rattray says, it is not because the woman and child need to be protected from the community but because they are a danger to the community. Finally, with the eighth day Outdooring,

and progressively through the various 'First Times', the two are re-admitted to the community. The child in particular, however, must pass through many stages before it is considered a full member of the community - c.f. the fact already noted that the corpse of one dying at any time up to adolescence may be treated in the same way as that of an infant dying during the first days of its life.

B. CUSTOMS TODAY

The Akuapem Ridge where I carried out field-work is today the home of two peoples: the Akuapem Twi's and the Kyerepongs. According to the historians, however, both these peoples are of Akan stock, the Kyerepongs having come down in an earlier wave of migration than the Twi's. Nowadays, moreover, although some towns retain their Kyerepong identity and speak the old Guan language, Twi is the lingua franca and as far as birth and puberty customs are concerned, the over-all pattern seems to be very much the same for

Twi's as for Kyerepongs. (Such variations as occur will be noted below.)

Of the Kyerepong towns, I visited: Adukrom, a fairly large town not far from Akropong, at the junction of two main roads and the seat of the senior chief of the Kyerepongs, where my informants were the chief and elders and, on another occasion, the Pastor and Session of the local Presbyterian church; Dawu, a rather smaller town on the main road between Adukrom and Akropong; and Abonse, another small town tucked away in the hills down the eastern side of the Akuapem Ridge, about five miles from Adukrom. In the latter two towns, the respective chiefs and their elders, together with other of their people gave me my information.

Of the Twi towns, I visited Akropong, the largest town on the Ridge, site of the earliest labours of the Basel missionaries and, today, of an important teacher training college, a secondary school and a multitude of elementary schools. Akropong is also the seat of the Paramount Chief of Akuapem, but the stool was vacant at the time of my stay and my information came

chiefly from private individuals and from the midwife, Mrs Martinson. I also visited Manprobi, (the original site of the paramount stool, but today an almost deserted village) where I had conversations with the headman and several old women (the sole permanent inhabitants); Bewase, an apparently vigorous little town though it is set back over a mile from the main road at the western foot of the Ridge; and Amanokrom, another main-road town about five miles south of Akropong. My informants in these last two places were, again, the respective chiefs, elders and other men and women.

1. CUSTOMS DURING PREGNANCY

There are three main persons whom the pregnant mother in Akuapem may consult: the private medicine-man, the priest or priestess of an **obosom** and the official midwife appointed by the public health authorities.

(a) Private Medicine Men

These appear to vie for popularity today with the old **obosom**. Informants at Amanokrom stated unequivocally that a medicine man was the correct person for the woman to consult; the town had several such

private practitioners and the woman would consult whichever she chose and receive from him special baths and drinks to protect her from evil and bring about an easy childbirth. Informants at Adukrom did not think that every pregnancy demanded consultation, but if the conception was pre-marital, then it would be necessary for the father to present himself (with or without persuasion from the mother's family!) and takes the woman either to a medicine man or to the priest(ess) of one of the abosom - more normally, to the latter. If a medicine man were consulted in such a case, he would provide a special bath, protective, not purificatory, in purpose. Informants at Abonse, however, reported that among them the medicine men were held in higher regard than the priests. (This was rather surprising in view of the fact that Abonse is a little village, tucked away down the hillside whereas Adukrom is a fairly large town at the junction of two main roads and has therefore among its populace a higher proportion of 'foreigners' who might be expected to bring special 'medicines' with them; but c.f.(b) re Dawu). The normal 'treatment' provided (by priest and medicine man alike) for pregnant women at Abonse is a

raffia wristlet to be worn at all times; but should the spirits 'give trouble', medicines for drinking would also be supplied. On some occasions, informants added, the spirits attacked the unborn child through the father, in which case the father also would have to be purified.

Some informants at Dawu said that, although there were many fertility cults, all were optional and the pregnant one might simply consult an old and experienced woman. At Manprobi also I was told that the first people consulted would be the old men or women of the town. These would prepare a special charm (known as akwamfanu - a root ground up and made into a hard cake with a beetle inside it) which is tied round the woman's waist and removed only while she is bathing. This done, the woman would go to the priestess of the obosom.

(b) Obosom

We have seen that in three out of the five towns mentioned, a pregnant woman may consult an obosom. The only town visited and not mentioned so far is Bewase. Here, informants said that a visit to the obosom, though not necessary, may be desirable (7). If a mother goes to the obosom, she will be given a medicine bath, a further medicine to drink and a talisman to carry. The baby

becomes thereby 'dedicated' to the obosom and, if it lives, must be the servant of that obosom (i.e. he or she must make regular offerings through the priest), - or may be called upon, even, to become a priest himself. The only possible way of obtaining release from such obligations, informants added, was to become a Christian; but even this might not work sometimes, should the obosom be obstinate (8).

Informants at Manprobi, on the other hand, said that just because its mother had consulted the priestess, a child was involved in no obligations whatsoever. (This contrast with the regulations at Bewase is perhaps explicable in view of the fact that there consultation is the exception, whereas here it is the rule so that the obosom is not so likely to lack servants and priests.)

Informants at Dawu were not agreed as to the necessity for consulting the obosom. Some said that it was only necessary if the pregnant woman became dizzy or behaved abnormally; in this case, it would be the task of the obosom's priestess to consult the unborn baby to find out what was wrong. Other informants, however, felt that it was imperative for every woman to visit the obosom, - nowadays more than ever before because many strangers have

come to the town from the Northern and Volta Regions, and many of these bring private 'fetishes' which may, albeit quite unintentionally, damage the baby; but the obosom will be able to provide immunity to such dangers.

(This piece of information, taken in conjunction with what was said above about the tendency to visit the obosom in the town of Adukrom while at Abonse it is the medicine man who usually deals with pregnancies, may indicate that the effect of an influx of strangers in a large town is to drive the people back to a more fervent interest in their traditional abosom, from which they had perhaps been hitherto falling away.)

The authority of the abosom to whom we have been referring would appear to be very localised. Adukrom informants listed Otutu, Ekple, Dedaku and Guabe, and although they told me that Guabe was the obosom of all the Kyerepong people, informants at Dawu (just along the road) when I asked them exclaimed: "No one would think of sending his wife to Guabe!" - they had heard of him and knew that he lived at Adukrom, but the abosom which they considered specially suitable for pregnant women were Onyaa, Kofi Osumanka and Amanfo. In fact, nowhere did I

find the same abosom for two towns except in the case of Manprobi which is the original site of Akropong and therefore has some of the same abosom.

(c) Taboos

Only one taboo seems to be in general force and that is the one (to be met also among the Ewe's. c.f. Chapter II, B.1.f. ~~last paragraph~~) which forbids a pregnant woman to eat in public. Informants at Bewase added that neither may she buy prepared food. Bewase people also have a taboo on the flesh of the goat for women who have consulted the obosom Fofie.

(d) The Official Midwife

Both Akropong and Adukrom possess small maternity hospitals with a fully-trained midwife in charge, and a very large number, possibly the majority (?), of the expectant mothers make use of these facilities - but only after consulting the medicine man or obosom priest to obtain protection from the spiritual dangers of childbirth. There seems to be no doubt about this. Mr Ampene (then on the staff of the Presbyterian Training College, Akropong and conducting some researches of his own) reported to the Interim Conference on

Christianity and African Culture held at Legon in November 1957 that there had even been a case in which the daughter of a presbyter was alleged to have visited a priestess during pregnancy. He had himself spoken to this priestess and she had told him that she found plenty of scope for her work, even among people who had passed beyond the Elementary stage of education. Further, Mrs Martinson, the Midwife at Akropong, told me that nearly every woman who enters the hospital is wearing some kind of protective amulet or charm strapped round her waist although they do not usually object when asked to remove such things.

2. CUSTOMS DURING BIRTH

a. Place and Persons Present

The old man at Manprobi told me that the normal place for a mother to go for her labour was the priestess' house. But whether or not this was a common practice in the past, all other informants were agreed that if the women did not go to the maternity hospital, she would either remain in her husband's house or go to her mother's home.

There was not so much agreement as to who would be present at the delivery. Informants at Amanokrom stated

that under no circumstances were males, other than the native doctor or medicine man allowed to be present. At the opposite extreme, Abonse informants stated that the 'midwives' were normally males. The rest of my informants seemed to be generally agreed that males might be admitted in emergency and Bewase informants added that under such circumstances the father of the baby and the priestess would be called in also.

b. Atmosphere Surrounding Labour

Among the Twi's as among the Ewe's, a woman's labour is looked upon as a battle against evil spirits, though today the consequences of her dying in childbirth are not so grim as they were in the past. Only eighteen years ago, Akropong informants assured me, if a non-Christian woman died in childbirth, her body and all her property would immediately be removed from the house and taken out into the bush. Here the body would be sprinkled with white clay (or wrapped in a piece of white calico) and buried, this being the normal procedure for dealing with the corpse of a warrior dying in battle. If the baby had already been born, the family would immediately give it away to anyone who would accept it or even simply cast it out in the bush.

if unborn, the foetus would be removed and buried with the mother's body. Today, such practices have ceased (or if they have not ceased, are not heard of), but something of the atmosphere still remains and a woman dying in childbirth is still called ɔtɔfó - "one who has fallen in battle". (But the term is also applied to one killed in an accident.)

c. Customs concerned with Umbilical Cord and Placenta

The taboo to be met with among the Ewe's (and implied in Rattray's account summarised above) which forbids the cutting of the umbilical cord with a metal instrument is not known here. Akropong informants said that scissors or a knife might be used. It is cut to the length of the length of the child's knee and the end is bound with a piece of raffia (Akropong) or a thread from the mother's hair (Amanokrom) - i.e. one of the threads used to tie her plaits.

Although Amanokrom informants knew of no special customs connected with the placenta and umbilical cord, most others told of customs similar to those practised among the Ewe's. (c.f.Chapter II.B.2.c.ii) Informants at Akropong and Abonse said that, after the

cutting, the end of the cord still attached to the placenta would be touched against the child's lips with an admonition to the child not to be talkative in later life. (At Abonse, the touching is performed thrice and there is a further admonition to the child to be obedient to its parents.) Akropong informants quoted a saying addressed to talkative children in later life: "Gyama wamfa wo tam ayka wo ano anaa ? - Maybe they didn't touch the placenta to your mouth?" The same informants explained that if the baby were born in the maternity hospital, the cord fallen from its navel would be used for this custom and afterwards kept by the mother; the effect of the mother's keeping the cord would be to increase the child's stability in later life and a further saying, addressed to people who are always travelling around, is "Perhaps your umbilical cord wasn't kept?"

Nearly all informants stated that the placenta should be wrapped in three odwéŋ leaves before being disposed of (10).

Dawu informants reported the custom (found among the Ewe's, c.f. Chapter II.B.2.d.ii) of giving the placenta to a barren woman so that she may bury it to

make herself fertile. Abonse informants said that anyone might bury it. Bewase informants said that the burial must be done by a member of the family but that a barren woman might be allowed to urinate upon it after this in order to gain fertility.

Most informants also had something to say about the right and wrong way up of burying the placenta. At Bewase, Manprobi, Akropong and Abonse it was agreed that the end of the umbilical cord should be uppermost, though different reasons were given for this regulation. At Bewase, Manprobi and Abonse, it was said that the mother would become barren if it were not observed; but at Akropong informants produced an interesting variant, saying that if the parents wished their next child to be of the opposite sex to the one just born, then the turning upside-down of the placenta when burying it would obtain the desired effect. Dawu informants simply said that the barren woman should bury the placenta the same way up as it was handed to her; otherwise it would not help her - but it would have no ill-effects on the mother or baby from whom it came.

d. Immediate Attentions to Baby

As soon as possible, the baby is washed with soap and warm water. Then, at Amanokrom, Bewase and Abonse, it is

"vaccinated" with powdered charcoal (11) designed to keep away witches and evil spirits and to protect it from the danger of an 'evil eye' (i.e. a person who looks at one and wishes one evil). At Bewase, this appears to be a very elaborate procedure, for the skin is scratched and the powder rubbed in at five places (centre of forehead, nape of neck, points of shoulders and centre of chest). At the other two towns ,, it is simply done on the face. At Dawu, if the obosom was consulted earlier, the priestess is called in to sprinkle the baby with a special medicine which is considered to have the same protective power as the vaccination in other towns..

In nearly all towns ,, informants mentioned the familiar custom of putting a little alcohol (usually schnapps) into the baby's mouth to clear the mucus, and nearly all said that this 'gives the baby a good (singing) voice' in later life.

Abonse informants added two further pieces of information. Firstly, soon as the baby is born, all present address it with the words "Come and stay!" Secondly, after the alcohol has been administered, the baby is presented (offering thrice) to its mother, with

the words "This is your baby", whereupon she takes it and puts it to her breast. (I visited Abonse last of the towns and did not therefore have a chance to enquire whether these customs are normal elsewhere, but they seem natural enough under any circumstances.) If the baby is dead, however, it must on no account be seen by the mother.

e. Father's Responsibilities

Only Dawu and Abonse informants mentioned the provision by the father of the "handwashing rum" (for the midwives), which custom we meet in other parts of Ghana (c.f. Chapter II.B.2.d.i). At Abonse, the rum is used first, each midwife first dipping his right hand in the rum and touching his forehead and chest before proceeding with the washing, and then washing again in soap and water. At Dawu, soap and water is used before the rum and the father has, further, to supply the midwives with a meal of eggs and fowl which has the effect of completing their 'purification'.

At Amanokrom and Adukrom, the father brings (if the delivery took place in his own house) or sends (if it took place at his mother-in-law's) a fowl to be slaughtered as a feast for the mother. At Amanokrom, the baby is also

associated in this feast by having the pancreas of the fowl touched to its lips and to the soft crown of its head (through which it is believed to have fed while in the womb). At other places the father is responsible for providing especially good food for the mother during the next week. At Abonse he has to provide further rum for the midwife to pour a libation to all the abosom of the town.

contrast the Ewe belief that the baby breathed through its crown: Ch. III. B.3.b.xiv.

f. Visits to Mother and Baby

Once the "vaccination" has been completed (or, where that is not done, straight away) members of the family and friends are allowed to enter the room ~~straight away~~ to congratulate the mother and welcome (12) the baby. The normal greeting to a new-born baby is: "Wo ba tra'se - If you have come, come to stay". The baby's day-name may be used when addressing it.

According to Abonse informants, it is the custom among them for the father immediately to notify the Chief of the baby's birth. Adukrom informants, on the other hand, said that the community as a whole was not interested in the birth of ordinary babies, unless it happened that the mother "had not menstruated" (i.e. had not performed the customary puberty ceremonies declaring her attainment

of womanhood), in which case a taboo would have been broken and the whole community affected. It may be that notification of the Chief never took place except in the smaller towns but in any case, if the custom was once practised more generally, it has fallen into disuse today.

3. CUSTOMS AFTER BIRTH

a. Care of Mother and Baby During First Few Days

In all places, the rule is strictly observed that neither the baby nor mother may go out during the week following the delivery. The mother is allowed out into the compound to bath, but the baby may not even leave the room. Bewase informants said that this was because the baby, although 'vaccinated', is still very susceptible to the 'evil eye'.

Although the tradition of using old clothes to wrap the baby during this week is still observed, Akropong informants stated that there is none of the deliberate negligence described by Rattray (c.f.A. .3.a., above), but that, on the contrary, the baby is very well cared for. In the old days, they said, a mixture of the juice of the **afare** leaf (13) with shea butter was used to anoint the infant's body during this first week, but nowadays the

best olive oil is used from the start. There seems, indeed, to be no concern with the possible danger of 'tempting the spirit-mpther to recall the child' (c.f. Rattray) for it is common for the mother and other members of the family to wear white - a public sign of rejoicing - during the first week.

b. Relationship Between Outdooring and Naming Customs

Although a child is very often named at the same time as it and its mother are outdoored, the Twi-people maintain a distinction (such as Rattray reported from Ashanti) between the two customs and have separate names for each: Tay Fi and Adinto. The main practical application of this distinction is that, whereas it is held that Tay Fi (Outdooring) must be performed on the 8th day after the baby's birth, it is considered permissible for Adinto (Naming) to be postponed.

Among the Kyerepong people, this distinction is not so clearly maintained and, in practice, the emphasis seems to be almost entirely on the naming of the child. Thus, except in the case of twins (c.f. c.ii., below), any customs which might be distinguished by the Twi-people as properly a part of Tay Fi are performed by the Kyerepongs on the same day as the naming - however late

that day may be after the child's birth. The Kyerepongs have only one name for the whole custom and this lays the stress on the naming aspect: Abadinto .

For the purposes of clarity, however, we shall adopt the Twi mode of classification and deal under a separate head with those customs which they would classify as a part of Outdooring.

c. Outdooring

i. Day

As has already been stated, Twi people insist that this custom must be carried out on the eighth day after the baby's birth. The Kyerepongs perform it on the same day as the baby is named, which may be later than the eighth (c.f. (d).i.)

ii. Procedure

Akropong informants stated that the universal custom is for the mother to take a bath, using a new sponge and then to don a new white cloth, decorating herself with white clay and beads. The baby is also decorated with white clay and charcoal may be used to 'make-up' its eyebrows. (But they were insistent that the charcoal has no more significance than mascara! There is no idea of 'disguising' the child such as

Rattray described from Ashanti). The ceremony is completed by the mother's enjoying a feast of fowl. This must be provided by the father, even if he has not yet been able to assemble the other gifts necessary before the Naming ceremony can be performed.

Abonse informants added two pieces of information which belong under this heading:

Very early in the morning on which Abadinto is to be performed, the mother's hair is trimmed. This is a sign "that she is free from danger". The same custom may be performed for any person after recovery from serious illness.

At Abonse, twins are given a special 'outdooring' on the very day of their birth. They are carried round the town in a large wooden basin and then returned to the house to undergo the normal eight-day confinement, at the end of which they will be named in the same manner as ordinary children.

iii. Significance

The outdooring customs of this area are clearly concerned with stressing the mother's emergence from danger. Quite apart from the Abonse practice of trimming the mother's

hair, the wearing of white cloth and beads and the use of decorative white clay on mother and child are all universal Ghanaian symbols of victory. Akropong informants expressed it thus: "The mother is being purified from death", and they explained that the mother had done battle (and therefore been in close contact) with death, but now emerges triumphant. The eight days represent the 'danger period' for the mother and, to a lesser extent, for the baby also.

There is, it will be observed, a difference between this interpretation and that given by Rattray for Ashanti. According to Rattray, the main reason for the confinement of the mother and child during the eight days following birth was that these two might be a danger to the community. Among the Twi's today, however, the greatest concern under these circumstances seems to be for the mother.

d. Naming

1. Choice of Name

Asked why they gave a child a further name besides its day-name, Amanokrom informants pointed out the need to "distinguish one Kofi from another Kofi" but then went on to say "We like to hear the names of departed relatives called again". These people do not, however, hold any beliefs in "re-incarnation" in the strict sense, though the belief is

still common that a man receives the ntɔrɔ spirit from his father and passes it on to his children.

The normal procedure when chosing a name is, according to Akropong informants, that the first-born receives the name of the grandfather (or, if a girl, the female equivalent of that name), while the second child receives the name of the grandmother (or its male equivalent). If there exists no equivalent of such names in the requisite gender, then recourse is had to the names of paternal aunts and uncles. In addition to this family-name, if the child is born on a special occasion it may receive a further commemorative name, e.g. 'Afriyee' for a child born on an auspicious occasion - "as when the father has just received promotion". Adukrom informants, however, did not agree that there were any hard and fast rules regarding the choice of name and said that in all cases the father must consult his elders before deciding.

ii. Officiant and People Present

There was no unanimity between the various groups of informants as to who should perform the naming custom. I therefore simply give, without comment, the various answers I received in reply to my question: Who performs the Naming?

Bewase: the father of the child or the father's senior brother.

Manprobi: the child's father if the custom is performed at his own house; but if the child was born at its maternal grandmother's house, then the father must send his sister there to perform the Naming. (Note: this assumes the Naming is being performed at the same time as the Outdooring.)

Akropong: the father appoints an elderly woman - or, failing a suitable woman, a man - of his own abusua.

Adukrom: the person after whom the child is to be named, or, if he is dead, then either a relative of his or the child's own father.

Dawu: the person after whom the child is being named, if a man; if a woman, however, she must appoint a man to do the job for her.

Abonse: the child's grandfather.

Normally, only relatives are invited to the custom. But in the case of important families or if a man and his wife are away from home when their child is born, friends and neighbours also will be welcomed.

iii. Day and Time

As has already been explained, the day of the Naming may often be postponed until the father has had time to collect together all the gifts he must present. If, however, a postponement is made, it will be in multiples of seven days so that the Naming is performed on the same day of the week as that on which the child was born (14).

All informants were agreed that the custom should be performed in the early morning, though specific times given ranged from 5.0 to 8.0 a.m.

iv. Father's Gifts and 'Fee'

The father must provide a sum of money, new cloths and foodstuffs for his wife; and all the articles normally required for the baby's toilet and dressing. The old people at Manprobi said that it was more proper for the man to give his wife a large number of cloths and no actual cash; but most wives today expect cash, though the amount may vary between £2 and £20 (15). Informants at Bewase, Manprobi, Akropong and Adukrom specified, among the toilet articles to be given to the child, one of the father's old cover-cloths (that is, a cloth used for wrapping oneself at night and for casual wear). On this cloth the child would lie, and Bewase informants gave the traditional explanation of this: that thereby some

of the father's personality would pass into the child. According to Kyerepong informants, the father must also provide food for a feast to follow the Naming. The Chief of Abonse added: "...and two tins of palm-wine for the people of the town"; but I had the impression that this was a provision which, however traditional, most fathers conveniently forget!

To supply all these items every time he begat a child would, however, be more than the ordinary farmer could afford and, in point of fact, all my Twi informants conceded that a man need only provide a feast and give the cloths and money to his wife on the occasion of her first child's (or, alternatively, first male child's) Naming. But he must, of course, provide for every new baby's real personal needs.

Finally, over and above the gifts already listed, the father must pay a special sum of money (described by some informants as a 'registration fee') to the mother when the child is named. Eight shillings, twelve shillings and one guinea are standard amounts for this 'fee'.

v. Procedure

Details of procedure given by the different groups of informants varied considerably.

The ceremony as described by those at Akropong is as follows: the officiant first pours libation, calling

upon the abosom of the town; then, taking the baby on his lap, he dips his index finger in the wine or 'rum' from which he has poured libation and touches it thrice on the baby's lips, saying each time: "Your father says you are called X." He then goes on to tell the baby about the character of the person after whom it has been named. Finally, he shows the child the gifts and tells it that these have been presented by its father. This group of informants stressed that their custom was different from the Fante one "because the Fantes use water as well as wine", but another Akropong man told me that he himself used, and had seen other Akropong people use water as well as wine, together with the formula (also used by the Fantes): "Your name is X, water is water; your name is X, wine is wine"(16).

Kyerepong informants at Dawu and Abonse said that they did not practise the touching of the wine or water on the baby's lips at all. Instead the officiant makes the spitting sign of blessing (c.f. Footnote 39 to Chapter II) thrice on the baby's head and says: "If you have come to stay, do not just show yourself and return. You are called X." Kyerepong informants at Adukrom, however, said that they performed both the 'spitting' and the touching of the wine! As an example of the officiant's words during the latter

ceremony these informants gave: "I bless you! Live long so that just as I have lived so long that you have been named after me, you may beget a child and name him after your father. If you are named after a person and do not live long, it is a taboo. We bless you utterly in order that you may live long."(17)

The simplest form of naming was that described by informants at Bewase: the officiant simply announces "The baby is called X." and then pours libation.

As we have seen, in the Twi towns at any rate the father does not have to provide a feast except in the case of his first child. But in any case the bottle from which the libation was poured has been broached and the remainder will now be shared among those present. It is customary also for the visitors to make some gift to the child and Dawu informants stipulated explicitly that the officiant must give the child a sum of money, or a female sheep or goat (to serve as an 'investment').

vi. Current Practice

We have just reviewed descriptions of the naming custom as various groups of people feel that it should be performed(18). But we must now add that Akropong informants estimated that as few as 50% of young couples do in fact bother to follow

the traditional custom. I spoke privately to one young mother who told me that when her last baby was born her husband was away from home and simply wrote her a letter telling her what to call the baby! When I mentioned this case (anonymously, of course) to a group of the town's elders, they naturally expressed their disapproval; but even they, when asked, were prepared to agree that Christian baptism was a perfectly satisfactory equivalent for the traditional naming ceremonies. I gathered, however, that Christian fathers would still be expected to make the traditional gifts to their wives and, as Mr Nketia recounted in his paper on this subject, non-payment of the traditional gifts and cloths may lead to friction between families, - even Christian ones! But, certainly in Akropong (though perhaps to a lesser extent elsewhere), over a century of Christian influence seems to have had the effect of loosening the peoples' attachment to their traditional naming customs.

vii. Significance

At all events, whether with more or less traditional ceremonial, a baby will receive some name or other in addition to its day-name. We have already recorded two reasons for this special naming as given by Amanokrom

informants (c.f. d.i., above), and may now add a third: "A name", they said, "gives a child more status; he will be treated more respectfully after his naming than before."

In considering the significance of Outdooring (c.f. iii., above), we noticed that the people appear to regard this as a custom concerned primarily with the reception back into public life of the mother. It now appears that it is the Naming custom which is particularly concerned with the reception of the baby. Rattray, as we saw, laid particular emphasis on the 8th day Outdooring as marking the beginning of the re-instatement of both mother and child , and there is obviously a sense in which this is still true today. But the over-all impression given is that mother and child each has a custom which is seen as, in a special sense, her and its own. It still remains true, however, that the baby has only begun its progressive initiation to full membership of the community. This is shown clearly by the 'First Sitting-Up' ceremony (see next sub-section).

e. Customs after Naming

The baby now has its own new clothes and toilet articles. It has given signs of its serious intention to stay in this world and has therefore received reciprocal acknowledgement. If a priest was called in to see the

mother and baby through their danger, the father now goes to pay his fees. From six weeks to three months after the birth the mother goes round thanking all those who helped at the time of her delivery. (Christians do this at the time of the child's baptism). Attention now turns from fears about a relapse to interest in the baby's growth. No informants mentioned the custom (recorded by Rattray and Field) of a ceremonial First Feeding from a Metal Spoon, but they did speak of the First Sitting-Up. This, said Akropong informants, is an important occasion, for "it shows that the baby is really joining you". The ceremony is usually performed for boys at two months and for girls at three months. A clever child or other friend of the family is invited to come in and help the baby sit up on its buttocks.

Apart from this, no other 'first time' customs are practised generally today.

C. COMPARISON AND CONCLUSIONS

1. COMPARISON

While remembering what was said in the opening paragraphs of this chapter about the dangers of comparing one type of evidence with another, it seems nevertheless important that we should attempt to record some general impressions as to the

way in which customary practices appear to have altered during the past twenty-five to fifty years. Because of the limitations of the evidence, we cannot make any statements about changes in the detail of ceremonial practice, but it does seem possible to discern a shift in the orientation and emphasis of popular attitudes and behaviour patterns in respect of pregnancy and childbirth.

In the course of our survey, we have noted the increasing influence of modern medical knowledge (personified in the Public Authority midwives) on those to whom such services are available. But it is not this to which I primarily refer, for recourse to the midwife has become, as we have seen, rather an addition to than a substitute for traditional practices. The midwife is playing her part in the change that is taking place, but the change itself is a more far-reaching one: it is a general 'break-away' from fixed communal patterns of behaviour towards a greater individualism of outlook.

This general movement reveals itself in at least four ways:

(a) Only one taboo is found to be generally observed today. Rattray recorded that a woman must observe

the taboos of her husband's ntóro. We cannot state definitely, though it would seem highly probable, that this regulation was once common to all Akan peoples; but in any case taboos of one kind or another are to be found in all primitive communities and it is they which help to bind the community together. The fact that they are almost entirely absent in Akuapem is one indication of the 'break-away' that is taking place.

(b) The choice between obosom and medicine man as 'consultant' during pregnancy appears to be entirely a matter for the individual to decide. We recorded, certainly, in our survey, that in some towns it is the priest of the obosom, in others a medicine man to whom people are normally recommended; but the choice is ultimately the individual's. Furthermore, the very fact that in some places the medicine man is actually preferred to the obosom is of considerable significance. It is the oman- and abusua-obosom who are the traditional guardians of town and family; medicine men, while no new phenomenon, certainly did not have in the past the importance which they appear to have acquired in the eyes of many people today, and they have always been individuals and not institutions in the sense that the abosom with their priests

and priestesses have been.

(c) Today, far more care and attention is given to babies during the first week of their lives than was customary in the past. We have seen how the old custom of deliberately neglecting a baby during the first week has been virtually abandoned today. In the past, concern for the continuation of the family line ('of the name') was paramount; a particular baby might or might not survive the first eight days, but what was really important was that some baby or other should survive: nothing should be done, no premature claims should be made, which might tempt the 'spiritual- authorities' to 're-call' the baby which had just been born; but, on the other hand, if this one did return to the ghost-world, then one's main concern was to see that nothing was done which might prevent the same baby or another one from being sent back to earth a second - or, if necessary, - third or fourth time. It would be wrong to suggest that concern for the continuance of the family line is any less strong today than it was in the past; nevertheless, the fact is that today far more attention is paid to each baby as an individual than was customary in bygone days.

(d) The interest in Outdooring and Naming

as these customs are practised and understood today centres mainly on the individual mother and child. This point has already been brought out in our discussion of the significance of Outdooring and Naming (c.f. Part B: c.iii. & d.vii) and no further comment is necessary.

To what causes should this break-away from communal patterns be attributed? The withdrawal (inevitable in view of the needs of government in a modern state) of much of their old power from traditional authorities has obviously been the greatest general cause. But quite apart from this we can identify at least three particular causes more closely connected with our investigation:-

(a) The fact that, ever since the establishment of the 'Pax Britannica', and more especially since the introduction of good roads and motorised transport, travelling has become the delight of hundreds of thousands of West Africans. This has meant both that Akuapems themselves have been able to wander far from home, and also that many 'foreigners' (especially traders from Northern Ghana and other parts of West Africa) have settled in the Akuapem towns and villages. Both these groups of travellers have been responsible for the introduction of new 'fetishes' and 'fetish-cults (19) to the towns.

These new 'fetishes' have a natural attraction for the people of the towns. In the old days, it is true, there was always a good selection of abosom available; but these were community gods, each with his particular concerns (though some might overlap) and all considered to possess a certain 'esprit de corps'. This meant that if a woman was having difficulties over childbearing or if all her babies were dying in the first days of their lives, she might fairly quickly exhaust the possibilities of the abosom, and, if no improvement in the situation took place, would fall back into apathy and despair. The new 'fetishes', however, bring new hopes: here are some complete 'outsiders' who may not bear a grudge against her as the community's abosom seemed to do; or perhaps the woman is aware that she has transgressed in some way against the community - then it will obviously be more practicable to go to the 'foreign' god right away. Once this sort of process has set in, one can see how a run of lucky co-incidences might bring a foreign fetish such a reputation that his owner may in time achieve a popularity greater than that of the obosom-priest.

(b) Modern medicine and the general rise in standards of hygiene (through the work of sanitary inspectors, improvement

in sewage disposal methods etc.) have also played a part - albeit an indirect one - in encouraging the break-away from traditional practices. These things have been directly responsible for the marked decline in infant mortality rates and the increased chances of survival (implicit therein) of any particular baby. Where there is greater hope of an infant's survival, there interest in it as an individual baby (as distinct from a general desire for the continuance of the family line) increases proportionately. Hence the abandonment of the traditional custom of neglecting a baby during its first week of life and the orientation of the Outdooring and Naming customs away from the community aspect and towards a particular concern for mother and child.

(c) Finally, and especially when we think of the Akuapem Ridge, we cannot neglect the influence of Christianity. It is now generally recognised that the nineteenth century missionaries presented the Gospel in an exceptionally individualistic form; but even apart from this, Christianity has always had (however much some may bemoan the fact) a disruptive effect on society (20). This effect is particularly marked in the case of more primitive societies in which the stress is markedly on a community to which

individuals are seen as in every way subordinate, for, while Christianity also is concerned with the building up of a corporate community, it sees this as a process in which every individual is called to co-operate by a responsible exercise of his power of choice. The preaching of the Gospel has, thus, the effect of encouraging people to become aware of themselves as individuals capable of exercising this power of choice and of standing, at least in some things, 'on their own feet', independently of the community as a whole. It is not only - and herein lies the risk which missionaries must take - the actual converts who are influenced in this way by the Christian preaching. The concept of man as a responsible individual is only, as it were, of the psychological prolegomena to the Gospel itself and there will be many who accept and act on this idea without going on to practice that consecration (to which the Gospel itself calls them) of their newly-found power of choice to the will of God. Even those who never hear the new teaching at all will be influenced by it, both through the example of those who have heard it, and also by the fact that if some members of a community start acting in an independant fashion the solidarity of the whole is affected

and everyone is forced, to some extent, to take independant action. Hence there arises a situation in which a growing number of people learn to taste the delights of independant choice and action while only a very few have found any criteria to guide them in the exercise of these powers; still less has the aggregate of individuals found the key to the force which might remould it into a new community.

2. CONCLUSIONS

From what has been said it will be evident that there exists in Akuapem today no clear-cut confrontation of the ancient with the modern or of Christianity with paganism. Instead, we find a situation in which all these elements rub uneasy shoulders. Obviously, such a position is both unstable and unsatisfactory. Some might even regard it as tragic that 'ancient' and 'modern' methods should still vie with one another, that the 'modern' has not 'emancipated' the people from their old ways. But the Christian need not take so pessimistic a view of a situation which in fact contains within itself the seeds, the potentiality, of great promise.

Over the past few decades, the 'Western Churches'

have become increasingly aware that the separation of religion and life, of the 'secular' from the 'sacred', which has taken place in the thought and practice of Western Christendom has been little short of catastrophic. Today, every effort is being made to re-bridge these gulfs, and a particularly striking instance of this has been the coming together of groups of those concerned with spiritual, mental and bodily health: priests, psychiatrists and doctors. In other words, we are just beginning to realise today that the individual human being is an extremely complex unity and that when he is sick he needs to be cured and made whole in every aspect of his person.

If, in the light of these considerations, we look again at the situation on the Akuapem Ridge, we must at least recognise that in their continued recourse to the abosom and to the medicine man these people are giving proof of an awareness (confused and inarticulate though it may be) of the interrelationship of the physical and the spiritual in man. These people still realise vividly what the European tends to ignore: that in conception and childbirth there is indeed an element of mystery, of the numinous.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. A clear instance of such an adaption taking place is to be found in the customs of the Krobo ('Otofo') settlers in Osu (cf Chapter VI). These people, feeling perhaps that some deference should be paid to their new neighbour, the sea, introduced into their initiation rite for girls a ceremony in which the girls jump off a rock into the sea.

2. It is interesting to note that the girls of Otofo families in Osu also wear the black and white beads (which are normally the prerogative of priests or priestesses) during their initiation rite.

3. In Akan psychology, the ntóro is that part of himself (sometimes described by anthropologists as the 'seminal soul' or 'totemic spirit') which a father communicates to his children. It is to be distinguished from the abusúá or 'body-blood soul' which the mother passes on. Both words may also be used to refer respectively to the two groups to which a person belongs: his father's ntóro ('family') and his mother's abusúá ('clan'). (cf. Parrinder, West African Psychology: Lutterworth, 1951:p.20)

4. The water must not be boiled, Rattray explains (Ashanti; O.U.P, 1923: p. 54), because water is of divine origin: "...it comes from Onyame, the greatest of the gods...." and "To boil water is to kill it." The new-born baby needs "...all the help it can get (sc. to 'tie it down' to this earth!) from the terrestrial spirits and abosom."
Per contra, at death, a corpse is usually washed in boiled water

5. Ntetea; Oyiniedi. Neither Rattray nor Field offers a literal translation of these titles for the Outdooring ceremony and I have been unable to trace their derivation.

6. cf. a similar practice among some Ewe's today: Chapter II.B.3. / b.xi

7. There are, according to informants, two gods specially fitted for this work: Fofie and Nante Nyame. The former is the most popular. He is said to have descended on the town when it was founded four or five generations ago and his special responsibilities are for war, sickness and pregnancy.

8. I myself met a young woman who had been dedicated in this way to the god of her home town. When she grew up, she travelled to Takoradi where she became a Christian and took up petty-trading. But business kept on going wrong and she was constantly subject to fits of dizziness. One day she consulted a 'soothsayer' in Takoradi who told her that a god to whom she had been dedicated was calling her to serve him. She returned home forthwith (incidentally, leaving behind a 'bad debt' of £500!) and is today priestess of the god.

9. Akropong informants estimated that 75% of births now take place in the maternity clinic.

10. In this respect it is interesting to note that, according to Christaller's Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language, odwen (camwood) leaves are sometimes used in preparing a blood-staunching medicine. Among the Ewe people we found the belief that the placenta is, at the time of birth, a living thing (cf. Chapter II B.2.d.ii, fourth paragraph), and perhaps the Twi's also have the same idea: the placenta must be prevented from losing blood.

The old man at Manprobi quoted the saying "Tam akyiwade - The placenta determines the fate", but unfortunately I did not have the opportunity to ask him to explain this further.

11. Charcoal is a very popular prophylactic against the 'evil eye'. For example, if a woman wishes to carry food through the street, and fears that someone may look on it with an evil eye, she takes the precaution of putting a few lumps of charcoal on top of the food before setting out. Charcoal powder is also

mixed with schnapps, akpeteshie (locally distilled gin) and other liquors to be taken as a medicine for a wide variety of complaints diagnosed as due to witchcraft of one sort or another.

'Vaccination', as here described, is not reserved to babies but may also be administered to adults believed to be under a witch's spell. I also knew one young man whose grandmother insisted on his being thus 'vaccinated' before he left Ghana for a course of study abroad.

12. The Ghanaian for April, 1959, carried an article on Naming the Child as practised among the Fante people, in which it was said that as soon as the baby was born people came to "pay homage" to it. Akropong informants assured me that the idea of 'paying homage' to a newly-born baby would never occur to Twi people!

13. Afare, according to informants, is a particularly fat and juicy leaf. I cannot find the word in the Dictionary.

14. Dr Westermann (Die Glidyi-Ewe in Togo, Berlin 1935; p.8), writing of the adoption of Twi Day Names by the Ewe people and the use of these names in greetings, says "...the greeting name is in fact the name of the protecting spirit which presides over vorsteht this day". If this was the origin of Day Names, it would explain why the customs should be performed on the baby's birth-day - for it would obviously be propitious for the spirit whose name the baby bore to preside over the customs. But none of my contemporary informants offered such an explanation.

15. At Abonse, the amount of the father's cash gift to the mother is fixed at £2.12s. Informants added, moreover, that the wife may agree to return the money to her husband in private after the celebrations!

16. This second informant was a middle-aged man, whereas the people who did most of the talking in the former group were an elderly man and women. It may well be, therefore, that the older form of the Akropong custom was as the couple described it; but it would appear that, today, no clear distinction can be drawn in practice between a 'Fante' and an 'Akropong' form of the custom.

17. These words are such as might be spoken at the naming of a boy. Informants here (at Adukrom) added that, in the old days, if the baby was a boy, a gun was put into its hands and fired!

18. With reference to the question of inter-tribal marriages, Akropong informants said that in all cases the custom of the baby's mother's tribe should be performed.

19. Northeners, Nigerians and other immigrants naturally like to bring their own gods with them when they travel far from home; but many Twi people also, having come across 'powerful' spirit on their travels, often purchase such 'fetishes' and bring them back to their home towns. I met one man who had been a lorry driver. While travelling in the Northern Region, he had come across what struck him as particularly fine 'fetish'. He used up all his savings to purchase it from its owner and learnt from him also the dances which he would have to perform in order to 'consult' the 'fetish'. Now he is back in his home town and 'doing a roaring trade' as priest of a new cult and medicine-man available for general consultation.

20. cf. Acts of Apostles, 17.6.

PROJECTED CONTINUATION OF THIS REPORT

CHAPTER IV : EWE PUBERTY CUSTOMS

will summarise and discuss (in a manner similar to that employed for Birth Customs in the preceding chapters) data concerned with Ewe customs performed to mark certain stages in the general process of growing-up of boys and girls. It will be suggested that, in the case of the boys, the ceremonies still performed at intervals may once have formed part of a recognisable 'puberty custom'.

The main points covered will be:

Circumcision of Boys

Presentation of a Gun to the young man and other Analogous Ceremonies (e.g. apprenticeship)

Assessment of Young Peoples' Maturity and First Steps towards their Marriage and Independence.

Customs Performed in Connection with a Girl's First Menstrual Period.

CHAPTER V : TWI PUBERTY CUSTOMS

will summarise and discuss (in similar manner to Chapter IV) evidence relating to Twi Puberty Customs. These are almost exclusively concerned with girls. The declining enthusiasm of practice on the Akuapem Ridge will be contrasted with the relatively vigorous practice of an Ashanti town.

CHAPTER VI : GA INITIATION RITES

will discuss a wide range of Ga customs concerned with the initiation of girls and boys, women and men to 'higher status'. The suggestion will be made that what were originally puberty customs have acquired new applications as general initiation rites for various comparatively exclusive and semi-religious groups.

/SUMMARY CONTINUES...

CHAPTER VII : CUSTOM AND SACRAMENT

will examine the relationship of the traditional birth and puberty customs to Christian baptism and confirmation. The views of informants on this subject will be given first; the question will then be debated on practical and theological grounds.

CHAPTER VIII : CHRISTIAN ACTION

The report will conclude with some practical suggestions as to the sort of action the Christian churches might take in response to the situation assessed in the foregoing chapters.

APPENDIX A.

ORIGINAL (VERNACULAR) VERSIONS OF PRAYERS, PHRASES, &c. QUOTED IN THE MAIN TEXT.

KEY:- o= ɔ e= ɛ f= ʃ n= ŋ s= ʃ v= ʋ

CHAPTER I

B.1.d.i. Introductory Libation (from Osu)

Nilmei ke Naamei! nye ba hea eko nyenua;
Kusum ni wobaa fee ne ni nyeke dzoomo dzoo adzoo wo.

B.1.d.iii. Words Spoken During Lifting-Up of Baby (from Teshi)

Woke bo miitsoo hulu ke nyontsene wo nwei ke sikpon;
ohie aba mesi ohie aba gbo dzen.

B.2.i. Introductory Libation (as given by Mr E.A. Ammah in his unpublished article. No vernacular text is given in his published booklet.)

Nmedzi asime? nmedzi asi Dzu. Nilmei adzu, Naamei adzu. Nmene gbo ni bato wo le woke le baatsoo Tsotsoobi. Eyi abagbo dzen; nyehea daa nee eko nyenua, ni nyedzoa le.

B.2.ii. Words Spoken at Lifting-Up of Baby

(as given by Mr E.A. Anteh:)

Miidzie o kpo
Miitsoo hulu, Tsotsrobi, nunemo ke kooyoo edzwe le.
Oyi abagbo dzen.

(as given by Mr E.A. Ammah in unpublished article:)
Nmedzi asime? nmedzi asi Dzu. Nilmei adzu, Naamei adzu. Na! nmene gbo ni bato wo le woke le miitsoo Tsotsoobi.

B.2.vi. Blessing (Main Prayer)

given by:	(a) Dr Field	(b) E.A. Ammah	(c) Osu Informant
1.	Tswa, tswa, tswa, omanye aba.	Tswa, tswa, tswa, omanye aba.	Tswa, tswa, tswa, omanye aba.
2.	Wo gbe kome?	Tswa, tswa, omanye aba.	
3.	Tswa, omanye aba.	Tswa, omanye aba.	Tswa, omanye aba.
4.		Woseli yi ati.	Woseli yi ati.
5.		Woblol yi ati.	Woblol yi ati.
6.	(cf. line 30)	Wobole kutu wokpe.	Wobole kutu wokpe.
7.	(cf. line 31)	Wodze bu wodze nu.	
8.	(cf. line 32)	Woye wonu wokodziano adzo wo.	Woye ni wono wokodziano adzo wo.
9.	Gbo ni ba ne, ese tu.	(cf. line 14)	Gbo ni ba ne, ese tu.
10.	(cf. line 15)	(cf. line 15)	Ehie fann.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

	(a)	(b)	(c)
11.	(cf. line 27)	(cf. line 16)	Eyi abagbo dzen
12.	(cf. line 29)	Gbo ni ba le etse yi wala.	
13.	(cf. line 28)	Enye yi wala.	
14.	(cf. line 9)	Esee tuu.	Esee tuu.
15.	Ehie fann.	Ehie fann.	Ehie fann.
16.	(cf. line 27)	Eyi abagbo dzen.	(cf. lines 11 & 40)
17.	Ebatsu nii ehã etse.		Ebatsu nii ehã etse.
18.	Ebatsu nii ehã enye.		Ebatsu nii ehã enye.
19.	Eka dzu.		
20.	Eka fõ.		
21.	Wekumei abii wonõ fa nii wo fa le.	Wekumei wonaa faanii wofa le.	Ni weku nabii ana fanii ni ameke fale.
22.		Ebatsu ehã wo ni woye.	
23.		Esee aba harann.	
24.		Eko ata si ni eko aba.	
25.		Eke edin ba, eke eyen eya.	
26.	Eke ewabii enumo abatsu nii ni eye.		
27.	Eyi abagbo dzen.	(cf. line 16)	(cf. lines 11 & 40)
28.	Enye yi wala.	(cf. line 13)	
29.	Etse yi wala.	(cf. line 12)	
30.	Ke' wobole kutu wona akpesi.	(cf. line 6)	(cf. line 6)
31.	Ke' wodze bu, wodze nu no.	(cf. line 7)	
32.	Ke' woye wodzu wokodzii anoadzowo.	(cf. line 8)	(cf. line 8)
33.	Ke' wona futu le, ayilon.		
34.	Ke' wona tu, le enyo dzin.		
35.	Gã humi le koyo tswa ni owieo owoo mii.	(cf. Sub-section B.2.v.)	Humi bile koyo tswa dani ewlo.
36.	Ona minnako.	" " " "	Ona hu onako.
37.	Onu minnuko.	" " " "	Onu hu onuko.
38.	Gã humi malee.		
39.	Ke' okasi le dzweno onitsumo he.		
40.	(cf. line 27)	(cf. line 16)	Oyi abagbo dzen.
41.		(cf. text from B,2,11, above)	Agoo! Nmene me? Nmene Dzu. Niimei Dzu, Naamei Dzu.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

(from Denu)
Amevõwo toe. Míato nye flemla

B.3.b.viii. Words Spoken at Throwing of Water on Roof (from Denu)
Mikle tohono, mikle anyigba (miawoe nye tatowo lo): neyi gbeme ne tsi foe menye doletèa deke ne o.

B.3.b.xi. Words Spoken at Holding-Up of Carrying-Cloth (from Dzodze)
Hodzedo, hodota, hoyixo.

B.3.b.xvi. Outdooring Prayers

(from Mafi-Dugame)
Mawu Sodza kple esroa anyigba: amesi mieqo de mí la míeda akpe na mi; be miana devia nano anyí ne wòatsi, ne mágáku o, ne woakù tsi ne míawo míano.
Togbe Kolie kple Avakpe, mi xo aha no, ne miadze agbagba akpe de mía nti be amedzro si va mía gbo la, nano mía gbo aku tsi na mí míano
Togbe-gbe (alo Mama-gbe), xo aha na no ne nakpe de mía nti be amedzro si va mía gbo la, woano mía gbo aku tsi míano.

(from Mebiawe)
Anyigba-madzofli; Mawu-Odzobo - netui kplakplakpla axo adzo - Klu nyui xoto, Kosi nyui xoto - ne etem mate wò, ne enam mana wò; Osefia, Adofia; Ezu be yewono gbede tu nu, ade no akpokpo dzi; Adanua yewokpa 'ti kpa da; Etogbe zikpui, ezi di zi; Kolie ame trõ; Veno madógò, atsuno-tse-no; Avakpe, tonudayi, egbe kple gbemafe; Matsevia adido afo glomoe; Aklakpa, Todze; Akpo dzedam, kumka bleponi, konu kotoe abe aguto ene, Toxonui, awlosu; eyata vi si wodzi nam la, mele edem de go le wofe nuse me.
Dzoduameto megakpo naneke le egbo o.
Adzeto megakpo naneke le egbo o.
Ne amea de be yeakpo nane le devia gbo la , ku ne wu amea.

(from Bato)
Agoo! ://3 Togbewo miatowo enye flenyi me mìaa ://3 Nyitso vinye srõ fofu eye Mawu kpe de enuti; edzii loo egbe nkeke enyiegbe. Meyo togome kple nogome be madee de go. Egbe vitate tso aha tukpa eye be mado gbe da na mia Tonu, Danyiewo, Agbadzo, Tsimo, Atigo, Dzole, Mawu, Egbe, Tuta, Baa, Ga, Atlebale, Koui kple Vui. Miho aha no.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

(from Hohoe)

Mawu Sogblae, Mawu Hagbonotsui, see woade Mawugã gbo. Togbewo petee hã nasee, be devi si wodzia woadi akpe de mia nu woano agbe, le ehawo dome be dzogbe võe deke nagava edzi o, be ne amea de akpoe nkuvoe amea azu anyigba devia azo edzi.

Le Togbewo petee kple Mawugã fe nko me, võe neno didife nyvlea neno devia gbo.

(from Ho)

Agoo! ://3 Mawu gãa nesee.

Agoo! Menye võ to o 'A' kple 'B' dzi vi eye wodzi 'C'. Miawoe be yewo fe nofe megaqi gbolo o 'D' fo fu eye wodzi vi, to eve, etõ mese o. Egbe ametsitsiwo va kpe be woaqe devia qe xexe, eye wotso aha de asi nam be matso ado gbe da na mi. Miawoe ano eta eye míawo míano egome. Kusekuse ne miano aha sia qe devia, kple dzilawo dzi. Wofe lãme nano sesie. Devia netsi da afo ketu. Dzilawo nadzi eve, nadzi eto ne miawo. Xoqome alo agbalime nevẽ menye võ to o. O Mawu gã, aha woe nye esi. Kusekuse...

(from Adidome - translated at Footnote 58a)

O Mawu xo aha nanu, Togbe Kotie, Togbe Avakpe, Mama-lino kple míade trowo mi va xo aha miano. Menye nya adeke ye o, miano vi Kofi esroa yenye Akosiwa ye wode wonoewo eye le mia fe didi ta la, nyonua efofu eye wodzi vi sia kpom miele egbea. Abe alesi wòle ene la, mele devi la qem qego egbea eye mele kukudem na mikatã be mia kpe de devi la nuti be wòatsi eye efe lã me nasẽ eye wòakpo ga akpo afea ta.