

Children's Stories:

Conditions under which story was given: In the children's compound at 7 p.m. in a boarding school, with one child in class

CHILD TRAINING IN SISSALA

Introduction: I wish you to tell us your favourite story, so that I can tell it to children in the schools at Accra.

CULTURE.

CHILD'S FAVORITE STORY:

by

J. EGALA

There was a time when there was a chief and he had a farm. He owned everything that is in the world. There was a dove in a cage on the farm. When the chief went one of his sons to the farm to meet the bird and

There was a boy who had a dove in a cage on the farm. When the chief went one of his sons to the farm to meet the bird and

When the boy heard the news he went away to tell his father that something was in the farm going to eat him up. The chief called his horse and went to the farm. When the chief saw the dove the dove flew away and the chief ran away. When the chief returned home he called his son to the house and asked him what was going on. The chief told him that there was something in the farm eating his dove. When the boy said to the chief he called the dove and brought it and he was given as much as he wanted to eat. That is the end of my story.

Introduction: I wish you to tell us your favourite story, so that I can tell it to children in the schools at Accra.

## APPENDIX VI.

### Children's Stories:

Conditions under which story was given: In the children's compound at 7 p.m. in a boarding school, with one child (a girl) 7 years of age.

Interviewer: I wish you to tell me your favourite story so that I tell it to children in the schools at Accra.

### Child's favourite story:

Once upon a time there was a chief and he had a farm. He sowed everything that is in the world. There was a dove in a tree on the farm. When the chief sent one of his sons to the farm he heard the bird singing:-

"Anaya kee kee do, anaya kee

Ka kutia din a gulagula tso di

Awuya gulaa".

When the boy heard the song he went away to tell his father that something was in the farm going to eat him up. The chief saddled his horse and came to the farm. When the chief came to the farm the dove sang again and the chief ran away. When the chief returned home an orphan boy came to the house and asked him what was wrong. The chief told him that there was something in his farm eating his millet. When the boy went to the farm he killed the dove and brought it and he was given so much money that he became rich. That is the end of my story.

Interviewer: That is an interesting story and the children in Accra will like to hear it. Can you tell me another story of a girl you think is bad?

Child: Yes, I can.

A Bad Girl.

This bad girl is called Hayere. She is mad. She kills people with knives. She abuses people who have done nothing to her. She was here and she ran away to Budzan.

Interviewer: Do you know of anyone she killed?

Child: No, but she once chased us in the town with a knife. She would have killed us if we did not run.

Interviewer: You were wise to have run away. Can you tell me a story of a good girl?

Child: Yes, there are many good girls in the town.

A good girl.

They are many. Lareba is a good girl. She is a red girl. She buys pietos for me. She is good because she is kind to me.

Interviewer: Good. What would you wish if you were granted one wish in the world?

Child: Money.

Interviewer: Can you tell me how you look like so that I write your description down to read to some children who would like to hear about you?

Child's self description

I am red. I am a small girl. My head is small and I am lean. I have a small mouth with white teeth. I bathe well. I like rice.

Interviewer: You have done it very well indeed. Now tell me what you can remember from the time you were born up to the present.

Child: I was born at Tumu in my mother's house at Zongo.

There are about six or seven people in my house. When I was about six years old I went with my mother to Po and lived there for about a month. Before I came to school I worked for my mother. I used to fetch water from the well and I washed pots. When I came to school I was about six and a half years old. I like to be in school.

Interviewer: You have done very well indeed and I think we have to stop now, but tomorrow I shall come with some papers so that you do some drawings for me to show to your friends at Accra.

Condition under which story was given: In one of the classrooms with the child alone; a boy of 7 years of age.

Interviewer: Could you tell me any story you like best?

Child's favourite story: Once upon a time there was a leopard. He went to the farm. He went and killed a dove. He was coming when he saw two women. He asked them to give him water to drink. They took the water from the river and the calabash broke. The leopard said that they must bring the water in the broken calabash. He gave the dove to the women. The women went and gave it to their mother and father but they refused to take it. Then the women began to sing:

"Gbēke e gbēke e, what shall you wish for if you were

Tfena la e ka kɔmo

Na so beet fɛɛ. for a black".

Tfena la e ka kɔmo, you just describe yourself to me

Nko so beet fɛɛ. now is that. I am black.

Tfena la e ka kɔmo".

Then the women went and told the leopard that their parents had refused the dove. The leopard told them to throw the dove away and they did so. That is why there are many doves in the world now. If they had killed the dove there would not have been doves in the world.

Interviewer: Now I wish you to tell me another story about a bad boy you know or can think of.

Child: I know of a bad boy in our village. His father is the chief of our village. He always goes round stealing people's guinea-fowl eggs. He was once caught and brought to the chief. He was beaten and we all went there to see. I went there with my father and he told me not to do such things. The boy always steals and he is always beaten.

Interviewer: Stealing is not good but has he stopped now?

Child: No. He ran away to Wa.

Interviewer: I suppose you know of a good boy, could you tell me about one?

Child: Batong is a good boy. He helps his father on his farm and does not steal. He use to give me some yams from his father's farm. He does not beat small children. I like him very much.

Interviewer: You have done very well to have told me these interesting stories; but what would you wish for if you were granted a wish?

Child: I would wish for 'a smock'.

Interviewer: Now, could you just describe yourself to me?

Child: I am short. My nose is flat. I am black.

Interviewer: Is that all you can say about yourself?

All right, now tell me your life story.

Child: I was born in Tumu in my father's house. Some people from Danye came and took me to that village. I was not as happy there as in Tumu. We went to Danye for fetish. They gave me money. One of my brothers has gone to Obuasi and two are in the house. I used to go to the farm and look after fowls. Balon put me in school.

Interviewer: You have done very well indeed, but I shall come tomorrow to let you draw for me some of the things you like.

## PREFACE.

My thanks are due to my Tutor, Mr. J. G. Oddoye for reading through my thesis and giving me valuable suggestions at the early stages of my work.

It would have been most difficult for me to obtain information if the chief of Tumu, who understood the idea of my research, had not helped to explain the purpose to his elders. My sincere thanks go to him and Alehen, one of his elders, whose assistance was most valuable.

I am also grateful to the headmaster of the Tumu Primary Boarding school and his staff for their willing co-operation and to my grandmother for answering some of my embarrassing questions.

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J. Egala.

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# CHILD TRAINING IN SISSALA CULTURE

## INTRODUCTION

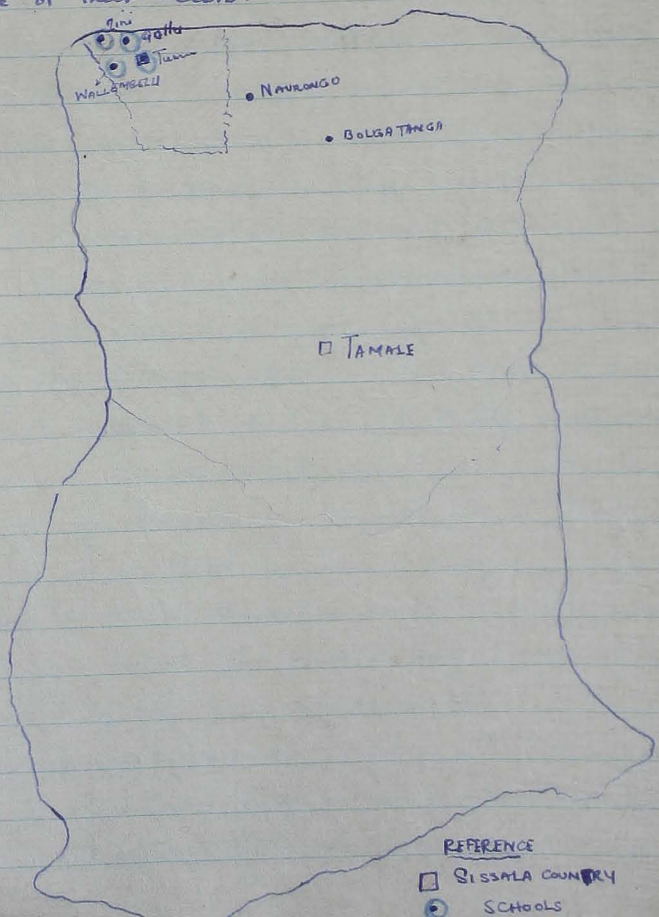
The Sissala tribe is found at the north western corner of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. (see map attached) Prior to the advent of the Europeans, this tribe was subject to various Iambarima raids for slaves for the "Slave Trade" which was then carried on in many parts of Africa. The tribe was finally saved by the British when they defeated the Iambarimas and drove their leader Bababe into the French territory. The results of these slave raids are the present sparse population of the Sissala country.

The Sissalas are engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry and have to face a long dry season followed by a short rainy season. The climatic conditions make their agricultural pursuits rather hazardous and they have to work hard under these conditions if they are to survive. Like most backward people, incapable of understanding the natural phenomena around them, they deify nature, fearing and worshipping it and at the same time describing it in terms of themselves. The development of magical beliefs is an attempt to explain the reasons for the natural phenomena that they see about them. The magical and religious beliefs are worked into elaborate folkways and taboos that control the conduct of individual men through the fear of the consequences of not behaving in certain ways.

Family in the sense of husband, wife and children alone living together, does not exist among the Sissalas. The Sissala family comprises all male blood relations living in the same compound and working on the same family farm. The oldest of them all is the head of the family and by virtue of his position has control over all family properties. He satisfies the needs of all the other relatives in the family provided they work on the family farm. The adults live in separate rooms

in a large compound and their children are generally brought up together to ensure the unity of the large family. Their training is directed by the family and guided by the aim to induct them into the customs and life of the group in order to preserve folkways. Quite explicit rules are formulated concerning the important activities of life: the duties of children to parents: the relationship between the sexes: loyalty to elders and leaders: taboos against certain food stuffs: the accepted interpretation of natural phenomena, and the participation in religious rites and ceremonies.

With this picture at the back of their minds, the <sup>people</sup> (tribe) try to bring up their children in the image of their elders.



## CHAPTER I.

### ATTITUDE TOWARDS HAVING CHILDREN.

Marriage among the Sissala tribe is undertaken primarily for the purpose of having children. Having children is considered as a means of increasing the labour force on the farm and of keeping one's family line from becoming extinct. The father of many children commands respect and is respected in society since the children contribute potential wealth and the male elements, would when necessary, rally to protect him and at times the society at large. Such a father need not do much work at home.

Since children are considered as constituting a labour force, they are regarded as assets. Hence the more of them one has the better. The fact that the more of them there are the more mouths there are to feed is hardly realized, and even if it were realized it is never considered a problem since they themselves always produce the food. Female children are equally welcome in numbers for they serve as means of obtaining money and cattle when they marry. The people moreover believe that children are given to parents by God and it would be sinful to refuse them. There are, however, some children who are undesirable and must be got rid of. Such children include those born with teeth or with one eye and who must be destroyed immediately.

Childlessness is regarded as a curse among the Sissala people. The fact that a couple have no children is regarded as proof that they are bad people and they are being punished with childlessness by God. There are, therefore, no devices for overcoming sterility, but it is strongly believed that one can find the causes of sterility by consulting the soothsayers who could find out from one's ancestral spirits, who might then communicate to the soothsayer what he or the barren woman should do to overcome her

sterility. There are, on the other hand no devices for limiting the family. These would be quite unnecessary in any case since children are the gifts of the Gods and are assets rather than liabilities.

There are no arrangements for illegitimate children. The marriage system is such that such children are rarely ever found. According to this tribe a village is composed of members of the same clan and are supposed not to inter-marry. Wives are therefore sought from other clans or villages. It is difficult therefore to have children with a woman without marrying her according to customary law. Women who are married are forbidden to have sexual inter-course in their home towns.

The case of orphans is the responsibility of the head of the large family. Should there be an orphan, he gives him to one of his wives and the child is treated kindly by all the relatives of his parents. Adoption of children is only undertaken when a woman dies immediately after giving birth or during the first few months of giving birth to the child. If the woman should die immediately after birth, the baby is taken to the grave and the sextons place it by the grave. The dead mother is placed in the grave and the sextons speak to the baby saying, "If you wish to live, you may roll away from the grave, but if you wish to go with your mother you may roll towards the grave". If the baby should roll away from the grave it is taken away and cared for by one of the husband's other wives. If it should roll towards the grave it is buried alive with the mother. This is done when the baby is less than

a day old at the time of the mother's death. If it is about two or three days old when the mother dies then it is adopted by one of the women in the family.

#### PRE-NATAL PERIOD.

The typical feeling of a pregnant woman is one of happy expectation of a child if she has been faithful to her husband. If she should have sexual inter-course with any other man, then there is fear of hardship or even death at birth. It is believed among the Sissala tribe that the husband is the rightful person to have a child with his wife and if any other person should help him in doing so, the wife has to confess before the child comes into the world. Should the wife refuse to confess it is believed she would die. Cases have been cited in which pregnant women died because they refused to confess of their disloyalty to their husbands.

Pregnancy is considered a natural process at one stage or the other in the life of a woman and so there is no definite change introduced into the mode of life of the pregnant woman. She is supposed to go about her duties normally. The local midwives insist upon this and their reason being that it reduces the amount of "bleeding" during child birth. This is probably a means of ensuring that the pregnant woman does some exercises. Then again, since pregnancy is not regarded as something extraordinary, the pregnant woman is not given any special diet and she feeds with the other females in the large family.

From about the seventh month of pregnancy and onwards, the expectant mother is not allowed to do hard work. She should not lift heavy weights nor should she bend downwards and remain in that position for a long time. When she sits she must stretch her legs out and never be in a position which will bring pressure on the

abdomen. Marital intercourse must stop during this period that is from the seventh month.

To ensure the well-being of the unborn child, the expectant mother must be on the look out and not cross the trail of a snake. If she does, it is believed the child will have many small illnesses during the early months after birth. She must avoid coming into contact with monkeys whether dead or alive since doing so, it is believed, would make the child look like one when born.

Some husbands warn their wives never to allow ugly people to walk behind them. The pregnant woman is forbidden to be present at another pregnant woman's Labour. It is the belief that if she does she may abort.

If it is the woman's first child, no one may draw her attention to the fact that she is pregnant unless a ceremony, as follows, has been performed. The husband, after consulting a soothsayer, selects one of his sisters to come and pour water on the pregnant woman. She arrives from her husband's village secretly and enters the brother's compound without the brother's wife seeing her. In the night, when all is quiet, she enters her brother's room where he is asleep with his wife. Waking the brother quietly she bids him move aside. She then empties a calabash of water over the woman saying as she does so, "Ia mi nuy ay tia mi t'ua." (Take my oil and give me my seeds.)

Next morning, the sister twists a dawadawa fibre belt which she gives to the woman to put round her waist. This may not be removed until

the day of birth. Before this ceremony, the pregnant woman may have beads round her waist and the removal of these according to the custom makes free development of the child possible during the period of pregnancy. After the ceremony those who have the right to play with her (e.g. husband's brothers and sisters) will laugh at her and draw her attention to her condition and call her a thief.

The husband has yet to perform another customary ceremony for the well-being of the unborn child. This time the ceremony is connected with the wife's family. Immediately after the ceremony of "Splashing Water", a man from the husband's family is sent to the wife's village to inform her parents that their daughter is pregnant. The messenger has to take along tobacco and kola-nuts to announce the news. The woman's parents get ready food prepared from beans and the husband's parents also prepare food from millet flour together with a lot of meat, a pot of pits and a pot of honey. On a date appointed by the wife's parents, women from both villages carry these articles mentioned above and meet half-way between the two villages. A boy of about seven years of age leads the carriers of the articles of food from the husband's home. The pregnant woman follows immediately after this boy. Another boy of about the same age heads the party from the woman's home. When both parties meet, the two boys are made to wrestle and always the boy from the husband's home puts down the one from the wife's home. This signifies that he has taken the child from the wife's parents for the husband's and his parents. Then follows the exchange of the articles of food. When they return home the husband is free to feel that all is well and he is sure of having a healthy baby.

From this time onwards the husband is prohibited from destroying the life of any animal or insect. Even

when he sees a snake coming into the house he must call some one else to kill it. It is believed that if he kills any animal or insect his wife will give birth to a dead baby. If, however, he is a hunter, he is permitted to kill bush animals with his gun. In such a case he eats the boiled liver and intestines of the animals with a mixture of medicine with his pregnant wife.

BIRTH

The expectant mother does not look forward to labour pains and the period is really dreaded. Indeed the whole family is plunged into a state of terrifying suspense during labour pains. Since anaesthetics are not used - they are in fact unknown - labour pains are looked upon by wife and husband as a matter of life and death. The husband and all the other members of the family look out <sup>for</sup> ~~for~~ soothsayers to tell them what to do to help the expectant mother. The suspense is so great that no food is prepared for the rest of the family until the woman gives birth. The elderly people in the family remain outside in front of the compound with solemn faces. They may remain outside even through out the night if labour should continue overnight.

At birth, the midwife, who is generally an old lady with two or three elderly women, is present in the room with the expectant mother. The midwife is not trained for her work but has learnt her art through the experience of child bearing herself. Birth may take place in any room in the large family compound. As soon as the child is born, one of the women assisting the midwife gives an alarm in the form of a yell - a sound very much like the whistling of

a train - announcing the arrival of the child. Then, one of the women goes out to the men waiting outside the compound and informs the father of the sex of his new born baby.

After birth, mother and child are never separated. They sleep in the same room and on the same mat. The mother and the baby remain indoors for three days in the case of a boy and four days in the case of a girl. During this period, the mother undergoes a cruel method of bathing. The bathing is conducted by the midwife assisted by the two elderly women who helped her at birth. The mother is led by the midwife to the bath room where a calabash of boiling water is kept ready. The mother is seated on a stool and her legs are held astride by the two elderly women. The midwife uses a small calabash with which she throws the hot water into the mother's sexual organ. After this most painful procedure, her stomach is pressed all over with a rag dipped into the hot water. When all is over a cloth is tied tightly round the waist and the stomach. This process is repeated morning and evening for three (days) or four days according to the sex of the child, and is regarded as a means of getting the remaining blood in the woman's womb completely out.

Her coming out-doors for the first time is made an occasion for the following ceremony. Soon after the birth of the child the husband sets out for the wife's village, taking with him a white cock or hen according to the sex of the child. He must do everything in complete silence and must not look behind neither must he give way to anyone he meets on the road. He walks straight to the wife's parents' house and remains standing in the compound until the father-in-law or his brother comes to take the fowl from his hand. Some medicine is handed to him - "Kantory lueuy"

(fairy medicine) - and he returns again in silence and places the medicine near the head of the baby in the room.

On the third or fourth day as the case may be, when every one is asleep, when (even) there is dead silence with <sup>not</sup> even a dog barking ~~or~~ or any one coughing, a ladder is set up against the wall of the hut. (The tops of these huts are roofed flat with earth). The mother of the infant climbs on to the flat roof and bathes her arms and breast with a concoction made from the medicine which the husband had brought from the wife's village. Next, the younger sister of the husband's mother climbs onto the roof while another woman from his mother's village stands below the ladder holding the infant. This female addresses the woman on the roof saying, "The infant wants to go on to the roof" and hands over the child. The mother on the roof then says, "The child wants to enter the room" and hands over the child. This performance is repeated three or four times according to the sex of the child and at the last time it is bathed on the roof with the medicine. It is then taken back into the hut and in future mother and child may come out freely from their room into the compound yard.

A week or two after birth the baby has to be given a name. A sacrifice is made to the "Lelia" (ancestral shinos). If the infant is supposed to be the reincarnation of an ancestor it is carried to a special room in which the ancestral shrines reside. There it is held in the arms by the man in charge of the shrines. He addresses the spirits saying, "Spirit so and so has returned, permit us (to) to get crops and allow women to bear children". The child is now held on the man's knees and its name spoken three or four times according

to its sex. A fowl and a goat are then slaughtered and their blood poured on the shrine. The particular spirit supposed to be responsible for the birth of the child becomes the guardian spirit of the child. It is believed that if this ceremony is not performed and some one by chance calls the name of the ancestor who is being born again in the presence of the new baby it will die. Fathers feel proud at such ceremonies if the baby happens to be a boy. The elders congratulate him for having one of their paternal ancestors re-incarnating through him. Baby girls are accepted but not with much hope as future builders of the family as baby boys. The mother feels happy if she has a baby girl. Each parent favours having children of his or her sex.

## CHAPTER II.

### FEEDING.

Sissala babies are all breast fed. Artificial feeding is absolutely unknown among the tribe. The first breast feed is given about ten to twelve hours after birth and by another woman with a baby of the opposite sex. If the new baby is a girl her first feed must be given by a woman with a baby boy. Seated on a stool, the mother or its temporal nurse, holds the baby on her laps with its head raised towards her breast in a caressing fashion to feed it. There are no fixed times for feeding and persistent crying of the baby is followed by an attempt at feeding by the mother. The baby, quite naturally, sometimes refuses to eat and the mother is thrown into a state of anxiety. She calls the midwife to examine the child to see whether there is something wrong with it. When the midwife finds no external cause to warrant the refusal of food, she sends for the roots of a tree called "Guriguma" in Sissala. These are boiled in a pot and the impression when cool, is forced into the child by cupping the hand

against its mouth and pouring the liquid into it. The liquid gives the child free bowel and it soon feels well again.

Each time the child stops feeding, the mother waits a while and tries to feed it again. A second refusal shows that it has had enough. The mother takes delight in feeding her child and enjoys the process. The thought of spoiling one's figure through child bearing is never entertained by any Sissala woman. Women without children are regarded as social outcasts.

The mother who has too little or no milk in her breast is supposed to have wronged the Gods during her period of pregnancy. It is traditionally believed that during the period of pregnancy, the ancestors and the various Gods worshipped by the family come in human form to test the character of the pregnant woman. They may come to ask for salt, pepper and other minor things they are sure she can readily provide. If she refuses to give away the thing asked for, they punish her by not giving her enough milk for her baby. When this happens, the husband has to find out through the soothsayer which God has been offended and then He is pacified with whatever He may ask for. This may take the form of a fowl, a goat, or water mixed with millet flour if the God concerned is a kind one. This deity makes all extra-ordinarily kind and generous when they are pregnant.

Throughout the period the baby feeds from its mother's breast marital intercourse is absolutely forbidden. If marital intercourse should take place, the mother's milk becomes bad for the child and

may lead to frequent stools and even death of the child. It is generally accepted that marital intercourse should (begin) not be undertaken by the mother for the first three years of the child's life. Mothers accept the principle and husbands find no difficulty in this arrangement because polygamy is practised among the tribe.

### WEANING.

Weaning is a gradual process spread over a period of three years. Eight months after birth the child may be given porridge prepared from millet flour in addition to its mother's milk. As the child grows older, food such as "Kulsoy" (a thickened form of millet flour food) pap, yams and beans are given. In addition to taking these foodstuffs, children are encouraged to continue feeding from their mother's breast as long as possible. Some children, however, decide to discontinue feeding from their mother's breast before they are three years of age. When this happens, the child is not forced to continue, but if at the age of three years it continues to do so the mother applies the ground leaves of neem trees to the breast. The area round the part applied (teat) becomes bitter and the child leaves of sucking because of the bitterness.

At about six <sup>months</sup> (months) of age and onwards, a sudden rise of temperature of the child accompanied by diarrhoea is considered by parents to be caused by the onset of "teething". A continuous flow of saliva from the child's mouth and an unwillingness to feed are noticed by parents and also considered to be caused by "teething". Parents are not worried since they know from their experience that all will soon be well again with the child. The child cries a lot during the period and it is carried on the mother's back to make it go to sleep. After two or three days the child becomes well again. As the child begins to have teeth it finds

its mother's breast a good place for exercising its teeth. The mother bears the occasional bites of her breast without a fuss during this period. At about the age of one year and onwards the mother hits the child when it bites the teat of her breast. When this happens the child cries for a while and the mother begins to feed it again from her breast. Though there are no fixed times for feeding, mothers do not over feed the child. They try the child with a feed each time it cries and if it refuses, that is the end of it. It might mean that there is another cause of crying other than hunger.

Children are not given any particular things to suck; they (~~suck~~) suck anything they can lay hands on, for example, sucking their own fingers or the fingers of the adult holding them, stones or any piece of wood within reach. They are not given any objects on which "to teethe", and most of them resort to 'thumb-sucking'. Parents regard this as a natural process and do not stop them.

Since weaning is spread over a number of years its effects cannot be accurately assessed. The child is not completely weaned but may take other food in addition to the supply of milk from its mother up to the age of three years.

#### SOLID FOOD

Solid food is introduced before complete weaning of the child. To begin with, a preparation of millet flour food is given in a semi-solid form followed by yams and fufu. These food stuffs are given by hand and by the mother. Children who are below three years of age feed with their mothers and after the age of three years all children in the family feed together from a common dish.

There are no hard and fast rules about times of feeding the child. The child, in addition to the regular feeding hours of the adults, in the family, is fed whenever it is hungry and expresses it. Parents make provision for this by keeping food aside in case the child should ask for it. These may take the form of groundnuts, roasted yams or milk with millet flour.

When children refuse to eat or do not eat enough, parents suspect illness and they take immediate steps to check it. The tender leaves of the neem tree are ground together with ginger and rolled into tiny balls. Two tiny balls of this mixture are pushed into the anus of the child. It is asked to hold on and not to let them out for a few minutes. If the child is less than two years old the mother prevents it from defaecating by covering the anus with a piece of rag. After a while the mother allows the child to defaecate. In the case of the older child it is sent outside the compound to do so. This treatment urges the child to free its bowels. Refusing to eat is considered a sign of internal troubles and steps are taken to clean the "inside" of the child. The same treatment so stated under "feeding" is given if the above treatment fails to give the desired effect.

Over-eating is not encouraged by parents. If, however, the child does overeat, a sweeping broom is passed over its stomach several times to relieve tension. It is held that by so doing some of the food is swept away. It might be due more to the power of suggestion than to the effect of the sweeping.

Vegetables prepared in the form of soup, groundnut, cow milk and meat are considered good food for children. Other foodstuffs taken by adults are also taken by children except the flesh of animals like the lion and the leopard. It is

considered that if a child should eat the flesh of these animals it will remain small and weak all its life.

Further questions for explanation are never tolerated by parents and elders. They end their remarks by saying, "we met it so and our fathers told us so and therefore it is true". Parents consider cow milk and honey palatable for children. ~~It is considered~~ <sup>and food prepared</sup> from millet flour and a specially prepared bitter soup unpalatable. This type of bitter soup is generally given to children when they have fever or stomach troubles. Children are induced to take <sup>this</sup> unpalatable soup with the promise of having milk and honey afterwards. Children's diet, except for the few foodstuffs already mentioned is the same as that of the adult.

At the age of two years, the child is supposed to be able to feed itself, though it might have made attempts earlier at feeding by itself. The mother and other women in the family continue to help the child in feeding itself sometimes. For instance, when the food is too hot, the mother takes a bit in her hand and when it is cool, places it in the child's hand.

Children of about the same age feed together from a common dish placed on the ground before them and parents insist that they wash their hands before the meal. When the dish of food is placed before them, the younger ones in the group are taught to support the dish with their left hands while they eat so as to keep it from being pushed about. As the food gets gradually diminished, the senior children stop eating according to ages and in the end the youngest of the group is left to finish off what is left in the dish. Any of them who feels he has not had enough food reports to the mother for more. Talking.

during meals is not encouraged by parents and children are hushed up when they do talk.

### ELIMINATION

Toilet training is not introduced until one and a half years after birth. There is complete disregard for toilet training during this period. The child fees its bowels on the mother's laps or on the ground anywhere in the compound. To help the mother with the clearance of faeces, most families keep dogs. As soon as the child fees its bowels the dog is called and it cleans the mess in a most satisfactory manner.

At the age of two years the child is taught to go outside the house during the day for elimination. The child soon learns to report to the mother when it feels like going to latrine. Whenever it does so the mother asks a sibling to direct the child outside the house. The child returns to the mother after freeing its bowels and she washes its anus with water or cleans it with ~~the~~<sup>a</sup> piece of rag. Regular and good elimination is considered by parents as a sign of good health. A mother does not show disapproval at soiling and wetting of her clothes by the child; she considers herself fortunate to have a child to wet or soil her clothes. The child is entirely dependent on the mother and since it cannot speak the mother takes all inconveniences caused by it as part of a mother's responsibility. The entire dependence on the mother should not continue indefinitely, but should stop as soon as the child attains the age of three years. If after the age of three years the child continues to soil and wet the mother's clothes, it is punished by the mother. The mother trains the child to overcome wetting by waking it at night to urinate outside.

Parents and adults in general do not show disgust at the child's dirty habits. They consider it as only natural. The adult's attitude to the ways of the child's care-free behaviour is symbolised in the proverb, "Hambie ni zima", literally meaning "A child not caring for consequences of its behaviour, enjoys life".

Toilet training is supposed to be complete at the age of three years. There are no specific differences in bowel and bladder training in the day. It is during the night that the mother wakes the child at midnight to urinate and by repeating this every night the child gets used to it. The child itself can report at any time during the night when it feels like going to latrine. If (she) it should do so the mother takes it outside in the yard for that purpose. The dogs, which sleep in the yard, eat up the faeces as soon as the child finishes. Mothers attach a great deal of importance to the training of their children out of the habit of night (~~siding~~) wetting. It is a shame to a mother if after three years of age, her child should continue to wet its bedding at night.

#### MOTOR DEVELOPMENT.

Little or no (~~clothing~~) clothes are worn during the early years of the child's life and the child is free to develop unrestricted by clothing of any kind. Parents do not think it necessary to provide movable or stationary furniture for the child. The child is carried about in the arms of the women of the house-hold or its elder brothers or sisters. Elder brothers and sisters <sup>act</sup> as carriers of younger brothers and sisters around for play without clothing during the hot weather. It is amusing to see one naked babe staggering along under the weight of another almost as big, and also to notice how passively the latter lies in all kinds of contorted positions as if fully conscious of the good intentions of its nurse.

Out side under the trees, elder sisters and brothers (sometimes mother's sisters) provide stones and other odd bits for the child to play with. The child is

allowed as much freedom of movement as possible. This may begin at the age of six months when the mother's sister takes the child outside under the shade of a tree. She seats the child on the sand and sits behind to support it. Supports are not considered necessary because the child is allowed to develop at its own rate through encouragement from siblings and mother's sisters.

The child learns to crawl at about seven months onwards. The period varies from child to child, much depending on its health. If it has been ill during the early months of its life, the time for learning how to crawl may be delayed. Learning to crawl is encouraged by siblings and mother's sisters who carry the child outside the house for play. The mother's sister allows the child to sit and she begins to walk on all fours away from it. The child looks at her and also tries to imitate what the mother's sister ~~and~~ is doing. The child is not forced into doing what the mother's sister does but by doing it over and over again in front of the child it soon begins to do so also.

Parents seem not quite definite about the period the child begins to walk. It is agreed by many, however, that at one year old the normal child should begin to walk. If the child has suffered from some serious illness, it may begin to walk later than a year old. Children are not rewarded for walking early. In fact a mother is rebuked by the old ladies in the family if she encourages her child to walk earlier than a year old. The old ladies tell her she is impatient about sexual intercourse and that is why she wishes her child to walk too soon.

Once a child can move about by itself it is allowed free movement to any part of the house. It may crawl after another child in the compound or may engage itself in anything of interest, such as playing with water in a pot. The

mother watches it all the time and when it gets near any dangerous object such as fire, it is carried away ~~to~~ and placed at a safe distance from it. If it should continue approaching the dangerous object then the mother asks her sister to take it outside the house for play. A mother said she once allowed her child to touch fire and ~~she said~~ the child later warned its baby brother of the danger of moving near fire.

There is no necessity for the mother to frighten the child from wandering about because of the possibility of its getting lost. The child plays with other children in the family under the trees in front of the compound under the watchful eye of the mother's sister.

Stories are however, told to scare the child from following the mother to say 'the market' or bush. These take the form of threats of being eaten by a hyena or a lion if it follows the mother.

Adults do not expect the child to sit still except during meal times. At all times during the day it is expected to be with other children of its age outside the house and playing. They are only called in for meals. Outside the house, boys and girls play together. Some act as horses and others ride them, pretending they are taking them to the water hole for a drink. One of them runs freely and the others chase him. The one who catches him is in turn chased by the other.

SLEEP.

When the child does not want to sleep the mother carries it on her back and lulls it to sleep. If the child can walk and still feeds from the mother's breast she lies on her mat with it and places the breast in its mouth.

The child sucks and soon falls asleep. From about two years of age the child is forced to sleep by threats of wild beasts coming to eat it if it does not sleep.

The child sleeps in the parents' room and on the same mat with the mother. If the father should have another wife, the mother sleeps in another room with the rest of the children. Children up to the age of five years have plenty of sleep but after that age they are used as scare-crows and shepherd boys and are forced to get up early to attend to their duties. In the <sup>evening</sup> ~~(morning)~~ parents do not see that children go to bed early. They remain playing in the house till it is time for parents to go to bed. The time for sleep is not regular since parents go to sleep at any time they feel like sleeping. Children are at liberty to go to sleep earlier if they wish to do so, but they must all go to bed when the last adult retires to go to bed.

### HEALTH

Parents depend very much on superstitious beliefs in matters affecting the health of their children. The least illness the child may have is attributed to anger of one of the Gods. One finds various bits of talismans hanging round the child's neck, ankles or waist. Although colds, dirt and over-eating are considered dangers to good health, parents trace the cause to their various Gods. If cold makes the child ill, that cold has been brought about by a particular God and if dirt makes a child ill another God has caused it.

Children are not allowed to play about in the rain or the ~~at~~ <sup>in</sup> cold weather as they may be ill. They must not lie on wet bedding. Play in the open air is encouraged - children are encouraged to go outside the house and play most of the day under the shades of trees. Parents do all these for the good health of their children and yet they believe

that good (~~health~~) or bad health is given by a super-natural being.

Sick children receive special attention from their grandmothers or experienced women in the family. The grandmother advises the mother as to what herbs to give, and what diet should be given. The diet is generally composed of porridge, food prepared from millet flour with soup, made from pounded dry ochro and water which has been <sup>made</sup> (~~pressed~~) to trickle through a potful of ash. Dried fish is added to the soup. Soup prepared in this manner is bitter and it is alleged it has the power of cleaning the 'inside' of the child.

The sick child is kept in the parents' bedroom until it is well. If the child becomes seriously ill it is removed to a (~~sq~~) separate room under the care of the mother and the grandmother. The other children in the family are not allowed to go in to see him (~~until he~~) until he improves in health.

### CHAPTER III.

#### PHYSICAL CONTACT MASTURBATION.

Among the Sissala Enbe kissing is unknown. Parents show affection towards their children by stroking, embracing and placing them on their laps. The father and the mother are not the only people who show their affection in this manner but also the grandmother and the father's other wives. Children receive such expressions of affection when they fall or quarrel with other siblings. The grandmother, who is a sort of mediator in the family, sometimes overdoes this. She shows so much affection to the child that the father reminds her of the dangers of showing too much affection to the child.

At three years of age and onwards, the male child is shown little affection by the mother and other women in the family but the female child continues to receive affectionate treatment from the mother and other women in the family. The male child tends to be with the father and the grand mother since he receives kind treatment from them. The male child is reminded always by the mother that he is of the male sex and should be with his father.

In bathing the child, special attention - in the case of girls - is given to the genitals which are bathed with warm water. It is not considered that much care is necessary in the case of boys and their genitals and are not therefore given any special attention. There are no special children's words for the genitals.

Masturbation in children is (never) recognized as exceptional. Parents are of the opinion that their children do not practise it. What does happen is that children of opposite sexes play at husband and wife and sleep together on the same mat. When children are caught at such practice the male child is given a good beating and never allowed to remain with the females along anywhere in the compound. The female child is treated rather cruelly by the mother. She grinds pepper and applies it to the child's vagina. The other children in the family ridicule the unfortunate pair and the treatment becomes a warning to the other boys and girls against similar practices.

Children play sex games in sand under trees in front of the compound and generally act 'father and mother'. Sand is piled round to form imaginary huts. The girls play the parts of mothers and prepare meals (for ~~the~~ family) (all with sand put in broken bits of pots and calabashes) for the boys who act as fathers. Suddenly they all pretend it is night and go to sleep together in their imaginary huts. One of the boys acts as a cock and when he crows (imitation) they all wake up and pretend it is dawn and every one goes about his or her business. Parents regard this as

'child play' and donot take the trouble of observing what they do.

### CLOTHING AND SELF EXPOSURE.

Children are not <sup>trained</sup> to feel ashamed of appearing naked before anybody. They are allowed to play about naked except on special occasions such as market days and during funeral ceremonies of old men and women. The child is helped in dressing and undressing up to the age of three years. After that age he or she is supposed to be able to dress and undress without assistance from the mother. The female child can be recognised by the perineal band she puts on.

At the age of three years, baby dress gives way to dresses of different design for boys and girls. The boys begin to put on smocks and the girls tie clothes round their waists. Thus the boys' dress is designed in the same style as the father's and the girls in the same form as the mother's.

Parents are careful not to undress before their children because they feel their children should not see their sexual organs. It is considered by parents that because their children passed through their sexual organs they must not be allowed to see them.

### SEX DISTINCTIONS.

Boys and girls are supposed to behave differently after the age of three years. The girls imitate the behaviour of their mothers while the boys imitate <sup>those</sup> of the fathers. If a boy should behave girlishly the parents show disapproval by reminding him in (an) angry tones that ~~he~~ he should remember he is a boy and that his behaviour is not becoming <sup>of</sup> to his sex. Disapproval is shown similarly if a girl behaves in a manner that a boy is supposed to behave.

Before the age of five years, boys frequently go

about in groups with girls. After the age of five, as mobility increases and interests diverge the sexes tend to separate. A well defined sexual dichotomy runs through the Sissala social life and thought and children begin to adopt the cultural definitions of the role of the sexes in relation to each other about the time that single sex-groups become common. This is associated with a differentiation of their activities in the family economic system. Thus shepherds are always boys whereas it is the girls who help with house keeping. In their various duties in the house boys remain with their fathers while girls remain with their mothers. From this ~~time~~ age and onwards the children feed separately: girls with their mothers and boys in a group together if they are many. If there are one or two boys only in the family then they feed from the same dish with their father.

As the children grow older they have more contact with the parent of the same sex. The boy is supposed to prefer the father and the girl the mother. The father does not encourage this, but the mother will always send the boy to his father unless he is not about in the house. She sends the boy away saying, "You are a male child, go to your father and donot remain with me". The parent of the same sex is thus the model according to which the child regulates his conduct. This attitude does not change as the child grows older; in fact it grows stronger.

SIBLING RELATIONS.

The child in a family is never told when a new baby is expected. It is after the birth that he is told after a short ceremony. Soon after birth, when the room has been cleared of all the mess, the midwife boils an egg and making the child stand before the door of the room in which the mother is lying with the new baby, places the egg on his head and allows it to drop to the ground. The child is then told to pick it up and eat it. As he eats the egg the child is informed that he is now grown and has a brother or sister.

as the case may be, and he is told to be kind to <sup>the</sup> little one. Then he is allowed to go into the room to see the new baby. The child is not told where babies come from and if he should enquire, he is told that babies come from mother's 'inside'. The child's curiosity is never appreciated and he is generally hushed up in a painful manner.

The grandmother or the father's other wives take care of the older child. As already stated, the child is expected to show a kind attitude towards the new baby. Expressions of jealousy are not permitted nor provoked. Parents make it a point of encouraging the older child to love his baby brother or sister. They tell the older child that he likes babies that is why he has allowed his mother to have one and expressions as, "N nyung sima" ("You have good luck") make the older child feel well disposed towards his baby brother or sister.

It is the expressed views of many parents that sentiments of parents are not the same in the case of each child. A younger child tends to be regarded with more affection than an older one. The mother favours the baby of the family especially during the early years of its life.

Older children have many disadvantages. They do not receive display of affection from their parents. They have to help in various duties in the house while the younger children are left to go anywhere they like and to do no work at all in the house. They have, however, the advantage of going with their fathers to places of sacrifice in the town and enjoying the meat of fowls, goats and sheep slaughtered for the fetiches. The younger child receive most affection from their parents. They are always with their parents and are given whatever they

If <sup>there</sup> ~~is~~ something nice to eat they generally have more of it than the older children. As the younger children grow older these advantages pass to the younger ones who follow them.

The affectionate disposition of parents towards their younger children gives rise to the bullying of the younger children by the older ones. Quarrels between siblings arise over ownership of articles such as they use for play. One child may run out with a bottle or the lid of a tin and the other child may run after him, claiming ownership and then a quarrel begins. Such quarrels are more frequent among children of the opposite sexes in the family. When there is a quarrel as mentioned above, the parents satisfy both children by giving another bottle to the child who is claiming the article. If the parents find they cannot get another article for the child who is claiming ownership, then the article is taken away from both of them.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO PARENTS.

The mother is chiefly responsible for the early care of the child. If the child's paternal grandmother is alive she helps the mother. In this case the child is always with the grandmother after feeding if it is not asleep. She bathes the child and looks out for signs of illness. The grandmother is in contact with the child up to the age of six years, when he goes to school or if the child does not go to school, up to the time he is capable of helping his father on the farm. It is worthy of noting by contrast, that the relationship between grandparent and grandchild is the reverse of that between parent and child. While the parents expect absolute obedience from their children, the grandparents encourage equality, friendliness and partnership in their grand children by joking relationship and mutual ragging between them.

The child's early contact with the father is mainly through play. After the day's work on the farm, the father

Sits in the compound with the child on his laps and plays with it. He speaks to it and makes various noises with his mouth to amuse it. The father is the chief authority as regards the disciplining of the child. The mother informs the father of any misbehaviour of the child and the father decides what punishment to be given to the child and carries it out himself. The mother threatens the child by saying, "Hi dzang bul n nyunia ki", meaning, "I will report you to your father". The mother has no say in all matters of discipline in the family.

Parents behave well towards each other before their children but when quarrels arise they disregard the presence of their children and the father may beat the mother. When this happens the children suffer at least for the duration of the quarrel. The mother may refuse to prepare food for the father together with his children. The paternal grandmother takes care of the children as soon as she realises the situation and reconciles husband and wife.

Disobedience to parents' orders may lead to quarrels between parents and their children as for instance, when parents insist that their children should not go outside the house to see a dance in progress during the early hours of the night and the children do obey the parents become angry. If the parents show continued annoyance, it is customary for the child to ask for forgiveness. It is traditionally held that one's parents are always right and in all quarrels with parents, the child has to ask for forgiveness; parents never admit they are wrong in dealings with their children. The parents' authority lasts until the boy or girl is married. Even after

marriage the son is still under the authority of the father for the father bears all financial responsibility for the marriage and the maintenance of the son and his wife.

Children are not supposed to be grateful to their parents for all that they do for them, but parents feel they owe it to their children to provide enough property for them. They economise in their daily life so that enough cattle, money and large stores of foodstuffs are left behind for their children.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO ADULTS OTHER THAN PARENTS.

The grandparents, father's other wives, aunts, brothers and their wives all live in the same compound and play prominent roles in the early life of the child. All the adults maintain friendly relationship with the children of their blood relations living in the compound and are kind to the children.

The child is required to be polite to the other adults in the family. If another family visits the parents, the child is not excluded from the company formed. The child can play with the children of the visiting family and can speak to them on such occasion. If the child is taken to visit relations or friends, he is expected to behave himself well and not to disgrace the family. He is warned against bad behaviour because parents are blamed when their children behave badly on such occasions.

#### POSSESSIONS.

The child is told by the mother not to take things belonging to other people. If the child does so the mother scolds him and makes him give the things back to the owner. Parents pay attention to training their children not to take things belonging to other people. They contend that it leads to stealing if not checked at an early age. If the child should grab any things from some one else he is scolded and made to give them back. If he should pick them up somewhere in the house he is asked to return them to

the owner. The child has his own possessions and these may take the form of his clothing, fowl and a collection of odd bits for his play. He is not allowed to wear his clothes for play in the sand except on special occasions such as market days or on visits to other families. The child's own collection of odd bits, (broken pots, calabashes, and cans made in miniature made from guinea corn stalks etc.) which he values highly are at his disposal at any time of the day. The fowl is also at his disposal because it is a traditional gift from his mother's brother. He has to take care of it so that it lays eggs and hatches them into chickens. The chickens are sold when they are grown and the money is used to buy a pup. When the pup grows it is exchanged for a goat. This may continue and before he is an adult he is in possession of a cow. The child is encouraged to take pride in the fowl and adults relate to the hearing of the child how they took care of their fowls when they were young and how they built up their financial stability from such small beginning.

Parents consider children inexperienced and take it upon themselves to warn them against dangerous objects. They are warned against touching such objects as fire, boiling soup and other breakable objects in the house. Warning may take the form of information of the results of touching the object, as for example, "Nyiŋ la dzay nyi-ŋiŋ" meaning "The fire will burn you if you touch it"

Children are regarded as destructive and when they destroy anything they are scolded or slapped and told never to do so again. Toys are not provided but children manipulate any house hold objects they

can lay hands on. They may play with broken bits of pots or calabashes, empty cigarette tins or beads. They make their own crude bows and arrows, hoes and axes out of guinea-corn stalks. It is not uncommon to see a guinea-corn stalk bent at the top and called an axe by one child while another may choose to call that same guinea-corn stalk a moment later a horse. When some children have not got what the others have, they try to take them by force from the owners, or go to complain to their parents about what they have not. They complain that such and such a child has this or that thing and they have not and parents may either get them what they want or promise to buy some for them at the earliest opportunity.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### SPEECH.

The infant's cries of hunger and pain are promptly responded to by the mother. As soon as she gets to the child she takes him and tries to find out the cause of the cry. If there is no external cause for crying and the child still appears well but refuses to eat, the mother concludes that the cry is unnecessary. If the child cries out of anger for something he cannot get the mother allows him to cry until he is tired and stops crying by himself. Repeated disregard of such cries of the child makes him get out of the habit of crying unnecessary.

At the age of three years and onwards, the parents take a definite stand against unnecessary crying of the child. If the child cries because <sup>he</sup> ~~his~~ is asked to share his food with his brothers and sisters, the parents allow the rest of the children to eat up all the food and the crying child goes without. This method is used in various forms until the child learns not to cry to have his own way. Some parents believe in beating the child to cry all the more and

They maintain that if the child is made to cry more he will soon get tired and stop by himself.

The child may cry for a long period if something he is playing with is taken away from him without substituting another or giving him an understandable reason for so doing. Other occasions for long period of crying are when the child is stopped from going with his mother to the market or from playing or when the child is refused something he wishes to have because his other playmates have them.

Early vocalisation of the child is encouraged by the parents - specially the grandmother. The child while with the grandmother may begin making a continuous 'o-o-o' sound and the grandmother goes on repeating the same sound. The grandmother may change the sound to 'a-a-a' and the child changes to the sound also. 'Baby talk' is regarded as certain sounds and signs that children make and come to mean something to them and the parents and members of the household learn to interpret their children's 'talk'.

The father, mother, grandmother, father's other wives and mother's sisters talk to the child when playing with him. It is traditionally held that mothers should not go to their home-towns with the child at the time he begins to talk. The stage at which the child learns to talk is supposed to be the most enjoyable period of fatherhood when the father is able to play and talk with his baby and be amused by the child's efforts to speak. Parents do not make any effort to teach the child to modulate his voice and he is not held to high standards of grammatical correctness.

They are allowed to speak freely and to learn the accepted form of speech from their parents and other adults in the house.

From the time the child begins to learn how to speak up to the age of three years, he is listened to by the adults who enjoy his form of speech. At the age of five years the child is required to sit still and listen to adults while in their company; but he is free to take part in conversation among children of his age. When the child speaks to his parents and other adults in the family, he is not asked to be factually precise in what he says. Parents recognise this period as one of imitation and the child says what he hears from adults and does not mean what he says sometimes.

From the age of nine years, children are expected to distinguish between fantasy, truth and lying. The training of the child in truthfulness is carried out in a practical way. If a child is known to be lying he or she is punished severely. The punishment generally takes the form of flogging. Lying is considered by some parents as merely foolish and contemptible. They believe it causes annoyance and the liar's comrades distrust him, but they would not punish a child for lying unless it led to serious consequences.

#### GAMES, SONGS, STORIES.

Sissala children have a natural way of exercising their bodies at different stages of their development through participation in games. Most of their games are played according to age groups. The first group comprises all children within the ages of three to six years. They have motor and exploratory play—chasing each other, falling on each other and using their own made drums and bows and arrows in their imaginative play. They provide themselves with long guinea-corn stalks each and pass them between their legs and pretend they are riding horse and have competitive races with them. Some of them pretend they are cattle and walk on all fours while

one or two of them drive them to the water hole for a drink. They 'moo' and imitate the movement of cattle as they go along. In these early games no sex distinctions are made.

The second group comprise all boys within the ages of seven to nine years of age. This group continues playing 'cattle and horses'. This time other children pretend to be the horses while others ride on their backs. They dance to the music of broken calabashes used as drums and sing songs they have heard during adult dances.

The third group are of ages nine to twelve years of age. This group play the game known as 'Kpebig'. Each player provides himself with a stick which looks very much like a hockey stick. They divide themselves into two groups. A stone is used as the ball and they have opposite walls as scoring points. When the game begins the side which can get the stone to hit the opposing side's wall has scored a point. These children enjoy themselves in this game. Wrestling is another form of exercise with this age group. There is a common wrestling ground which is sandy and free from stones which may cause injury after a fall. Such games are, of course boys' games, and in any case in this and later age groups, children of the two sexes keep to themselves for games and sports.

The fourth and the last group is made up of boys of twelve to fifteen years. By this stage imaginative play has been abandoned and dancing becomes the principal recreation. Wrestling is done during moonlight nights to test individual strength and skill. Boys at this age are discouraged from play as described in the previous age group. Adults encourage them to play

more attention to work - farm work and other responsible duties in the house.

There is an 'indoor' game played only in the rainy season when the youth are kept indoors by the down pour of rain. The hard covering of the guinea-corn stalk is plaited into many rings about six inches in diameter each. There are eight players each with three of these rings. The players sit about two yards apart with four players on each side and facing each other.

One side stand two of their rings each by supporting them against each other at the top. The other set of four players at the opposite side roll one of their rings at a time towards those kept standing by the other side. If the rolled ring knocks down one of the pair of rings kept standing, then the player whose ring knocked them down collects the other player's rings. When the four players have each had a turn at rolling their rings, then they give way to the other players to roll their rings also.

Another <sup>pastime</sup> ~~pastime~~ which adults encourage the youth to take interest in is the game called 'dere'. It is played during the hot season under the trees in front of the compound. A square is made on the ground and six small holes are made along each side and continued in line within the square. When completed there are seventy-two holes in all. Each player has twelve small stones and they place them into the holes one after the other, with the idea of having two of their stones lying in a line with an empty hole in the middle.

Two people play the game but other people watching may give advice to either of the players. It is the duty of each player not to allow his opponent to place his stones in a line with a hole in the middle. When each player has finished placing his stones in the holes, play then begins. If a player manages to have three of his stones lying in a line, he collects one of his opponent's stones. This may continue until one

player finds he has lost so many of his stones that he gives up the game. The player with more of his stones in the holes becomes the winner.

Girls after the age of nine years, play together in their own groups and provide music by singing and clapping their hands and dance to the rhythm of the music so produced. They play at 'cooking porridge, grinding flour and sharing out the food. Every feature of the real process is mimicked, but with astonishing imaginative adaptations. Two flat stones serve as grindstones. They have many forms of things to represent pots, dishes, calabashes and ladles - bits of cigarette tins, broken calabashes and pots and leaves. Three stones make a fire-place, a thin piece of guinea-corn stalk is the stirring-stick, some dried grass make the firewood. A real fire is lit if adults are not near by, otherwise a fire imagined. Real grain is not used but sand serves as grain. Green leaves and weeds are vegetables. They prepare an imaginary meal which they serve and pretend to enjoy.

There is a general dancing once a week on market days, when both sexes come together. The adults take part in the general dance which serve to teach the younger ones the main steps in the various dances. The children have no special songs but pick up songs from adults during the weekly dances. The older children learn to sing the songs during the weekly dance and later dance and sing the same songs with the younger children at their play.

Adults donot discriminate between stones appropriate to children and to themselves. Folk tales of all

sorts are passed on to the children, although there is a tendency to choose the more fantastic folk tales to tell them. No reading material is available to Sissala children.

### WORK.

The Sissala child must learn to be useful as soon as possible. At the age of five years, he begins ~~(to work)~~ to assist in herding sheep and scaring away birds from newly sown fields and from crops not far away from the house and goes with the family for sowing and harvesting of crops.

The girl at about this age helps with the nursing of infants. She accompanies her mother to the water-hole and begins to carry tiny pots. She also helps in simple domestic affairs such as sweeping and the washing of cooking ~~and~~ utensils. There are no rewards in connection with work performed but children are punished, usually by beating or deprivation if they do not show signs of usefulness in the house. Parents show pleasure at seeing their children help them with their work. The child also feels proud and happy of being serviceable to his or her parents. It is a common sight to see children running to <sup>their</sup> parents and asking them to give them some work to do.

The working hours of girls are shorter. They help their mothers in the morning and evening and the work may occupy about two hours of the day. The boys have to remain at their work (i.e. on the farm or with the sheep in the field) from six o'clock in the morning until about five thirty in the evening although remaining at their work does not mean actual working all the time. They take their food with them and remain under the shade of trees, play about and attend to the sheep only at intervals. They enjoy themselves in the open air all day and most of them prefer going out to such activities than remaining at home.

When male children are about the age of seven years they are

expected to take active part in work on the farm. They leave the house early in the morning with their hoes and baskets containing chickens, for the farm. The oldest boy among them controls the rest of the boys and all work on the farm. While the rest are working at hoeing among the crops, the oldest boy details one of the boys to prepare the mid-day meal, which may either be boiled beans or yams. At the heat of the day all retire to the shade of a tree to have their meal. After the mid-day meal there is rest for everybody until about three o'clock in the afternoon when work begins again in full swing until five-thirty in the evening. The oldest child gives out instruction for closing and all the children collect their chickens and hoes and follow the winding path towards the home.

### ADOLESCENCE

The last stage of childhood is marked by the absorption of the child into the economic system and of responsibility over younger male children in the family. The female child by this age is already staying in another village with her sister. (See appendix on marriage system)

The boy is supposed to leave childish ways and to assume more responsible position in the family activities. If there are more than one of them of the same age in the family, they have joint responsibility over the younger ones and are answerable to their father for any trouble on the farm or outside the house.

The transition period is not marked by any rites de passage. There is no change in the mode of life of the boy. He takes an active part in building and thatching and in the making of bows and arrows, of

in the practice of crafts, (if his father is a craftsman) like leather-work or forging of hoes, axes and knives. The boy's desire for more dress makes him work harder on the father's farm so as to provide enough yams, millet, beans and maize. The surplus of those foodstuffs can be sold and the money used in buying clothes from itinerant traders in the district. The boy at this age has increased freedom of action provided he works hard on the father's farm.

The girls, as mentioned above, leave for their sister's husband's villages and undergo an entirely different treatment from that given to the boys who remain with their parents. They learn about menstruation from their elder sisters with whom they live. Their sisters watch them closely during the period of development and when they suspect that their sisters will soon begin to pass menses, they tell them what may happen to them at any time from that period onwards. They are told to report immediately to their sisters for help. When the period sets in, the elder sisters teach them how to bathe the vagina and how frequently they should change their perineal bands. They are told never to have sexual intercourse when passing menses and never to cook food for the family during the period. Girls are supposed to be ready for marriage when they have passed menses three or four times without having sexual intercourse.

The boy's chief sources of sex knowledge are from friends and other adults who talk loosely about sex practices in the presence of them. There is little or no emphasis placed on chastity and parents seem to pay no regard to the presence of children when they talk about sex among themselves.

The wives of the people in the village or town bring their sisters to assist them with the domestic work and the boys befriend those outside their family circle and these friendships between the opposite sexes are known and sanctioned by parents, and love affairs are carried out between the sexes and within the town or village. The youth confides such love affairs in his brother's wife who acts

as a sort of go-between. The early lovers (~~officers~~) are of the same ~~sex~~ age and may not practice sexual intercourse until they are grown. The girl in any case will not allow this since she may be found out to have had sexual intercourse before her marriage when she comes to have her first sexual intercourse with her husband.

There is no indication of any revolt of youth against social institutions, mourning obligation, duties to chief and elders and the like - which begin to take explicit charge of their lives at this stage. The reason for this must lie in the very considerable degree of personal freedom accorded to the young people in the various family arrangement. In the economic sphere, they are attached to their various households and must co-operate therein, but they are quite at liberty to select a patch of the family land and plant groundnuts, or yams there, the product to be used for their own individual ends (~~subject~~). Young people combine in groups as 'working bees' and under the leadership of one of their number they go off to clear<sup>o</sup> field to plant yams. The provisioning of the group for the time of work, which constitutes its payment, is the care of the owner of the ground, who may be ~~and~~ one of the group or some elderly person. They may also organise a 'hunting-group' and go out into the bush to return with rabbits, antelopes etc. to be shared with their parents. These cooperative groups embody a considerable recreational element, and are taken up with enthusiasm. ~~Other~~ <sup>Older</sup> people do not interfere with the organisation of these groups. For purely recreational purposes, again, the young people are definitely marked off by formal divisions of the society from their elders. Their freedom of expression in this respect probably acts as a safety-valve for the restraints placed upon them in other directions.

In addition, some of the general values of society tend to lessen the chances of revolt. The absence of a moral attitude towards time — the conception is that of passing of time and not of personal ~~waste~~ waste of it — tends to reduce the irritation between the older and the younger generation. The obvious creative nature of the economic activities in which they engage, and their direct relation to their personal needs make also for the equilibrium of youth. The gradual acquisition of economic responsibility helps to in this direction.

It is customary that parents look out for young girls for their children at an early age. These young girls are about the same ages with the boys and are introduced to the youths as their future wives. Although no sexual intercourse is permitted, the (young) girls live in the same family with the boys. The arrangement is possible only in families that are rich.

Adolescence is regarded as a happy time by most people. They contend that they had everything they required provided by their parents. The period is known as 'Pɔ-sig' in the Sissala Language and it marks the beginning of adult life.



CHILDREN OF BOTH SEXES PLAY TOGETHER. THE FATHER SEEMS INTERESTED IN THE YOUNGEST CHILD.



AFTER MEALS, THE YOUNGEST IN THE GROUP HAVE TO CARRY THE DISHES TO THEIR MOTHER.



THE CHILD CARRIED IS CRYING BECAUSE HIS MOTHER HAS LEFT FOR THE MARKET.



A WIFE'S SISTER CARRYING  
A CHILD.



A WOMAN CARRYING A POT  
TO THE WATER-HOLE FOR  
WATER.



CHILDREN OF PRIMARY CLASS II, AT THE BOARDING SCHOOL AT TUMU.

ECONOMIC DUTIES AND ACTIVITIES. (BOYS.)

PLAY.

3 - 6 YEARS.

Begin to help in herding sheep and goats; scaring birds from newly sown fields and from crops.

Fetching white ants for chickens.

Running and chasing each other about. Use of mimetic toys (bows + arrows, drums) in play. Toward end of period - social imaginative play with 'cattle' and 'house building' commences often in company of older children of either sex as well as recreational games and dancing.

6 - 9 YEARS.

The above duties fully established.

Help in hoeing planted fields and assist in sowing and harvesting.

Towards end of period begin to do regular farm work and care of poultry.

Imaginative 'Cattle' and 'house building' play common. The latter often reflecting current economic activities of adults. Hunting with groups of comrades for rats. Plaiting with grass begun and also ritual play.

9 - 12 YEARS.

Fully responsible 'sheep herding'.

Assisting parents in hoeing and care of crops. Sons of specialists craftsmen assist fathers in their work. - Learning by doing.

For the development of preceding forms of play especially ritual play. Grass plaiting established. Recreational games and dancing more skilful. Wrestling. Game of 'kpebis' greatly enjoyed.

SEX DIFFERENCES IN WORK AND PLAY ESTABLISHED.

12 - 15 YEARS.

Duties as in preceding period but more responsible. Responsible care of poultry, sometimes own property.

Leader of younger brothers to farm. Real farming of own plots and in cooperation with older

members of the family established;

by the end of the period. Sons

of specialists experimentally making things.

Imaginative play abandoned. Dancing the principal recreation. Ritual play abandoned. Plaiting of grass for personal decoration mainly. Regular sweet-hearted commu-  
wrestling during moonlight nights

## GIRLS.

### ECONOMIC DUTIES AND ACTIVITIES.

### PLAY.

#### 3 - 6 YEARS.

None at first. Towards end of period the same duties as small boys. Frequent nursing of infants. Accompany mothers or married sisters to water holes and begin to carry hing-pots. Help in simple domestic tasks such as sweeping.

Attached to older sisters and drawn into their 'house keeping' play. Towards end of period begin to take social part in the latter and begin recreational play and dancing. Often found in mixed groups.

#### 6 - 9 YEARS.

Duties of previous period established. Responsible co-operation in water carrying and simpler domestic duties. Help in cooking and activities associated with food preparation such as searching for wild edible herbs. Accompany family parties at sowing and harvesting - giving quasi-playful help.

House keeping play usual. Recreational play and dancing established. Mimicking current women activities e.g. plastering of walls and grinding millet.

#### 9 - 12 YEARS.

All domestic duties can be entrusted to them by the end of this period. Water carrying, cooking, care of infants etc. Assist in building and plastering and more responsible. Often sent to market to buy and sell.

House keeping play continues, gradually fading out at end of period. Dancing becomes principal recreation. Begin to have sweet-hearts but not yet with serious intent.

#### 12 - 15 YEARS.

Takes responsible part in all domestic duties of every day life and of those associated with ceremonial occasions. Go for firewood and collect shea nuts and help to prepare sheabutter.

Imaginative play abandoned. Dancing main recreation. Courtship and attention to personal appearance occupy most of the time. Actively participate in social side of funeral ceremonies etc. in the role of marriageable girls.

FUNDAMENTAL LEARNING PROCESS AMONG THE SISSALAE.

Sissala children do not automatically copy the actions or words of older children or adults with whom they happen to be, merely for the sake of 'imitation'. Under certain conditions mimetic behaviour may be unnecessary, but in certain types of situations it is the child's readiest form of cognitive adaptation.

- Mimesis takes place (a) as a response to direct stimulation, (b) as an adaptation to situation which the child does not know how to deal with on the basis of its attainments at the time, (c) in play, when it is rehearsing in fantasy its interests and life of the world about it.

A child's first efforts at talking are constantly stimulated by the mother or grandmother. At the babbling stage, its mother or grandmother will frequently, jocularly mimic its babbling; "What are you muttering there?" says the mother, "ba-ba-ba-ma, ma, ma;" and the infant is thus stimulated to repeat the sounds again and again. I have observed incidents such as the following: A man was playing with his little son of about two years of age. He called him "Batoon!" and he replied "m-m," and again he called and he replied, and so on for several times. His wife called him, and turning his attention from the child, he answered. The infant, still influenced by the 'set' of the game repeated as well as he could, a word or two, much to his amusement. It can be seen that the expectation of normal behaviour influences parents to talk to infants as if they understand everything.

When there is a group of children, the oldest or most self-possessed generally gives the lead to the behavior which others follow. Thus Sissala adults behave in exactly the same manner. In a difficult situation the best adaptation is to copy the actions and words of any one who understands the situation. Small children are particularly apt to ~~encounter~~ encounter unfamiliar elements in situations, and therefore readily resort to mimesis. When the child is eagerly exploring the world around him, this happens so often that it seems to develop a habit of mimicking older children in whose activities

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it is trying to participate. Thus, whenever I encountered little groups of children at play and asked the youngest a question, one of the older children replied and the younger repeated the reply in the same words.

A striking feature of social development among the Sissalas is the degree to which children identify themselves with older siblings and parents. It is noticeable in children of five or six years of age, and becomes more marked as they grow older. Character appears to run <sup>in families</sup> (~~through~~) and children behave exactly like their parents; an industrious man's sons apply themselves to work from early childhood; the dishonesty and (~~unreliability~~) unreliability of a parent may be reproduced in the child. The social structure of the Sissalas, with its emphasis on family solidarity and lineage, encourages such identification. If one asks a child, 'who are you?' the answer in most cases is, 'I'm so-and-so's child or of so-and-so's family.'

A child will always say, 'This is our dog, our sheep, our farm, our house,' identifying himself completely with his family. The example given of the unity of the social 'setup' shows how identification operates to constitute unity. It is, I think, the mechanism mainly responsible for the child's acquisition of interests, and therefore generate powerful motives for following out these interests which are derived from the world of adult activity.

Co-operation is emphasised in all activities and it is of special importance for children's learning. The little girl who goes with her mother to the water-hole and is given a tiny pot of water to carry is making only a small contribution to the household's water supply. Yet it is real contribution. She learns to bring her little pot of water as a necessary quota to the common pool for the household. The boy during a sacrifice called to hold the leg of a slaughtered cow while it is skinned, not only

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receives his first lesson in anatomy but also feels that he is performing a task which is necessary for the completion of an important ceremony. The children who carry balls of swish for men to build contribute valuable labour. The child's training in duty and skill is always socially productive and therefore psychologically worth-while to him.

The idea of play is well defined and clearly recognised by the Sissala people though its value to the child is never realised. The play of Sissala children emerges partly as a side-issue of their practical activities. In their play, the children rehearse their interests, skills and obligations and make experiments in social living without having to pay the penalty for mistakes. The Sissala child's play mimesis is always an imaginative re-construction based on themes of adult life and the life of slightly older children.

In the practical study of the process of learning in the Sissala child one finds that it resembles that of many other children the world over. S. Issac's book entitled "Intellectual growth of young children" has this to say which is as true of the English child as the Sissala child. "Imaginative play builds a bridge by which the child can pass from symbolic values of things to active inquiry into real construction and real working... In his imaginative play the child creates selectively those elements in past situations which can embody his emotional and intellectual needs of the ~~past~~ present, and he adapts the details moment by moment to present situations". Sissala parents don't appear to know the learning process which their children instinctively follow, but it is a natural process which when observed with an enquiring mind reveals fundamental learning processes recorded in books among other peoples of the world who have the advantage of putting their thoughts into writing.

Children's arts and crafts have a play value in that they are practised purely for pleasure and have a seasonal incidence. They demand considerable skill of eye and hand and individual differences in ability are noticeable. Towards the end

of the rainy season, strong and supple reeds spring up along the water courses. Children pluck these reeds to plait bangles, necklets, small panels to hang over the chest as decoration and waist bands.

By the age of fourteen or fifteen most girls are already married or being courted in marriage. They take their household duties more lightly perhaps than older women with children, but their childhood education is complete. 'To play' now means to join in the weekly dances or dress up to go to market and there to gossip.

Boys, also between the ages of twelve or thirteen and sixteen to eighteen are at the stage of transition from childhood to manhood. The imaginative play, still prominent at the beginning of this period is given up by degrees and usually abandoned altogether when puberty is established.

With boys, therefore, as with girls, the completion of their childhood education marks the end of childhood play. Imitative and imaginative experimentation becomes redundant when the individual attains social responsibility and maturity. The play of Sissala children changes with their advancing maturity, contributing at each stage to the elaboration and intergration of those interests, skills and observances that mastery and acceptance of which is the final result of their education.

WIVES AND METHOD OF MARRIAGE

It is a common practice among the Sissala tribe for one man to have more than one wife. Keeping more than one wife is not only a matter of ensuring sexual gratification, the main purpose of the practice would appear to be economic and it is claimed to be so. The people being primarily engaged in farming, need many hands during the sowing and harvesting seasons on their farms. With more than one wife the work could be divided so that while some help on the farm, others prepare the meal and others also collect firewood or fetch water for the household. It would be practically impossible in such a society for a woman to run a house single-handed. The tribe, therefore, has accepted ways of increasing the number of wives one has.

MARRIAGE THROUGH COURTSHIP.

When a man sees a girl whom he wishes to marry, he gives her a present of about 200 cowries (valued 2<sup>0</sup>). This gift is known as 'Sugeri morikie'. If the girl accepts it, she will give the money to her mother and will tell her that she loves the man. The suitor will next take some salt and kola-nuts and visit the girl's parents. These gifts are known as 'tobo' (tobacco.) The salt and kola-nuts are later substitute for what was formerly tobacco. While at the girl's village, the suitor makes friends with the girl's brother, who will act as a negotiator between the suitor and the girl. The suitor is then told when to bring guinea-corn for the pits known as 'Ha-dzari sinij' (i.e. pits for seeking a woman). The suitor then returns to his village and may return with the guinea-corn at the given time. During the three days the mother-in-law is preparing the pits, the suitor spends his time in his (wife's) future wife's home. When the pits is ready, it is divided into three portions, one for the girl's father and his brothers, another for the girl's brothers and the

third for the girl's mother and the other women in the house. The suitor also gives a thousand cowries (valued 100) to each of the groups and a hundred kola-nuts to the males only. The suitor then returns home.

Some days later, the bride is escorted to the bridegroom's village by some women from her home, accompanied by a man known as "Sipatoro". (leader) The 'Sipatoro' is always the son of a clanswoman from the bridegroom's town, who is married a clansman of the bride but not of the bride's family. On their arrival the bride and the accompanying people are led to the bridegroom's mother's room. The women in the house, on seeing the bride raise a shrill cry called "Kuli" in Isalig and the men yell "Kye-hu" (a war cry). The bridegroom's father then slaughters a goat and friends bring guinea-corn, yams, fowls, guinea-fowls and other food stuffs to help feed the strangers. The people who accompanied the bride may leave the next day with the remaining foodstuffs given to them to their village. The bride is then shown round the rest of the family by the bridegroom's mother.

A young man may perform all the necessary requirements of a girl's parents during courtship if he has the money and later informs his father about his intention of marriage. In circumstances where a young man cannot do so himself, the father performs all the necessary marriage customs and when the girl is brought she is given to the young man. Some fathers do this without the knowledge of the one they intend to give the girl to until she arrives.

Some years after marriage (in many cases when the couple have children) the father of the bride sends the 'Sipatoro' to ask the husband for the bride price, called 'Ha-dzariij'. The amount varies according to the established custom between the clans.

Some clans receive thirty-shillings and a goat and others a cow and a goat. It is the rule that fathers claim exactly what they paid as bride price for their daughter's mothers. The most senior person in the family, who holds the family property in trust, pays the bride price.

#### MARRIAGE BY CAPTURE

Another method of getting a man's bride early to his village is by capture. After giving the girl the usual 200 cowries, the man may find that the girl's parents seem to be delaying the marriage. If this happens, the man courting the woman arranges with the woman's brother to help him in getting the woman to his village without the parents' consent. The woman's brother claims a fee of five shillings from the suitor and with the woman's consent, appoints a day for her to be carried away. The suitor, on receiving information from the woman's brother sends two men to wait outside the woman's village for her. At dusk, the woman's brother leads her out of the village towards the suitor's village. The two men sent by the suitor meet them and the woman is escorted to the suitor's village. The brother then returns home and pretends to have gone for an evening walk.

When the father of the woman and other relatives become aware of her absence, they enquire from all her brothers about her. Not receiving information from any of them about her whereabouts, the father decides to wait for a day or two before taking action on the incident. He is not disturbed by the absence of his daughter because of the possibility of capture by the suitor of whom he is aware.

As soon as the two men arrive<sup>at</sup> the suitor's village with

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the woman, the suitor sends one of them with a white fowl, some kolo-nuts and tobacco to inform the woman's parents that their daughter is with him. The woman's parents show anger and threaten to have their daughter back at once. After much begging, the parents agree to the marriage provided the woman loves the man. The messenger is then sent to inform the suitor to come with his bride to brew *pieto* for the woman's parents. If the woman's birth has been ascribed to the influence or assistance of one of the household spirits, a ceremony is performed before she can have sexual intercourse with the husband. This rite takes the form of an additional gift of an ewe or a goat (accompanied ~~with~~ a white hen, or a red cock as requested by the woman's parents) from the suitor to the girl's parents. The ewe or goat is held above the shrine of the particular spirit which is supposed to be the woman's guardian spirit and a piece is cut off one of its ears by the person performing the rite saying, 'You Lima, Tog or Dalusij' (These are names of various spirits worshipped) permit this woman to conceive before she is two months with her husband. The piece of the animal's ear is left on the shrine and the animal itself is then set free. After it has grown its first born animal is sacrificed over the shrine and the woman and her husband are invited to be present during the sacrifice. At this ~~time~~ sacrifice the spirit is thanked if the woman by this time is conceived or if not, the spirit's attention is directed to the fact that she has not yet done so. The foreleg and neck of the sacrifice are given to the couple. The original animal, the ear of which was cut, must on no account be

killed before it has had a young one.

The couple return home and look forward to having a child if they have not had one before the sacrifice. The woman's parents can, at any time from now onwards, require the husband to pay the bride price.

MARRIAGE OF WIVES' SISTERS.

When a woman is married either through courtship or capture, she asks her parents for one of her sisters to come and stay with her and help her with her domestic work. The girl might be the wife's sister or one of her brothers' daughters. The girl goes to stay with her married sister or aunt at an early age and the elder sister or Aunt and her husband become responsible for her early training.

When the girl comes of age, the sister or the Aunt and her husband decide upon what to do with her. If the girl is of the same mother and father with the elder sister, then she cannot be married by the sister's husband. If on the other hand they are of the same father and of different mothers then she can be married by the sister's husband. If the husband realises he cannot marry the wife's sister himself, he arranges a marriage between the girl and one of the male members of the family. Aunts and their <sup>niece</sup> ~~brothers~~ can be married to the same husband and they generally do so. In the case of sisters the husband and his wife decide what they wish to do with the girl and the wife takes her to their village to inform their parents of the arrangement. If the parents agree, they ask the elder sister to take the girl back to her husband's village and an ewe or a goat brought for the sacrifice. It will be realised that this method of marriage does not give the girl any chance of making her choice. Once the elder sister is in agreement with the marriage the parents do not interfere. The elder sister then takes another small girl with her to her husband's village for the purpose of

of domestic assistance

Many marriages in the past have been of this type. The results of this type of marriages have been the numerous divorce cases in the local Authority Courts. These girls, when they are of age, realise that they do not love their husbands they have been given to and so they arrange with young men from other villages and run away to them. To solve these undesirable marriages the native courts consider the girl's choice of a mate paramount. If the girl chooses a man she likes to be her husband then the former husband is compensated by the refund of his expenses by the new husband. This procedure has made elder sisters return their younger sisters when they are of age to their parents so as to make their own choice from various suitors.

MARRIAGE OF WIDOWS WITHIN THE FAMILY.

When a relative dies in a family, his wives are not allowed to leave his home and go to marry elsewhere. There is an arrangement whereby the widows marry other male members of the family so as to enable them to take care of their children.

The widows are allowed to make their choice of husbands among (a) The younger brothers of their late husband (b) The sons if they are grown (other than the widow's own sons) (c) The grand sons.

Marriage to the widows' late husband's elder brothers, fathers or grand father is not permitted.

When the funeral ceremony of the husband is over, the widows watch their late husband's bachelor brothers and sons and decide which of them they prefer to have as husbands. On occasions, a widow may wish to marry one who is already married. In that case it

becomes a case for bargaining with the wife of the man. If a satisfactory agreement is reached the marriage may be effected. When they decide to marry any of the brothers or sons, they inform the oldest woman in the household of their intention. The old woman instructs them to get water ready for their selected husbands. The old lady then goes to inform the persons concerned that the widows wish to marry them. The men chosen cannot refuse to be the widows' husbands. It is the belief that if they did they would be punished by the departed spirit of their relative. After the water which was presented for bathing by the widows, the men concerned become their husbands.

#### "HELA" or LOVER -

There is a customary arrangement among the Sissalas people, whereby a husband (generally an old man) agrees to have his wife having a lover. The lover performs certain services such as doing work on his house and supplying him with pits on market days. The arrangement is as follows: A man makes a lover of a fellow clansman's wife and after some time tells the lover that he wishes her husband to know about it, and as it were transforms what is a guilty intrigue into a licensed association between them. He asks a male friend to break the news to his lover's husband. It is then arranged by the friend so that lover and husband meet on a market day in the husband's house over a pot of pits. The subject is discussed and a mutual understanding reached as to their future relations. The husband will either inform his wife's lover that his intercourse with his wife must cease, or he will agree to share his wife with him. If the husband agrees, the lover gives him 1000 cowrie, an arrow, a fowl and some tobacco. The arrow the lover gives to the husband is to show that his (lover's) life lies in his hand.

Besides this arrangement any other form of love-making is not encouraged. Loving a man's wife secretly may be carried on at the lover's own risk. If a man is found to be loving another's wife he has to pacify the husband by

performing a sacrifice purported to purify the woman. The husband sends the wife to the lover accusing him of seducing his wife. If the lover admits, he has done so, he sends a fowl to the husband thus signifying his guilt. The husband then sends to inform the lover to bring animals and fowls necessary for the sacrifice of all his 'jujus'. These may include such things as a black he. goat, a black cat, a sheep, fowls and even money. The husband receives these birds and animals and kills them all for his 'jujus' and strangely enough, he himself is not permitted by custom to eat the flesh of any of these birds and animals. The meat is enjoyed by the other male members of the family - females are not permitted to partake of the meat. The wife may, after this sacrifice return to her husband and the lover warned by the male members of his family not to repeat the offence. Such love affairs are not encouraged by the elderly people since they reckon it spoils good relations in the community.

INHERITANCE

Among the Sissala people the first son of a father can inherit his property only when the father has no brother who is older than the first son. If the father has a brother who is older ~~than~~ than all the sons then he inherits the property and becomes responsible for the care of all the sons. The property is held, as it were, in trust by the brother and he uses it in the interest of the sons and other relatives in the family. Out of it he pays the dowries for wives for the sons when they are married and provides them with clothing and any other things they may require. None of the sons has the right to take any of their father's property without the consent of this person. The father's brother has no right also to claim any of their father's property which he gave to his sons before his death. Those become the individual property of the son or sons concerned.

If a father should have no brother who is older than the first son, then the first son inherits the father's property. The daughter, if even she is the first born of the father, does not inherit her father's property which goes to the male born next after her and daughters in general ~~are not~~ do not enjoy the property of their father. Female children are supposed to be cut off from the family as soon as they are married. The eldest son who inherits the father's property is also supposed to use it in the interest of his brothers. He may also use the property in paying for dowries of wives for his brothers and may provide them with clothing and food.

It is the duty of who ever inherits the property to care for the wives of the deceased if they should remain within the family.

Property according to Sissala custom is never to be divided among sons of the deceased, it should always be held in trust by the senior member of the family for the common good. First sons may inherit their father's or if they are young, their father's ~~(brother's)~~ brother may do so. The father's brother does not hand over the property to the son when he is grown but remains in charge until his death. The son may then take over all the property

and this may include his father's and his uncles if he has any.

## SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE SISSALA LANGUAGE

The Sissala Language, like most Gold Coast languages, has no written form owing to the fact that the people are not educated so as to make any writing possible. All the same, the language functions adequately to enable the people to carry on with all their socially desirable intercourse. The Sissala language, since it has no written form, has to depend very much on the society for its grammar and correct usage. There are no teachers appointed for the teaching of the language, but the society in general ~~correct~~ correct the younger members when they make any ungrammatical expressions. The first school therefore is the 'Sissala home' where the child is taught in an informal way by his parents through the direct method of learning. There is, of course, no other method since Sissala is the only language the parents use. As the children of a village begin to speak the language, they are given opportunity of further practice in free speech when they meet their friends of equal ages for play under the trees or on moonlight nights. The adults make it a point to introduce them to more idiomatic Sissala as they come in contact with them at home, on the farm or at special gathering. It might rightly be asked that since there is no written form of the language how has it be preserved through the ages? Part of the answer can be found in the oral type of education described above and part by tradition.

The Sissala people preserve their language through its social aspects. There are many dances and songs connected with all the musical instrument of the people. Let us take the Xylophone and see how the language is used. There are many songs which are as old as the instrument and yet once the player plays a tune on it the whole gathering takes up the tune in the right words, e.g.

"La yiila wa la gua-gua pul to yiila wa  
La yiila la gua-gua pul to yiila wa la yiila."

Translation:

"Our song, we danced and danced till dawn  
Our song we danced and danced till dawn."

The poetic ability of the people is sometimes expressed in the way they compose words for songs to the music of the xylophone. It is surprising to find on such occasions young men and women composing songs to the tune of the xylophone about some behaviour of one of them. A young man saw one of his friends buy food in the market and put it in his pocket and so he composed the following song about him:

"Yomu, ya wi kase, O yo fura he  
Gari dzufa la ka key bays galsbe"

Translation:

"Yomu has done a wonderful thing,  
He bought 'fura' and put it in his pocket before the  
girls."

It is worthy of note that the fear of being mentioned in a song like this tends to make the younger people very careful of their behaviour.

In the same way the "talking drums" are used in dancing and are expressive of the meaning of the language. The younger generation in most cases are given opportunity of picking the history of the tribe <sup>through</sup> ~~these~~ the songs. For the purpose of a specific example I will quote a few.

"Ali Dima birime tub ko na Zambarima ba fuy  
gbaga"<sup>o.c</sup>

Translation:

"Ali Dima come back and see the Zambarimas now being carriers of loads."

In this song the younger generation are lead to understand that once the 'Zambarima' people who raided their country and were lords over them, are now reduced to ~~the~~ carriers of loads. 'Ali Dima' referred to in the song was one of their ancestors. Another "talking drum" song which is sung as thanks to the Europeans for

defeating the Zambarimas round about 1899 is:-

"Moni - gud moni Nasara n ne kiri Zambarima ka la to pala la di niamo,

Grandara ne kiri Zambarima ka la to pala la di niamo."

Translation.

"Morning, good morning white man, you drove the Zambarimas away and got the town for us to enjoy ourselves.

The great one drove the Zambarima and got the town for us to enjoy ourselves"

In this song also the younger generation will get to know that the Zambarimas did not leave the country on their own accord but were defeated by the 'whiteman'. The word 'morning' has become part of the language through this song.

There are various dialects of the Sissala language which are spoken within the district. The dialect groups form the Political divisions of the area. They are four in number and in general they are understandable among the people. The fact that a Sissala man (~~does~~) is not allowed by custom to marry from the same town but from another, makes the intergration of the various dialects possible.

Since the men marry from the various dialect groups their offspring become capable of speaking their mother's dialect in addition to their father's. The father insists on the child speaking his dialect and not the mother's and the child grows up to speak his father's dialect although he understands his mother's as well.

In this way the tribe as a whole comes to understand the various dialects of the Sissala language. This has an advantage because the tribe through marriage comes to realise the idea and importance of unity.

The influx of petty Traders from the South of the Gold Coast, Nigeria and the neighbouring French villages has an influence on the commercial aspect of the language. The Yoruba man has to express himself so that the Sissala woman selling yams may understand him, the man from Ashanti also tries to have his requirements satisfied in

in the same manner. On both sides there is a need to satisfy the other man or woman. Frequently one finds gestures and broken bits of various languages spoken in an attempt to convey meaning to the other. In the end the Sissala Language has a few new words added to its vocabulary from other parts of the country. Words like "Nawa" (how much, in Hausa) 'bra' (in Twi) and many other are understood by the Sissala seller. As time goes on these words and many others may be used unconsciously by the Sissala sellers and buyers and through them become part of the language.

There are times when the Sissala boy, girl, man or woman must be very careful of the use of words. For instance, in the evening, towards the time for the evening meals, people are not allowed to call the names of certain animals. If they did, they would find that most of the older men would go without their meals. The people believe they have 'jujus' which prohibit the naming of animals like the lion, the wolf, the cat, etc. just before meals. Children are taught from the very beginning to be careful of their use of language at this time.

The language in the family is carefully regulated. It is considered bad manners to use foul language in the presence of one's parents or people older than one's self. Love affairs spoken before one's parents is also considered bad manners. One should on no account make remarks about one's father's or mother's make up. This applies equally to any person of one's father's age. But one would ask, "How can parents and elders ensure that their children learn this?" In a society like this, where there is no press, verbal public disapproval of any member's behaviour has a far reaching effect. For example, if one of the younger members

of the Society uses foul language to his parents, friends of his age show disapproval by talking about it on their way to the farm or on social gathering. Soon the culprit realises that he is an outcast among his play mates. The whole community may show disapproval by composing a song about him. This idea of singing bad songs about some one at social gathering is so hated by all that it acts as a means of ensuring good behaviour among the younger generation. On the other hand it is a high honour to have a song composed about one, praising his brave deeds or his good behaviour. Language in this sense is being used as a means of disciplining the community.

In the Sissala language there are no proscribed set of the language held as prohibitive of expression. There are, however, certain songs which are held as taboo for sections of the Community. There are for instance, songs which are <sup>not</sup> allowed to be sung by any one whose father is alive. Such songs are generally sung as last tributes to the dead.

Euphemistic language is very much used with Sissala children. It might be it is a sort of encouragement to the children to stop them from being frustrated in their early years of growth. For instance, when a Sissala child begins to speak and can understand the language of those around him, this form of language is used by parents. In a family, if a child stumbles and falls, the parents tell him that he has put down a rabbit. The child may try to raise a heavy weight and the father or mother tells him that he is very strong. The child feels satisfied and may stop this difficult task and engage himself in another child-like activity. This sort of language is not only used to children but applies to adults also. It might take the form of jokes between friends or when one wishes another not to feel the effect of what might otherwise be an abuse. An elderly person might give one of <sup>his</sup> children or somebody else a very small piece of meat. The recipient might say "Mi namia la yuga", ('My meat is large') but in fact he wishes to remind the

given that his meat is too small. Euphemism is also used by the women folk in making insulting remarks about their neighbours. Frequent usage has made them easily understood by many so that if one uses them another may reply by using another. Sometimes this sort of language is carried on between women until it becomes direct language and ends probably in a quarrel.

Language used during religious performances is different from the language of every day life. There are many Gods in the Sissala sense each needing special recognition. You have the 'Sun God' the 'Earth God' the 'Bush God' and many others including their ancestral Spirits. In each case a special person is chosen to speak to the God concerned in a special religious form of the language. For example the following is the language in which the 'Sun God' is addressed:

"Tumu Wiheye, si la liy, n ne la liy dey dey yire n hala tin-ley ari vesig kala. Ma ya di la na yarifiala, a ya di hata lul, a pila kudile."

#### Translation:

"Tumu 'Sun God' get up and receive your water, if you receive it you may call your wife the 'Earth God' and all ~~you~~ the other Gods who are your friends. You may give us good health, allow our wives to bear children and allow us us to have plenty of food."

The person leading the religious ceremony is assisted by other old people whenever he is stuck during the ceremony. Language used in religious ceremonies must never be used anywhere else by anybody in the tribe.

The magical use of language is common and it is handed down from one magical person to another to whom he intends giving some of his powers. The recipient of the magic has to learn how to address it when he wishes to solicit its help. This he can do successfully

through the knowledge of the special language. For example, he is taught to say, "Bakurima, si la n liy" i.e. 'Bakurima get up and receive your water,' each time he wishes to pay the magic his homage. If the magic has the power of making one's opponents fall at the utterance of the word 'Kai,' the word is tried by the one handing over the magic on the one receiving it. This single word 'kai,' stands for a whole sentence, e.g. 'Kai be kun ne n dza a ya?' ('Kai, what are you going to do?') It is believed that if a magician uses this word his opponent will fall to the ground. This kind of language is used mostly by hunters who believe that magic can help them against wild animals.

The Sissala language is predominantly social in nature. Having no written form and confined to a limited area it is through its social usage that the traditions and history of the tribe is preserved and handed on from generation to generation.

Children's Stories:

Conditions under which Story was given: In the children's compound at T.p.m. in a boarding School with one child (a girl) 7 years of age.

INTERVIEWER: I wish you to tell me your favourite story so that I tell it to children in the schools at Accra.

Child's favourite Story:

One upon a time there was a chief and he had a farm. He sowed everything that is in the world. There was a dove in a tree on the farm. When the chief sent one of his sons to the farm he heard the bird singing:-

"Anaya kee kee doy anaya kee  
Ka kutia din a gulagula tfo di  
Awuya gulaa"

When the boy heard the song he went away to tell his father, that something was in the farm going to eat him up. The chief saddled his horse and came to the farm. When the chief came to the farm the dove sang again and the chief ran away. When the chief returned home an orphan boy came to the house and asked him what was wrong. The chief told him that there was something in his farm eating his millet. When the boy went to the farm he killed the dove and brought it and he was given so much money that he became rich. That is the end of my story.

INTERVIEWER: That is an interesting story and the children in Accra will like to hear it. Can you tell me another story of a girl you think is bad?

CHILD: Yes, I can.

A BAD GIRL: This bad girl is called Hayere. She is mad. She kills people with knives. She abuses people who have done nothing to her. She was here and she ran away to Budzans.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know of any one she killed?

CHILD: No, but she once chased us in the town with a knife. She would have killed us if we did not run.

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INTERVIEWER: You were wise to have run away. Can you tell me a story of a good girl?

CHILD: Yes, there are many good girls in the town.

A good girl: They are many. Laseba is a good girl. She is a red girl. She buys pretos for me. She is good because she is kind to me.

INTERVIEWER: Good, what would you wish if you were granted one wish in the world?

Child: Money.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me how you look like so that I write your description down to read to some children who would like to hear about you?

Child's Self description: I am red. I am a small girl. My head is small and I am lean. I have a small mouth with white teeth. I bathe well. I like rice.

INTERVIEWER: You have done it very well indeed. Now tell me what you can remember from the time you were born up to the present.

Child: I was born at Tumu in my mother's house at Zongo. There are about six or seven people in my house. When I was about six years old I went with my mother to Po and lived there for about a month. Before I came to school I worked for my mother. I used to fetch water from the well and I washed pots. When I came to school I was about six and a-half years old. I like to be in school.

INTERVIEWER: You have done very well indeed and I think we have to stop now, but tomorrow I shall come with some papers so that you do some drawings for me to show to your friends at Accra.

Drawings attached.

SALAMATU'S DRAWINGS. (A GIRL OF 7YRS.)

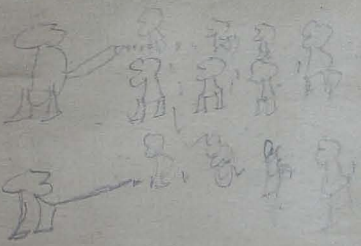
MAN



WOMAN



A MAN AND A WOMAN



bayisa  
laligine

A FIGHT.

SALAMATU'S DRAWINGS CONTD.



Bo kiri do gone

A PLEASANT THING. A DOG CHASING A RABBIT.



dimig



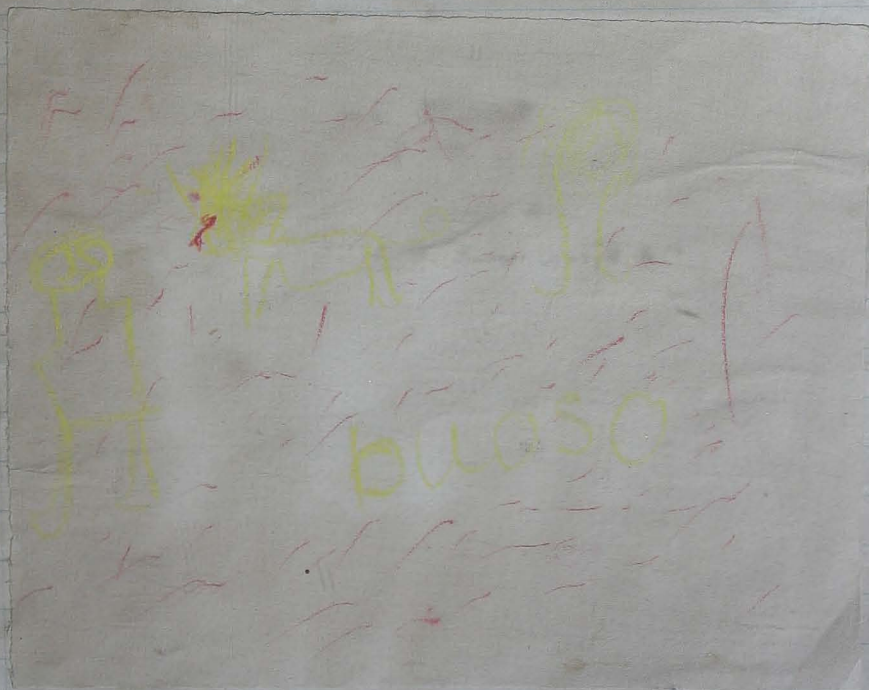
Natsi kig

AN UNPLEASANT THING. A SNAKE CHASING A RABBIT.

SALAMATU'S DRAWING CONTD.



WHAT THE CHILD IS AFRAID OF. A HYENA AND A SNAKE



A DREAM.

A HYENA CHASING THE CHILD.



THE INSIDE OF THE CHILD'S HOUSE

STORIES CONTD.

CONDITION UNDER WHICH STORY WAS GIVEN: In one of the classrooms with the child alone, a boy of 7 years of age.

INTERVIEWER: Could you tell me any story you like best?

CHILD'S FAVOURITE STORY: Once upon a time there was a leopard. He went to the farm. He went and killed a dove. He was coming when he saw two women. He asked them to give him water to drink. They took the water from the river and the calabash broke. The leopard said that they must bring the water in the broken calabash. He gave the dove to the women. The women went and gave it to their mother and father but they refused to take it. Then the women began to sing:

"Gbeke e gbeke e,

Tjena La e ka komo

Na so beeffe.

Tjena La e ka komo

Nko so beeffe.

Tjena La e ka komo."

Then the women went and told the leopard that their parents had refused the dove. The leopard told them to throw the dove away and they did so. That is why there are many doves in the world now. If they had killed the dove there would not have been doves in the world.

INTERVIEWER: Now I wish you to tell me another story about a bad boy you know or can think of.

CHILD: I know of a bad boy in our village. His father is the chief of our village. He always goes round stealing people's guinea fowl eggs. He was once caught and brought to the chief. He was beaten and we all went there to see. I went there with my father and he told me not to do such things. The boy always steals and he is always beaten.

INTERVIEWER: Stealing is not good but has he stopped now?

CHILD: No. He ran away to WA.

INTERVIEWER: I suppose you know of a good boy, could you tell me about one?

CHILD: Batingo is a good boy. He helps his father on his farm and does not steal. He use to give me some yams from his father's farm. He does not

beat small children. I like him very much.

INTERVIEWER: You have done very well to have told me these interesting stories, but what would you wish for if you were granted a wish?

CHILD: I would wish for a Smoek.

INTERVIEWER: Now, could you just describe yourself to me?

CHILD: I am short. My nose is flat. I am black.

INTERVIEWER: Is that all you can say about yourself? All right, now tell me your life story:

CHILD: I was born in Tunnu in my father's house. Some people from Danye came and took me to that village. I was not so happy there as in Tunnu. We went to Danye for fetish. They gave me money. One of my brothers has gone to Obuasi and two are in the house. I used to go to the farm and look after fowls. Balon put me in school.

INTERVIEWER: You have done very well indeed, but I shall come to-morrow to let you draw for me some of the things you like.

Drawings attached.



A MAN AND A WOMAN.



A FIGHT.

Yuosig



A PLEASANT THING.

A CAR.



AN UNPLEASANT THING. A HUNTER SHOOTING A LION

BOTHUGLO'S DRAWINGS CONTD-



WHAT THE CHILD IS AFRAID OF. A MAD MAN HOLDING AN AXE



A DREAM. A SNAKE GOING TO BITE HIM.



INSIDE THE CHILD'S HOUSE. A DOG AND A FOWL IN IT.