

**NAWURI-GONJA RELATIONS,  
1913-1994**

**BY**

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**This thesis is submitted to the University of Ghana, Legon in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of M.Phil degree in History.**

July 2002



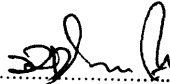
## DECLARARTION

I hereby declare that except for references to other works which have been duly acknowledged, this thesis is the result of my research, and that this study has not been presented either in whole or in part for another degree elsewhere.

  
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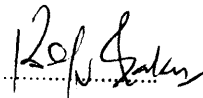
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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ADM:</b>	Administration
<b>Ag:</b>	Acting
<b>BNI:</b>	Bureau of National Investigation
<b>CC:</b>	Chief Commissioner
<b>CPP:</b>	Convention People's Party
<b>CSP:</b>	Chief Superintendent of Police
<b>DC:</b>	District Commissioner
<b>GNA:</b>	Gonja Native Authority
<b>LA:</b>	Local Authority
<b>LC:</b>	Local Council
<b>NA:</b>	Native Authority
<b>NAGA:</b>	National Archives of Ghana, Accra
<b>NAGT:</b>	National Archives of Ghana, Tamale
<b>NAO:</b>	National Alliance of Liberals
	Native Administration/Authority Ordinance
	National Democratic Congress
	National Liberation Council
	New Patriotic Party



**NPP:** Northern People's Party  
**NRC:** National Redemption Council  
**NTS:** Northern Territories  
**NTO:** Native Treasury Ordinance  
**PF:** Popular Front Party  
**PNDC:** Provisional National Defence Council  
**PNP:** People's National Party  
**PP:** Progress Party  
**PRAAD:** Public Records Administration and Archival  
Division  
**REGSEC:** Regional Security Committee  
**SNA:** Secretary for Native Affairs



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In writing this thesis, I received the assistance from many people, too numerous to mention here. Suffice it, however, to acknowledge some people for their outstanding contribution. Primarily, I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. N.J.K. Brukum for his inspiring, enthusiastic and diligent guidance and supervision. Similar thanks also go to Dr. D.E.K. Baku for his immeasurable comments and suggestions.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to Miss Gifty Amankwa, Millicent Awuni and all the Secretaries of Media Design on Legon Campus for typing the thesis. Special thanks also go to all my informants, especially Nana S.G. Friko for giving me valuable documents concerning Nawuri-Gonja relations. My sincerest thanks also go to my wife Akulede Theresa Kasta for motivating me during difficult times.

Thank you my God, Lord Jesus Christ and Holy Mary (Mother of Jesus Christ) for enabling me to write this thesis successfully.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at the relationship between the Nawuri and the Gonja from 1913 to 1994. It discusses the arrival of the Nawuri, the Gonja and other immigrants into the Nawuri area and the nature of the relationship between the two groups of people through time.

Contacts between the Nawuri and the Gonja date back to the seventeenth century when the two ethnic groups regarded each other as political allies. As political allies, the Nawuri supported the Gonja when eastern Gonja came under attack by Asante in 1744-45. Similarly, the Nawuri supported the Lepo Gonja (one of the three gates to the Kpembe chieftaincy) when a civil war erupted between Kanyase on the one hand and the Lepo and the Sungbung on the other.

The relationship between the Nawuri and the Gonja up to 1913 was very cordial and peaceful. In 1913 Karantu Kankarantu Jawula was installed the Kanankulaiwura in the Nawuri area. Throughout his tenure of office, Kanankulaiwura Jawula pursued policies that indicated that the Nawuri were Gonja subjects and that allodial rights to the lands in the Nawuri area resided in the Gonja. It was this action of Kanankulaiwura Jawula and the subsequent amalgamation of the Nawuri area to the Gonja state that brought about a change in the relationship between the Nawuri and the Gonja.

There are several feuds between the Nawuri and the Gonja relating to birthrights, allodial rights, overlordship and chieftaincy became the thrusts of their relationship. The local feuds between the Nawuri and the Gonja determined their positions in politics concerning the status of Togoland from 1922 to 1956 as well as politics in Ghana from 1966 onwards. The above issues of dispute between the Nawuri and the Gonja, particularly the Gonja claim to allodial rights to lands in the Nawuri area and political control over the Nawuri, their non-

~~recognition~~ and suppression of Nawuri chieftaincy formed the root causes of the conflicts between the Nawuri and the Gonja both during the colonial and the post-Independence era.

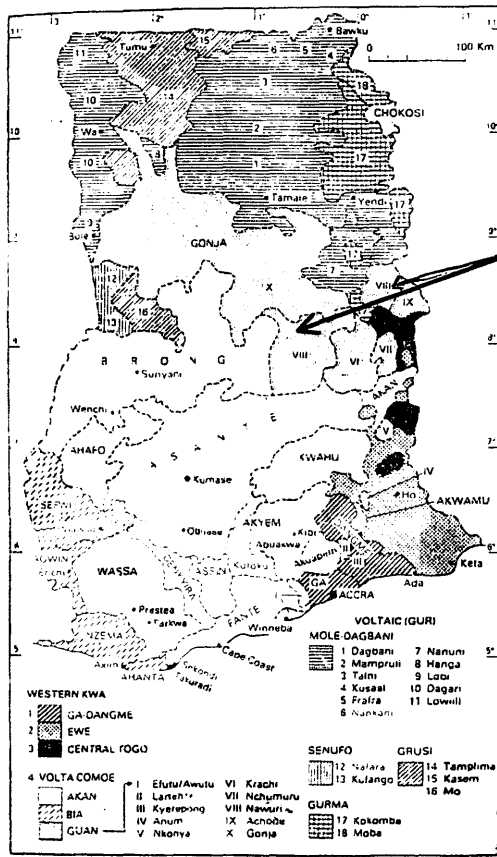
The wars between the Nawuri and the Gonja have technically not ended, and a state of war still exists between them since no peace treaty has been signed. The Ampiah Committee that was set up in 1991 by the erstwhile PNDC Government to investigate the causes of the Nawuri-Gonja wars submitted its findings and recommendations to the government in that year. Perhaps for political reasons, a Government White paper was not issued on the findings and recommendations of the Committee.

## RELEVANCE OF THE PERIODS 1913 AND 1994 TO THE STUDY

The relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja were, for the most part, dominated by the struggle for sovereignty, overlordship and allodial title to lands in the Nawuri area situated in East Gonja District. The period 1913 and 1994 had between them two historical landmarks in the relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja. The first colonial report on the installation of a Gonja head chief (Kanankulaiwura) with political authority over the Nawuri was in 1913.<sup>4</sup> Various historical, political and introspective interpretations are therefore given to the 1913 report. For some, it lofly demonstrates the recognition by the Germans of Gonja rule over the Nawuri while others regard it as the introduction of Gonja imperialism in the Nawuri area. In the main, however, 1913 is significant because the roots of the bitterness between the Nawuri and the Gonja are traceable to Kanankulaiwura Mahama Karantu Kankarantu Jawula, who was enskinned in that year. It was for these reasons that 1913 is significant as far as the history of the relationship between the Nawuri and the Gonja is concerned.

The year 1994 on the other hand is significant because it marked the end of hostilities, if only temporary, between the Nawuri (whom the Konkomba supported) and the Gonja.





NAWURI STATE II  
NORTHERN AND VOLTA  
REGIONS OF GHANA

Map 1.1 Distribution of language groups in Ghana

## INTRODUCTION

The area under study lies in the eastern corridor of East Gonja District in Northern Region and parts of the Volta Region of Ghana. The area, which I refer to as the Nawuri area for historical and linguistic reasons is variously called the Alfai, the Kanankulai and Kpandai area. The Nawuri area stretches between latitude  $30^{\circ}$  –  $20^{\circ}$  to the south.<sup>1</sup> In a German map produced in 1906, the name 'Nawuri' appeared along longitude  $10-15^{\circ}$  to the right.<sup>2</sup> The Nawuri area occupies a landmass of approximately 24km from Lugni-pii in the north to Buya in the south, and about 65km from Kpasa in the east to Tangelan in the west.<sup>3</sup> The Achode, the Nchumuru, the Nanumba and the Krachi bound the Nawuri area in the east, west, north and south respectively. The Nawuri area formed part of the former German Colony of Togoland administered by Britain as the Mandated territory from 1922 to 1945 and the Trust Territory from 1945 to 1956.

The precise date that the Nawuri made early contacts with the Gonja cannot be determined, though it dates far back to the pre-colonial period, probably in the seventeenth century. The earliest Nawuri contact with the Gonja was probably made at Kpembe and Salaga in the eastern corridor of the Gonja state. The political alliance between the Nawuri and the Gonja was mainly responsible for the immigration of the Gonja into the Nawuri area. The Nawuri and the Gonja were regarded as political allies and it was this alliance that ensured the immigration of the latter into the Nawuri area. It is also probably that trade was responsible for the immigration of the Gonja into the Nawuri area. About the seventeenth century or earlier, Nawuri traders were said to have

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<sup>1</sup> Map of Togo (Karte von Togo) produced in 1906 by the Germans.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> The mile equivalents of these distances are 15 miles from North to South and 35 miles from east to west respectively.



commuted to Salaga for trade and consequently interacted with various traders of different ethnic backgrounds including the Gonja. The commercial contacts or relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja were strengthened when a group of the Gonja migrated from Salaga and Kpembe to the Nawuri area to settle. However, a few Gonja traders travelled to the Nawuri area to secure foodstuff to barter their goods at Salaga market. It should be noted that the migration of the Gonja to the Nawuri area was not en masse, it was a series of disjointed migrations. The migration of the Gonja (the Lepo Gonja) to the Nawuri area to settle permanently began around the last decade of the seventeenth century or first decade of the eighteenth century, but the phenomenon continued even up to the closing decade of the nineteenth century. From the beginning of the first influx of the Gonja to the Nawuri area up to the 1930s, the relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja had been cordial, and this was evidenced by intermarriages and cultural exchanges between them. Besides, and more importantly, the Nawuri and the Gonja (especially the first stock of the Gonja [the Lepo] that migrated to the Nawuri area) formed a political alliance to help each other in the defence of their respective territories. It was against this background that the Nawuri supported the Gonja in the Asante invasion of eastern Gonja (Salaga and Kpembe) in the eighteenth century. It was also against this background of the political alliance between the Nawuri and the Gonja that the former supported the Lepo against the Kanyase in the Kpembe civil wars of 1892-3 and 1895-6.

However, from the 1930s onwards the relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja became strained. The question of the rightful and legitimate owners of the lands in the Nawuri area marred the relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja. From the 1930s

onwards the Gonja began to challenge the logic and legitimacy of the Nawuri allodial claim to lands in the Nawuri area. Colonial administrative policy (the policy of indirect rule) was responsible for this change of the Gonja attitude. The introduction of the Native Administration Ordinance of 1932, which amalgamated Nawuri area to the Gonja state, ultimately empowered the Yagbumwura and his sub-chiefs over the Nawuri. The amalgamation of the Nawuri area to the Gonja Native Administration area reduced the Nawuri, a hitherto independent people to a vassal and subordinate status. It was the amalgamation of the Nawuri area to Gonja Native Authority that influenced the Gonja to claim allodial rights to lands in the Nawuri area. It was to legitimatise and justify their allodial claim to the lands in the Nawuri area that the Gonja fabricated the story of the origin of the Nawuri. Between 1930 and to 1994 the question of the legitimate owners of the lands in the Nawuri area dominated the relationship between the Nawuri and the Gonja and had serious consequences for the two peoples and the country as a whole. This dispute between the Nawuri and the Gonja over the allodial rights to the land in the Nawuri area also generated the disputes over the legitimate rulers in the Nawuri area and differences between them in the nature, name, composition and functions of the Alfai Local Council. Others include the respective attitudes the Nawuri and the Gonja adopted on the Togoland question and the 1956 plebiscite, differences between the Nawuri and the Gonja in the support for political parties in Ghana since 1969. In fact, the dispute over the allodial rights to land in the Nawuri area was the pivot upon which all other differences between the Nawuri and the Gonja have revolved. It was the dispute over the ownership of land in the Nawuri area between the Nawuri and the Gonja that degenerated into the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts of 1991 and 1992. It was also this dispute over the

ownership of the land in the Nawuri area that made the Nawuri to support the Konkomba against the Gonja in the 1994 ethnic conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana. Since the rightful owners of the lands in the Nawuri area have not been determined, the dispute between the Nawuri and the Gonja still rages on. The Ampiah Committee formed in 1991 by the erstwhile PNDC Government to investigate the causes of the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts of 1991 found that the land in the Nawuri area belong to the Nawuri. However, the PNDC Government failed to issue a White Paper on the report; neither did the Government implement the recommendations of the report.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There is hardly any academic work on the relationship between the Nawuri and the Gonja. On the other hand, academic work and research on the Gonja are impressive. As a matter of fact, there is some marginal information about Nawuri-Gonja relations in the works of Ampene, Braimah, Boahen, Cardinal, Tamakloe, Wilks and Wilks, Letzion and Haight.<sup>5</sup> The thrust of the above publications are that: first, Nawuri history is

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<sup>5</sup> Ampene, K.: *History of the Guan-Speaking Peoples of Ghana*, (Laterian House, Boso, 2003).

Braimah JA. : "The Founding of the Gonja Empire" (Legon, the author, 1970).

Braimah, J.A: The Two Isanwurfos. (Longman, London, 1967)

Cardinal, A.W: Tales in Togoland. (Oxford University Press. London: 1931).

Tamakloe, E.F: A Brief History of the Dagbamba People. (Government Printer, Accra. 1931).

Wilks, I.: Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order (Longman, London, 1975).

Wilks I., Letzion N. and Haight, B.M: Chronicles from Gonja: A Tradition of West African Muslim Historiography (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 1986).

peripheral to Gonja history, second, the Gonja are the overlords of the Nawuri, third, Nawuri land is Gonja land as the Gonja are the allodial owners.

It is to correct these erroneous assumptions that the study investigates the relationship between the Nawuri and the Gonja from the pre-colonial period up to 1994 to establish its nature, impact, reasons and any other considerations relevant to the history of the Nawuri-Gonja relations.

### SOURCES

Two main sources were explored to reconstruct the history of the Nawuri-Gonja relations. These are primary and secondary sources. The components of the primary source include research in Public Records Administration and Archival Division (PRAAD) in Accra and Tamale as well as the District Archives in Krachi and Salaga. Others include Colonial Annual Reports in the Balme Library from 1919 to 1952, Dixon's Report on the status of the Nawuri and the Nchumuru within the Togoland Area of the Gonja District, and the Ampiah Committee of Inquiry into the Gonja, Nawuri and Nchumuru Ethnic Conflicts of 1991. Interviews were also conducted in Salaga, Kpembe, Damango, Kpandai and its surrounding villages. Information was also obtained from the Kpandai Police Diary and Logbooks of Kpandai Primary and Junior Secondary Schools established in 1947 and 1953 respectively.

Secondary sources were also used and indicated in the bibliography.



## **Structure**

A topical and analytical approach was adopted in this study. The study is divided into six chapters. A summary of the chapters is as follows:

### **Chapter One: Nawuri area before and after the influx of immigrants**

This chapter examines the various views on the origin of the Nawuri and the Gonja, the features of the last communal settlement of the Nawuri at their present settlement and the immigration of the Gonja, the Kotokoli, the Konkomba and the Basari into the Nawuri area. The chapter further examines the reasons for the absence of wars between the Nawuri and the Gonja when the latter migrated to the Nawuri area. It also discusses the economic, social and demographic impact of the influx of the Gonja and other migrants to the Nawuri area. More importantly, the chapter looks at the nature of the early relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja as well as the issues that turned the Nawuri-Gonja relations sour.

### **Chapter Two: Chieftaincy and Nawuri-Gonja Relations**

The chapter examines the evolution of chieftaincy among the Nawuri. It also traces and examines the evolution of the institution of Kanankulaiwura (the office of the Gonja head chief in the Nawuri area), Gonja hegemony over the Nawuri and its impact. The installation of Nana Atorsah as Nawuriwura and his policies as well as the 1943 exodus of the Nawuri from the Gonja District to the Krachi District are also discussed in this chapter. Finally, the chapter examines the Kanankulaiwura Skin Dispute and its

effects on the Nawuri, the Gonja and other inhabitants in the Nawuri area in the Salaga District in general.

### **Chapter Three: The Nawuri area under Colonial and Independent Governments in Ghana**

This chapter explores the political situation in the Gold Coast during the partition of Africa, the imposition of colonial rule on the Gold Coast, the Anglo-German Convention of 1899 and the divisions of the neutral zone (of which the Nawuri area was part) between Britain and Germany. It further looks at the colonial policies and the impact of colonial rule on the Nawuri. In addition, the chapter examines the evolution of Native Authority in the Gold Coast, the amalgamation of the Nawuri area to the Gonja Native Authority and the impact of this policy as well as the developments undertaken by Gonja Native Authority in the Nawuri area. In addition, the chapter explains the conditions that led to the establishment of Local Councils in the Gold Coast and the Alfa Local Council: its establishment in the Nawuri area; its nature, composition, activities, functions and developments undertaken.

### **Chapter four: The Nawuri, the Gonja, the Togoland Question and post-1956 politics in the Gold Coast and Ghana**

This chapter examines the attitudes of the Nawuri and the Gonja on the Togoland question. It also discusses the activities of the Togoland Congress and the Convention People's Party as well as the 1956 plebiscite and its aftermath in the Nawuri area.

Finally, the chapter examines the attitudes of the Nawuri and the Gonja towards political parties in Ghana between 1969 and 1994.

#### **Chapter five: The Nawuri - Gonja Conflicts**

This chapter discusses the immediate causes of the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts of 1991 and 1992, the phases and consequences of the conflicts. The chapter further assesses the reasons for the victory of the Gonja in the first conflict and why the Nawuri won the second and third wars respectively. The chapter also examines the efforts at resolving the conflicts and the correlation between the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts (1991 and 1992) and the 1994 ethnic conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana.

#### **Chapter six: Conclusion**

This chapter is a summary of the five preceding chapters.



## CHAPTER ONE

# NAWURI AREA BEFORE AND AFTER THE INFLUX OF IMMIGRANTS

### 1.1 Geography of the Nawuri area

The Nawuri area has been the main point of contact between the Nawuri and the Gonja since the pre-colonial period. Hence the Nawuri and the Gonja have lived together for several hundreds of years and their relations have been characterized by periods of peace and friction. Generally, however, the Nawuri and the Gonja had lived in peace. The peaceful co-habitation of the Nawuri and the Gonja, however, ended in 1991 when war broke out between them. This compelled the Gonja to flee Kpandai for Kpembe and Salaga. This chapter will begin with a geographical description and historical account of the Nawuri area before the migration of the Gonja to the Nawuri area.

The Nawuri area consists of the following towns and villages: Kpandai, Katiejeli, Balai, Bayim, Nkanchina, Dodoai, Kabonwule, Kotiko, Kitare and Bladjai, all in the Northern Region. Across the Oti River, in the present day Volta Region, the Nawuri founded Njare, Disare, Awuratu, Oprusai, Linkpan, Suruku<sup>1</sup> Kpasa and Abrionko. The first three and the last settlements appeared in a Gold Coast atlas map of 1935 as being Nawuri settlements.<sup>2</sup>

Achode, Nchumuru, Nanumba, and Krachi bound the Nawuri area in the east, west, north and south respectively. Natural features such as hills, streams, watercourses

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<sup>1</sup> Dixon, J. Report Concerning the Status of the Nawuris and Nanjuras within the Togoland area of the Gonja District, 1955, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Atlas of the Gold Coast published by the Gold Coast Survey Department. (Accra: 1935).

serve as boundary marks between the Nawuri and their neighbouring states. For example, the *Konkibi* delimits the boundary of the Nawuri area to the east while *Lugni Kebunbi* serves as the boundary between the Nawuri and the Nanumba in the north respectively.<sup>3</sup> Even among the various Nawuri settlements, natural features such as rocks, watercourses, hills and big trees define traditional boundaries. For example, a hill upon which stood a cashew tree serves as the boundary mark between Kpandai and Balai. According to Nawuri traditions, a big mound was raised at the boundary between Balai and Kpandai to serve as a boundary mark.<sup>4</sup>

The boundaries between the Nawuri and their neighbours have not been questioned by their neighbours since pre-colonial times. According to Bening boundary features were venerated and the fear of provoking the anger of the gods, ancestors or the spirits that animated boundary features restrained people from engaging in boundary disputes.<sup>5</sup> For example, as explained by Krachiwura to Dixon in 1955, the Nawuri, the Krachi, the Nchumuru and the Nanumba served one deity – the Krachi Denteh in the pre-colonial period. He further observed that:

in those days there were no disputes and the only bond between these peoples was the Denteh Fetish<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the reasons assigned by Bening for the absence of boundary disputes is Nawuri kinship. Apart from the Nanumba, the other ethnic groups that have

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<sup>3</sup> Konkibi is a hill while Lugni Kebunbi is a stream between Lugni-Pii and Lugni proper.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Bening, R B. "The Evolution of Administrative Boundaries of Northern Ghana, 1898-1965" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of London 1971), p2.

<sup>6</sup> Dixon, *op. cit* Appendix VIII, p 11.

common boundaries with the Nawuri are Guans.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the Nawuri, the Krachi, the Nchumuru and the Achode were and are still regarded as “brothers”. The Nanumba also had good relations with the Nawuri. The Nawuri-Nanumba relation was founded on intermarriages. Intermarriages between the Nawuri and the Nanumba were common in the early history of contact of the two ethnic groups.<sup>8</sup> The presence of the Nawuri or cousins of the Nawuri who spoke the Nawuri dialect in preference to the Nanumba language in the Nanumba state is a clear quintessence of the intermarriage between the Nawuri and the Nanumba. It is a common belief among the Nawuri that the bulk of the Nanumba in Wulensi, Tampoai Kpengnansi, Jemang and Kajasu are Nawuri.<sup>9</sup> It was common for the offsprings of such intermarriages to stay with their maternal uncles and were assimilated into the Nanumba or the Nawuri respectively.<sup>10</sup>

## 1.2 The cradle of the Nawuri

The origin of the Nawuri is subject to dispute. Various stories have been told about the origins of the Nawuri. These include those of Ward and Jones<sup>11</sup>, Dixon<sup>12</sup>, Gonja,<sup>13</sup> Tamakloe<sup>14</sup> and Ampene<sup>15</sup>, and the oral traditions of the Nawuri themselves.

Writing on the foundation of the Gonja, Ward mentions the presence of the Guan-speaking groups in what is now central, western and eastern Gonja long before the arrival

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<sup>7</sup> The Guan neighbours of the Nawuri are the Achode, the Nchumuru and the Karachi. They are believed to have originated from the same place (in the Afram Plains) with the Nawuri and congregated in the same direction to their various settlements.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. In fact, the names of the last four settlements are in the Nawuri dialect.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ward, W.E.F.: A History of Ghana (George Allen And Unwin Limited, London : 1966). P.34. Jones, D.H. “Jakpa and the Foundation of Gonja” in Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana (Vol. VI, 1962). Legon pp 1- 28.

<sup>12</sup> For more details see Dixon’s Report, 1955.

<sup>13</sup> Braimah, J.A: The Two Isanwurfos (Longman, London: 1967),

<sup>14</sup> Tamakloe, E.F: A Brief History of the Dagbamba People, (Government Printer, Accra: 1931).

<sup>15</sup> Ampene, op. cit pp. 153-159.

of the Gonja and that it was with these Guan-Speaking groups that the Gonja must have intermingle.<sup>16</sup> Jones also shares the same view and said among such Guan-speaking groups were the Beri, living on the borders of Ivory Coast between Bona and Bundugu.<sup>17</sup> He further explains that several of the *Nyamase* communities of central and western Gonja speak or used to speak a Guan language.<sup>18</sup> These include the Choruba, now spoken at Senyon and Seripe, a few kilometers from Bole; Damputu spoken in three or four villages in the neighbourhood of Buipe.<sup>19</sup> Others are the Nawuri and the Nchumuru in the Kpembe division of eastern Gonja. Jones further affirms Ward's view and says that it was with these Guan-speaking peoples that Jakpa's followers from *Mande* must have mingled and intermarried to acquire their present speech.<sup>20</sup> Though the story does not indicate the cradle of the Guan, it at least shows that the Guan and therefore the Nawuri are autochthonous and that the Nawuri arrived at their present settlement first before the Gonja.

Another story about the origin of the Nawuri is that given by the Gonja. According to the Gonja, the Nawuri and the Nchumuru came from *Mande* with Ndewura Jakpa.<sup>21</sup> Gonja traditions further maintain that the Nawuri and the Nchumuru formed part of the fighting army of Jakpa, and that the Nawuri were settled at their present settlements under the political hegemony of the Lepo.<sup>22</sup> However, these traditions do not refer to the Nawuri and the Nchumuru as *Nyamase*.<sup>23</sup> There are, however, weaknesses in

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<sup>16</sup> Ward (1966). p. 130.

<sup>17</sup> Jones. *op. cit.* pp. 1 – 28..

<sup>18</sup> Jones. *op. cit.* pp 1 – 28. "Nyamase" is derived from the Mande word "Nyama", which means 'refuse' or "something worthless."

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>21</sup> Braimah (1967). *op. cit.* p. 122.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*



these traditions. Firstly, if the Nawuri have originated from the same place with the Gonja and, indeed, formed part of the Gonja fighting army, then there should be some mutual cultural borrowing or the Nawuri who were allegedly subordinates of the Gonja should have borrowed some cultural traits of the latter. The reality is that there are no signs of cultural borrowings. Whereas the Gonja have three long horizontal marks on both cheeks, the Nawuri do not have any. Besides, the Nawuri wear cloths and their chiefs sit on stools as symbol of office while the Gonja wear smocks and *batakari*, and their chiefs sit on skins. Linguistically, Nawuri is a distinct language with different phonetic sounds from Gonja, and it is closely related to Nchumuru, Krachi and Achode than Gonja. The Nawuri are Guan and belong to the Kwa-speaking group while the ruling house of Gonja are *Mande* and belonged to the ethnic groups of the Niger-Congo. Hence from the cultural and linguistic points of view, this story should not be accepted as adequately explaining the origins of the Nawuri.

Dixon presents another story to explain the origin of the Nawuri. According to him, the Nawuri originated from Techiman or the Techiman area.<sup>27</sup> There are two reasons why Dixon offers this explanation. Firstly, that the people of Katiejeli originated from Techiman together with the Kalendi and the Kablima sections of the Gonja that came directly under the Kpembewura and Yagbumwura respectively.<sup>28</sup> Secondly, Dixon claims that the Dodoai Nawuri came from Kafaba in the Gonja state and that there was an exchange of burial customs between these places.<sup>29</sup> On the bases of these premises Dixon concludes that:

the Nawuri had already accepted the overlordship of the

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<sup>27</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p.5.

<sup>28</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p.5.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

Gonja before arriving in the area and had gone ahead of the main Gonja invasion to drive out the Konkomba inhabitants of what must have been a very sparsely inhabited country. This theory is supported by the tradition that the people of Katiejeli came from Techiman.<sup>30</sup>

According to Dixon, the view that Katiejeli Nawuri came from Techiman presupposes that all the Nawuri came from Techiman where they accepted the overlordship of the Gonja. But granted that Katiejeli Nawuri came from Techiman, it does not necessarily follow that all Nawuri originated from Techiman. The Nawuri, however, deny Dixon's claim and maintain that if some people in Katiejeli came from Techiman, they were not Nawuri and that they have assimilated such people. It should be pointed out that Dixon was a colonial officer. As such he was definitely biased in favour of the Gonja who were the overlords of the Nawuri in furtherance of colonial administrative expediency or the indirect rule.

Tamakloe also puts forward a story to explain the origin of the Nawuri. According to him, the Nawuri were Konkomba who were captured by Jakpa and resettled at their present place.<sup>32</sup> Writing on Jakpa's conquest, Tamakloe claims that:

the insatiable spirit of Jakpa was dissatisfied with the kingdoms and chieftaincies he had hitherto won. And the conquest of the eastern countries became his ambition. And as Jakpa had put things in order and appointed one of his sons as chief in the newly made kingdom he took the field against the Kpamkpamba people. He raided on his way Bo, Tashi, and the Bassari people who took refuge in their mountain-passes but left their flocks and cattle for the raider. The Kpamkpambas were then attacked, but the fighting was very furious indeed, but the tactics of the Ngbanye were superior to those of the savages who were routed and taken prisoners, with thousands of oxen, sheep



<sup>30</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.*, 18, p5.

<sup>32</sup> Tamakloe, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25. Also see Cardinall, A. W: Tales in Togoland (Oxford University Press, London: 1931) pp 260 - 261.

and goats. Jakpa then returned to Salaga by the same route. He planted the captives taken from Kpamkpamba, between Nchumuru, Salaga and Nanumba, to cultivate the soil, and to supply the Kpembi-wura (chief of Kpembe) with foodstuff. They multiplied greatly, and built many towns such as: Kpandai, Bayim, Beladjai, Kotiko, Nkanchina, Belai, Katiejeli. The War-chief of the Kpembi-wura then built his residence named Alfae ( Alfayiri) near Kpandai which from that time became the residence of all the War-chiefs in succession until 1896 when war broke out between Kabachi and Lempo, and this residence became a ruin unto this day.<sup>33</sup>

Tamakloe's claim cannot be accepted for many reasons. Firstly, he seems to indicate that it was at their present settlement that the Nawuri acquired their new dialect. He, however, failed to explain how the Nawuri acquired their new dialect and abandoned their original dialect, Konkomba. Secondly, Tamakloe did not explain why these Konkomba captives (now the Nawuri) did not speak Gonja but evolved a dialect, which is linguistically and phonetically different from Gonja. According to Tamakloe the Konkomba captives (now the Nawuri) settled under the hegemony of the Lepo Gonja. They should therefore have adopted and spoken Gonja. It is therefore inconceivable and absurd that the Konkomba captives evolved a language of their own, Nawuri.

Ampene also has another story about the origin of the Nawuri. Ampene's story about the origin of the Nawuri is similar to the Nawuri tradition of their origin.<sup>31</sup> However, Ampene, unlike the oral traditions of the Nawuri, trace the origin of the Nawuri to the northern part of Ghana. He states that:

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<sup>33</sup> **Ibid.** In fact, Tamakloe just stated his views without acknowledging his sources and this therefore puts his views in doubt. It is important to know that Tamakloe was employed as an Interpreter in the Kete-Krachi in the German Togoland from 1897-1907. It was this time that he compiled information on the "Emigration of the Kagbanye People." In 1910 he was employed as a Census Clerk in the Eastern and Western Dagbon where he had the chance of studying the Dagomba language.

<sup>31</sup> Ampene. op. cit. pp 153-154.

tradition holds that the founding fathers of Nawuri disintegrated from the Guan cradle in the north and migrated southwards till they reached the place near Sekondi on the west coast where they settled briefly. Due to the slave raid activities which were prevalent on the coast in those turbulent period of history, the Nawuri ancestors embarked on the second leg of their journey; this time they moved eastward and settled at Larteh on the Akuapem mountains. Known to one another when at Larteh were the ancestors of Krahi, Nkonya, Yeji, Dwan and the Nawuri who spoke the Guan language. At Larteh they experienced untold hardships as a result of Akwamu oppression. The Akwamu who made several inroads into the mountains lived at Nyanaowase from where they captured some of the inhabitants who were sold into slavery. The Akwamu oppression coupled with the slave raid on the coast caused the Nawuri to stage a counter migration to the north. They claim to have moved from Larteh earlier before the Nkonya, Krach and Yeji. This was long before the coastal towns ousted Akwamu at Nyanaowase in 1733.<sup>32</sup>

From this point, however, the story of Ampene about the cradle of the Nawuri was the same as that of the Nawuri in terms of the identity of their leaders, activities and stopovers the Nawuri made until they arrived at Kitare. In addition, Ampene is of the view that:

the Nawuri were said to be courageous hunters who protected the neighbourhood by means of hunting along the basin of the Oti river. They were the first people to name an area known as Tutukpane which had since become one of the Adele towns. Because the area was being invested with large lakes and ponds which made it impossible for hunters to track the animals shot, they deserted the area, hence Tutukpane is a Nawuri word interpreted as "vain shot".<sup>33</sup>

The origins of the Nawuri, as related by their oral traditions, do not confirm the stories of the Gonja, Dixon and Tamakloe except that of Ampene. Their traditions say that the Nawuri, one of the Northern Guan ethnic groups, settled in the present day Ghana

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<sup>32</sup> **Ibid**

<sup>33</sup> **Ibid.**

over a thousand years ago.<sup>34</sup> The cradle of the Nawuri, as is the case of most Guans, was in the Afram Plains.<sup>35</sup> From there the Nawuri moved along with other Guan communities such as Krachi, Nchumuru and Achode to Larteh where they settled for a while.<sup>36</sup> However, being adventurous hunters, fishermen and farmers, the Nawuri found the mountainous area of Larteh unsuitable for their vocation.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, under the leadership of Kruk paw, the Nawuri migrated from Larteh and passed through Senchi and Anum. They are believed to have moved along the Senchi River and crossed it northwards at Akrosu in present day Kete-Krachi and settled at *Nawuri Kupo* near Dwan in the Brong Ahafo Region.<sup>38</sup> Here their leader, Kruk paw died, and his descendants moved eastwards and founded their settlements under Nana Attara. The Nawuri moved along the *Lee* and settled at Otisu for a short period, and finally crossed the Oti, settled and founded the village of Attara (now known as Kitare)<sup>39</sup>. This settlement was named after Nana Attara. The settlement of Attara (Kitare) was surrounded and protected by *brindini*.<sup>40</sup>

### 1.3 The Kitare walls

Nawuri oral traditions say that Kitare was their last communal settlement. From Kitare various lineages and clans moved out and founded various settlements in the Northern Region of Ghana and across the Oti River in present day Volta Region of

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<sup>34</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* part 1, p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Nana Mbimadong, Balaiwura on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000.

<sup>36</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* p. 12.

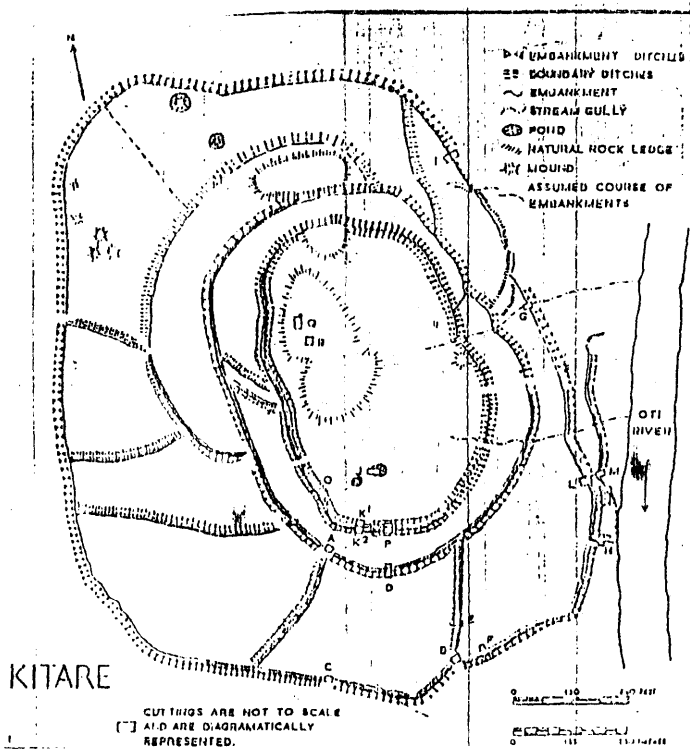
<sup>37</sup> Interview with Nana Mbimadong, Balaiwura on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid* Lee is the Nawuri term for a river. Lee as used above refers to the tributaries of the Oti River in the Nawuri area

<sup>40</sup> "Brindini" was a wall, which was built of mud around Kitare to protect the Nawuri against possible attacks from enemies.

MAP THREE



Source: Mathewson, R.D.: "Kitare: A Preliminary Note" in Archaeological Sites in Ghana, (1965) Legon, P 403



Ghana. The traditions further say that Kitare had three walls. These were the outer, middle and inner walls. These walls had three gates: the west, east and south gates.<sup>41</sup> An excavation carried out by Mathewson reveals that the Kitare walls enclosed an area of about three quarters of a square mile.<sup>42</sup> Mathewson's excavation further reveals that small interconnecting laterite mounds radiated between the outer and middle walls, and that these mounds most likely represented boundaries that would have demarcated definite areas between the outer and middle walls.<sup>43</sup> According to Mathewson:

the allotment into definite demarcated zones could have either been based upon clan structure or upon the existence of Zongo compound.<sup>44</sup>

Mathewson's finding confirms Nawuri oral traditions that the settlement in Kitare was in the form of quarters.<sup>45</sup> The oral traditions of the Nawuri say that the various families that migrated from Kitare to carve out various Nawuri settlements lived in different quarters under their respective heads within the walls.<sup>46</sup>

Within the inner embankment was a large oval-shape pond-reservoir.<sup>47</sup> Several low and ill-defined mounds were enclosed within the inner wall, which for most part probably represented ruins of houses. These mounds lend support to the Nawuri claim that farming activities were conducted within the enclosure<sup>48</sup>. Two conclusions could be made from the small geographical extent of the enclosures. Firstly, the farms within it were small, and therefore could not sustain a large population for a long period.

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<sup>41</sup> Mathewson, R.D. "Kitatre: A Preliminary Report" in Archaeological Sites in Ghana (1965), Ghana, p.404

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Mathewson, op. cit., p.405.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Mathewson, op. cit p.505.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2001

Secondly, either there were no attacks on the settlement as the Nawuri claim or that they were for relatively short periods.

Writing on the purpose and initiators, Mathewson remarks that:

It is uncertain whether this was entirely a local development or a feature arising out of the increased influence Islam had... The very close resemblance of Kitare stockade with the stockade entrenchments of the Sudan is significant and one must look for the origins of the site to the savanna country in the north where political and economic centralization provided the basis for the establishment of entrepots which maintained and controlled the flow of communities over long distance trade routes.<sup>49</sup>

The traditions of the Nawuri, however, say that the Nawuri built the Kitare walls and that the building of the walls was socio-politically motivated.<sup>50</sup> The Nawuri assert that the walls were built to protect children and women at home while the men went for farming, or were undertaking other activities.<sup>51</sup>

Concerning the period the walls were constructed, Mathewson says that they were constructed probably in the fifteenth century.<sup>52</sup>

Mathewson further says that:

Ketare is a Hausa word for the crossing of a road, river, or border and can be used either as a noun in the sense of 'the other side', or as an adverb, 'on the other side'... it seems quite probable that Kitrare is a cognate place name derived from the Hausa word K'etare. Semantically, this does seem to make some sense, as one might assume that the side was looked upon by the Hausa trading community being across the river and beyond the fringe of their home land.<sup>53</sup>



<sup>49</sup> Mathewson. *op. cit.* p. 415

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Nana Ayegai at Bladjai on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Mathewson. *op. cit.* p 416

<sup>53</sup> Mathewson. *Op. cit* p 417

On the basis of this Mathewson questions the plausibility of the Nawuri claim that Kitare was named after their chief Attara. Mathewson's etymology of Kitare is subject to dispute because it is based on probability.

#### **1.4: Nawuri settlements: relations, social and economic activities**

The exact period the Nawuri arrived at their present habitat is not known. According to Jones, the claim that the Nawuri and the Nchumuru came along with the Gonja:

cannot be accepted literally as we know that Nchumuru chiefs controlled the Afram Plains and much of the country north-west of Ashanti in the opening years of the seventh-century onwards.<sup>54</sup>

If indeed, the Nawuri and the Nchumuru moved together then they must have arrived together. Inferring from the time frame given by Jones, it could be speculated that the Nawuri arrived at their present settlement probably after the opening decades of seventeenth-century, did not move together with the Nchumuru or that Jones' time fame was incorrect. The date for the arrival of the Nawuri in the Nawuri area has not been documented. This therefore makes it difficult for one to establish an exact chronology of their arrival in the Nawuri area. The only historical source that one could rely on is oral tradition. However, this source is beset with a problem of giving exact chronology of historical events. Notwithstanding this problem, some facts stand clear: the Nawuri arrived in the Nawuri area long before the intrusion of the Gonja into that area. and that the area was uninhabited at the time the Nawuri arrived. Dixon confirms the latter fact in his report when he said:

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<sup>54</sup> Jones. op. cit p. 1-28.

there is no archaeological evidence of the inhabitation of the Alfai area prior to the arrival of the Nawuri tribe although it is claimed by the Gonja that the Konkombas were there and were driven out.<sup>55</sup>

As said earlier, after the last communal settlement at Kitare, the various Nawuri clans moved out and founded various towns and villages in the present day Northern and Volta Regions of Ghana. The relationship between the various Nawuri communities was not estranged after they had moved out from their last communal settlement. On the contrary, a climate of unity and co-operation continued to prevail among them as it was when they were living in their last communal settlement in Kitare. The Nawuri say that in those days, it was uncommon to find a Nawuri isolated from his or her kinsmen.<sup>56</sup> The Nawuri congregated together almost every time. Men hunted, farmed together and ate from a common bowl while women went to the riverside together to draw water. This attitude became intricately woven in the cultural and social life of the Nawuri that they [the Nawuri] described themselves by the term *na wuri-wuri*.<sup>57</sup> Another feature of *Nawurism*, which epitomized the unity and co-operation among the Nawuri was *fanda-ei* or *fandai*.<sup>58</sup> *Fanda-ei* or *fandayei* was a term used to describe the act of fighting in union among the Nawuri. Nawuri oral traditions say that the origins of *fanda-ei* are as old as their founding ancestors. Anytime a Nawuri was drawn in a fight with another person other than a Nawuri, all his or her Nawuri kinsmen around helped in

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<sup>55</sup> Dixon. *op. cit* p.12.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>57</sup> The term *Na wuri-wuri* in Nawuri means 'congregating together'. It is from this term that the name Nawuri is derived. Since no ethnic group gave itself a name, it probably indicates that the Nawuri were given their name by some ethnic group and this was before they arrived in the Nawuri area. It also indicates that the Nawuri exhibited the *Na wuri-wuri* characteristics before they arrived at their present area. These were evidenced by the fact that the forest near Dwan in present day Brong Ahafo where the Nawuri made a stopover on their way from Larteh to their present settlement was named after them as *Nawuri Kupo*.

<sup>58</sup> The term *fanda-ei* or *fandai* in Nawuri literally means 'You should all beat somebody'.

beating the latter.<sup>59</sup> In that circumstance, the question whether their Nawuri kinsman was right or not did not really matter to them. It was therefore an unwritten social code obligating every Nawuri to go to the support of his or her Nawuri relative drawn in a fight with a person of a different ethnic background. Notwithstanding this cordial relationship among the Nawuri, there were instances when two individual Nawuri, clans or communities were drawn into fight. According to the oral traditions of the Nawuri, one such fight or feud was the one between the Chaga Nawuri and their Kabonwule kinsmen in the eighteenth century. The fight erupted as a result of the continuous harassment on the Kabonwule Nawuri and the seizure of their *pito* by the Chaga during funeral celebrations of the former.<sup>60</sup> It was in an attempt to arrest the infringement on their freedom by the Chaga men that the Kabonwule were said to have polluted *pito* with tobacco, which made the alcoholic content more potent.<sup>61</sup> As the Chaga became intoxicated beyond control, the Kabonwule pounded on them and killed many.<sup>62</sup> This resulted in a near extinction of the Chaga who finally migrated from their habitat and settled at Balai.

Apart from this and other scattered cases of feuds there was generally peace among the Nawuri. The Nawuri engaged in various economic activities. One of the common economic activities among the Nawuri was and still is farming. As a fertile agricultural region, Nawuri area was suitable for the cultivation of various crops such as tubers, cassava, maize, plantains, beans, rice and peppers. The rich grassland in this region also provides pasture for the raising of livestock. The farm produce and livestock produced in

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with Nana Friko on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Nana Yaw Goglogo at Kabonwule on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.



the Nawuri area were either consumed locally or sold to traders from neighbouring states. The Nawuri also engaged in hunting as an economic activity. Hunting expedition was an adjunct economic activity that was undertaken by every male youth. It was regarded as an activity that equipped them with bravery and skills in handling ammunitions in times of war.<sup>63</sup> The Nawuri communities along the *Lee* also engaged in fishing as an important economic activity.<sup>64</sup>

The Nawuri also engaged in trading. They traded with the Krachi and exchanged their wares such as maize, rice, tobacco for fish and other items such as salt. The Nawuri also conducted trade as far as to Salaga carrying on them a variety of goods for exchange. The trade route started from Kpandai and passed through Balai, Kumabuyei, Mabu to Salaga. Though they conducted trade as far as to Salaga, the Nawuri were not lured by the slave trade in Salaga to partake in it as a lucrative economic venture. In isolated cases, however, the Nawuri were said to have bought slave women from Salaga for marriage.<sup>65</sup> However, evidence exists of an Asante raids for slaves in the Nawuri area.<sup>66</sup> The Nawuri in Bladjai say that Asante raiders went to that vicinity to raid.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, the Nawuri in Kabonwule say that their ancestors paid slaves as tribute to the Asante.<sup>68</sup> This probably occurred when the Nawuri area came under Asante after the latter defeated the Gonja whom the Nawuri supported. Though the Nawuri area came under Asante there was no sign that it did. This was because the Asante did not station a resident minister in the Nawuri area as was the general principle of the Asante in conquered and annexed

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>64</sup> "Lee" is a Nawuri word, which means river or sea.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Nana Ayagai at Bladjai on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Nana Goglogo at Kabonwule on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

territories. Though technically, until the defeat of the Asante by the British in 1874, the Nawuri were under Asante's dominion, it was hardly felt. The only impact was the exaction of tribute.

Though all Nawuri communities confirm Dagomba threats of raids in the Nawuri area, there was only one instance that it occurred.<sup>69</sup> In that raid, one Balai Kojo was captured and sent to Yendi for sale. He was, however, liberated by a group of the Nawuri and the Nanumba at Wulensi.<sup>70</sup>

### 1.5 The arrival of the Gonja and other immigrants in the Nawuri area

The history of the arrival of the Gonja in the Nawuri area, which is loosely tied with the history of the Gonja Kingdom is well known to be recounted here in detail. Suffice it, however, to state that the traditional story on the origin of the Gonja and the foundation of Gonja Kingdom is woven around the career of Ndwura Jakpa Sumaila.<sup>71</sup> Gonja oral traditions maintain that Ndwura Jakpa came from the west, from Kabba in *Mande*. He is said to have appeared as an invader at the head of a band of *Ngbanya* horsemen which, if not numerically large was irresistible by virtue of its superior weapons and discipline as well as by virtue of the prayers of Mallam Fatigi Morukpe.<sup>72</sup> The traditions further assert that Jakpa and his *Ngbanya* horsemen did not meet any effectively organized states to resist them, and that this therefore made his conquest less arduous.<sup>73</sup> After conquering a large area from Bole to Sansanne mango, Jakpa was said to have *sat down* at Nyanga and

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<sup>69</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Jones. op. cit. pp 1-28. Also see Braimah (1970), op. cit. p.122.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

divided his empire among his sons and brothers.<sup>74</sup> According to Braimah, Gonja traditions place the origins of their empire to the mid seventeenth-century when a group of people on horsebacks armed with spears, led by Ndwura Jakpa, succeeded in collecting a large army of the Waagara, the Bambara, the Asonga, and started conquering as far as to the present day Gonja land.<sup>75</sup> Gonja hegemony was established over the *Nyamase* and later over the Nawuri and the Nchumuru who were believed to be their political allies. The Gonja Empire was divided into six divisions, namely, Bole, Damongo, Tule-we, Wasipe (Daboya), Kusawgu and Kpembe.<sup>76</sup> Three royal clans, namely, Lepo, Singbung and Kanyase, are in the Kpembe division.<sup>77</sup> Kpembe traditions assert that each of the clans had their respective chiefs who succeeded to the Kpembe Skin in succession.<sup>78</sup>

The oral traditions of the Nawuri say that the Lepo Gonja were the first group of the Gonja to arrive in the Nawuri area. Though Nawuri traditions are unanimous on the first Gonja immigrants in the Nawuri area, there is, however, a controversy over the period they arrived. One tradition traces the arrival of the Gonja in the Nawuri area to 1892-93 and 1895-96 when civil war erupted in Kpembe among the three royal clans following a succession dispute.<sup>79</sup> This assertion is completely unfounded for a number of reasons. Firstly, a line of Kanankulaiwuras had been established in the Nawuri area long before

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Goody, J.R. "Circulation Succession among the Gonja" Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology, Vol. IV.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

the arrival of the Germans in 1884, which pre-dates 1992-93 and 1895-96.<sup>80</sup> The Nawuri even agree that about four or five Kanankulaiwuras ruled in the Nawuri area before the arrival of the Germans. Given this assertion, the Nawuri claim that the Gonja arrived in 1892-93 and 1895-96 cannot be accepted. For, if that claim is accepted, it means that the Gonja arrived in the Nawuri area just between eight and twelve years after the arrival of the Germans in 1884; a view that cannot be accepted since the arrival of the Gonja in the Nawuri area occurred long before the arrival of the Germans in that area. It also means that the Gonja arrived in the Nawuri area just between six to three years before the Anglo-German Convention of 1899, which partitioned the neutral zone. However, this assertion can be accepted if it is claimed that the first six Kanankulaiwuras before the Anglo-German convention of 1899 ruled for only a year each as the assertion makes one believe. Secondly, as early as the eighteenth century the title of the Kanankulaiwura was mentioned in official records.<sup>81</sup> According to Wilks, in 1751 civil disturbances occurred at Kpembe following the dispute over succession after the death of Kpembewura Morukpe.<sup>82</sup> In that disturbance the name of the Kanankulaiwura was mentioned.<sup>83</sup> Reporting on the disturbances that resulted in the reoccupation of Kpembe by an Asante force, Wilks states:

the Kpembewura [ Nakpo] and two subordinate Skin Holders – the Kulupiwura and probably Kanankulaiwura - were arrested, and sent to Kumasi or Mampon.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Kanankulaiwura is the title of the Gonja Head chief in Nawuri state. The title is derived from the Nawuri words *Kanun*, which means meat, *Kule*, which means chunk, and *wura*, which means 'chief or master'. Hence "Kanankulaiwura" in Nawuri means the 'chief or master of chunks of meat.

<sup>81</sup> Wilks, I. *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The structure and Evolution of a Political order*, (Cambridge University Press, London: 1975), pp. 265, 275.

<sup>82</sup> Wilks, *Op. cit.*, p. 265.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

In another development, it was reported that between 1830 and 1875 civil disturbances broke out again at Kpembe as the Skin came once more into dispute between the Kanankulaiwura and Sungbunwura.<sup>85</sup> Wilks reports that:

the Atebubuhene, Daiwia was instructed by the Asantehene Kwaku Duah I to intervene and impose a settlement: the Skin, it was ruled, was hence forth to be held rotationally by the three eligible subordinates' Sungbungwura, Kanyasewura and Kanankulaiwura.<sup>86</sup>

Since the title evolved in the Nawuri area and referred to the Gonja chief in Kpandai, it clearly indicates that the Gonja had long been established in the Nawuri area either before or during the eighteenth-century. It would have been inconceivable and absurd to use the title at the time it did not exist.

Thirdly, the Nawuri were said to have assisted the Lepo and Sungbung clans against the Kanyase in the Kpembe civil wars of 1892-93 and 1895-96. In the first war, for example, the Lepo army was said to have mustered an army of 305 gunmen and was said to be headed by the Kanankulaiwura, the Gonja chief in Kpandai.<sup>87</sup> The mention of the title Kanankulaiwura in that period meant that the Gonja or at least the Lepo Gonja were in the Nawuri area before the Kpembe civil wars.<sup>88</sup> Besides, it was reported that about five hundred Nawuri lost their lives in that war.<sup>89</sup> The Lepo Gonja could not have marshaled this number if friendly contacts had not been established with the Nawuri for long or if they had not been living in the Nawuri area at that time.

The second Nawuri tradition on the period of the arrival of the Gonja in the Nawuri

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<sup>85</sup> Wilks. Op. cit. p 275

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Braimah (1967). op. cit. p 29.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>89</sup> Braimah (1967). op. cit. p.29.

area places it to 1744-5. It was asserted that in that year Asante re-occupied Kpembe and Salaga when the Gonja rebelled against them. The Asante invasion caused total unrest and general insecurity in Kpembe and Salaga. It was in the wake of these circumstances that most of the Gonja, especially the Lepo fled to the Nawuri area to seek refuge.<sup>90</sup> This seems a plausible explanation of the period of the arrival of the Gonja in the Nawuri area. Nevertheless, it is also beset with some doubts. This is because the Nawuri were said to have helped the Gonja as political allies during the first Asante invasion of Kpembe and Salaga in the third decade of the eighteenth century. An extract from Gonja chronicle reports that when the Asante arrived to fight the Gonja, they met:

the Sultan of Kumbi [ Kpembe] wth his troops, the Kunbulu, and the Sultan of Alfai[ the Nawuri area] with his troops the Nācūri [Nawuri]...<sup>91</sup>

This gives the suggestion that either the Gonja were established in the Nawuri area before the Asante invasion of the eastern part of the Gonja Kindom or that Nawuri-Gonja relations preceded the war. The time frames of both the first and second stories converge on one common theme. They both indicated that the Gonja arrival in the Nawuri area was necessitated by wars. It is most probable that some Gonja immigrants arrived in the Nawuri area during the Asante invasion of East Gonja while others arrived during the Kpembe civil wars. But the fact still stands clear that the Gonja were settled in the Nawuri area before these upheavals in the eastern part of the Gonja empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively.

The main reason responsible for the immigration of the Gonja into the Nawuri area is the alliance between them and the Nawuri. The oral traditions of both the Nawuri

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<sup>90</sup> Interview with Nana S. G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>91</sup> Wilks, Levzion and Haight. op. cit. p.197.



and the Gonja say that the Nawuri and the Gonja were allies in the past. In that situation, one cannot overrule the possibility of early contacts between the Nawuri and the Gonja before the latter finally arrived in the Nawuri area. As allies therefore, it was not surprising that a large army of the Nawuri fought on the side of the Gonja against the Asante in 1744-45. Similarly, it was the alliance between the Nawuri and the Gonja that gained the support of the Nawuri for the Lepo clan in the Kpembe civil wars. This story provides a more plausible explanation for the prelude to and arrival of the Gonja in the Nawuri area. It should further be emphasized that the migration of the Gonja to Nawuri area was not necessarily en masse. It was a series of disjointed migrations to the Nawuri area migrations, which occurred prior to the Asante invasion of the eastern part of the Gonja empire. There is also every reason to believe the proposition that during the eruption of either wars in Salaga and Kpembe areas of the Gonja Kingdom in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a small band of the Gonja migrated to the Nawuri area to escape the unrest in that part of the Gonja Kingdom.

The Gonja, however, do not accept the Nawuri assertions. They maintain that they arrived in that area with the Nawuri and that Ndwura Jakpa settled the Nawuri under the hegemony of the Lepo.<sup>92</sup> The Gonja maintain that the Konkomba who, out of fright, fled and abandoned their lands on hearing of Ndwura Jakpa originally occupied the area now inhabited by the Nawuri.<sup>93</sup> Jakpa was said to have shared the land he had “conquered” among his brothers and sons.<sup>94</sup> Jakpa is further said to have divided the people who came with him among his sons and in that vein gave the Nawuri to his son,

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<sup>92</sup> Dixon. Appendix ‘N’; Extract on the “Ethnography of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, West of the Volta” by Jack Goody.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

Djoro, the chief of Alfai and a member from the Lepo royal clan in the Kpembe division.<sup>95</sup> The Gonja version is hard to accept since most authorities on the history of Ghana are unanimous on the extent of Gonja conquest not going beyond the Dakar River in the east. In his report Dixon admitted this when he said that:

it is not clear whether "Ndewura Jakpa" had actually reached Balai, which is a little west of Kpandai, the headquarter town of the Alfai area, or whether he was still further west with some of his people scouting ahead.<sup>96</sup>

Besides, there is no archaeological evidence of inhabitation of the Nawuri area prior to the arrival of the Nawuri. Dixon further stated that:

there is no archaeological evidence of inhabitation of the Alfai area prior to the arrival of the Nawuri tribe, although it is claimed by the Gonjas that the Konkombas were there and were driven out.<sup>97</sup>

Whatever was the case, there is one clear point of circumstantial evidence: there was no fighting between the Nawuri and the Gonja when the latter arrived in the Nawuri area. The absence of wars between the Nawuri and the Gonja when the latter arrived in the Nawuri area made Dixon to formulate an explanation. Dixon was of the view that:

the most reasonable explanation of the absence of any fighting arising from Gonja invasion or infiltration, linked with the comparatively small number of Gonjas living in the area, is that Nawuris had already accepted the overlordship of Gonjas before arriving in the area and had gone ahead of the main Gonja invasion to drive out the

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid. The term Alfai only came into use after the Dagomba Muslim came to settle in the Nawuri area. Before Alfai came into use Nawuri area was called Nawuri or *Kanankulai*. Alfai is etymologically derived from the Nawuri word *lifa* which meant Moslem and the suffix *ai* which meant home. Hence Alfai in Nawuri means the Moslem's home. Alfai was used as a cognate name to refer to the place in Nawuri area where Moslems in the pre-Gonja days settled. Since Alfai is a Nawuri word and was in use during the pre-Gonja days, it could not have been evolved by the Gonja to refer to the Nawuri area.

<sup>96</sup> Dixon, op. cit. para. 12, p. 4.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

Konkomba inhabitants of what must have been a very sparsely inhabited country.<sup>98</sup>

It is true that the population of the Nawuri outstripped that of the Gonja at the time the latter arrived in the Nawuri area. For example, as late as 1948 the population of the Gonja in the Nawuri area was 436 as against 1, 195 Nawuri.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, the numerical disadvantage of the Gonja in the Nawuri area could not necessarily prevent them from conducting a war of conquest to dislodge the Nawuri from that area. Besides, available documented evidence indicates that the Gonja were militarily strong at that time. According to Boahen, the centralized political machinery, cavalry and superior weapons of the Gonja made them irresistible, and militarily strong.<sup>100</sup> According to him, this aided the Gonja in the conquest of vast territories in Northern Ghana.<sup>101</sup> Given this evidence, it is therefore untenable to impute the absence of wars between the Nawuri and the Gonja at the time the latter arrived in the Nawuri area on their numerical disadvantage. After all, the Gonja in the Nawuri area could have relied on Gonja troops from Kpembe, Salaga and western Gonja to conquer the Nawuri as was the case in the 1991 and 1992 Nawuri-Gonja conflicts. The absence of wars between the Nawuri and the Gonja at the time the latter arrived in the Nawuri area indicates the possibility of a peaceful immigration of the Gonja into the Nawuri area who later imposed themselves on the Nawuri as overlords as was the case of the Mamprusi over the Kusasi in Bawku and its satellite areas. In other words, the Gonja did not settle in the Nawuri area with an aim

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<sup>98</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.*, p.5.

<sup>99</sup> African Population According to Tribal Divisions, 1948: Gold Coast Colonial Office Report, British Sphere of Togoland for the year 1949, pp. 146-147.

<sup>100</sup> Boahen, A. A: Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. (Longman, London: 1975) p. 2.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

of conquering and annexing that territory to the Gonja Kingdom. Rather, their arrival in the Nawuri area was motivated by a desire to attain access to a peaceful area not only to settle, but also to engage in economic activities. It was this motive that ruled out the possibility of a war between the Nawuri and the Gonja when the latter arrived in the Nawuri area.

The next immigrants into the Nawuri area were the Kotokoli who were believed to have arrived in the area in about the beginning of the twentieth-century.<sup>102</sup> They were believed to have migrated from Togo during the First World War because of famine.<sup>103</sup> The Kotokoli were said to have arrived in the Nawuri area in small bands to conduct trade in foodstuffs such as yams, maize, cassava and flesh of game.<sup>104</sup> They did not return when they found the Nawuri area suitable for habitation. Kotokoli settlers first settled at Bladjai and later moved to Kpasa, Katiejeli and Kpandai for commercial reasons.

In 1922 a small band of the Konkomba and the Basari arrived in the Nawuri area.<sup>105</sup> From then onwards many Basari and the Konkomba arrived in the Nawuri area. The expression in Konkomba and Basari *Ncha-nawul*, meaning (I am going to the Nawuri area) was universally known as the description of the migration or exodus of the Konkomba and the Basari to the Nawuri area.<sup>106</sup> Everywhere they settled in the Nawuri area, they were attached to the Nawuri. The Basari and the Konkomba who arrived in the Nawuri area through the Nanumba state settled at Balai while those who arrived through

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<sup>102</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Dixon, op. cit. para. 10 p. 10.

<sup>106</sup> Ninkab Manim : "Evidence to Ampiah Committee in Tamale on 31 October, 1991" Also see Ampiah, Op. cit. part II, p. 97ff.



Kpasa settled at Bladjai. Later, Senya and Battor fisher folks arrived in the Nawuri area and settled along the banks of the Oti tributaries, particularly at Kitare, Njare, Bladjai, Nkanchina and Linkpan.<sup>107</sup>

The arrival of these bands of immigrants brought about profound socio-economic changes in the Nawuri area. Firstly, it brought demographic changes. For example, between 1931-1948 the population of the Nawuri area was said to have increased by over one hundred and forty percent.<sup>108</sup> The report further states that the population of Kpandai, the main centre in the Nawuri area, multiplied by about six times in that period<sup>122</sup>. With the exception of Bladjai, which population reduced following the exodus of the Konkomba and the Basari to Kpasa, the population census in 1970 further recorded increases in the population.<sup>109</sup> For example, between 1948 and 1970 the population of Kpandai rose from 1,718 in 1948 to 4438 in 1970.<sup>110</sup> Similarly, the population of Kabonwule and Kitare rose from 309 in 1948 to 784 in 1970, and 211 in 1948 to 991 in 1970 respectively.<sup>111</sup> However, the population of Bladjai reduced from 834 in 1948 to 618 in 1970 following the migration of the Konkomba and the Basari to Kpassa.<sup>112</sup> After the Konkomba and Basari hunters realized that Kpasa was a good hunting field, they asked for permission from the Nawuri in Bladjai to settle on Kpasa lands. Permission

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<sup>107</sup> Interview with Nana Ayagai at Bladjai on 6th March 2001.

<sup>108</sup> Aitol, T.E: Ghana Population Atlas, November 1959, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, Accra.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> "Population Census Special Report D", Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana, 1970", Census Office, Accra, December 1971. p 25

<sup>111</sup> This was an increase of over one hundred and seventy percent.

<sup>111</sup> "Population Census Special Report "D", Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana, 1970", Census Office, Accra, December 1971. p 25.

<sup>112</sup> Colonial Office Reports, British Sphere of Togoland. 1935, p.12.

was granted and this led to the exodus of the Konkomba and the Basari from Bladjai to Kpasa and resulted in the reduction of the population of Bladjai in 1970.<sup>113</sup>

Another socio-economic impact of the immigration of other ethnic groups in the Nawuri area was the increases in agricultural activities resulting in surplus of foodstuffs. A 1935 colonial report described the Nawuri, and for that matter, the Konkomba and Basari settlers in the Nawuri area as:

an industrious hardworking people. They produce a surplus of foodstuffs for sale and rear good herds of cattle, which are said to be some of the finest in the Northern Territories.<sup>114</sup>

The early relationship between the Nawuri and their immigrants, particularly the Gonja was very cordial. As their political allies, the Nawuri regarded the Gonja as their friends and consequently related warmly with them. In fact until 1935 Nawuri-Gonja relationship had been peaceful. In that year, some Nawuri were said to have assisted the Gonja to fight the Nchumuru when they protested against the amalgamation of their land to Salaga District. Another group of the Nawuri were said to have protested against the support of the Nawuri to the Gonja against the Nchumuru, thus leading to disturbances between them and the Gonja.<sup>115</sup> There is much evidence to suggest that the relationships between the Nawuri and the Gonja up to 1935 were cordial.

Firstly, the Nawuri provided shelter and food for the first Gonja immigrants. The Gonja were said to have put up with the Nawuri for sometime before putting up their houses. Both the Nawuri and the Gonja say that the Nawuri supported the Gonja to make their farms and to build their houses, though the Gonja claim it was a tribute paid to

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<sup>113</sup> The first Konkomba to be granted permission by the Nawuri in Bladjai to settle on Kpasa lands were members of the Konja family.

<sup>114</sup> Colonial Office Reports, British Sphere of Togoland, 1935, p.12.

<sup>115</sup> Interview with Nana Ayeagai at Bladjai on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2001.



them<sup>116</sup> According to the Nawuri, they gave the Gonja yam seedlings, maize and cassava stalks to enable them to make their own farms.<sup>117</sup>

Secondly, the cordial relationship between the Nawuri and the Gonja was noticeable in intermarriages. By the 1930's intermarriages between the Nawuri and the Gonja had become common. These intermarriages helped to foster peaceful relations between the two ethnic groups as evidenced by the respect accorded to one's in-laws. As marriage was regarded as a responsibility of two families, intermarriages between the Nawuri and the Gonja were similarly regarded as the responsibility of the two ethnic groups; hence the need to respect and live peacefully with each other became a necessity.<sup>118</sup>

Another expression of the cordial relationship between the Nawuri and the Gonja was their celebration of festivals and funerals together. During Nawuri festivals such as Yam and Guinea Corn, the Gonja participated actively.<sup>119</sup> Similarly, the Nawuri also participated actively in the Damba festival of the Gonja.<sup>120</sup> In another development, however, Gonja presented livestock, foodstuffs and cash to their Nawuri friends during such Nawuri festivals and the latter also reciprocated during Gonja festivals.<sup>121</sup> Further more, during funerals of a deceased Gonja or Nawuri, the two ethnic groups collaborated with each other. Both the Nawuri and the Gonja mourned and observed the funeral rites of deceased Gonja or Nawuri.<sup>122</sup> It was further asserted that the Nawuri who were

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<sup>116</sup> Interview with Nana Mbimadong Obempeh, Balaiwura on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Nana S. G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

regarded as grave diggers by virtue of being the owners of the Nawuri area dug graves for the burial of deceased Gonja.

## **1.6 Nawuri-Gonja relations turn sour**

### **A The question of the indigenous status of the Nawuri and the Gonja**

Co-operation and friendship between the Nawuri and the Gonja were sometimes marred by disputes. Disputes between the two ethnic groups that included the question of the indigenous status of the Nawuri and the Gonja emerged at one time or the other. Each ethnic group claimed indigenous status and advanced reasons to support it. The arguments of the two ethnic groups were tied to the story of their origin.

The Nawuri advanced many arguments to support their claim that they were the indigenous people in the Nawuri area. According to them, they were the first to settle in the Nawuri area.<sup>123</sup> They further maintain that at the time they entered that territory, no other ethnic group had lived there. Neither was there any evidence that any ethnic group prior to the arrival of the Nawuri settled at their present habitat.<sup>124</sup> According to the Nawuri, if arrival first in a territory is a determinant of the indigenous status of an ethnic group, then it follows logically that they are the indigenes of the lands they now occupy. According to them, they arrived in the Nawuri area long before the arrival of the Gonja.<sup>125</sup>

In addition, the Nawuri point out that neither they nor a section of them were ever settled in the Nawuri area by the Gonja. According to them, they forged political alliance with the Gonja at the time they were already established in the Nawuri area. The Nawuri

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Nana Obempeli Mbimadong, Balaiwura on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

further deny the Gonja assertion that they [the Nawuri] originated from the same place with the Gonja.

The Gonja, however, maintain that they settled the Nawuri at their present settlement.<sup>126</sup> According to the Gonja, Ndwura Jakpa is said to have passed through present day Nawuri area to the Konkomba country (probably Saboba) during his war expeditions.<sup>127</sup> According to the Gonja, the Konkomba inhabited this place, but it was deserted when Ndwura Jakpa arrived in the area.<sup>128</sup> Here, Jakpa is said to have settled some of the people (the Nawuri) he had brought with him in present day Nawuri area. The Gonja further maintain that Ndwura Jakpa was said to have settled the people from Kafaba at Dodope (Dodoai) and at Kabonwule he settled the Kabonwule-‘the Red Akan’.<sup>129</sup> This Gonja assertion is difficult to accept for two reasons. Firstly, there is no evidence to support the view that the people of Dodoai originated from Kafaba. The Dodoai Nawuri do not subscribe to Kafaba as their place of origin, but subscribe to the general cradle of origin of the Nawuri. Secondly, the wrong etymology of Kabonwule that the Gonja version contains indicates that it is a fabrication. Kabonwule could not literally mean ‘the Red Akan’ as the Gonja claim. ‘Red’ in Gonja is *Pepe* but not *wule*. Accordingly, if Kabonwule etymologically meant ‘the Red Akan’ it would have necessarily been *Kabon pepe*. Kabonwule probably means ‘the people of Akan descent’ but not ‘the red Akan.’ The historical evidence of this assertion goes back to the seventeenth century when Asante slave raiders allegedly took one Kabonwule lady as a

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<sup>126</sup> Braimah, (1967) Op. cit., p.2.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

slave to Mampong.<sup>130</sup> The then Mamponghene was said to have had a baby with her. He is said to have founded the Kabonwule clan.<sup>131</sup> Another version of Nawuri traditions asserts that the Kabonwule were the only Nawuri community which has many Akan words in its dialect, hence the name Kabonwule.

Explaining the Gonja tradition further Braimah asserts that the Nawuri area was called *Kanankuli* because it was settled by a collection of ethnic groups.<sup>132</sup> Braimah's assertion is too vague to be accepted. This is because he failed to mention the diverse ethnic groups in the Nawuri area. Perhaps, Braimah is implying that the presence of the Konkomba, the Basari and the Kotokoli made the Nawuri area cosmopolitan. This alternative could not also be accepted either because the Konkomba, the Basari and the Kotokoli immigrants started arriving in the Nawuri area in the 1920s, centuries after the area had been inhabited by the Nawuri. Besides, decades before the Konkomba, the Basari and the Kotokoli started arriving in the area, the name 'Kanankulai' was already well known as the cognate name of the Nawuri area. For instance, in 1906 the name 'Kanankulai' appeared on the German map of Togo produced in that year.<sup>147</sup> The Gonja also hold to the claim that they are the overlords of the Nawuri; an overlordship they alleged arose from the tacit acceptance of the Nawuri. According to Dixon:

Nawuris had already accepted the overlordship of the Gonjas before arriving in the area and had gone ahead of the main Gonja invasion to drive out the Konkomba inhabitants of what must have been a very sparsely inhabited country.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Interview with Nana S. G. Friko at Katiejeli on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>131</sup> Interview with Nana Mbimadong. Balaiwura on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

<sup>132</sup> Braimah (1970), p. 122.



Examinations of the Gonja claims reveal that they are spurious. Firstly, it is known that Ndwura Jakpa, the founder of Gonja empire did not cross the River Dakar in any of his expeditions into the Nchumuru area much more to talk about the Nawuri area, which lies further east.<sup>133</sup> Secondly, the Nawuri arrived in the area before the political alliance with the Gonja was forged.<sup>134</sup> There was no point of contact between the Gonja and the Nawuri before the latter arrived in the Nawuri area.<sup>136</sup> Further more, to date there is no archaeological evidence of the inhabitation of the Nawuri area before the arrival of the Nawuri.<sup>137</sup> Available evidence shows that the Nawuri first occupied the land. The overwhelming evidence that exists to support this contention is also supported by Braimah who though played tricks on the fact by saying in several of his writings that the only people the Gonja met in the Nawuri area were the Nawuri in Balai.<sup>138</sup> It is undoubtedly true that Braimah and the Gonja in general tried to twist historical facts to create the impression that only the village of Balai existed when the Gonja first set foot on the Nawuri area. Historical facts exists to the effect that all the Nawuri settlements of Kpandai, Nkanchina, Katiejeli, Njare, Kpasa, Kitare, Bladjai, Linkpan, Awuratu, Oprusai, Suruku, Dodoai and Kabonwule were in existence before the arrival of the Gonja in the Nawuri area.<sup>139</sup> The traditions of the Nawuri show that the general Nawuri movement from their origin to their settlements was not emblock.<sup>140</sup> Besides, the presence of the Nawuri at Balai is a proof that the Nawuri are the indigenes in the area. If the Gonja claim to have arrived in the Nawuri area before the Nawuri, then one would

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<sup>133</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit* p141. Also see Dixon, *op. cit.* p. 4

<sup>134</sup> Interview with Nana Mbimadong Obempeh, Balaiwura, on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Dixon, *op. cit* p. 4.

<sup>138</sup> Braimah(1970), *op. cit* p 122

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Nana Mbimadong Obempeh, Balaiwura on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*

expect some villages to bear Gonja names. Also one would expect natural features like rivers, streams, and mountains to bear Gonja names. A survey and a search on the etymology of names of settlements, streams and shrines in the Nawuri area reveal that all are in the Nawuri language. For example, the names of the settlements such as Kpandai, Balai, Nkanchina, Katiejeli, Kitare, Bladjai and Kabonwule are all in the Nawuri language. Besides, the names of all streams in this area are in Nawuri language. These include, *Kuwa*, *Kudja*, *Wassawasa*, *Wullinbun*, *Dobun*, *Bunkpa*, *Bula* and *Kpasa*. Furthermore, all the shrines in the Nawuri area such as *Nnanjulo*, *Boala*, *Kachilenten*, *Nana Esuwele*, *Kankpe* and *Buya* are in Nawuri. In times of disaster, the Nawuri propitiated and pacified their deities to ward off any calamities befalling the inhabitants. The Gonja, however, assert that the Nawuri were their *tendanas* whose sole responsibility was the discharge of religious duties in the area. Notwithstanding the Gonja assertions, the above facts give credence to the view that the Nawuri are the aborigines of the area.

**B. The rights of the Nawuri and the Gonja in the allocation and utilization of land in the Nawuri area**

The above question is intricately linked up with the ownership of land in the Nawuri area. Generally, ownership of land is acquired in three ways: by birthrights (first settlers), by conquest and by lease. Granted that these principles are the only ways to justify the ownership of land, then land in the Nawuri area belongs to the Nawuri since on record, both written and oral, it is known that Ndwura Jakpa did not cross the River Dakar to the states lying east of it including the Nawuri area to conquer them.<sup>141</sup> On the question of birthrights or first settlers, it has already been shown in the preceding pages

<sup>141</sup> Interview with Nana Mbimadong Obempeh, Balaiwura on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000.



that the Nawuri are the aborigines. It is therefore reasonable to uphold the Nawuri claim that they are the landowners.

Despite these overt facts, the Gonja challenge the right of the Nawuri in the allocation and utilization of land in the Nawuri area. Since the land tenure system in the Nawuri area is closely related to the sequence of arrival of the various ethnic groups who occupy that part of the East Gonja District, an understanding of the history of their arrival is necessary. However, since the history of the arrival of the Gonja and the Nawuri has already been discussed above, it will not be recounted here in detail. Suffice it, however, to say that the Gonja met a sizeable number of the Nawuri in the Nawuri area when the former arrived. Although the Gonja claim the Nawuri were subject to them, it has not been clearly indicated how the overlordship was established.<sup>142</sup> There is also no evidence that any fighting ever took place between the Nawuri and the Gonja when the latter arrived in the Nawuri area. In spite of this Dixon claims that:

in all probability, Nawuris had already accepted the overlordship of Gonja prior to their arrival.<sup>143</sup>

Given this trend of events, the Nawuri and the Gonja respectively and concurrently exercised authority in the allocation and utilization of land in the Nawuri area.

Commenting on the rights of the Nawuri and the Gonja in the allocation and utilization of land in the Nawuri area, Dixon states:

the Nawuris have allodial ownership of those lands which they have effectively used and occupied is not disputed by Gonjas. It has been shown that the Gonjas did not interfere in the full enjoyment by subject peoples of their lands and customs provided that the overlordship of the Gonjas was

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<sup>142</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* p. 39.

<sup>143</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p 7.

acknowledged and their control of the land recognized. The Alfai area is still sparsely inhabited and was even more so when the Gonjas and the Nawuris first appeared. What apparently has happened in practice is that the Nawuris have always enjoyed the full rights in all lands around their villages which they have effectively occupied and farmed. It will be appreciated that without mechanical means of transport the amount of land which any village can effectively farm is limited to a day's walk, except in exceptional cases where farm settlements are created at a distance from the parent village. While there is no doubt that Nawuris have been living in complete enjoyment of their land there is also no doubt that the Gonjas have, without any objection from the Nawuris, permitted during the last 20-30 years the immigration of Konkombas and Bassaris who have either settled in the vast stretch of unoccupied land or have settled near a village with the concurrence of the inhabitants. There is no record of the Nawuris inviting Konkombas and Bassaris to settle and the evidence is that no settlers could enter the area without Gonja permission. Briefly, therefore, the relationship between the Gonjas and the Nawuris in the matter of land is that the Gonjas have not interfered with tribal ownership but have, on the lines of a modern state, assumed the right to control immigration and to act as the legal guardians of the Alfai land.<sup>144</sup>

Dixon failed to realize that land in Nawuri area belongs to the Nawuri, and that the Gonja forcefully began exercising authority in the allocation of land in the Nawuri area when that territory came under Gonja Native Authority in 1932. He also failed to realize that the Gonja usurped those rights from the Nawuri when their overlordship over the Nawuri was effectively enforced in the same year. Hence as overlords of the Nawuri, the Gonja further claimed allodial rights to lands in the Nawuri area.

Advancing the Gonja claim further, Dixon asserts:

the Gonjas have fought two land suites in the courts, one on behalf of the Alfai area and the other on behalf of the

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<sup>144</sup> Dixon, op. cit. pp24-25

Najuro area, without any objection from Nawuris or the Nanjuros.<sup>145</sup>

Inferring from this, Dixon maintained that the Gonja were acting as legal guardians of the land in the Nawuri area.<sup>146</sup> In so far as the land suits were concerned there were no particulars as to when these cases were heard, which part of the land was in dispute, the subject matter of that dispute and the claim in them.<sup>147</sup> It was therefore a fabrication by the Gonja to justify their illegal allocations and usurpation of land in the Nawuri area. Even granted that the Gonja did fight land cases on behalf of the Nawuri, that did not necessarily and legally give them the right to allocate land in the Nawuri area at the expense of the Nawuri. In its report, the Ampiah Committee maintains:

as there are situations where an occupier of land **CAN** and **SHOULD** take action in respect of land, without further particulars of the cases, *supra*, it will be wrong to hold it against the Nawuris and Nchumurus as the relinquishment of the rights in the land" (emphasis mine).<sup>148</sup>

Furthermore, available documented evidence shows that the Nawuri are the owners of the lands in the Nawuri area in Salaga District. The 1932 Native Administration Ordinance that delimited the Gonja District acknowledged this when the ordinance demarcated Gonja district as including:

all the tribal lands lying within the Northern section:- (a) belonging to the Owure of Nchumuru; or (b) belonging to the **NAWURI TRIBE** and subject to the chief Wurubu of Kpandai" (Emphasis mine).<sup>149</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p.25.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* p.48.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Colonial Report on British Togoland for the year ended 1932, p.7.



The testimony of the Konkomba and the Basari inhabitants in Nawuri state further affirms the view that land in the Nawuri area belongs to the Nawuri. The evidence of Ninkab Manin, who had lived in the area since 1929, at the time of Captain C.C. Lilley, confirms that the Nawuri had been exercising rights over the land for a very long time despite the overlordship of the Gonja.<sup>150</sup> With regard to the acquisition and allocation of land in the Nawuri area, the Konkomba and the Basari said they had always approached the Nawuri and that they dealt with the Gonja in matters relating to chieftaincy and political affairs only.<sup>151</sup>

Furthermore, the local missionary, Theobald, also confirms that he first acquired land for the mission through the Nawuri elders in Katiejeli, but recently obtained land for a leper settlement through the intervention of the Gonja chief after the Nawuri exodus.<sup>152</sup>

In addition, it has been established that customary law on land in the Kpandai area is in principle identical with the general customary law on land in the Northern Territories.<sup>153</sup> Allodial rights to land in the Kpandai area are held by kinship groups, which in this instance are the Nawuri clans.<sup>154</sup>

Finally, all information obtained stress that allodial rights in land belong to the Nawuri although it was alleged that they had lost the rights in Kpandai by abandoning the land in 1943. This was supported by the view that:

in Gonja political rights are not identical with rights in land. It seemed to have been acknowledged generally that, although allodial rights in land are with one or two

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<sup>150</sup> Ninkab Manim, "Evidence to Ampiah Committee in Tamale on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1991". Also see Ampiah, *op. cit.* part II pp 97-102

Ninkab Manim, a Basari in Kpandai was one of the Nawuri witnesses during the proceedings of the Ampiah Committee of Inquiry.

<sup>151</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* para 197, p.47

<sup>152</sup> NAGT/RATI/568 "Note on the Kpandai, Nawuri and Nanjuro under United Nations Trusteeship" P.1.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> NAGT/RATI/568 "Note on the Kpandai, Nawuri and Nanjuro under United Nations Trusteeship" P.2

exceptions, vested in Gonja in groups of various tribal distinction, politically they are all members of the Gonja state.<sup>155</sup>

All these evidences clearly support the view that the Nawuri are the owners of lands in the Nawuri area, and as such, reserve the right to allocate the said land. The Gonja exercise of such authority was illegal and owns its root to the overlordship they claimed over the Nawuri and usurpation of the latter's rights in the allocation of land under Gonja rule. In summary, the following observations should be made: the Nawuri allocated and utilized their lands without hindrance from the Gonja. Similarly, the Gonja had also allocated and used land that was in their possession without hindrance so long as these allocations and utilizations did not interfere with the rights of the Nawuri. It was only where the Gonja had attempted to interfere with the land in the possession of the Nawuri in the guise of overlordship that trouble always arose.

In conclusion, the following observations are made: the dispute over the ownership of the lands in the Nawuri area was the main issue that determined the nature of the relationship between the Nawuri and the Gonja. The dispute over the lands in the Nawuri area, however, had several ramifications, which included the questions of aboriginal status, overlordship, rights to exact taxes, and many more. It was to determine the rightful owners of the land in the Nawuri area that the stories of the origins of the Nawuri and the Gonja are very important. It was also to support the allodial claim of the Gonja to the lands in the Nawuri area that the views of the Gonja, Dixon and Tamakloe are particularly interesting.

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<sup>155</sup> (NAGT/RATI/568 "Note on the Kpandai, Nawuri and Nanjuro Under United Nations Trusteeship" (n.d) p. 1

## CHAPTER TWO

### CHIEFTAINCY AND NAWURI-GONJA RELATIONS

#### 2.1 Evolution of chieftaincy among the Nawuri: a controversy

The previous chapter discussed the origin of the Nawuri and the Gonja, the Kitare walls and social and economic relationships and activities of the Nawuri. The chapter further discussed the influx of the Gonja, the Konkomba, the Kotokoli, the Basari and other ethnic groups to the Nawuri area and its social and economic impact. The chapter ended with the social, political and economic collaborations between the Nawuri and the Gonja, and the issues that made Nawuri-Gonja relationships sour.

In this chapter the evolution of chieftaincy among the Nawuri, the institution of Kanankulaiwura (Gonja head chief in Nawuri area through whom the Gonja ruled the Nawuri) and the Kanankulaiwura Skin Dispute will be discussed. The chapter also discusses the emergence of Nana Atorsah as Kpandaiwura and Nawuriwura in the 1940s and 1951 respectively and Nawuri militancy. The chapter ends with the effects of Gonja rule on the Nawuri.

It is not certain when chieftaincy evolved and developed as a political institution among the Nawuri. Nevertheless, there have been divergent views on its evolution. While the Nawuri maintain that chieftaincy was a customary political institution among them, the Gonja are of the view that it is a recent development among the Nawuri. To justify their hegemony over the Nawuri, the Gonja maintain that the institution of chieftaincy among the Nawuri is a mid-twentieth century innovation and development.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alhaji Jawula. M.N.D: "Evidence to Ampiah Committee on 22 October 1991" in Ampiah, Op. cit., pp 18-25.

For example, in his reaction to the installation of Nana Atorsa Agyemang I as the Nawuriwura in 1951, the then Yagbumwura Ewuntoma states:

I have never heard of the title 'chief' of Nawuri land but at the present moment I am not concerned as to whether your activities are in accordance with your custom or not.<sup>2</sup>

Even as recent as April 1991 the Kanankulaiwura in his characteristic Gonja conviction pronounced that:

you are no doubt aware that as the Kanankulaiwura, I am the direct representative of the Kpembewura who is the divisional chief of Kpembe including Alfai area. In the Alfai area, I am the direct representative of the Kpembewura who is the divisional chief of Kpembe including Alfai area. In the Alfai area, I am assisted by Dusaiwura, Bladjaiwura, Njarewura and the Chowura. Apart from these chiefs mentioned, there are no other chiefs in the Alfai area. Your Excellency, I am making this point because in your radio announcement inviting us to this meeting you mentioned Nawuri names with titles 'Nana'... I want to make it clear at this initial stage that throughout the Gonja Traditional Council area no chief bears the title 'Nana'.<sup>3</sup>

Dixon also shares the same conviction with the Gonja when he says:

the claim of "Nana Atorsah Agyeman I" to the "paramountcy" of the Nawuri area is spurious and is not based on traditional precedent.<sup>4</sup>

In furtherance of their claim, the Gonja maintain that the political leaders in Nawuri traditional set-up are clan heads called *Eblisaa*, which meant 'any elderly man'.<sup>5</sup> These *ablisaa* (plural), according to the Gonja, were responsible to the Kanankulaiwura and that those who rendered good services are elevated to the rank of *Mbongwura* (War

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<sup>2</sup> A letter from Yagbumwura Ewuntoma, to Nawuri Elders' 26 October 1951.

<sup>3</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p. 5.

Captain) and stools were created for them.<sup>6</sup> The Gonja further allege that it was Kanankulaiwura Mahama Karantu Kankaranful who created stools for Boila of Kpandai, Awiagah of Jadigbe and Asafu of Nkanchina.<sup>7</sup> Whatever the source and motive of Gonja claims were, a critical scrutiny and juxtaposition of it to the Nawuri political structure reveal that it was spurious. The *Mbowura-ana* were merely military leaders whose services were exploited in times of war. Thereafter, the *Mbowura-ana* retired to their private capacity as ordinary natives of the Nawuri area.<sup>8</sup> Nowhere in the political history of the Nawuri did the *Mbowura-ana* serve as chiefs.<sup>9</sup>

Besides, culturally, it seemed inconceivable and illogical for a Gonja chief who sits on a skin to create stools for his Nawuri subject chiefs. Doubting the substance of the Gonja claim but driven by his usual bias in favour of the Gonja that made it completely impossible for him to dismiss the Gonja claim entirely, Dixon remarks:

there is the possibility that each Nawuri Headman had his own family stool and that the Gonjas did create war Captain stools for some special reason for the Nawuri Headmen of Kpandai, Jadigbe and Nkachina.<sup>10</sup>

Besides the Gonja claim, the phraseology of some Nawuri memoranda suggests the idea of a seemingly recent evolution of chieftaincy among them. As recent as 1991 one of the Nawuri memoranda submitted to the Ampiah Committee carried that connotation. In that memorandum the Nawuri wrote that:

from time immemorial, Nawuri society had been an ascephalous (sic) society (i.e. without chiefs) but had

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Mbongwura is the Gonja title for a war captain or chief. The Nawuri equivalent is Mbowura. The plural of Mbowura is Mbowura-ana.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7 February 2001

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p. 5.



political organization with power in the hands of clan heads. The few Gonjas who came to settle at Kpandai started practicing chieftaincy as known in Gonjaland and with time the few Gonjas attempted to extend and superimpose their system of administration on the Nawuris but we have always resisted it. Owing to early formal education received by many Gonjas, their sons and daughters have monopolized high government appointments in the Northern Region, and thereby actively supported the Gonja chiefs to cross to Kpandai to prop up the chiefly inclination of a few Gonjas there with the view to extending Gonja hegemony throughout Nawuriland.<sup>11</sup>

Apart from the phraseology in that memorandum, the adverbial time phrase of a petition by the Nawuri to the District Commissioner at Salaga on the installation of Nana Atorsah Agyemang I in 1951 also carried a seemingly recent evolution of chieftaincy among the Nawuri. In that petition the Nawuri wrote:

we the under-marked elders of Nawuriland humbly place this application before the Government for kind consideration; that we have now elected and installed our own Nawuri chief, NANA ATORSA NAWURI (NAWURI- WURA)...<sup>12</sup>

Though the grammatical function of the 'now' adverb of time in the petition is comprehensible, its historical import is unequivocal to its grammatical implication. Historically, it echoed and emphasized the re-institutionalisation and resuscitation of chieftaincy, particularly the office of the Nawuriwura (paramount chief of the Nawuri), among them.<sup>13</sup> It also emphasized the fact that the Nawuri had, by custom, elected and installed a Nawuri on their own as their paramount chief.<sup>14</sup> Between 1913 and 1951 the position of the Nawuriwura and Nawuri chiefs in general relapsed into oblivion and was

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<sup>11</sup> A petition of the Nawuri to the Chairman of the PNDC dated 2 April 1991.

<sup>12</sup> A petition of Elders of the Nawuri land to the District Commissioner at Salaga, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1951.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Nana Agbedji Kasikor, Nkanchinawura on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

over-shadowed by the Kanankulaiwura and his sub-chiefs. Never did the 'now' phrase of time in the petition indicate the first adoption of chieftaincy among the Nawuri as it may lead one to believe. Whether it was used correctly or not its historical import still stands clear though its grammatical function in the sentence belies it.

Notwithstanding the Gonja conviction and the phraseology of some of Nawuri memoranda, colonial reports were replete with records of Nawuri chiefs. For example, in 1926 a colonial report stated that:

there are five divisions or tribal areas [in Krachi district]: Krachi, Nawuri, Nchumuru, Adjuati and Adele. Each is governed by its own Head Chief and Sub-chiefs who are assisted by Counsellors. These chiefs are not elected but are appointed, from among other chiefs by a system of rota (sic). Such chiefs are all of one family in each division. Their titles differ: Krachi is governed by Omanhin. Nawuri is governed by Wurubon (Wurabu), Adjuati is governed by Asasewura, Nchumuru is governed by Owure and Adele is governed by Ejudele.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, the phraseology of some Gonja petitions and letters as well as their actions demonstrated that the institution of chieftaincy is customary among the Nawuri. On 29<sup>th</sup> November 1988, the Kanankulaiwura, Alhaji Ademu wrote a letter to Nana Gyakun Benfiane of Nkanchina as follows:

Dear Sir,  
Installation of Nawuri-wura, Kpandai: While acknowledging yours dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 1988 on the above topic and in cognisance with the norms and practices of the Gonja Traditional council, as established by the Regional House of Chiefs as well as the National House of Chiefs and the Chieftaincy secretariat, I have the pleasure, with reference to the D.S.P. Salaga's letter No. DC.1.0.15 Vol.3/36 dated 30<sup>th</sup> December 1987 and copied to you to grant you permission to install as the Nawuri-wura, for the Nawuri community in the Alfai area of the Gonja

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<sup>15</sup> Annual Report on the British Sphere of Togoland for the year ended 1926. p.10.

Traditional Council. This is of course the result of the popular acceptance of the Nawuris to the rotational system of the Head chief which has been rightly bestowed on the Nkanchina clan of the Nawuri Tribe in Alfai area, after it had passed from Kpandai to Balai and now to Nkanchina, Katiejeli, Bladjai, Kitare and Kabonwule...<sup>16</sup>

The letter showed that at least the Kanankulaiwura, and for that matter, the Kpembewura, and the Yagbumwura recognized the chiefly office of the Nawuri and did not interfere with the institution. Besides, the letter showed that chieftaincy was customary to the Nawuri since the Kanankulaiwura acknowledged that it was customary for the Head Chief of the Nawuri to rotate from one village to the other.

Thirdly, in August 1925 the Provincial Commissioner for Southern Province wrote a letter to the Acting Chief Commissioner for the Northern Territories concerning the need to give medallions to the chiefs in Krachi, Kpandai, Siari, Tutukpene and Nanjuro.<sup>17</sup> In that letter the Commissioner stated that:

no medallions have been issued to the Krachi District. The Acting District Commissioner suggests, and I recommend that the following chiefs be given medallions. Omanhene – Krachi – 4 inches, Wurobon (Nawuri chief) – Kpandai – 3 inches, Osuriwura – Siari – 2 inches, Eju Dele – Tutukpene – 2 inches Owure – Nenjero – 2 inches.<sup>18</sup>

Consequently, on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1925 the *Wurubon* (the Nawuri chief in Kpandai) was given a three-inch medallion, thus gaining recognition from the British colonial

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<sup>16</sup> Letter from Kanankulaiwura Aponnibise Alhaji Ademtu to Nana Gyakon Benfiane Nkanchina, 29 November 1988

<sup>17</sup> ADM 56/1/234 Letter from the Provincial Commissioner. Southern Province to the Acting Chief Commissioner dated 17<sup>th</sup> August 1925. See Appendix II

<sup>18</sup> ibid.



government as the traditional chief of the Nawuri area.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, it should be made clear that chieftaincy is expressed in various forms. It does not necessarily mean the existence of chiefs. Since it is a system of traditional rule, the capacity and identity of the ruler varied from culture to culture. It could be a chief, clan head or chief priest depending upon the culture of a particular group. Hence the identity of the political heads of the Nawuri whether *ablisaa*, traditional priests or chiefs was dictated by Nawuri traditional democracy. Therefore, the political prominence and functions of such political heads should be examined in the context of the Nawuri culture but not within the spectacle of another culture. In any case, clan heads (*the ablisaa*) who the Gonja allege were the political heads of the Nawuri served in the capacity of chiefs as they performed the duties of a chief. Besides, no ethnic group right from the start had the institution of chiefship. All of them including even the revered Asante system were theocratic in nature before chiefship evolved.

The controversy over the evolution of chieftaincy among the Nawuri cannot end without a chronicle of the Nawuri version. Nawuri oral traditions are replete with lists of *Nawuriwura-ana* who ruled at one time or the other.<sup>20</sup> Besides, Nawuri oral traditions relate that the following villages and titles of chiefs constituted the Nawuri traditional set-up:

Kpandai where resided the Kpandaiwura; Bladjai where resided the Bladjaiwura Balai where resided the Balaiwura; Nkanchina where resided the Nkanchinawura, Katiejeli where resided the Dusaiwura; Kabonwule where resided

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<sup>19</sup> It is not quite clear whether the medallion given to the Nawuri Paramount Chief (Wurubon) was awarded to him on the date stated above or later since the date of award stated in the document preceded the request by the Commissioner of Southern Province to award him and three of his colleagues medallions. See Appendix III

<sup>20</sup> Interview Nana Mbowura Boila, Ayafolewura of Kpandai on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2001. Kpandai Nawuri chiefs are the Kpandaiwura, Kascikabonowura, Aboluochinakabonowura, Adjandekabonowura and Ayafolewura. Nawuri-ana is the plural of the title Nawuriwura.

the Kabonwulewura; Kitare where resided the Kitarewura, Oprusai where resided the Oprusaiwura; Njare where resided the Njarewura.<sup>21</sup>

The suffix *wura* in Nawuri as in Gonja and all Guan speaking dialects means 'master or legitimate owner.' Literally therefore, Nawuri chiefs are regarded as the 'masters or legitimate owners' of the places they ruled.

Since the office of the Nawuriwura is rotational, he resided in his hometown or place of his preference. However, in all cases the Nawuriwura settled in Kpandai, the capital of the Nawuri area. The foregoing explanation shows that the institution of chieftaincy is customary among the Nawuri, but not a mid-twentieth century innovation and development. The Gonja claim is a deliberate fabrication to distort history to justify Gonja hegemony over the Nawuri. As will be shown later in this chapter and in chapter five, the non-recognition of Nawuri chieftaincy institution and Nawuri chiefs by the Gonja was one of the major remote causes of Nawuri-Gonja conflicts in 1991 and 1992.

## **2.2 The nature of chieftaincy among the Nawuri**

As an indigenous custom and prestigious political institution among the Nawuri, chieftaincy is held in lofty height. This was demonstrated by the wide spectrum of Nawuri chiefs, the political roles they performed and the respect accorded them.

Chieftaincy institution among the Nawuri is hierarchical. At the apex of the hierarchy is the Nawuriwura. He is the highest and last authority of appeal among the Nawuri. The first time the Nawuri used the title Nawuriwura was in 1951. It was first

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<sup>21</sup> ***Ibid.***

used in a petition of 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1951 to the District Commissioner at Salaga.<sup>22</sup> The title re-appeared for the second time in official records in a petition by the Nawuri also of 12<sup>th</sup> November 1951.<sup>23</sup> Prior to 1951 it seemed probable that the title of the Paramount chief of the Nawuri was Wurabu, which appeared in colonial records as *Wurubon*.<sup>24</sup> The title Wurabu is etymologically derived from two Nawuri words: *wura* which means 'chief or master' and *bu* which means state or area. Hence Wurabu means 'legitimate ruler or paramount chief of the Nawuri area in whose custody all lands and properties are confided and reposed'.<sup>25</sup>

However, in 1951 the title Nawuriwura was substituted for Wurabu. The change of the title was conceived as far back as in the 1940s when the Nawuri seceded to the Krachi District.<sup>26</sup> The change of the title was necessitated purely by linguistic reason. In colonial records the title Wurubu was wrongly spelt as Wurubon.<sup>27</sup> The wrong spelling of the title as Wurubon (instead of Wurabu) by colonial officials gave it a Gonja undertone. It also gave it a phonetic synonymy with the Gonja word Wuragbon. The Gonja equivalent of 'great' is *gbon*, *bon* or *gbun* as in Yagbonwura, Yabonwura, Yangbumwura and Yagbunwura. Hence the last syllable in Wurabon- *bon*- had a linguistic implication of 'great' in the Gonja language. Since for both the Nawuri and the Gonja the title *wura* (which was wrongly spelt as *wuru* by colonial officials) means chief or master, the title wurubon could therefore be interpreted in Gonja connotation as 'the great chief'. It was against this background of the linguistic confusion and equivocation

<sup>22</sup> A letter from the Elders in the Nawuri area to the District Commissioner at Salaga, 3rd November 1951. See Appendix XI.

<sup>23</sup> A letter from the Elders in the Nawuri area to the District Commissioner at Salaga, 12<sup>th</sup> November 1951.

<sup>24</sup> See Annual Report on the British Sphere of Togoland, 1926, p.10.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> See Annual Report on the British Sphere of Togoland, 1926, p. 10.



that the wrong spelling of wurabu created that the title was changed to Nawuriwura.<sup>28</sup> For the equivocal linguistic implication of this title had the tendency of distorting Nawuri history to justify Gonja hegemony over them.

The oral traditions of the Nawuri are replete with a list of Wurabu-ana or Nawuriwura-ana that ruled at one time or the other. The following is the list of Wurabu-ana or Nawuriwura-ana:

Nana Krunkpaw: Nawuriwura who led the Nawuri from Larteh to Nawuri Kupo. Nana Attara: Nawuriwura who led the Nawuri from Nawuri Kupo to Kitare. He was also the founder of the walled town of Kitare. Nana. Abisa: Nawuriwura at the time the various Nawuri clans dispersed from Kitare to other areas in the Nawuri area in present day Northern and Volta regions of Ghana to found various settlements. Nana Bresiam Okore: The bravest Nawuriwura and founder of the Okore stool, the paramount stool of the Nawuri. Nana Akonshi: Nawuriwura who helped the Gonja against the Asante invasion of Eastern Gonja. Nana Elu: Nawuriwura when Germans arrived in the Nawuri area in the 1880s. Nana Dari: Nawuriwura who fought on behalf of the Lepo against the Kanyasiwura in 1894. Nana Boila: Nawuriwura at the time Mahama Karantu Kankaranful was installed as the Kanankulaiwura in 1913. Nana Bunyaluwei: The Nawuriwura who was allegedly poisoned to death at Kpembe and the chiefly medals of the Nawuri taken by the Gonja. Nana Lowugyayin: The Nawuriwura at the time the Nawuri seceded to the neighbouring areas of Krachi and Nanumba in 1943. Nana Atorsah I: Nawuriwura who stood militantly to oppose the office of the Kanankulaiwura as the paramount chief in the Nawuri area. He reigned from 1951-1968. Nana Bakianesu Aseadwo I: He reigned from 1968 – 1983. A non-militant Nawuriwura.<sup>29</sup>

The paramount stool of the Nawuri, which is a black Stool is called *Bresiam Okore*. It was named after Bresiam Okore, the fourth Nawuriwura and creator of the

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Nana S. G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

stool.<sup>30</sup> The stool had, for its appellation, the title *Okore*. Like the Golden stool of the Asante, the Bresiam stool is blackened with the blood of animals. The stool is also a god in itself: it receives thanksgiving, votive and pacification sacrifices periodically or annually during festivals, epidemics, installations and funeral of Nawuriwura-ana.<sup>31</sup> The creator of the Nawuri paramountcy stool (Bresiam Okore) came from Kpandai. Consequently, the stool was supposed to be the singular preserve of only the Nawuri in Kpandai. Customarily therefore, the stool is not placed in the custody of any Nawuriwura who did not come from Kpandai. In that circumstance, the Bresiam stool is kept in the custody of the *Eblisaa* of Kpandai.<sup>32</sup>

With the exception of Nana Bakiansu Asaseadwo I, all the Nawuriwura-ana provided in the list above were Nawuri from Kpandai. This was not the result of a design or a manipulation on the part of the Nawuri in Kpandai. On the contrary, it was because of the early development of chieftaincy among the Nawuri in Kpandai than the Nawuri in other settlements. However, it was most probable that it was because resident colonial officials in the Nawuri area, Salaga District and Krachi District gave recognition to the Bresiam stool to the neglect of other stools in Nawuri villages. It was also most probable that the Nawuri in Kpandai enjoyed this privilege because they resided in the capital of Nawuri area, Kpandai.<sup>33</sup> In such situation, the Nawuri chief in Kpandai might gain prominence over his counterparts in the other Nawuri settlements and thus be regarded as senior to them.

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* Also see footnote 20 for the list of Kpandai Nawuri chiefs.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

In 1951 Nawuri elders, traditional chief priests and chiefs met at Katiejeli and deliberated on various issues including the office of the Nawuriwura. At that meeting the delegates resolved to make the office of the Nawuriwura rotational among the various Nawuri settlements starting from Kpandai through Nkanchina, Balai, Katiejeli, Bladjai, Kitare, Kabonwule and Njare.<sup>34</sup> The first Nawuriwura installed after the Katiejeli resolution was Nana Atorsah I, a Nawuri from Kpandai community. This was in respect of the line of succession established in the 1951 Katiejeli resolution. In respect of the resolution, Nana Atorsah was to be succeeded by a candidate from Nkanchina. Consequently, when Nana Atorsah died in 1968, Nana Gyakun performed the funeral rites of the deceased Nawuriwura as custom demanded.<sup>35</sup> That included the formal announcement of the death of the Nawuriwura, provision of a sheep, cow and foodstuffs, among others. However, for reasons unknown the line of succession abruptly changed, and Nana Bakianesu Asaseadwo I, a candidate from Balai was enthroned as the Nawuriwura. Since then the line of succession to the Nawuriwura throne was established to take that sequence.

Just like all other traditional states, various sub-chiefs assist the Nawuriwura. Immediately below the Nawuriwura are the Nde-awura. These are chiefs of the various Nawuri settlements. As representatives of the Nawuriwura in their various settlements, the Nde-awura see to the implementation of the policies of the former aside the political and judicial roles they perform as chiefs. The titles of the Nde-awura are obtained by adding the suffix *wura* to the names of their respective villages or towns as in Kpandaiwura, Bladjaiwura and Kitarewura.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Nana Agbedji Kasikor. Nkanchinawura on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

A peculiar feature of the traditional political structure in the Nawuri area is the absence of divisional chiefs. The view that the small geographical extent of the Nawuri area explains the absence of divisional chiefs in Nawuri political structure is untenable. The alternative explanation that imputed the absence of divisional chiefs on the alleged recent evolution and innovation of chieftaincy among the Nawuri is also not acceptable either.<sup>36</sup> Instead, the close proximity of Nawuri settlements to each other made the need for divisional chiefs utterly unnecessary.<sup>37</sup> For their incorporation in Nawuri political structure would tend to duplicate administrative functions.

Next to the Nde-awura are the Ayafoele-awura (Leader of the young men).<sup>38</sup> They are responsible for mobilizing the youth to undertake various development projects and social activities in their respective communities. In times of war the Ayafoele-awura liaised with the Mbowura-ana to raise an army, to acquire ammunitions and to provide food for the army.<sup>39</sup>

Below the Ayafoele-awura are the Mbono-awura. These are heads of various clans in each Nawuri community. The Mbono-awura, otherwise called Mbono-ablisaa (family elders) or *ablisaa* for short, settle petty family squabbles, keep family properties and offer sacrifices to family deities. Besides, they, together with the Ayafoele-wura, form the counsel of elders of each Nawuri community. This was the structure of the chieftaincy institution among the Nawuri until about the 1930s when Gonja hegemony was formally established over them.

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Nana Mbowura, Ayafoelewura-wura at Kpandai on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2001.



### 2.3 The institution of the Kanankulaiwura

The institution of the Kanankulaiwura is shrouded in obscurity and has variant traditions of origin. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: the Kanankulaiwura did not wield any significant political power in the Nawuri area until the 1930s. Nawuri traditions say that the ancestry of Kanankulaiwura is traceable to one Mallam who settled in Nawuri land in about the seventeenth or early eighteenth century.<sup>40</sup> The Mallam, as the traditions say, was powerful and famous in the preparations of traditional medicines for curative, protective and preventive purposes.<sup>41</sup> As part of his profession, the Mallam prepared medicine for Nawuri hunters to help them in their hunting expeditions.<sup>42</sup> Nawuri oral traditions further say that it was at this time that a rheumatic Gonja patient burst on the scene to be treated by the Mallam.<sup>43</sup> The Nawuri presented the Mallam with chunks of meat as part of their appreciation and extended their hospitality to the Gonja rheumatic patient.<sup>44</sup> As the Mallam tabooed unslaughtered meat as is customary with Moslems but the Gonja did not, the latter received the meat the Nawuri offered to the Mallam.<sup>45</sup> The Nawuri further say that with time the Gonja man became known as (Kanankulaiwura), meaning 'the owner of Kunankuli.'<sup>46</sup> The term Kanankulaiwura became the nickname of the Gonja man and when he requested to be a Zongo chief the request was granted. The Gonja man made the request apparently to ensure that the Nawuri would continue to extend the gratitude given him after the death of the Mallam. The Mallam's action was not intended to introduce Gonja hegemony over the Nawuri, though it eventually did. It

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with Nana Mbimadong Obempeh, Balai-wura on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> *Kunankuli* is etymologically derived from the Nawuri words *Kunun*, meaning 'meat' and *Kuli*, meaning 'chunk'. Hence *Kunankuli* in Nawuri means 'chunk of meat'.

should be stressed that the rheumatic Gonja patient did not only lay down the foundation for the institution of Kanankulaiwura, but also laid a fertile ground for Gonja rule in the Nawuri area. This began the line of Kanankulaiwuras in the Nawuri area.

However, the real cause of the establishment of Gonja suzerainty over the Nawuri was British colonial administration. With a small staff, and a large area to rule and the parsimony of the home government, the British realized the expediency of ruling through chiefs. Consequently, the colonial regime therefore restructured power relations between chiefs and their people in favour of the former. Their powers were increased by allowing them to rule their subjects as far as was compatible with equity and good government. The British colonial Government also recreated paramount chiefs and established the lines of succession in various traditional states. In pursuance of this and in preparation for the introduction of Native Administration Ordinance (1932), various conferences were held to codify the traditional constitutions, rules of successions and the relationship between the various ethnic groups and their paramount chiefs. The most important of these conferences were the Gonja (May 1930), Dagbon (November 1930), Kusasi (March 1931) and Mamprugu (1932) and Mamprugu again in (July 1933).<sup>47</sup>

Following the introduction of indirect rule in 1932, the Kpembewura's authority and influence were enforced over the Nawuri.<sup>48</sup> In 1933 the Yabunwura of Goja and his Council were appointed as Native Authority over lands subject to the Yabunwura of Gonja situated within the Northern Territories and within the Northern section of

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<sup>47</sup> Brukum, N.J.K.: "The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast Under British Colonial Rule, 1897 – 1957: A study in Political Change. Unpublished Thesis presented to the University of Toronto, Canada, 1997, pp. 275-6.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Nana Mbimadong Obempeh, Balaiwura on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000.

Togoland under British Mandate.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, the Kpembewura and his council were appointed as subordinate Native Authority for the Kpembe division that included the Nawuri area.<sup>50</sup> Thus, since the Kanankulaiwura was a Gonja, the Gonja Native Administrative Authority not only regarded him as the sub-chief of Kpembewura in the Nawuri area, but was also empowered as the de facto chief in the Nawuri area. It was this development that ultimately increased and enforced the authority of the Kanankulaiwura over the Nawuri in the Nawuri area.

The Gonja version of the origin of Kanankulaiwura associates it to the foundation of the Gonja empire. The Gonja refer to Tamakloe's work to substantiate their claim.<sup>51</sup> Tamakloe's view has already been discussed and dismissed as worthless in the preceding chapter.<sup>52</sup>

The Gonja traditions further say that Jakpa settled the Nawuri in the Nawuri area under the hegemony of the Lepo, one of the three gates in the Kpembe chieftaincy.<sup>53</sup> Giving evidence to the Ampiah Committee on the origin of Kanankulaiwura, Alhaji M.N.D. Jawula, a Gonja, maintained that when the Kpembewura was installed in Kpembe he also got a son installed as Kanankulaiwura at Kpandai. This son was a Moslem. According to Jawula, the Kpembewura instructed the Nawuri that:

I am giving a Moslem chief as an "Alfa" and he is going to be based in Kpandai. Help him at all times, when need be because he is your chief.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Dixon, *op. cit.* p.14.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>Tamakloe, *op. cit.* pp. 24-25

<sup>52</sup>For the Tamakloe's view and the arguments against it see pages 14 and 15 of this study.

<sup>53</sup>Alhaji M. N. D. Jawula: "Evidence to the Ampiah Committee of Inquiry into the Gonjas, the Nawuris and the Nanjuros Dispute in Tamale on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1991.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*

It is difficult to accept the Gonja claim since it has not been established that Ndewura Jakpa waged his wars of conquest to the Nawuri area. Neither has it been established that Ndewura Jakpa settled the Nawuri, the Konkomba or any captives in the Nawuri area.<sup>55</sup>

Besides, the etymology of Kanankulaiwura reveals that the Gonja version of its origin is fabricated. Giving the Gonja version of the etymology of Kanankulaiwura, Braimah maintains that it is derived from the Gonja word *Kanankul*, meaning 'the assemblage of diverse tribes.'<sup>56</sup> Hence the Kanankulaiwura, according to Braimah, was 'the chief of the assemblage of diverse tribes.'<sup>57</sup> Braimah's assertion is subject to criticism and cannot be accepted. In the first place, Braimah's assertion is too vague to be accepted. He failed to mention the diverse ethnic groups or tribes in Kpandai. Perhaps, Braimah is implying that the arrival of the Kotokoli, the Konkomba and the Basari in the Nawuri area made the population in that vicinity cosmopolitan. This implication cannot be accepted either because the Kotokoli, the Konkomba and the Basari arrived in Nawuri area in the 1920s, by which time a line of Kanankulaiwuras had been established.

An examination of the Gonja version of the etymology of Kanankulaiwura reveals that it was a twist of linguistics to distort history in their favour. For if Kanankulaiwura was a Gonja word it would have been *Kanankulpewura* but not Kanankulaiwura. Linguistically, it could not have been Kanankulaiwura since the syllable *ai* linking *kanankul* and *wura* is a Nawuri word which means 'home.' The Gonja equivalent of home is *pe* but not *ai*.

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<sup>55</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.*, part 1, p 61.

<sup>56</sup> Braimah (1970). *op. cit.*, p 122.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

Until the 1930s the Kanankulaiwura's political authority in the Nawuri area was either insignificant or minimal. Two reasons were responsible for this. Firstly, the Nawuri regarded the Kanankulaiwura as a Zongo chief who did not wield any political authority in the Nawuri area. Secondly, there was the absence of common traditional democracy between the Nawuri and the Gonja before the imposition of colonial rule. Until the advent of colonial rule, the Nawuri never had common organs of Native administrative rule or institution with the Gonja.<sup>58</sup> The advent of British colonial rule and the promulgation of the Native Administration Ordinance brought the Nawuri under Gonja rule, and this ultimately gave the Kanankulaiwura, (the representative of the Kpembewura in the Nawuri area) power over the Nawuri.<sup>59</sup>

Dixon, however, disagrees with the view that the Nawuri and the Gonja never shared common traditional democracy before the advent of colonial rule. In his report, he asserts that though the Nawuri were a different ethnic group from the Gonja and spoke different languages, they (the former) had traditional ties of allegiance with the Gonja dating far back to the eighteenth century.<sup>60</sup> Dixon remarks that:

the statement that Nawuris had no connections and dealings with Gonjas is obviously absurd.<sup>61</sup>

Dixon's claim is unacceptable because his conclusion proceeded from an apparent assumption. It is derived from a false premise that the Nawuri and the Gonja originated

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<sup>58</sup> Interview with Nana Agbedji Kasekor, Nkanchinawura on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p 22

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*



from the same place, and as such had common democracy.<sup>62</sup> In a statement preceding his conclusion, Dixon writes:

the claim that before the advent of European rule the Nawuri had no common **Origin** or tradition with the Gonja has been shown to be unfounded”<sup>63</sup> (emphasis mine).

Whatever was the controversy by 1991 when the Nawuri-Gonja wars erupted a line of Kanankulaiwuras had been established. The Gonja say that the following Kanankulaiwuras ruled over the Nawuri area before the advent of colonial rule: Kanankulaiwura Djoro I; Kanankulaiwura Sanda I; Kanankulaiwura Jawula I; Kanankulaiwura Turmi I; Sabalwu Abudu; Sabalwu Daramani; and Mahama Napo.<sup>64</sup> Gonja further assert that it was during the reign of Kanankulaiwura Mbema that the Germans arrived in the Nawuri area.<sup>65</sup> The Gonja further claim that it was during the reign of Mbema that the Anglo-German Convention of August 1899 partitioning the neutral zone was made.<sup>66</sup>

Just as any other chief, an elected candidate to the Kanankulaiwura Skin went through a process of rites of enskinment. However, the process of installing the Kanankulaiwura is different from the general process of installing Gonja chiefs.<sup>67</sup> In general kingmakers install all Gonja chiefs.<sup>68</sup> On the contrary, the Kanankulaiwura is

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> A memorandum submitted by the Kpembewura, Sulemana, Isanwurfo II, Divisional chief of the Kpembe Division of Gonja to J.Dixon ESQ, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 1955.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Braimah (1970), *op. cit.* p.122.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

self-installed.<sup>69</sup> The chief elect to the Kanankulaiwura Skin went to the room where he first put on a cummerbund, and swore allegiance to the Kpembewura and the people.<sup>70</sup> The manner of his installation is similar to that of the Mbonwura among the Gonja.<sup>71</sup> Explaining the process of the installation of Gonja chiefs, Braimah could not provide a reason or historical basis for this apparent deviation of the installation of Kanankulaiwuras from Gonja custom. It seems probable, however, that it stems from the view that the Kanankulaiwura institution originated as an office or title of a Zongo chief to which no allegiance or respect was paid by the inhabitants of the Nawuri area.<sup>72</sup>

Evidence shows that all Kanankulaiwura up to Mahama Karantu Kankaranful were installed by the Nawuri or installed after their consent was sought.<sup>73</sup> According to the Nawuri, they installed Kanankulaiwuras under a kapok tree at the outskirts of Kpandai: a process of installation denoting the low prestige attached to the office.<sup>74</sup> The newly installed Kanankulaiwura then swore an oath of allegiance to the Nawuri, and sacrifices were made of which the hind legs of the sacrificial animals whether roasted, cooked or raw meat was given to him. This epitomized the origin of the institution of Kanankulaiwura.<sup>75</sup> The new Kanankulaiwura was led in a procession to the town amid drumming and dancing. However, after the introduction of indirect rule in 1932, and the subsequent amalgamation of the Nawuri area to the Gonja District, the role of the Nawuri

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Nana S. G. Frico at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Nana Ayegai at Bladjai on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

in the installation of Kanankulaiwuras was lost as the Gonja traditional Council usurped it.<sup>76</sup> Since then the Gonja installed all Kanankulaiwuras.<sup>77</sup>

All Kanankulaiwuras that reigned before Mahama Karantu (installed in 1913) exhibited two main features. Firstly, they spent much of their time in Kpembe in Gonja state rather than in Kpandai, the capital of the Nawuri area.<sup>78</sup> They preferred to spend their time with their kinsmen in Kpembe to staying in Kpandai. The argument that the small population of the Gonja in Kpandai made it difficult for the Kanankulaiwuras to stay in the Nawuri area to enforce their authority is untenable. After all, it is not necessarily the case that the population of a royal house in a particular area should be large before the chief or royal house could stay there permanently to enforce their authority. The most plausible reason was that the office of the Kanankulaiwura then was a title in name without any corresponding political authority. Consequently, it was therefore economically and politically wasteful for the Kanankulaiwuras to stay in the Nawuri area to idle. Besides, the argument that the Kanankulaiwuras preferred to rule the Nawuri area from Kpembe is not acceptable either. It is also interesting to learn that the Kanankulaiwuras did not die on the throne. Rather, they were dethroned or abdicated before their death for various reasons ranging from malfeasance, corrupt practices, lack of commitment to chiefly duties and obligations, interference with Nawuri political affairs, and many others.<sup>79</sup> For example, Kanankulaiwura Mbema during whose reign Germans arrived in the Nawuri area resided in Kpembe in British Territory.<sup>80</sup> Besides, he

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<sup>76</sup> Interview with Nana Ayegai at Bladjai on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>80</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p.7.



did not die on the throne: he was deskinning before his death.<sup>81</sup> History is silent as to where his successor, Kanankulaiwura Lempo resided, but since he was elevated to the status of Kpembewura, it is probable that he spent a considerable part of his reign in Kpembe.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, Kanankulaiwura Djoro II did not die on the Skin because he voluntarily abdicated and fled to Kpembe in the British territory on hearing the news of his possible arrest by the Germans for allegedly taking part in the molestation of a German colonial Officer.<sup>83</sup>

It has been indicated that after the death of Atuma, successor of Djoro II, the Kanankulaiwura Skin was left vacant as the Nawuri resolved not to install any Kanankulaiwuras.<sup>84</sup> Consequently, for six months the Kanankulaiwura Skin remained vacant.<sup>85</sup> The Nawuri's decision not to install further Kanankulaiwuras would have necessarily changed the course of history on the Nawuri-Gonja relationship if it had been pursued forever. However, in September 1913 the Nawuri reverted to the installation of Kanankulaiwuras in the Nawuri area. This was dictated purely by administrative reasons. For the Nawuriwura who replaced the Kanankulaiwura in administrative matters in the German colonial apparatus was obnoxiously lackadaisical and did not show much commitment to his chiefly duties. Instead, the Nawuriwura pre-occupied himself with farming activities. This argument seemed very plausible because as recent as between 1978 and 1980, the then reigning Nawuriwura, Nana Bakianesu Asaseadwo, was involved in active farming and went to farm regularly.<sup>86</sup> In such circumstances, there

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<sup>81</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong, Regent at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>82</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Nana S. G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Nana Mbimadong Obempeh, Balaiwura on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

was bound to be administrative inconvenience, and there was no doubt that this forced the Nawuri to install Mahama Karantu Kankaranful as the Kanankulaiwura. Another reason why the Nawuri installed Mahama Karantu (Jawula) as the Kanankulaiwura in 1913 was the apparent refusal of other Nawuri communities to attend the court of Nana Boila, then Nawuriwura. Besides, the Nawuri communities refused to pay homage to Nana Boila.<sup>87</sup> It is difficult to understand why the Nawuri refused to pay homage to Nana Boila and attend his court. It was quite probable that there was a feud between Nana Boila's kinsmen (the Nawuri in Kpandai) and other Nawuri communities. Consequently, the satellite Nawuri communities refused to attend the court of Nawuriwura Boila, a native of Kpandai. Instead, the Nawuri clamoured for a Gonja to be made their traditional political leader since, according to them, the Nawuri could not rule themselves'.<sup>88</sup> It was for these reasons that the Nawuri were compelled to install Mahama Karantu Kankaranful as the Kanankulaiwura in September 1913. The Nawuri chose him because he had gained a lot of fame and popularity among them through his credit worthiness, fairness and shrewdness in business. The Nawuri therefore saw Mahama Karantu as ideal because, as a friend, he could be trusted.

Though the re-instatement of the office of the Kanankulaiwura by the Nawuri was not overtly purported to facilitate the German colonial apparatus, it did facilitate it. As was the feature of colonial rule especially British and German Colonial policies in Africa, traditional rulers occupied prominent positions in the colonial administration. It was a matter of fact that the absence of the Kanankulaiwura and the reluctance of the Nawuriwura to assume that role was a big blow to German colonial administration in the

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<sup>87</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Nana Mbimadong Obempeh, Balaiwura on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000.

Nawuri area. It was therefore not surprising that the German colonizers, who accordingly documented the event in their records warmly hailed the installation of Mahama Karantu as the Kanankulaiwura in the Nawuri area on 13th September 1913.<sup>89</sup> The then District Officer at Krachi described Mahama Karantu's installation as having:

...been elected as overlord of the district of Nawuri with the approval of the imperial Station Kete-Krachi. Under him are the chiefs of the following localities:  
Kpandae (Kpandai) (2) Katiageli (Katiejeli) (3) Balue (Balai) (4) Bajim (Bayim)  
(5) Nkantschena (Nkanchina) (6) Dodope (Dodoai) (7) Kabauwele (Kabonwule) (8) Kotiko (9) Abrionko (10) Suruku.<sup>90</sup>

Dr. Von Raven signed the original document, which was in German.<sup>91</sup>

The documentation of the installation of Kanankulaiwura Mahama Karantu, the first ever of that kind in the Nawuri area, did not imply the recognition of the Germans of the overlordship of the Gonja over the Nawuri. On the contrary, it was rather an ample demonstration of how the Germans appreciated the role of a paramount traditional ruler or overlord (whether he was a Nawuri or Gonja) in the Nawuri area to facilitate an efficient German colonial administration in that area. This was because such facilitating role had been neglected for the preceding six months to the installation of Mahama Karantu. After all, the successors of Mbema (the Kanankulaiwura when the Germans arrived in the Nawuri area) - Lempo, Djoro and Atuma - were installed at the time German colonial rule was already established in the Nawuri area but the Germans did not document the dates of their installations.<sup>92</sup> If the documentation of the installation of Mahama Karantu signified the German colonial Government's recognition of the

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<sup>89</sup> Dixon. *op. cit.* p. 8.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

overlordship of the Gonja over the Nawuri, it would have necessarily documented the last three predecessors of Mahama Karantu whose installation occurred at the time German colonial rule was already established in the Nawuri area.<sup>93</sup> Besides, the acceptance of Mahama Karantu by the Nawuri as their overlord did not necessarily mean the acceptance of all the Gonja as their overlords.<sup>94</sup> The Germans were only interested in the installation of the Kanankulaiwura and thus documented the event in so far as the Kanankulaiwura would facilitate the efficient functioning of the German colonial apparatus in the Nawuri area.<sup>95</sup>

#### 2.4 The Kanankulaiwura Skin Dispute

In the 1930s the role of the Nawuri in the installation and deskinment of Kanankulaiwuras was relegated completely to the background. Since then Kanankulaiwuras were installed and deskinmed by the Gonja without resort to the Nawuri. This political development incurred the resentment and displeasure of the Nawuri and was one of the major remote causes of the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts of 1991 and 1992.<sup>96</sup> Despite this gloomy political development, the issue of the Kanankulaiwura Skin Dispute in 1968 provided a fertile ground for the Nawuri to interfere in the Kanankulaiwura affair. In that year a dispute over succession ensued between Haruna and Alhassan Jawula, but the feud lingered up to 1971.<sup>97</sup> The matter was referred to the Nawuri and the Gonja Traditional Council respectively.<sup>98</sup> Haruna received the popular

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Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

A letter from Nawuri Chiefs to the Yagbumwura, 25 February 1971.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Nana S. G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

support of the Nawuri and the Gonja Traditional Council.<sup>99</sup> In consonance with custom, Haruna was installed as the new Kanankulaiwura in the Nawuri area in 1968 to the resentment of Jawula and his supporters.

Alhassan Jawula who was naturally not content with the turn of events appealed against the verdict of the Gonja Traditional Council.<sup>100</sup> Alhassan Jawula received the support of Isanwurfo Ababio Jawula, then reigning Kpembewura. The matter was referred to the National Liberation Council (NLC) for arbitration.<sup>101</sup> The NLC promptly set-up a Commission to investigate the matter.<sup>102</sup> The Commission began its investigations but could not present its report when Kanankulaiwura Haruna died in 1971. The death of Kanankulaiwura Haruna provided an opportunity for Alhassan Jawula to appropriate for himself the title of Kanankulaiwura even prior to the decision of Gonja Traditional Council.

The Nawuri resented Alhassan Jawula's arrogation pointing out that it was in contravention of the laws of the land since he did not receive their approval; neither did he receive the support of the Gonja Traditional Council.<sup>103</sup> In their petition to the Yagbumwura against the actions of Alhassan Jawula, the Nawuri stated that:

we the chiefs and people of Kpandai district are becoming increasingly concerned about the Kanankulaiwura dispute and wish to remind you and the Traditional Council about the need to maintain the decision of the Traditional Council which recognized the late Kanankulaiwura Haruna as the rightful chief of Alfai ... we fear that the rumours now circulating are likely to prejudice the fair and impartial hearing of this matter and may well create a tie like the

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> A petition from Nawuri Chiefs and Naimi (Chief Imam) of Kpandai to the Prime Minister, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1971. See Appendix XXIV.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.



Dagomba issue. We do not think that the death of Kanankulai(sic) Haruna creates any advantages to Mr. Alhassan Jawula as it is rumoured over here. He, according to rumours, appears to be impressed with the lie that he is now unopposed in his joint bid with his brother Kpembewura to flout customary procedure...we want to make it clear that if any decision is to bring harmony then it must be based on the Traditional Council's decision as laid down upholding the Kanankulaiwura as chief of Alfai. The after (sic) the principle that was followed by the council will have to be followed in the selection of the next Kanankulaiwura. Anything short of this will be met with the strongest opposition.<sup>104</sup>

In response to the Nawuri petition, the Gonja Traditional Council immediately held an emergency meeting at Damongo on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1971 and proclaimed Alhassan Jawula as the 'de facto' Kanankulaiwura'.<sup>105</sup>

Having received the official proclamation as the Kanankulaiwura of the Nawuri area, Alhasan Jawula pursued policies that were to consolidate his position. This he did by deporting the Bassari, the Kotokoli and the Konkomba who did not support him under the guise of the Aliens Compliance Order of 1970.<sup>106</sup> In a petition against the actions of Alhassan Jawura, the Nawuri alleged that:

while favouring some mischievous aliens who follow him, he [Alhassan Jawula] threatens others with the Government Compliance Order that he and the Kpembewura in January, 1970 caused the deportation of the former Kpandai Basare chief Gau, Malam Musa Kotokoli, Malam Abudali Sabonkudi, Mr. Peter Kwasi KEBANDE, and that he and the Kpembewura have been empowered by the Regional Chief Executive to cover all aliens who own up themselves to two of them, otherwise the names of all aliens who refuse to give up must be

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<sup>104</sup> A letter from Nawuri Chiefs to the Yabumwura. 25<sup>th</sup> February 1971.

<sup>105</sup> A letter from Yabumwura Ewuntomah to Nana Asasedwo and Ten others, 20<sup>th</sup> March 1971.

<sup>106</sup> A Petition FROM Nawuri Chiefs and Naimi (Chief Imam) of Kpandai to the Prime Minister 5<sup>th</sup> March 1971.

submitted to his office at Tamale for immediate deportation action to be instituted against such persons.<sup>107</sup>

As a result of the Kanankulaiwura Skin Dispute between Haruna and Alhassan Jawura, Moslems in Kpandai were divided into two groups. One group worshipped with Haruna in the main Kotokoli Mosque while the other group worshipped with Alhassan Jawula in the general Mosque in Kpandai.

It was also alleged that after Haruna's death, Alhassan Jawula ordered the Kpandai Police Inspector to stop one Malam Baba Sirifi, Naimi of Kpandai and his Moslem group from attending prayers in the main Kotokoli Mosque. Consequently, a group of them broke away and joined with Alhassan Jawula and his Moslem group.<sup>108</sup> Besides, Alhassan Jawula was alleged to have threatened some people:

not to farm on his land because Kpandai area is for him.<sup>109</sup>

He even went to the extent of collecting chunks of meat from Kpandai and Buya butchers<sup>110</sup> When one police constable, Corporal Yeboah in Kpandai was alleged to have criticized and accused Alhassan Jawula for illegally collecting chunks of meat from Kpandai butchers, the latter was alleged to have caused his transfer.<sup>111</sup> These actions of Alhassan Jawula won him the loyalty of many settlers in Kpandai. For example, It was alleged that:

as a result of these threats, a host of alien Moslems abruptly quitted (sic) the main Kotokoli mosque at Kpandai to join Mr. Alhassan M. Jawula and his group in the

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> A petition from Nawuri Chiefs and Naimi (Chief Imam) of Kpandai to the Prime Minister, 25<sup>th</sup> March 1971

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

Kpembewura's mosque also at Kpandai for daily prayers.<sup>112</sup>

The Nawuri challenged the Kanankulaiwura's status of Alhassan Jawula claiming it was illegitimate as far as the traditions and customs of the Nawuri, the landowners of the area, were concerned. In reaction Alhassan Jawula claimed his reign was legitimate and made references to documents in the police files at Kpandai, Bimbilla, Tamale and that of the Regional Chief Executive at Tamale confirming his recognition as the chief long ago.<sup>113</sup> Expressing their opposition to Alhassan Jawula's ascension to the Kanankulaiwura Skin, the Nawuri petitioned the Prime Minister alleging that his reign was not only illegal, but was also obnoxious, tyrannical, and injurious to peace and harmony in the area.<sup>114</sup> They also demanded that Alhassan Jawula should be stopped immediately from acting in the capacity of the Kanankulaiwura.<sup>115</sup> In the concluding paragraph of their petition, the Nawuri threatened that:

anything done without our prior consultation or without the consent of we Nawuriland owners of Kpandai area in the Gonja East Constituency will be regarded as untraditional and shall consequently spark troubles in Kpandai area.<sup>116</sup>

It seemed that Nawuri opposition to Jawula's installation was not because it was in contravention of the customs and traditions of the land, but was motivated by the Nawuri fear that being a member of the Jawula family, Alhassan Jawula might resuscitate the atrocities, dictatorship and tyranny committed by the Kanankulaiwuras from the Jawula

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> A petition from Nawuri Chiefs and Naimi of Kpandai to Prime Minister, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1971.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

family.<sup>117</sup> The logic of this proposition is simple. Since the 1930s the Nawuri lost their customary right of selecting, installing and deskinning Kanankulaiwuras. Realizing the futility of restoring their lost customary rights in the Kanankulaiwura affairs, the Nawuri abandoned the issue altogether. Consequently, all such rights came to be securely wedged in the hands of the Gonja. Though it was apparent that Haruna, one of the contenders in the Kanankulaiwura Skin Dispute, allied himself with the Nawuri and whipped up the nostalgia among them that could not by itself alone make the Nawuri to oppose Alhassan Jawula's ascension to the Skin. This was because the Nawuri's opposition had no weight in compelling the Gonja to revert to the traditional status quo in respect to the Kanankulaiwura affair since that had the potency of jeopardizing Gonja hegemony over the Nawuri. It was therefore inconceivable to assert that the Nawuri were opposing Jawula in order to ensure consonance of the customs and traditions of the land. On the contrary, the Nawuri's line of action in the Kanankulaiwura Skin Dispute was motivated purely by the untold hardships they suffered in the hands of Kanankulaiwuras from the Jawula family in general. Hence their action was intended to pre-empt future occurrences of such hardships in the hands of the Jawula family. In their petition to the Prime Minister, the Nawuri were explicit on this when they said that:

we the people of Kpandai area have for many years suffered dictatorship, tyranny, unbearable torture and all sorts of unlimited inhuman intimidations in the hands of the Jawula family, and therefore oppose vehemently any attempts to make Mr. Alhassan M. Jawula the Kanankulaiwura. Such a step will bring endless chaos to the already existing troubles in Kpandai area.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> **ibid.**

<sup>118</sup> A petition from Nawuri Chiefs and Naimi of Kpandai to Prime Minister, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1971.

Whatever was the reason for the Nawuri petition, it did not have any impact: efforts were not made to deskin Jawula or to stop him from the arbitrary use of power. Disturbingly, however, the Nawuri were molested severely and hammered to submission by Kanankulaiwura Alhassan Jawula with the support of the then Northern Regional Chief Executive, J.A. Braimah, also a Gonja and a firm believer in Gonja hegemony. He did this by using government personnel and institutions. For example, according to an eyewitness and a victim of this Machiavellian tactics of Jawula, almost everyday a Nawuri was picked up by the police, beaten, arraigned before court and charges preferred against him.<sup>119</sup> This policy raked up favourable results for Kanankulaiwura Jawula as the Nawuri were intimidated to submission. Besides, peace was restored in Kpandai, thus pre-empting a looming clash between the Nawuri and the Gonja in 1971.<sup>120</sup> One would wonder why the Machiavellian policy of Jawula did not aggravate Nawuri anger and forced them to wage a war of social, political and cultural liberation against the Gonja. The reasons were simple. Firstly, the then reigning Nawuriwura, Nana Asaseadwo I favoured peaceful, rather than violent means to achieve the liberation of the Nawuri. He therefore prevailed upon the Nawuri and convinced them to resort to peaceful means. Secondly, the Nawuri were fully aware of the odds against them in the event of any hostilities. This was because the Nawuri feared that in the event that a war erupts between them and the Gonja, the latter would naturally use state personnel and institutions to fight them (the Nawuri). This was evidenced by the actions of the then

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<sup>119</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko of Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid

Northern Regional Chief Executive, J.A. Braimah, and the use of police in Kpandai by Kanankulaiwura Jawula to intimidate the Nawuri.<sup>121</sup>

Finally, the opposition of the Nawuri was not against all the Gonja but Jawula and his supporters. It should be admitted that the Nawuri had the backing of a section of Gonja supporters of Haruna as well as other Gonja in their opposition against Jawula. Therefore a general war between the Nawuri and the Gonja was totally inconceivable.<sup>122</sup>

## 2.5 Nana Atorsah Agyemang I and Nawuri militancy

Much is not known about the private life of Nana Atorsah I. Nevertheless, a faint idea of his private life is available. A full time trader, Nana Atorsah bought various varieties of foodstuff including yams, maize and groundnuts in Nawuri settlements and carted them to Accra for sale. His business acumen and credit worthiness made him famous and popular not only among the Nawuri, but also among all settlers in the Nawuri area in general. A towering and daring figure, a man of good stature, captivating and charming personality, Nana Atorsah Agyeman I rose to public prominence in the 1940s after he was made the Ayafoele-wura (the chief of the youth) in Kpandai. With these qualities, Nana Atorsah was able to rally behind him not only the Nawuri in Kpandai, but also all the Nawuri in the various Nawuri settlements. With this support Nana Atorsah opposed Gonja rule, firstly, in 1943 in his capacity as Ayafoelei-wura, and secondly, after 1951 in the capacity as the Nawuriwura. Matters came to a head in 1943 following the recruitment of soldiers during World War II.<sup>123</sup> The Kpembewura, possibly in an excess of zeal, sought recruits from among the Nawuri and, in order to avoid recruitment, the

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<sup>121</sup> A petition from Nawuri Chiefs and Naimi (Chief Imam) of Kpandai to Prime Minister, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1971.

<sup>122</sup> Interview Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>123</sup> Dixon. *op. cit.* p. 15

Nawuri paid him £200 instead to hire the Mossi in the Kumasi Zongo.<sup>124</sup> However, a demand was made later on the Nawuri to provide their quota even though they had paid £200 to the Kpembewura to hire the Mossi to take their place.<sup>125</sup> The Nawuri naturally became peeved and believed that the Kpembewura had swindled them of £200.<sup>126</sup> In frustration, the Nawuri under the leadership of Nana Atorsah vented their anger and spleen on the Gonja in Kpandai.<sup>127</sup> This created a chaotic condition in Kpandai.

Sensing imminent danger, the then reigning Kanankulaiwura immediately went to Kpembe and reported the matter to the Kpembewura and Mr. Syme, then District Commissioner at Salaga.<sup>128</sup> According to an eyewitness account, the Kanankulaiwura was alleged to have told the gathering made up of the Kpembewura, Mr. Syme, George Amadu Mahama and other sub-chiefs in the Kpembewura's palace that Nana Atorsah had self-styled himself the head chief of the Nawuri area.<sup>129</sup> It was further alleged that the Kanankulaiwura reported that Nana Atorsah demanded the abrogation of his (the Kanankulaiwura's) jurisdiction over the Nawuri and other settlers in the Nawuri area.<sup>130</sup> Three days after the meeting at Kpembewura's palace, the District Commissioner and other Gonja sub-chiefs in Kpembe division visited Kpandai and held a meeting with the Nawuri.<sup>131</sup> Having listened to the Nawuri version, the District Commissioner gave the Nawuri two options to choose from: either to remain within the territory of the Gonja

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Dixon, op. cit. p. 16.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>128</sup> Alhaji George Amadu Mahama Giving Evidence to the Ampiah Committee in Tamale on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1991. Also see Ampiah, op. cit. part II pp. 48-50.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.



Traditional Authority or vacate the area in order to escape from Gonja rule.<sup>132</sup> The District Commissioner's decision was motivated purely by the desire to ensure administrative convenience of British rule. There was also the wild allegation that the Gonja influenced him.<sup>133</sup>

In their frustration the Nawuri in Kpandai under the leadership of the then Nawuriwura, Lowugyayin and Nana Atorsah left Kpandai for the over-bank of Kitare in Krachi District. The Nawuri in Nkanchina also left for Banda in the Krachi District while a section of the Nawuri in Balai left for Chifeli in the Nanumba District. An agreement was allegedly signed between the Nawuri on the one hand, and the Gonja on the other concerning the exodus of the Nawuri from their lands under the Gonja Traditional Council. The agreement read:

we, the undersigned Nawuras at present serving the Kpembe Native Authority agree as follows:

1. That we wish in future to serve the Krachi Native Authority and therefore to move ourselves and our families and our moveable properties, on to land within Krachi District.
2. From and after the time when we shall have commenced to live on Krachi land we agree to serve the Krachi Native Authority and to renounce all right and interest in such lands within the Gonja Native Authority Area as we have considered as belonging to us; we will surrender, on leaving Gonja and, all our immovable property to the Gonja Native Authority.<sup>134</sup>

Whatever may be the legal force of this 'agreement' there was no doubt that it did express the intentions of the signatories to leave the Gonja Native Authority for good and

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<sup>132</sup> **Ibid.**

<sup>133</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>134</sup> Provisional Agreement Signed by Nawuri Elders before R.K. Talbot, the District Commissioner at Krachi on 10<sup>th</sup> day of February 1943.

all; and had the Nawuri adhered to it the Gonja-Nawuri ethnic conflicts might not have arisen.<sup>135</sup> Granted that the Nawuri signed the Agreement, it was most probable that they did so in frustration. A study of the 'Agreement' reveals that it was a concocted plan by the Gonja to usurp the Nawuri lands. The circumstance upon which it was drafted and executed renders it null and void. Firstly, a study of the document reveals that a Gonja, and not R.K. Talbot, the Krachi District Commissioner drafted it.<sup>136</sup> This was demonstrated by the spelling of Nawuri as *Nawuras* in the document. Nowhere in the documents of the colonial officials, whether Germans or British was Nawuri spelt or pronounced *Nawura*'. On the contrary, it is the Gonja who call and spell Nawuri as *Nawura*. Even to date the Gonja still call the Nawuri as 'the *Nawura*. Given this evidence it seemed highly conceivable that a Gonja drafted the document. Under such circumstance the legal force of the document is highly questionable since it was drafted by one of the parties to the Agreement, but not a neutral person. It was highly probable that either the Nawuri did not even see the document or that their leaders were impersonated.

Secondly, the interpreter of the terms of the 'agreement' to the Nawuri was not a Nawuri, but a Krachi. There was therefore likely to be the tendency of misinterpretation due to a language barrier. Since the interpreter did not understand Nawuri, he either had to do the interpretation in Krachi or Twi. In both cases there were bound to be linguistics problems. Consequently, it was highly probable that the correct and exact connotation of the terms of the 'agreement' were not made known to the Nawuri. This was compounded by the fact that all the signatories to the agreement were illiterates who could not get first

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<sup>135</sup> Dixon. *op. cit.* para 49, p.16.

<sup>136</sup> Interview Nana S.G. Friko at Kpandai on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

hand information of the content of the agreement for themselves since they could not read or speak English. Besides, the interpreter, one Abraham G. Owusu, a Krachi also had an indirect interest in the Agreement.<sup>137</sup> For as stated in the 'agreement' the Nawuri agreed to serve the Krachiwura upon arriving in his territory.<sup>138</sup> There was no doubt that this would naturally and unequivocally influence the interpreter to twist the content of the agreement so as to make the Nawuri vacate their lands under Gonja traditional Authority to resettle within Krachi territory in order to serve the Krachiwura, the interpreter's paramount chief. One cannot also overrule the possibility of the Gonja and the interpreter conniving to twist the content of the 'agreement'. The alleged Nawuri signatories to the agreement were Nana Lowugyayin, the then Nawuriwura, Nana Atorsah, chief of Kpandai, Agbedjie, Tankrantu and Kwadjo Balai. Finally, not all the Nawuri left for the neighbouring Krachi and Nanumba Districts. All Katiejeli, Kabonwule and a section of the Balai stayed behind. By implication it meant that not all the Nawuri renounced the rights to the lands as contained in the agreement. Given these reasons, it is reasonable to regard the 'agreement as baseless which had no legal force.

The Nawuri stayed in the Krachi District for seven years. Thus for seven years, between 1943-1950, the Gonja were given a respite. However, while at the Krachi and Nanumba Districts, the Nawuri occasionally returned to their settlements and offered annual sacrifices to their deities without Gonja resistance.<sup>139</sup> While in Krachi District some of the Nawuri who remained under Gonja rule visited the dissident Nawuri and

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<sup>137</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>138</sup> A provisional Agreement signed by the Nawuri Elders before R.K. Talbot, D.C. Krachi on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of February 1943.

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

urged them to return to their God –given land.<sup>140</sup> It is alleged by the Gonja that a delegation of seven of the Nawuri, probably those who remained under Gonja rule went to the Kpembewura in 1948 to apologize so that the dissident Nawuri could return to their land.<sup>141</sup> It is further alleged that the delegation was directed by the Kpembewura to see the Yagbumwura.<sup>142</sup> It is interesting to note that the alleged Nawuri delegation to the Yagbumwura did not include Lowugyayin, Agbedjie, Tankrantu and Atorsah, the alleged signatories to the 1943 agreement.<sup>143</sup> The only alleged signatory of the 1943 agreement who was a member of the delegation was one Kwadjo Balai.<sup>144</sup>

Apart from him all the alleged delegates were not members of the dissident Nawuri, but were those who remained under Gonja rule.<sup>145</sup> According to George Amadu Mahama, a Gonja, the delegation was asked by the Yagbumwura to pay some amount of money as proof of their ‘repentance and apology.’<sup>146</sup> The said amount of money was allegedly paid and the then clerk of the Gonja Native Authority in Damongo, J.A. Braimah prepared an agreement to that effect.<sup>147</sup> It is alleged that Kwadjo Balai, Amoani Balai and the other five members of the delegation signed the agreement.<sup>148</sup> It is further alleged by the Gonja that three copies of the agreement were prepared: one was kept on the file of the Native Authority in Damongo, one was given to the Kpembewura and the

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<sup>140</sup> Interview with Nan S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>141</sup> Alhaji George Amadu Mahama: Evidence to Ampiah Committee at Tamale on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1991. Also see Ampiah, *op. cit* part II pp. 48-50.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> It was alleged that the delegation was made up of Kwadjo Balai, amoani Balai and five others whose names were not mentioned. However, none of the anonymous five others was Atorsah, Lowugyayin, Agbedji or Takarantu – the signatories of the alleged 1943 Agreement.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

other was given to the Nawuri delegates, but none of these copies could be produced as evidence during the sittings of the Ampiah Committee.<sup>149</sup>

Whatever was the substance of this allegation, the dissident Nawuri did return in 1949/50 to the Nawuri area to settle under Gonja rule. On their return in 1949/50, the dissident Nawuri from Kpandai realized to their astonishment that their houses were taken over and occupied by the Gonja. Few had their houses intact, but some of the dissident Nawuri whose houses were occupied by the Gonja had to put up with their brothers. Others had to lodge with their Basari, Kotokoli and Konkomba friends. Soon after their return, by 1950, the Nawuri were planning to rejoin the Krachi District under the Krachiwura, and thus petitioned the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organisation to that effect<sup>150</sup>.

In 1951 Nawuri chiefs and leaders met at Katiejeli and discussed issues including the question of Nawuriwura.<sup>151</sup> At that meeting, a resolution was adopted to install Nana Atorsah as Nawuriwura to replace the infirm and aged Nawuriwura, Lowugyayin.<sup>152</sup> Consequently, Lowugyayin, the reigning Nawuri-wura was pensioned off.<sup>153</sup> According to the Nawuri, Bresia Okore of Kpandai, the founder of the Nawuriwura stool, established the precedence for such pensioning off.<sup>154</sup> In consonance with the Katiejeli resolution, the Nawuri installed Nana Atorsah Agyemang I as the Nawuri-wura in Katiejeli on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1951 amidst Gonja protests and resentments.<sup>155</sup> Nana

<sup>149</sup> The Gonja could not tender the document in to the committee as evidence because it was not available.

<sup>150</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.*, para 51 p.17.

<sup>151</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli, on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>152</sup> "Note of a Meeting Held by Mr. J.A. Dixon at Kpandai on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of March and 1<sup>st</sup> April 1955, with the Nawuris, Nanjuros and Gonjas to investigate the Grievances of the Nawuris and the Nanjuros".

p.4

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Dixon *op. cit.* p.16.



Atorsah was then led to Kpandai in a procession by a tumultuous Nawuri crowd carrying guns and chanting war songs.<sup>156</sup> Apart from the dispute between the Nawuri and the Gonja over the installation of Nana Atorsah as Nawuriwura, there was also the *scramble* for Nana Atorsah's subordination.<sup>157</sup> This was evidenced by a letter written by the then Bimbila-Na to Nana Atorsah. In that letter, the Bimbilla-Na wrote:

My Good Friend,

Yours was gladly received on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1951 with thanks.

It is a pleasure indeed to me of course. Nana Atorsah is a tied (sic) friend of mine, but I will only like to know much about which chief is to install him either 1. Kpambena, (Kpembewura) 2. Karakulena (Kanankulaiwura) or myself. That means under which jurisdiction will he be. Let me have a reply very soon so that by Sunday I will come or if I am unable to come may send a Representative with a large company to witness it.<sup>158</sup>

Though the Gonja contended that Nana Atorsah's installation as the Nawuriwura was uncustomary to Nawuri customs, they did not interfere. Expressing the Gonja sentiment about the claim of Nana Atorsah, Dixon states:

the claim of Nana Atorsah Agyeman I to the "paramouncy" of the Nawuri area is spurious and is not based on traditional precedent. The "paramouncy" is a creation to serve political ends and does not stand the test of examination<sup>159</sup>.

It has been argued that the fear of insurrection exploding in the Nawuri area should the Gonja interfere in the installation of Nana Atorsah restrained them. This was

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<sup>156</sup> Interview with Nana Agbedji Kasekor. Nkanchinawura on 8th March 2001.

<sup>157</sup> Letter from Bimbila-Na to the Organising Secretary (Friko) of Installation of Nana Atorsah dated 26<sup>th</sup> October 1951.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Dixon. *op. cit.* p 33.

made explicit in the Yagbumwura Ewuntomah's reply to the Nawuri about the installation of Nana Atorsah as the Nawuriwura<sup>160</sup>. In it he said that:

as I am responsible to government for perfect peace in this part of the Northern Territories, I am not prepared to risk disturbances and therefore I must call upon you to carry out the activities to which you refer in your petition, a copy of which has been shown to me, within the limits of Katiejeli village and in no circumstances whatsoever must a procession such as described above proceed to Kpandai.<sup>161</sup>

Having thus been installed as the Nawuriwura, Nana Atorsah implemented various policies that were to diminish the authority of the Kanankulaiwura. Two main policies- judicial and land tenure- were implemented by him to achieve the desired impact. Nana Atorsah encouraged all the Nawuri not only to patronize his court and the courts of all the Nawuri chiefs, but also to respect and honour the Nawuri chiefly office. Turning his attention to settler tribes such as the Konkomba, the Basari and the Kotokoli, Nana Atorsah enforced rigorously his land tenure and judicial policies. Firstly, Nana Atorsah refused to grant lands for farming and architectural purposes to settlers who refused to boycott the Kanankulaiwura's court in favour of his. This policy greatly helped to win the allegiance of the Konkomba and the Basari because they depended on large tracts of land for agricultural purposes.<sup>162</sup> Secondly, soft fines and penalties were imposed on convicts as against heavy fines on them for similar offences in the courts of the Kanankulaiwura. Though the measures of Nana Atorsah succeeded in winning the allegiance of a number of the Konkomba and the Basari, a few of them still remained

<sup>160</sup> Interviewed with Nana Agbedji Kasekor, Nkanchinawura on 8th March 2001.

<sup>161</sup> Yagbumwura Ewuntoma to the Nawuri Elders 26<sup>th</sup> October 1951. See Appendix X.

<sup>162</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2001.



adamant<sup>163</sup> The Kotokoli, however, were not attracted by Nana Atorsah's policies to sway their allegiance to him. On the contrary, they still remained loyal to the Kanankulaiwura. Two main reasons were responsible for this. Firstly, the Kotokoli were not farmers, but traders. Hence Nana Atorsah's land tenure policy did not affect them in anyway. Secondly, the Kotokoli were Muslims and therefore viewed allegiance to the Kanankulaiwura and the Gonja who were Muslims as an obligation laid down by the Qu'ran. They therefore regarded the Nawuri who were mostly Christians and traditionalist as 'infidels.' Hence they refused to switch their allegiance to Nana Atorsah and the Nawuri in general.

Nana Atorsah's land tenure and judicial policies provoked Gonja anger and reaction. It was this development that created a chaotic situation in the Nawuri area, especially in Kpandai resulting in disturbances between the Nawuri and the Gonja.<sup>164</sup> In such disturbances the Nawuri were arrested by the police detailed from Salaga, and the arrested Nawuri were sent to Salaga in container vehicles, imprisoned, fined or both.<sup>165</sup> One of such disturbances occurred in Kpandai in January 1952.<sup>166</sup> In that disturbance twenty-four persons, all Nawuri, were arrested and charged with committing a breach of the peace; nineteen were fined 30/- or one-month imprisonment with hard labour; four were fined 40/- or one month imprisonment with hard labour and one was discharged.<sup>167</sup> In addition, one Kwesi Nawuri was charged with threatening war and for provoking riot and fined £10 or two months imprisonment on.<sup>168</sup> All fines were, however, paid.<sup>169</sup> In

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> NAGT/RAT1/568 The Superintendent, Gold Coast Police, to the Assistant Commissioner, C.I.D Northern Territories, dated 26 January 1952.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

that disturbance Nana Atorsah was said to have claimed he was the Nawuriwura I and that he was senior to the Kanankulawura.<sup>170</sup> The Assistant District Commissioner at Salaga felt Atorsah should be restrained from continuing to maintain his position.<sup>171</sup> In reaction to Nana Atorsah's claim the Chief Commissioner wrote that:

I have to refer to your letter No. AE1. 1/62 of the 14<sup>th</sup> of February, regarding the Alfai Local Council and to inform you that the man known as Atorsah has no right to the title of chief as he has neither been recognized as the chief by any traditional body or by the government. Accordingly, I must register my objection to such title being applied to self-elected persons who attend at your ministry...<sup>172</sup>

Notwithstanding the opposition of colonial officials to his position, Nana Atorsah did not renounce his chiefly office nor relent in using militant measures to oppose Gonja rule.<sup>173</sup> Throughout his reign (1951-1968), Nana Atorsah favoured violence in opposing Gonja rule. Consequently, the Nawuri and the Gonja were constantly engrossed in disturbances with each other. Nevertheless, Nana Atorsah's measures did not succeed in diminishing the authority of the Kanankulaiwura. Neither did it end Gonja rule over the Nawuri. On the contrary, his measures made the Gonja to adopt stiffer policies such as the employment of government institutions and personnel to strengthen their mandate over the Nawuri. However, had the militancy of the Nawuri persisted, the Nawuri – Gonja communal violence in 1991 and 1992 would have probably occurred earlier. Unfortunately or fortunately, the successor of Nana Atorsah, Nana Bakianesu Asaseadwo favoured peaceful means and dialogue to obtain Nawuri freedom.

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<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> NAGI/RAT 1/568 Assistant D.C. Salaga to Ag. Senior D.C. Gonja District, Damongo, February 1952.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> NAGI/RAT 1/ 568 CCNT to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, 21 February 1952.

<sup>173</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17th April 2001.

## 2.6 Effects of Gonja rule on the Nawuri

From the period the Gonja arrived in the Nawuri area up to the 1930s, the Nawuri and the Gonja co-existed peacefully. In fact, throughout that period the Gonja did not interfere in the religious affairs of the Nawuri. Besides, they did not challenge the status of Nawuri chiefs, neither did they appropriate to themselves the right to allocate Nawuri land to settlers. This trend changed abruptly after the 1930s following the amalgamation of the Nawuri area to the Gonja District and the enhancement of the authority of the Yagbunwura, Kpembewura and Kanankulaiwura over the Nawuri with the introduction of the indirect rule in the Gold Coast. It was the enhancement of the powers of the Gonja chief over the Nawuri by the Native Administrative Ordinance of 1932 that made the Kanankulaiwura, acting in connivance of the Kpembewura, to interfere in the installation of the chief priest of the Balai Kankpe deity in 1951, challenge the status of Nawuri chiefs and to allocate Nawuri lands to settlers. These, together with the exaction of taxes from the Nawuri were the main effects of the Gonja rule on the Nawuri. These will be discussed in detail under their respective headings.

### A. The Kankpe Priest scandal

The Nawuri are basically practitioners of African traditional religion. The socio-political and economic lives of the Nawuri are deeply rooted in their religion – *Idakpa*, which means the deities. Since the Nawuri are known to be allies of the Krachi, the Nchumuru, the Achode and the Nanumba, they all worshipped *Krachi Dente*, a powerful deity. Aside the *Krachi Denteh* (corrupted by the Nawuri as *Kachilente*), the Nawuri worshipped and continue to worship different deities in their respective villages.

However, the common and most powerful ones are *Nnanjulo*; *Nana Esuwele*, *Chulin*, *Joogon* and *Kankpe*.

The *Kankpe* Priest (*Esiepu*) occupied a prominent position in Balai political affairs and the Nawuri in general, as did all Nawuri Fetish priests up to the 1950s.<sup>174</sup> Until 1951, the Gonja did not interfere with the installation of the *Kankpe* Priest. Expressing this sentiment in their 1951 petition, Nana Alechu, Kojo Balai and Yaw Mamfoi said:

since we came to form one Native Administration about sixteen years ago, we must be frank to say that our customs of installing our fetish priests (chiefs) have not been interfered with by anyone.<sup>175</sup>

In consonance with their tradition, the Balai Nawuri proposed to install a new fetish priest in August 1951, following the death of Nana Yaw. As outlined by Balai customs, one Nana Alechu was the rightful heir to the priestly office.<sup>176</sup>

However, on the appointed day a gang of traditional police (Nana Kana) led by the then Kanankulaiwura stormed Balai and interfered in the installation of the *Esiepu*. The Kanankulaiwura and the Nana Kana were alleged to have opposed the installation of Alechu, the customary candidate and forcibly ensured and monitored the installation of one Amoani in contravention of Balai customary law. Commenting on this incident in their petition, Alechu, Kwadjo Balai and Yaw Mamfoi said:

...on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> August, 1951, the day we were to install Alechu as the traditional fetish priest of Balai, a gang of about forty Gonja strong, led by the Kanankulaiwura (chief of Kpandai), his clerk and two Native Authority

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<sup>174</sup> Petition from Alechu, Balai Kojo and Yaw Mamfoi to D.C., Salaga 27<sup>th</sup> August 1951. See Appendix VIII.

<sup>175</sup> ibid.

<sup>176</sup> ibid.

Police men came without any previous information to the elders...<sup>177</sup>

The gang was said to have held consultation with Kwadjo Balai, the priest maker and impressed upon him to install one Amoani, a nephew of the Kanankulaiwura as the Kankpe priest against custom. Though the Kanankulaiwura knew that this did not fall within his purview, he claimed that:

he was instructed by the Kpembewura, Yagbumwura and the District Commissioner to come and instal (sic) a man suitable for him, therefore whether we liked it or not they have already chosen Amoani.<sup>178</sup>

Nana Alechu's supporters protested against the Gonja and this sparked off a disturbance in Balai.<sup>179</sup> In that disturbance, Nana Alechu's supporters were allegedly molested brutally by the police, forcing them to flee to the Nanumba state to seek refuge. However, against Balai customs, the Gonja forcefully installed Amoani as the *Kankpe Esiepu*.

#### **B. The exaction of taxes and social unrest**

Like all traditional systems of government, Gonja rule was characterized by the exactions of taxes. As their sovereign, the Kanankulaiwura claimed the rights to exact taxes from the Nawuri and other inhabitants in the Nawuri area. The Nawuri and other inhabitants such as the Konkomba, the Basari, the Nchumuru and the Kotokoli were obliged to pay taxes to the Kanankulaiwura. The taxes took various forms. In the remote past hind-legs of all large animals killed whether domesticated or wild by all subjects living in Nawuri

<sup>177</sup> Petition from Alechu, Balai Kojo and Yaw Mamfio to D. C., Salaga 27<sup>th</sup> August 1951.

<sup>178</sup> ibid.

<sup>179</sup> ibid.

area were given to the Kanankulaiwura.<sup>180</sup> Others including elephant tusks, ears and the upper skins of wild animals such as lions, leopards and wolves were also given to the Kanankulaiwura.<sup>181</sup> During festivals such as *Damba*, *Abrotie* and *Akyang*, the Nawuri were not only obliged to pay homage to the Kanankulaiwura, but also to provide him with foodstuff.<sup>182</sup> Similarly, on Fridays and during *Ramadan*, fisher folks were obliged to give the Kanankulaiwura baskets full of fish or their equivalent in cash.<sup>183</sup>

The Nawuri also suffered social injustice under Gonja rule. Gonja rule was characterized by tyranny. The Nawuri were reduced to objects to be disposed off at will. In clear terms, Gonja rule could be described as a rule of 'iron hand and blood.' With a majority of them being farmers, the Nawuri were completely reduced to the status of serfs. In a petition to the District Commissioner at Salaga reiterating the scandal surrounding the expulsion of a Nawuri levy collector from the Gonja Native Administration, the Nawuri stated that:

it is true we the Nawuri have been treated as serfs  
under the direct "nose" of the District Commissioners  
without their (sic) raising a finger...<sup>184</sup>.

Under Gonja rule, the Nawuri were required to offer forced unpaid labour within some specified periods in a year on the farm of the Kanankulaiwura. This system, according to reliable source, was instituted under the pretext of helping the Kanankulaiwura to secure foodstuff to feed government officials who visited the area.<sup>185</sup> In times of draught Nawuri

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<sup>180</sup> Memorandum from the Kanankulaiwura and his Elders of the Alfai area in Gonja District under United Kingdom Trusteeship to J. Dixon ESQ dated 25<sup>th</sup> March 1955.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Letter from Nana Atorsah (Nawuri) and Nawuri Elders to District Commission Salaga 24<sup>th</sup> December 1951.

<sup>185</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

women were obliged to draw water everyday free of charge for the wives of the Kanankulaiwura and other Gonja sub-chiefs in Kpandai against their will.<sup>186</sup> Again, during such periods of draught, Nawuri men were coerced to sink hand-dug wells for the Kanankulaiwura's wives and other sub-chiefs.

Besides, under Gonja rule the Nawuri completely lost their fundamental human rights. For example, any Nawuri or settler other than a Gonja found intoxicated was beaten severely by a mob of the Gonja. Again, the Gonja claiming the rearing of livestock such as pigs was against their religion, Islam killed them.<sup>187</sup> More painfully, the Gonja did not regard the Nawuri as humans. They referred to the Nawuri as *nduwurana* ('people with tails').<sup>188</sup> In the dispensation of justice in the Kanankulaiwura's court, the Nawuri were discriminated against even when a Nawuri was right.<sup>189</sup> The plight of the Nawuri was not dissimilar in matters of revenue collectors. In December 1957 the only Nawuri revenue collector serving on the Gonja Native Administration was sacked not for reasons of financial malfeasance and fraudulent act, but for ethnic prejudice.<sup>190</sup> In a petition against the expulsion of the revenue collector, Nana Atorsah remarked that

sir, except this Nawuri collector has gone wrong with his accounts, which is not the case, the surrounding (sic) of the tickets to the Kanankulaiwura amounts to high prejudice and avarice and I shall be grateful if you will look into this matter<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>187</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Letter from Nana Atorsah (Nawuriwura) and Nawuri Elders to District Commission Salaga 24<sup>th</sup> December 1951.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.



Gonja rule was also characterized by compulsory recruitment of Nawuri soldiers to fight for the Gonja or the British. In 1935, for example, it was alleged that the Nawuri were recruited by the Gonja to fight the Nchumuru who were protesting against the amalgamation of their area to the Gonja state.<sup>192</sup> It is still a bone of contention whether the Nawuri willingly supported the Gonja or were recruited against their will to fight the Nchumuru. However, according to an informant while some of the Nawuri supported the Gonja against the Nchumuru, others protested against it. Whatever was the case, the Nawuri actually supported the Gonja in a war against the Nchumuru in 1935.<sup>193</sup> It was reported that when the Nchumuru saw the Kpembewura and a number of the Nawuri marching towards them with guns, they fled and a number of them drowned in an attempt to cross the river.<sup>194</sup> This development greatly impaired the relationship between the Nawuri and the Nchumuru. That their relations were normalized stemmed from their common predicament under Gonja rule and the need to marshal their efforts together to throw away the Gonja yoke. In another development, in 1943, the Kpembewura sought recruits from the Nawuri to help the British in the Second World War.<sup>195</sup> As recounted earlier, the Nawuri paid up £200 to the Kpembewura to hire Mossi soldiers in Kumasi Zongo to take their place.<sup>196</sup> Nevertheless, perhaps imbued by the military strength of the Nawuri, the Kpembewura still demanded recruits from the Nawuri. This development led to the secession of the Nawuri from their land under the Gonja Native Authority to that part in Krachi district.

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<sup>192</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.*, p. 14

<sup>193</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>194</sup> Dion, *op. cit.*, p. 4

<sup>195</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

### C. Land utilization

The Nawuri lost the ownership of their lands under Gonja rule. As the overlords in the Nawuri, the Gonja further claimed allodial titles to the lands inhabited by the Nawuri.<sup>197</sup> Consequently, before any stranger could settle in the Nawuri area or acquire a parcel of land for agricultural and architectural purposes, Gonja consent was sought.<sup>198</sup> On rare occasions, some of the Nawuri had to acquire the right to utilize parcels of their own God-given lands from the Gonja.<sup>199</sup> However, in most situations lands acquired by the Nawuri by birth were indiscriminately sold out to settlers or seized by the Gonja for their own use. The resistance of the Nawuri did not in anyway stop the Gonja from the indiscriminate sale or seizure of their lands. In 1926 the colonial officials realized this when it was stated in a report that:

the aim of the colonial Administration which was continued by the Gonjas over the Nawuris was not to repair the damage of the past but by continuing to treat the NAWURIS as serfs refusing to recognize their chiefs, taxing them without representation at any traditional forum and selling the land of the Nawuris.<sup>201</sup>

With compensation to be given to owners of land that had been inundated by the construction of the Volta Dam, the Gonja put in a claim on the parcel of land, which is not theirs. With the prevailing idea that the Gonja controlled the area and the failure of the authorities to resolve the land issue, the Nawuri could not put in any claims. This is one of the major sources of grievances the Nawuri had against the Gonja.<sup>202</sup> In another development, some Nawuri had their parcels of land seized by the Gonja. One of the

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<sup>197</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* p. 17.

<sup>198</sup> Interview with Ayadong on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* part I, p.9.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

Nawuri victims whose land was seized by the Gonja was Kotokrow of Kitare. In 1951, Kotokrow of Kitare had his parcel of palm trees farm seized by Kanankulaiwura. Aggrieved by the Kanankulaiwura's action, Kotokrow sent the matter to the Alfai court, but the verdict was decided in favour of the Kanankulaiwura.<sup>203</sup> On the question of seeking a legal redress on the land, Kotokrow was directed to send the case to the Kumasi High Court, which court dealt with land cases; an action that he could not institute.<sup>204</sup> The Gonja did not only seize Nawuri lands, but also occasionally they sold one and the same parcel of land to two or more people. The seizure and sale of Nawuri lands and the double sale of the same parcel of land to different buyers shored up problems, animosities, confusions and disturbances over parcels of lands in the Nawuri area and was one of the causes of the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts in 1991 and 1992. In another development in July 1954 a land dispute arose between Kodjo Police, Philip Kwaku and three others of Katiejeli (all of them Nawuri) on the one hand and the Kankulaiwura on the other.<sup>205</sup> The Kanankulaiwura, the plaintiff in the case, sent it to the Gonja Native Court at Salaga for its verdict and settlement.<sup>206</sup> Fearing that the verdict of the Gonja Native Court in Salaga would be biased in favour of the Kanankulaiwura, the defendants (all of them Nawuri) mooted for the transfer of the matter to the Magistrate's Court at Salaga for determination.<sup>207</sup> In an Affidavit for the transfer of the matter, the defendants stated that

...there is at present a breach of relations between the Nawuris and the Gonja brought about by a land

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Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

Vincent Kwame Okeso, Ghana Police Force, Takoradi on Civil Case of Appeal – "Kotokrow Kitare" - Nawuri Elders, dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 1959. See Appendix XXII.

Motion on notice in the matter of: "Kanankulaiwura of Gonja – Plaintiff versus, Kodjo police, Philip Kwaku – Defendants and three others at Katiejeli" dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 1954.

*Ibid.*

Affidavit sworn by Kodjo Police at Salaga on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1954.

dispute. the plaintiff, well aware of this, has taken a civil action against us at the Gonja Native Court in order to secure a judgement against us, which judgement is bound to be of bias and prejudice... The incident forming the dispute for which the plaintiff is instituting a claim, has taken place on the Nawuri land and should therefore not be investigated by the Gonja or Kpembe Court<sup>208</sup>.

Once again the verdict of the court on the land dispute went in favour of the Kanankulaiwura. According to Friko Sawli, the court ruled that since the Nawuri area was under the jurisdiction of the Kanankulaiwura, he had the right to appropriate and allocate land in that area.<sup>209</sup> It was against this background that the Nawuri realized the futility of going to the court with the Kanankulaiwura on matters on land litigation. It was also this development that gave the Kanankulaiwura the freedom to sell and appropriate lands in the Nawuri area indiscriminately without Nawuri opposition until 1991. Thus, for about thirty-seven years (between 1954-1991), Kanankulaiwura and the Gonja had appropriated and sold lands in the Nawuri area without the Nawuri opposing them. In 1991 when the Nawuri resumed their opposition to Gonja appropriation of their land, wars erupted between them.

#### **D. The non-recognition of the Nawuri chiefs**

Gonja rule was imperialistic. It recognized Gonja political institutions at the expense of the Nawuri's. Nawuri chiefs were not regarded as equal to their Gonja counterparts. Neither was chieftaincy regarded as customary among the Nawuri. Nawuri chiefs were reduced to the position of heads of clans whose jurisdictions were limited to their respective clans. In the various Nawuri villages, Nawuri chiefs could not extend

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<sup>208</sup> **Ibid.**

<sup>209</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

their jurisdiction over the settlers. Consequently, courts of Nawuri chiefs were virtually deserted, and this naturally did not project the prestige and image of Nawuri chiefs. Though Nana Atorsah I used violent means to oppose Gonja rule, it did little to improve the lot of Nawuri chiefs.

Another negative effect of Gonja rule on Nawuri political institutions was the loss of Nawuri chiefly medallion. This medallion signified the British colonial government's recognition of the paramountcy and authority of the Nawuri wura in the Nawuri area. It had the inscription Wurabon on it.<sup>210</sup> According to the Nawuri, Nawuriwura Bunyaluwei, who was allegedly summoned to Salaga by the then District Commissioner in the 1940s was urged to appear in his official regalia.<sup>211</sup> The Gonja allegedly poisoned Nana Bunyaluwei to death, and thereupon stole the Nawuri regalia.<sup>212</sup> The Nawuri's efforts to retrieve their medals were fruitless since the Gonja received the backing of the District Commissioner in Salaga.

Such were the effects of Gonja rule over the Nawuri that in 1991 the Nawuri rose to oppose Gonja rule. The opposition of the Nawuri to Gonja rule in 1991 resulted in the eruption of the Nawuri-Gonja wars in that year and in 1992. In conclusion, the following observations are made: Colonial policy of Native Administration was the main cause of the establishment of Gonja hegemony over the Nawuri, which brought in its wake adverse effects on the Nawuri. It should also be added that, the remote causes of the Nawuri-Gonja wars of 1991 and 1992 are found in the effects of Gonja rule on the Nawuri.

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid

<sup>211</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpanda; on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE NAWURI AREA UNDER COLONIAL AND INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENTS IN GHANA

#### 3.1 Nawuri area in the period of the partition of Africa

In 1884 Germany proclaimed a protectorate over Togo, and present day Northern and Volta Regions of Ghana were sandwiched between Germany and France. This imperial ambition of Germany alarmed Britain, which also began concluding treaties with states in the northern part of the Gold Coast to bring them under her hegemony.

To regulate and define the spheres of control of the British and Germans, a joint Anglo-German Commission was established in 1887.<sup>1</sup> The Commission was tasked with defining the future limits of British and German Protectorates and spheres of influence in the territories lying in the interior of the Gold Coast Colony and the German Togo Protectorate.<sup>2</sup> After several sittings, the Commission came out with its recommendations.<sup>3</sup> Among the Commission's recommendations was the provision that:

a conventional line be drawn on the latitude of the mouth of the river Daka and that the two governments shall naturally agree to regard the territories lying to the north of this line, within the limits marked on the accompanying map, as neutral ground, and to abstain from seeking to acquire within them protectorates or exclusive influences.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bening, R.B: "The Evolution of the Administrative Boundaries of Northern Ghana, 1898 to 1965", Unpublished PhD Thesis presented to the University of London 1971. p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

The neutral zone, as indicated in the provision, stretched from Yeji to Yendi to the Northeast of Asante and to the north of Eweland of which the Nawuri area was part. For nearly one year the British and Germans adhered to the provision of the neutral zone. However, following the necessity to secure their interest and acquire rights in the neutral zone, the British and Germans agreed to partition the neutral zone in 1899.<sup>5</sup> Article five of the 1899 convention stipulated that:

...in the neutral zone the frontier between the German and English territories shall be formed by the river Daka as far as to the point of its intersection with the ninth degree of north latitude, then the frontier shall continue to the north, leaving Morozugu to Great Britain and shall be fixed on the spot by a mixed commission of the two powers, in such manner that Gambaga and all the territories of Mamprusi shall fall to Britain, and that Yendi and all the territories of Chakosi shall fall to German.<sup>6</sup>

Germany was happy with the partition of the neutral zone and her share of it. Expressing her contentment about the partition, Germany remarked that:

...in the eastern portion of the neutral zone which has fallen to Germany includes the fertile shore of the Oti, and the trade route Mango – Yendi – Kete Kratchi (which passed through Nawuri area)...<sup>7</sup>

After the World War I, Germany lost her possessions Overseas. German Togoland was partitioned between Britain and France. In 1919 the German Colony of Togoland was partitioned between Britain and France. Before the partition of Togoland, the Gonja petitioned the Governor of the Gold Coast to consider the unification of the Nawuri area in German Togoland with the Gonja Empire in the Gold Coast under British

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<sup>5</sup> Bening, *op. cit.* p. 36.  
*Ibid*  
<sup>7</sup> Bening, *op. cit.* P. 42

Protectorate.<sup>8</sup> In a letter on behalf of the Gonja to the Provincial Commissioner at Tamale, Harrold Branch, the then District Commissioner for Salaga stated that:

... as the question of divisions of Togoland is likely to come up for decisions shortly, I forward for information of the Chief Commissioner list of villages claimed by the Head Chief of Kombi (Kpembe) (B) Gonja villages under the chief of Alfai who resided at Kpandae on the main Kratchi – Yendi Road:

- (1) Kpandae, (Kpandai) (2) Inkanchima  
(Nkanchina)  
(3) Balai (4) Dodopa (Dodoai) (5) Katageri  
(Katiejeli)  
(6) Kabonyeri (Kabonwule) (7) Punayerima (8)  
Balajai (Bladjai)  
(9) Kanapusu<sup>9</sup>.

The Gonja agitation for the inclusion of the Nawuri area to their empire began in the second decade of the twentieth century following the installation of Mahama Karantu Kankaranful as the Kanankulaiwura in the Nawuri area in September 1913. After his installation, Mahama Karantu through false representations and fabrications of the history of the Nawuri area, made the colonial Government to think that the Nawuri, until the partition of the neutral zone in 1899, were under Gonja rule. In fact, until the second decade of the twentieth century the Gonja regarded the Nawuri as their allies and a people of independent sovereignty. Indeed, until the second decade of the twentieth century, the Gonja never referred to or spoke of the Nawuri area as a vassal entity of the Gonja state in any of the petitions to the colonial Government. Neither was such agitation contained in any of the British colonial reports preceding 1919.

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<sup>8</sup> PRAAD ADM 56/1/240 Letter from Harrold Branch, D. C. Salaga to the Provincial Commissioner, Tamale dated 28<sup>th</sup> July 1919. See Appendix I.  
<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

In the concluding paragraph of his letter, Harrold Branch outlined the necessity and reasons for the incorporation of the Nawuri area into the Gonja state when he stated that:

...in the final settlement of the new districts to be possibly formed to the east of the Dakah and Volta River, I put forward the claims of the Salaga District to have the above mentioned village(s) incorporated, as they would then return to their rightful Head Chief and give a much needed augmentation to this thinly populated District.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, in a handing-over report in September 1919, Harrold Branch, the out-going District Commissioner for Salaga, remarked that:

...the Gonjas are anxious to regain control of their former possessions across the Dakah in Togoland....<sup>11</sup>

After the defeat of Germany in World War I, France and Britain on behalf of the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations administered German Togoland. At the negotiations for the partition of German Togoland, Britain demanded the modification of the boundary mark between former German Togoland and the Gold Coast to ensure the unification of the Mamprusi, the Dagomba and the Gonja Kingdoms. This was achieved and the aspirations of the Mamprusi, the Dagomba and the Gonja were satisfied, but the Ewe remained divided against their wish.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> PRAAD ADM 56/1/240: Letter from Harrold Branch, D.C, Salaga to the Provincial Commissioner, Tamale dated 28<sup>th</sup> July 1919.

<sup>11</sup> PRAAD ADM 56/1/92 "Handing - Over Report of Harrold Branch, District Commissioner at Salaga" dated September 1919

<sup>12</sup> Boahen, A. A; Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. (London, Longman: 1975) p.71.

The ethnic, linguistics and cultural affiliations of the people living in the adjacent areas of the two countries mainly influenced the division of Togoland into British and French Togoland in 1919. Linguistics did not only influence the territorial division of the former German Togoland, but it also influenced the absorption of the British share of Togoland into the provincial administrative divisions in the Gold Coast. For example, Krachi District, which was made up of the divisions of the Krachi, the Nawuri, the Nchumuru, the Adele, the Achode and the Nanumba was absorbed into the Ashanti Province mainly because it was alleged that its inhabitants spoke a dialect of Twi. This is a false supposition. Notwithstanding the fact that some Twi words are found in the Krachi, the Nawuri, the Nchumuru, the Achode and the Adele languages, they are not in any way related to Twi. On the contrary, these languages (Krachi, Nawuri, Nchumuru, Achode and Adele) are related to the Guan cluster of languages such as Anum, Larteh, Buem and Nkonya. However, it soon became obvious that Krachi District could not be effectively supervised from Kumasi, as there was no direct road or telephone link between Kete-Krachi and Kumasi. The only main road that ran through the district lay north south, but Kete-Krachi was almost cut off from Kpandu and Ho by several unbridged and difficult river crossings. The only all-weather road and effective link between Kete-Krachi District and the Gold Coast was the Kete-Krachi-Yendi road, which passed through Kpandai, Bimbilla, Yendi, and then to Tamale. In 1922 therefore it was agreed that:

the most convenient solution of the whole matter was to put the KETE-KRACHI District under the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> (NAGA). ADM 39/1/31. Minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> January 1928 by the Secretary for Native Affairs.

Consequently, the Krachi District was carved out from the Ashanti Province and added to the Northern Territories in 1922. Simultaneously, with the transfer of the Kete-Krachi District from Ashanti to the Northern Territories, in September 1922 the Nanumba:

a separate people under their own Royal family but who have always been in the closest alliance and friendship with DAGOMBA were separated from that district and included in the Eastern Dagomba District.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, it was made clear that the Bimbilla Na was:

independent of and in no way subject to the paramount chief of Dagombas.<sup>15</sup>

This was not the case in respect of the Nawuri. When the Nawuri area was carved out from Kete-Krachi District ten years later (in 1932) and added to the Gonja District the Nawuri lost their autonomy and were simply absorbed by the Gonja. The British sphere of Togoland Order-in-Council of 1923 ratified the transfer of Kete-Krachi District to the Northern Territories. The Order-in-Council stated that 10,577 square miles of the Mandated Territory should be administered as an integral part of the Northern Territories.<sup>16</sup>

In 1928 following the construction of a new motorable road linking Kete-Krachi through Atebubu to Kumasi, and in view of the impending introduction of Native Administration in the in the Gold Coast, it was felt that culturally and linguistically most

<sup>14</sup> (NAGA). ADM 39/1/119. Enclosure in Letter Confidential No. 356/926 12 June 1920, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> (NAGA) ADM 56/1/500. Annual Report of the Southern Province for the Quarter Ending 31 March, 1923, p. 4. The Dagomba and Nanumba are believed to have originated from the same place, Zamfara, in Modern Nigeria, from the same language stock, Mole-Dagbani, and from the same ancestor. Tohajie. The traditions of the Mole-Dagbani related that the Grandsons of Tohajie (Na Gbewa's sons) – Siobu and Matambu – founded Dagbon and Nanumba states respectively.

<sup>16</sup> Gold Coast Colony. Report on the Northern Territories for the Year 1937 38, p. 2.

of the people in the Krachi District were more closely related to the Asante and should therefore be transferred to that Asante Province.<sup>17</sup> The Adele, the Achode, the Nanumba, the Nawuri and the Nchumuru were, however, to be left in the Northern Territories to avoid:

a salient of Ashanti territory projecting into the Northern Territories to form a possible refuge for malcontents from surrounding areas.<sup>18</sup>

In a letter to the Colonial Secretary on the question of the most suitable division of the Kete-Krachi District between the Asante and the Northern Territories, the Secretary for Native Affairs hinted that:

if a division is going to be made at all, the Northern Territories should get the Nanumba, Nawuri, Nchumuru, Adjati and Adele, and Ashanti the remainder of the District, Krachi proper...<sup>19</sup>

However, the German member of the Permanent Mandates Commission, M. Ruppel, objected seriously to the proposed change in so far as it affected the Togoland under British Mandate. The German member pointed out that the people of the Krachi District are Guans with their own language, but use Twi for commerce and social intercourse with other people. He further stressed that the Krachi, for example came from the south and had

no real connection with the Ashanti people although for a short time under their dominion.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> (NAGT) ADM. 1/145. Minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> August 1928 by the Ag. CSP on Indirect Rule, p1.

<sup>18</sup> (NAGA) ADM. 1/434. Conference Held at Yeji on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 1929 on the subject of the Revision of the Ashanti - NTS Boundary, pp 2 - 3.

<sup>19</sup> (NAGA) ADM. 56/1/299. Minutes by the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1928.

<sup>20</sup> Bening op. cit. p. 72

Anticipating a possible future unification of French and British Togolands, M.

Ruppel, remarked that there was

no necessity for dividing the Kratchi (sic) district into sections, or for connecting one part with the Ashanti Protectorate which would have the effect of cutting the whole Mandated Territory still more in pieces than had yet been done.<sup>21</sup>

In 1932 following the introduction of the Native Administration Ordinance, the Districts in the Northern Territories were re-organized in such a way that their boundaries coincided with those of the three native states– the Gonja, the Mamprusi and the Dagomba.<sup>22</sup> As a result of the Ordinance referred to above:

the area of the Krachi district has been reduced by the removal from it of the lands belonging to the Nchumuru and Nawuri tribes with populations, in round figures, of nine hundred and two thousand, six hundred respectively.<sup>23</sup>

This area was added to the Gonja District, which was renamed the Gonja-Volta District. The British colonial Officers erroneously thought that prior to the demarcation of the Anglo-German boundary, the Nawuri and the Nchumuru owed allegiance to the Yagbumwura, the Head Chief of the Gonja and that being:

*desirous* to renew that allegiance they have accordingly been included in the district of that name...<sup>24</sup>

It is difficult to see how *desirous* the Nawuri were to be included in the Gonja District when in actual fact they were not consulted to ascertain their views prior to the inclusion of their area to the Gonja District. In fact, the Gonja did not only impersonate

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Colonial Reports on British Sphere of Togoland for the year 1932, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> Colonial Reports, (1932), op. cit. p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

the Nawuri, but also fabricated a false fact that the Nawuri, before the partition of Africa, were under the Gonja state. All these tactics of the Gonja were aimed at producing a sweeping effect that would influence the British colonial Government to carve out the Nawuri area from Krachi District and include it in the Gonja District.

The headquarters of the District and residence of the Yagbumwura were both in Damongo on the western side of the Northern Territories. In 1945 the United Nations was formed and replaced the defunct League of Nations. Consequently, the Trusteeship Council replaced the Mandates Commission, which administered former German colonies through France and Britain. Unlike the Mandates Commission, which relied on reports by the administering powers on the Mandated Territories, the Trusteeship Council made periodic visits to the Trust Territories to acquaint itself with circumstances and grievances of the people. For instance, in September 1952 the United Nations Trusteeship Council's Visiting Mission to Togoland paid a working visit to the Nawuri area (Kpandai).<sup>25</sup> This was followed by the visit of His Excellency, the Governor, Sir Charles Noble Arden – Clarke on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 1952.<sup>26</sup>

The progress of the Gold Coast (which included British Togoland) towards nationhood brought up the question of the future status of the former German Colony of Togoland. This therefore made the results of a future plebiscite to determine the future of Togoland, as far as the British sphere of Togoland was concerned, virtually eminent and pre-determined. To this end, a plebiscite was organized by the U.N General Assembly to

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<sup>25</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.*, p. 15

<sup>26</sup> Joint Address of Welcome of Nana Atorsah Agyeman I. Nawuriwura and Nana Kojo Kuma, Nanjurohene to His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Noble Arden-Clarke, G. C. M. G. on the occasion of His Visit to the Kpandai Area, 24<sup>th</sup> November 1952.

determine whether the majority of the inhabitants of the Trust Territory under British administration desired either:

- (a) the union of their territory with an independent Gold coast; or (b) the separation of Togoland under British administration from the Gold Coast and its continuance under Trusteeship pending the ultimate determination of its political future.<sup>27</sup>

The plebiscite was held on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1956. The results showed that a majority of the people desired a union with the Gold Coast. Consequently, the Trusteeship agreement was terminated and the Nawuri area and the rest of British Togoland were formally united with the Gold Coast.

### 3.2 Colonial rule in the Nawuri area: German and British

The Nawuri area saw little socio-economic development during colonial rule. The situation in the Nawuri area during colonial rule could be likened to Cosnier's remarks on colonial rule in Africa in general. Cosnier remarks that:

we have left almost nothing for the producer in return for the considerable riches our commerce has gained. Almost nowhere are there any fixed riches.<sup>28</sup>

In fact, the only major physical legacy of the economic policies of the colonial powers was the 123½ - mile Kete-Krachi – Yendi road, which passed through the Nawuri area. The Germans constructed the road in the opening years of the first decade of the twentieth century. Even this physical development was paid for by the labour and taxes imposed on the Nawuri. To build and maintain the road, the German colonial

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<sup>27</sup> Bening, *op. cit.*, p. 85

<sup>28</sup> Crowder, M West Africa Under Colonial Rule, p. 273.



Government relied on recruited forced labour.<sup>29</sup> The Nawuri were obliged to maintain either side of the road in their territory. Failure to do so always attracted flogging.<sup>30</sup> Fines could also be paid off in labour. Government officials inspected Nawuri quarters and if they found them dirty they imposed a fine of 20 marks, which could be paid off by working on the roads.<sup>31</sup> According to Nana Kasikor Agbedji, the arduous task involved in maintaining the road forced the Nawuri to abandon a large tract of their land at the northern part of their area to the advantage of the Nanumba.<sup>32</sup> Commenting on the German colonial labour policy, Maier states that:

from the late 1890s onward all adult males were required to provide the German Government a certain number of days of labour – later it was set at 12 days annually and from 1909 onward the alternative of paying six marks annually was instituted.<sup>33</sup>

In an interview granted to Maier on 12 March 1973, Motodiahene Kofi Fusu decried the German labour policy when he said that:

the Germans forced us all to work, so sometimes we hid from them. They made us plant teak and mango trees and also to fetch water for them. I would hide in the bush for the whole day, and then would come out at night. Sometimes I would come out to eat once they had got their quota for the day. In the early morning they would come and grab you. If you slept late they came and took you.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko of Katiejeli on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Nana Kasekor Agbedji, Nkanchina-wura, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

<sup>33</sup> Maier, D.J.R. Priests and Power: The Case of the Denteh Shrine in Nineteenth-Century Ghana (1983) Indiana, Indiana University Press, p 164.

<sup>34</sup> Maier's interview with Motodiahene Kofi Fusu on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1973. Also see Maier, op. cit. p. 164.

Indeed, the German colonial labour policy reduced the Africans to serfs. Explaining further the negative effect of German colonial rule on the Nawuri, Nana Ayegai had this to say:

the Germans instructed our men to walk from Nawuri land to Krachi, a distance of about seventy-two miles, to cart mango seedlings to the Nawuri land. Each man was ordered to carry a certain number of mango seedlings, usually not less than ten. They planted the seedlings and watered them every day. If any number of a person's mangoes withered, the person had to travel on foot to Krachi to fetch that number of mango seedling to plant. If one's mango seedlings withered for the second or third counts, the one is severely beaten and made to go to Krachi to get some seedlings to replace the withered ones. The trend continued until the person got the required mango seedlings thriving. The women were also made to sweep every part of the town as the men cleared the weeds. The women also fetched water for the Germans<sup>35</sup>.

German colonial administration, like any other, was exploitative; the Nawuri were not spared. Under it there was hardly time for leisure.<sup>36</sup> Men found in leisure were banded together to either work on the roads or on farms in Bimbilla or Kete-Krachi.<sup>37</sup> Sometimes, such people were flogged and advised not to waste precious time in leisure. The fear of being conscripted by the Germans compelled the Nawuri (including their sub-chiefs and Nawuriwura) to desert their dwellings during the visits of German colonial officials, leaving the Kanankulaiwura and few Gonja behind. The Kanankulaiwura and his Gonja kinsmen did not flee from Kpandai during the visits of German colonial Officials for two reasons. Firstly, there was the problem of traversing a long distance

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with Nana Ayegai at Bladjai on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

from Kpandai to Kpembe, the nearest Gonja settlement to the Nawuri area. Unlike the Nawuri who fled from Kpandai and hid themselves in the Nawuri villages around Kpandai or sometimes on their farms, the Gonja could not do so because they could not travel to Kpembe within a twinkle of an eye since the visits of the German colonial Officials were always unannounced.<sup>38</sup> Secondly, the Gonja did not want to risk fleeing into the bush since they were not very acquainted with the geographical terrain in the Nawuri area. Viewed against this background the Kanankulaiwura and his kinsmen decided to stay behind while the Nawuri fled during the visits of German colonial Officials to Kpandai. This situation made the German officials to deal with the Kanankulaiwura as if he was the de facto chief and custodian of the Nawuri area.<sup>39</sup>

Closely linked to the above was the political policy of the Germans. The Germans pursued a colonial policy of placing the administration of their colonial estates entirely in the hands of Germans. At the same time the Germans either abolished the office of emirs and chiefs, curtailed their powers or retained them only as stooges to German colonialism. The British colonial report of 1920 – 21 on the German colonial system states that:

the Germans practised a system of administration which placed the government of the country entirely in the hands of European officials, minor posts only, such as clerkships, being filled by natives, while the policing of the country was entrusted to European officers. This system necessarily entailed either the abolition of the emirs and chiefs, or their retention as figureheads only; the abolition of native courts of justice, or such curtailment of their powers as to render them of little effect.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> The distance between Kpandai and Kpembe is forty-two miles.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Nana Agbedji Kasekor at Nkanchina on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

<sup>40</sup> Report on British Togoland for the Year ended 1920-21, p. 15

This consequently resulted in the proliferation of petty states in the colony, particularly, in Lome and Misahohe Districts. Analogously, the political high-handedness of the Germans stifled the chieftaincy institution among some of the indigenous states such as the Nawuri, the Adele, the Nchumuru and the Adjati.<sup>41</sup> This was evidenced by the capture of Nana Koranteng I of Shiare by the German authorities in 1896.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, in 1912 the Dente Bosomfo Abrefa and his successor-elect, Kofi Donkor, were hanged in the market from a tree by having boxes knocked out from under them<sup>43</sup>. This policy was aimed at stamping out all sources of traditional power that were likely to present resentment, resistance and opposition to the German colonial rule. Consequently, either most chieftains voluntarily abdicated their thrones or chieftaincy institution was not given an enviable aviation by the Nawuri and some ethnic groups under the German colonial administration.

The social policies of the German and the British colonial powers hardly brought developments to the Krachi District, of which the Nawuri area was part. Up to 1926 there was only one small school for infants at Krachi under the auspices of the Roman Catholic mission<sup>44</sup>. Even the school had to be closed down in the course of the year due to lack of teachers.<sup>45</sup> Though a Boarding Primary School was established in 1922-23 academic year in Salaga, the Nawuri did not attend it, but rather attended the Kpembe Primary School, which was opened five years later. In 1927 the British colonial Government established

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with Nana S. G. Friko at Katiejeli on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

<sup>42</sup> Evidence and document Produced by Nana Oberko Agyei II, Osulewura of Atwode Traditional Area in 1983

<sup>43</sup> Maier, *op. cit.* p. 169.

<sup>44</sup> Report on British Togoland for the Year 1926. p.7.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

the Kpembe Primary School. Since there was no school in the Nawuri area until 1947, the first educated Nawuri had to receive their education in Kpembe.<sup>46</sup>

In the field of health, the story was also the same. Until the 1930s onwards, the inhabitants of the Nawuri area relied on traditional methods in treating their livestock. Following the prevalence of rinderpest in the Trans-Volta Togoland in 1930, cattle were given anti-rinderpest immunization in Kpandai for the first time.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, until 1949 the inhabitants in the Nawuri area depended solely on traditional healers or travelled to Krachi, Salaga or Bimbilla to receive treatment in dispensaries. However, in 1949 the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade Mission (W.E.C.) established a Leprosarium in Nkanchina, only six miles from Kpandai.<sup>48</sup> The Leprosarium, which was controlled by a village council, treated the inhabitants in the Nawuri area from all skin related diseases. It also administered first aid to patients suffering from diseases other than those of the skin

### **3.3 Native Administration/Authority in the Nawuri area: general background to the Native Administration boundaries of 1933 1951**

After the definition of the international boundaries of Northern Ghana, the British initially pursued a policy of creating tiny territorial units called Native States in order to divide the people and prevent a possible combined uprising against the colonial administration. In July 1898 the first Commissioner and Commandant of the Northern Territories (NTs), Lt. – Col. H.P. Northcott proclaimed that:

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<sup>46</sup> The first Nawuri who attended Kpembe Primary School were either maltreated or sent to work on School farms during teaching hours while their Gonja counterparts were left in classrooms. This phenomenon compelled the Nawuri pupils to defect from Kpembe Primary School voluntarily.

<sup>47</sup> Colonial report on British Togoland for the end of the year, 1935, p. 64.

<sup>48</sup> Colonial report on British Togoland for the end of the year, 1950, p. 8.

...in every phase of administration, the agency employed will be that of the native chiefs, and their power will, during good behaviour be uniformly supported, except in matters of their relationship with neighbouring chiefs and of offences of a capital nature, which will be reserved for decision by a member of the Administration.<sup>49</sup>

However, when it was realized in 1910 that such a concerted revolt was not possible a policy of creating larger Native States was initiated and small ethnic communities were either persuaded or coerced to merge with the larger units. In 1921 Governor Guggisberg underscored the importance of forming large and strong native states when he intimated that:

...there is the tendency of the bigger states to break up to the detriment of development and trade...our policy must be to maintain any paramount chiefs that exists and gradually absorb under these any small communities scattered about. What we should aim at is that some day the Dagombas, Gonjas and Mamprusis should become strong native states. Each will have its own public works department and carry on its own business, with the political officer as a Resident Advisor. Each state will be more or less self-contained.<sup>50</sup>

Deploring the lack of a clear and well-defined administrative policy and envisaging the imminent introduction of indirect rule in the Gold Coast, S. T. Thomas, the Acting Governor of the Gold Coast, urged that:

definite lines of policy should be laid down without delay so that when the time is ripe, a system of indirect rule can be introduced and the natives themselves given a share in the government of the country.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Bening, *op. cit.* p. 160.

<sup>50</sup> (NAGA) ADM 56/1/258. Minutes of a Conference Held at Tamale dated March 11, 1921, pp. 1 - 2.

<sup>51</sup> (NAGT) ADM 1/7. M.P. 7469/28. Minutes by His Excellency the A.G. Governor. p. 1.

Fostering the authority of the Chiefs led to the creation of more influential Paramount chiefs and larger states. Chiefs were encouraged to visit and co-operate with one another in the belief that their positions would not only be enhanced, but also their control over their people would increase.<sup>52</sup> This was followed by the appointment of Paramount chiefs over the various people and Districts: the ideal being one for each District. In 1917 the Chief Commissioner reported that the policy of re-establishing the authority of chiefs had:

met with a very considerable amount of success, and that at the commencement of the war, the inhabitants of the NTs were, on a whole, an amenable people, living under their tribal chiefs, who in their turn, paid allegiance to their paramount chiefs through whom the administration worked as far as possible.<sup>53</sup>

However, the policy of imposing chiefs on the people was not without its anticipated problems. This was evidenced by the caution of the North-Eastern Provincial Commissioner in the NTs in 1912 when he said that:

we must go very slowly indeed with regard to the paramountcy of the various chiefs, the relations of sub-chiefs to each other, and also of the people to their various chiefs. It is useless to blind our eyes to this fact and to put down on paper that one chief is paramount to another...unless carefully watched the present scheme may really be a fruitful source of discord and tend to divide the people into even worse cliques than at present, instead of being a useful method of consolidating the various clans.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> (NAGA) ADM. 56/1/461. Bawku District: Report for the Month of December 1917, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> (NAGA) ADM. 56/1/219. Extract from the Chief commissioner's Memorandum to His Excellency the Governor on recruiting in the NTS, p.1.

<sup>54</sup> (NAGA) ADM. 56/1/462. Northeastern Provincial Report for the Quarter Ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 1912, p. 5.

Tentative measures for the creation of Native Administrative States were taken in the 1930s. In 1931 the Governor of the Gold Coast, R. Slater, declared that:

the aim of the present administration must be to repair the damage of the past by welding together parts of the same tribes, which within the memory of people alive today were under one paramount chief but for one reason or another have split apart, and in this way to build up larger states which will allow for the establishment in them of an efficient and effective form of local government.<sup>55</sup>

In pursuance of the Native Administrative policy, various conferences were held to codify the traditional constitutions, rules of successions and the relationship between the various ethnic groups. The most important of these conferences were Gonja (May, 1930), Dagbon (November, 1930), Kusasi (March, 1931), Mamprugu (1932) and Mamprugu again in (July, 1933).<sup>56</sup>

The Gonja and a section of the Nawuri attended the Gonja Conference, which was held at Yapei. The Nawuri claim that Mahama Kankarantu, the then reigning Kanankulaiwura, coerced them to accompany him to Yapei. They further assert that the agenda of the Conference was not clearly made known to them. Instead, they were told that the Conference was for all landowners and chiefs in the various territories in the Northern Territories and Northern Section of British Togoland.<sup>57</sup>

Dixon, however, denies the Nawuri assertion that they were either coerced or deceived to attending the Yapei Conference. According to him:

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<sup>55</sup> (NAGT) ADM. I/169. Letter No. S.N.A. 1251/31/12 of 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1931.

<sup>56</sup> For details see. Brukum, N.J.K. "The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast under British Colonial rule, 1897 - 1957: A study in Political Change". Unpublished PhD Thesis presented to the University of Toronto, 1997, pp. 275 - 76.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

there is no proof of force by Jawula, especially as the Nawuris have attempted to claim that he was a mere Seriken Zongo.<sup>58</sup>

Dixon was inclined to believe that the Nawuri attended the Yapei Conference because they owed allegiance to the Yagbumwura, Paramount chief of the Gonja. Dixon's inclination was based on the League of Nations' report of 1932, which stated that the Nawuri:

owed allegiance to the Yagbumwura, the head Chief of the Gonja state, and being desirous to renew that allegiance they have accordingly been included in the district of that name.<sup>59</sup>

Dixon's conviction is untenable since the authority of the Yagbumwura was not even respected by the Gonja as their Paramount chief prior to the 1930 Yapei Conference. It was at the Conference that the seniority of Gonja Chiefs was established and the authority of the Yagbumwura as the Paramount chief of the Gonja was restored. It is therefore conceivable that the Nawuri were either coerced or deceived into attending the Conference. Evidence exists which suggests that the Nawuri were forced to attend the Yapei Conference or were invited to the Conference under the pretext or authority of the District Commissioner in Salaga or/and the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories. This is evidenced by the interest, which the Chief Commissioner of Northern Territories had in the transfer of the Nawuri area to the Salaga District. In a letter to the Acting Colonial Secretary, the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories intimated that:

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<sup>58</sup> Dixon, op. cit. P. 13.

<sup>59</sup> Report on British Togoland for the year 1932, p. 10.

if the division is made, I would recommend that Nanumba, which is now part of Eastern Dagomba remain (sic), that Nawuri be added on to the Eastern Gonja...<sup>60</sup>

On this basis, it is highly probable that the Chief Commissioner for the Northern Territories and the District Chief Commissioner for East Gonja either deceived the Nawuri or gave governmental backing to Jawula to coerce the Nawuri to attend the Yapei Conference.

In the report of His Majesty's government in the United Kingdom to the Council of the League of Nations for the year 1933 it was recorded that:

prior to 10<sup>th</sup> September, 1932, the Northern section of Togoland under British Mandate which continues to be administered as an integral part of the NTs of the Gold Coast, was divided into the Kusasi, southern Mamprusi, Eastern Dagomba, and Krachi Districts, with their headquarters respectively at Bawku, Gambaga, Yendi and Krachie, but by an order made on the 1<sup>st</sup> of that month under section 3 of the Administration Ordinance of the Protectorate as applied to the northern section, by Articles of Togoland under the British Mandate Order-in-Council 1933, the districts were re-organised in such a way that their boundaries now coincided with those of the three Native States which had been divided by the arbitrary Anglo-German boundary. The designations and descriptions of the districts in the Northern section are now as follows:

1. Mamprusi – All the land lying within the Northern section subject to the Na of Mamprusi and occupied by the Kusasi, B'mowba and Konkomba tribes.
2. Dagomba – All tribal lands lying within the northern section :

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Dixon. *op. cit.* p 13

- (a) subject to the Na of **Dagomba**; or
  - (b) belonging to the Konkomba and Chakosi tribes; or
  - (c) subject to the Na of Nanumba
3. Gonja – All the tribal lands lying within the northern section;-
- (a) belonging to the Owura of Nchumuru; or
  - (b) belonging to the Nawuri tribe and subject to the chief of **Kpandai**.
4. Krachi – All lands within the northern section and subject to the Head chiefs of **Kete-Krachi, Adele and Adjuati**.<sup>61</sup>

With the introduction of Native Administration came the enhancement and increase of chiefly powers. Sub-chiefs in the Districts of Gonja, Dagomba and Mamprugu were compelled to recognize the authority of the Yabumwura, Ya-Na and Nayiri respectively. In addition, these chiefs were given tribunals at which they could try all cases except criminal ones. The Native Treasury Ordinance (NTO) of 1932 also established Treasuries in all the Native Administrative areas into which taxes collected by the chiefs supposedly for the development of their Native Administrative areas could be paid. To make the people obey the chiefs from 1935 onwards, they were provided with local police called Nana Kana – known for their unalloyed loyalty.

The purpose of the Native Authority and Native Treasuries Ordinances of 1932 was to provide a form of local government based as far as possible, on indigenous

<sup>61</sup> Report on British Togoland for the year ended 1932. pp. 6 – 7.



institutions.<sup>62</sup> They were also intended to provide the newly established Native Authorities with the power to collect taxes for the proper maintenance of local services.<sup>63</sup> In order to enable the transition from a tribal form of democracy to a Western form of democracy to be as easy and as acceptable to the peoples as possible, great attention was paid to traditional allegiances as forming the only reliable basis on which to build the new system of Local Government.<sup>64</sup> It was considered that the traditional acceptance of unity and mutual obligations would provide adequate confidence for the collection of taxes and that the acceptance of traditional sanctions would, in the cases of non-payment, provide a reasonable precedent for the statutory power of enforcement.

In 1935 the Courts Ordinance was passed.<sup>65</sup> The Ordinance vested the Governor with wide discretionary power with regard to the composition of the Native Courts in the Gold Coast. In the main, however, the chief and his council constituted the authority for the Native Courts. The Ordinance provided for three grades of Courts – A, B and C with different jurisdictional authorities.

#### **3.4 Native Authority in the Nawuri area: nature and activities**

Order No. 11 of 1933 Native Authority Ordinance appointed the Yagbumwura of Gonja and his Council as Native Authority for the lands subject to the Yagbumwura of Gonja situated within the Northern Territories and within the Northern Section of Togoland under British Mandate.<sup>66</sup> By Order No. 19 of 1933, the Gonja Divisional

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<sup>62</sup> Dixon, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Gold Coast Colony Report on the Northern Territories for the year 1937 – 38 Para. 28, p. 10.

<sup>66</sup> Dixon, op. cit., p. 14.

Native Treasury was established for the Gonja Division at Damongo in the west of the Gonja Division.<sup>67</sup>

In order to avoid over centralization at the centre and ensure smooth administration, the Gonja Native Authority like those of the Mamprugu and the Dagbon, was divided into subordinate native authorities. This became necessary because Damongo, the headquarters of the Native Authority, was far from the settlements in East Gonja in the Protectorate and the Northern Section of British Togoland. Order No. 13 of 1933 appointed the Kpembewura and his Council as a subordinate Native Authority for the division of Kpembe, which included the Nawuri area.<sup>68</sup> A sub-treasury for the Kpembe subordinate area was later established as a branch of the main treasury. Order No. 5 of 1934 made the Native Authority responsible for the collection of tax within the area for which the Gonja Native Authority was appointed. This included the Nawuri area. Membership of the Gonja Native Authority Council and the Subordinate Council in Kpembe were entirely made up of the Gonja. By the orders referred to above, the Nawuri were not made statutory members of the Council. It should be recalled that since the introduction of the Gonja Native Authority in 1933, the Nawuri had constantly protested against the amalgamation of their territory to the Gonja District. Consequently, the Nawuri boycotted all activities including the payment of taxes, which were done in the name of the Gonja Native Authority. In 1935 soon after the re-organization of the Districts, the Nawuri and the Nchumuru protested against it.<sup>69</sup> Their protest was, however, rebuffed by the Assistant District Commissioner resident in Salaga who was responsible for the administrative matters in the Kpembe sub-division.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

In 1941 a sub-Native Authority referred to as the Alfai Native Authority was established in Kpandai in accordance with caption 85 of the Laws of the Gold Coast.<sup>70</sup> The Nawuri, however, objected to the establishment of the Alfai Native Authority claiming that its establishment was not in accordance with caption 85 of the Laws of the Gold Coast. The Nawuri objected to the mandate of the Alfai Native Authority because it failed to make the Nawuri, the natural owners of the Nawuri area, the statutory members of the Native Authority. The membership of the Alfai Native Authority was solely made up of the Gonja with only one seat reserved for the Nawuri. The president of the Native Authority was the Kanankulaiwura.

In 1949 the Gonja Native Authority encouraged the election of Chiefs.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, the Gonja Native Authority introduced another chamber. The chamber was made up of an elected body of commoners.<sup>72</sup> The Gonja District was divided into twelve areas or constituencies, each of which by a ballot of all taxpayers, elected one member to the new body called the Gonja Legislative Assembly.<sup>73</sup> The Assembly examined proposals put before it and could by itself also initiate proposals. The Gonja Native Authority acted as a second chamber with powers of revision though still retaining the power to initiate proposals and keep ultimate control. Literacy was not a condition of membership of the Assembly and non-Gonja, provided they had three years residence were allegedly equally eligible with the Gonja for elections, though this was never achieved. Kpandai and its surrounding Nawuri neighbourhood in the Trust Territory elected one member to the Assembly, who was in all cases a Gonja. The first elections

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<sup>70</sup> Letter from Native Administration Office, Damongo, NTS, to Lawugyayin Nawuri, dated 4<sup>th</sup> September 1951.

<sup>71</sup> Report on British Togoland for the Year ended 1949, p. 12.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

took place early in 1949 and two meetings were held during the year at different places.<sup>74</sup> The third meeting was held in Kpandai during which the estimates of the 1950-51 recurrent Budget were considered.<sup>75</sup>

Just like other Native Authorities on the Gold Coast, the Gonja Native Authority in Kpandai had the mandate to collect taxes in its area and pay it into the treasury of the Native Authority or pay it into the Government treasury. The system of taxation in the Gold Coast then was a dual tax system of taxes, direct and indirect, payable to both the Government and the Native Authorities. While the rates of the direct taxes were determined by the legislature, the Native Authorities with the approval of the appropriate Chief Commissioners determined the rates of the indirect taxes.<sup>76</sup> The taxes of the native Authorities consisted of an annual rate payable individually in all areas. However, in the Nawuri area, the Gonja Native Authority devised a different system of taxation whereby the Kanankulaiwura assessed the tax collectively before deciding the rates of tax. In other words, the Kanankulaiwura fixed a projected revenue target for the recurrent year, and based upon it determined how much the taxpayer should pay. In 1949 it was reported that:

the indirect tax system of the Native Authorities consisted of an annual rate payable individually in all areas except the small portion of Gonja district [Nawuri area and Nchumuru areas] which lies in the Territory where the tax was assessed collectively and the chief concerned decides how it shall be allocated between the people.<sup>77</sup>

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Ibid.

Ibid.

Report on British Togoland for the year 1949, p 50.

Ibid.

Probably, the tax policy devised by the Kanankulaiwura in the Nawuri area was aimed at increasing the tax revenue of the Native Authority. This notwithstanding, the Nawuri protested against the tax policy of the Gonja Native Authority in the Nawuri area. The Nawuri were not slow to brand the tax policy as an exploitative device to raise a lot of revenue from their area for the development of Gonja District. Consequently, the Nawuri refused to pay taxes and urged the settlers to do likewise. In December 1951 the Nawuri petitioned the District Commissioner at Salaga on the question of payment of taxes. In the petition the Nawuri stated that:

...we respectfully beg to remind you of your letter sometime this year on the subject of the payment of the annual levy and beg to reiterate our decision that we do not wish to pay any more levy into the Gonja Native Authority Treasury for the perpetual use of the Gonjas and that pending the final decision of the Minister of Local Government on our case, we would pay all levies in to the Government Treasury.<sup>78</sup>

The request of the Nawuri was, however, rejected by the colonial Government. In a reply to the Nawuri, the District Commissioner at Salaga stated that:

in respect to your statement in paragraph (4) that you desire to pay the annual levy direct to Government, I have to draw your attention to my letter No. 950/152/1947 of 31<sup>st</sup> December 1951 which stated that His Honour Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories had ruled that this would not be possible.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Letter from Nana Atorsah (Nawuriwura) and Nawuri Elders to the District Commissioner, Salaga, dated 24<sup>th</sup> December 1951. Para. 4.  
<sup>79</sup> No. 69/152.1947. Letter from District Commissioner to Nana Agyeman, Nawuriwura dated 24<sup>th</sup> January 1952.

In early 1952 a grade "C" Native court was established in Kpandai.<sup>80</sup> As preparations were far in advance in 1951 to establish the Alfai Native Court, invitations were extended to some traditional heads to serve on the Court. In July 1951 the Kanankulaiwura extended an invitation to Lowugyayin, the then reigning Nawuriwura to serve on the Court. Nana Lowugyayin denied this invitation as he stated in his reply that:

- (a) that we are not aware of any Administration established in the Nawuri state called "Alfai N.A", how much more to have its court. The Authorities have not brought this to the notice of the people of Nawuri state;
- (b) that we are aware of a Court-house being constructed at Kpandai but we want to know if this court will form part of the Gonja Native authority;
- (c) that by your letter it is assumed that the Authorities have established a Native Authority in Nawuri (sic), and therefore this Native Authority should be called "The Nawuri Native Authority", the president of which should be a Nawuri and not a Gonja;
- (d) that the membership on these proposed court and Native authority should be properly constituted with the appropriate number of Nawuris on them since it is completely a Nawuri affair.<sup>81</sup>

Undaunted by the refusal of the Nawuriwura to take his seat on the Alfai Native Court, the Kanankulaiwura and the Assistant District Commissioner at Salaga continued urging him to take up the seat. In August 1951 the Assistant District Commissioner wrote a letter to Lowugyayin and copied to the Gonja Native Authority alleging that Lowugyayin had accepted to take his seat on the Alfai Native court.<sup>82</sup> Lowugyayin denied this allegation as he stated in his letter that:

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<sup>80</sup> Report on British Togoland for the year ended 1952, p. 41.

<sup>81</sup> A letter from Lowugyayin Nawuri (Nawuriwura) to Kanankulaiwura dated 31<sup>st</sup> July 1951. See Appendix VII

<sup>82</sup> Letter from Assistant District Commissioner, Salaga, to Lowugyayin (Nawuri-wura) dated 30<sup>th</sup> August 1951. Dispatch No. 0035/S.F. 7/14

touching upon the subject of the conversation (Ludjai – asst. D.C., Salaga, C.A. McLaren) during which you allege (sic) that I intimated accepting the request of the Gonja N.A. to take my place as a court member on the new court to be established. I regret to say that I do not remember ever intimating you of my willingness to accept the said membership.<sup>83</sup>

In all the replies of Lowugyayin to the invitations extended to him, the demands of the Nawuri were the same – the change of the name of the Alfai Native Authority to Nawuri Native Authority, and the demand for the Nawuri majority on the Native Authority Council.<sup>84</sup> The Nawuri also demanded that the Nawuriwura should be made the Chairman of the newly constituted Native Authority. The uncompromising stance of the Nawuri clearly epitomized their joint effort to totally boycott all administrative and political dealings with the Gonja. Whatever were the demands of the Nawuri, their intransigence did not influence the Gonja; neither did the District Commissioner meet their demands. Consequently, the Gonja or chiefs of settler tribes who were loyal to the Gonja took up Nawuri seats on the Native Authority and court.<sup>85</sup>

The contribution of the Native Authority to the development of the Nawuri area was minimal. The only physical and palpable contribution of the Native Authority to the development of the Nawuri area was the establishment and management of a Native Authority Village Day School in Kpandai. The Native Authority Village Day School was established on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1947. It had only three thatched rooms.<sup>86</sup> On 29<sup>th</sup> March

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<sup>83</sup> Letter from Lowugyayin (Nawuriwura) to the Assistant District Commissioner at Salaga dated 4<sup>th</sup> September 1951

<sup>84</sup> DIXON, *op. cit.* pp.26 – 28.

<sup>85</sup> Some of the chiefs were Akwesi Gonja, (Tangelan), Konde Basari (Kpandai), and Nyonfarm Basari (Kpandai).

<sup>86</sup> Kpandai Village Day School's Log Book, p. 2.



1947 the Native Authority roofed the classrooms with corrugated iron sheets.<sup>87</sup> The Native Authority later built an additional three-classroom block, roofed with thatch. On 17<sup>th</sup> May 1948 the thatch on the additional classroom block was unroofed and replaced with asbestos sheets provided by the Native Authority.<sup>88</sup>

As part of the efforts to co-ordinate and manage the school effectively, periodic visits were paid to it by the Kanankulaiwura and his council, the District Commissioner and the Clerk of the Gonja Native Authority in Damongo. For example on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1947 the Assistant District Director of Agriculture visited the School.<sup>89</sup> This was followed by a visit by J.K.G. Syme, the Senior District Commissioner of the Northern Territories four days after.<sup>90</sup> The District Commissioner of Gonja took his turn and paid a working visit to the School on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 1949.<sup>91</sup> This was followed by the visit of the then Kanankulaiwura and his elders – the Serkin of Kotokoli, the Serkin of Basari, Abdullai Tailor (Dagomba elder) Sule and Seidu, both Gonja. The Kanankulaiwura and elders were said to have lectured the pupils on good behaviour.<sup>92</sup>

On 14<sup>th</sup> March 1949 the Management Committee of the School with the Kanankulaiwura as the Chairman was formed.<sup>93</sup> The Committee was tasked to meet the teachers once every week or fortnight to discuss and settle issues of much importance.<sup>94</sup> In fact, the Kanankulaiwura was empowered by the Native Authority to oversee the running of the School that he virtually ruined the success of the school. He was said to have constantly interfered with the affairs of the school to the annoyance of the teachers.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Logbook, op. cit. p 3

<sup>89</sup> Logbook, op. cit. p 2

<sup>90</sup> Logbook, op. cit. p 3

<sup>91</sup> Logbook, op. cit. p 6.

<sup>92</sup> Logbook, op. cit. p 10.

<sup>93</sup> Logbook, op. cit. p 6.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

The Kanankulaiwura frequently demanded the School authorities to release their pupils to work on his farm or fetch water for his wives. He was also alleged to have visited the School and reprimanded the teachers in the presence of the pupils.

### 3.5 Impact of the Native Authority on the Nawuri

There seemed little reason to doubt that in the first few years of the working of the Native Authority in the Nawuri area was smooth though there was resistance from the Nawuri. Nevertheless, the Native Authority and Native Treasury Ordinances had a negative impact on the Nawuri.

Firstly, the introduction of the Native Authority and Native Treasury Ordinances reduced the traditional authority and importance of Nawuri chiefs. At the same time the Ordinances enhanced and increased the authority of Gonja chiefs over the Nawuri. Dixon laments on the role this factor played in the increasing discord between the Nawuri and the Gonja in 1943 onwards when he noted that:

...with the imposition of tax and the gradual transfer of power in local government matters from the traditional system of Councils to the new statutory system, the importance of the Council, gradually decreased. It is a grievance of the Nawuris...that under the Native Administration system, they "became as nothing" and lost the traditional importance and respect with which traditional relationship had invested them.<sup>95</sup>

Another negative impact of the Native Authority and Native Treasury Ordinances on the Nawuri was the alienation of the Nawuri from local government affairs. Travelling Administrative Officers at that time placed more and more responsibility on the Native Authority and dealt insignificantly with the Nawuri who did not form the Native

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<sup>95</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* para. 48, p. 15

Authority. This, in practice, excluded the Nawuri from discussions in matters of Local Government pertaining to the Nawuri area.

A third negative impact of the Native Authority and Native Treasury Ordinances on the Nawuri was the payment of tax, which reduced the Nawuri to the status of vassals of the Gonja. The Nawuri decried vehemently their vassalage status and refused to pay taxes to the Native Authority. The Nawuri alleged that the taxes they paid to the Gonja Native Authority were used in developing the Gonja section of the Native Authority as well as paying the salaries of Gonja chiefs at the expense of the Nawuri. In a letter to the District Commissioner at Salaga in December 1951, the Nawuri reiterated their decision to pay taxes direct to the Government Treasury.<sup>97</sup>

Finally, the Native Authority and Native Treasury Ordinances amalgamated the Nawuri area to the Gonja District administratively. Politically, the ordinance made the Nawuri, a hitherto independent people, subjects of the Gonja. By these Ordinances, the Nawuri were obliged to recognize the authority of the Yagbumwura as their overlord. In addition, the Nawuri were subjected to the rule of the Kpembewura and Kanankulaiwura, the Gonja chiefs in Kpembe and Kpandai respectively. At the same time, Nawuri chiefs were not recognized by the Ordinances as traditional rulers in the Nawuri area. In the main, therefore, the Native Authority and Native Treasury Ordinances formally imposed Gonja imperialism on the Nawuri area.

### **3.6 The Alfai Local Council, 1952 – 1966**

In 1952 a new Local Government system in the form of Local Councils replaced the Native Administrative system of Local Government, which was inaugurated in

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<sup>97</sup> Letter from Nawuri Chiefs and Elders to the District Commissioner, Salaga, dated 24<sup>th</sup> December 1951.



1952.<sup>98</sup> In the exercise of the powers conferred upon the Ministry of Local government by section three of the Local government Ordinance of 1951, and with the prior approval of the Governor – in – Council, the Ministry of Local Government established the Gonja-Volta District Council on May 1, 1952. The headquarters of the District was Damongo. The Council was divided into twelve wards. These were the wards of Bole, Buipe, Damongo-Yagbum, Wasipe, Tuluwe, Kasawgu, Debre, Kpembe, Alfai, Mo, Yeji and Prang.<sup>99</sup> The Council consisted of twenty representatives elected by adult suffrage and ten Traditional rulers.<sup>100</sup> The breakdown of the elected members is as follows: three each from Bole and Kpembe wards and two each from the wards of Alfai, Debre, Damongo-Yagbum and Tuluwe. The remaining six wards elected a representative each. The traditional members on the council consisted of seven appointed by Yagbumwura and his council, one by the Mo Chiefs' Council, Yejihene and his council, and Pranghene's (Sarkin Prang) joint Council of Elders.<sup>101</sup>

The Alfai Local Council was established as a Ward of the Gonja-Volta District Council. On 21 November 1951 a Draft Instrument establishing the Alfai Local Council was published.<sup>102</sup> On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1951, the Assistant Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories (who also served as Commissioner for Local Government re-organization in the Northern Territories) visited Kpandai and received verbal representations from the Nawuri, the Gonja and other inhabitants.<sup>103</sup> Nana Atorsah Agyemang headed the Nawuri representation at the meeting while that of Gonja was

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<sup>98</sup> Gold Coast. Local Government Ordinance, 1951: The Instrument Establishing the Gonja-Volta District Council, p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Dixon, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

headed by the Kanankulaiwura. The legal secretary of the Nawuri, Yawovi Datsa from British Southern Togoland made the verbal representation of the Nawuri on their behalf. Apart from the verbal representations, the Nawuri also submitted written petitions to the Assistant Chief Commissioner. The question of the aborigines and owners of the Nawuri area in the Gonja-Volta Local Council became the major issue of debate at the meeting since it determined the traditional authority, (whether the Nawuriwura or the Kanankulaiwura) that had the mandate to elect the traditional members on the Council and also preside over the Council's meetings. The Nawuri and the Gonja respectively tendered in documents to support their claim of allodial rights to the lands in the Nawuri area. The Gonja tendered in a document handed to Mahama Karantu Kankaranful Jawula by Dr. Von Raven, the German Administrator in Krachi in 1913.<sup>104</sup> At that meeting the Nawuri requested various changes to be made in the Draft Instrument establishing the Alfai Local Council. Firstly, the Nawuri, demanded the transfer of the Nawuri area from the Gonja traditional overlordship to the Local Government Organisation in Krachi-Buem. The desire by the Nawuri to break away from Gonja traditional rule demonstrated their disapproval of and protest to the amalgamation of their area to Gonja Native area in 1932. The transfer of Krachi from the Northern Territories to Southern Togoland in December 1950 further incensed the Nawuri's position. Dixon, however, alleges that it was quite probable that some politicians in Southern Togoland pressed the Nawuri for a break away of their territory from the Salaga District and its inclusion into the Krachi-Buem District. The Nawuri also demanded that the Nawuriwura and his council, if the transfer was made at all, should occupy the seats for the Nawuri area in the Krachi-Buem Native Authority. Alternatively, the Nawuri asked for the change of the name of the Alfai

<sup>104</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.*, Appendix VIII, p. 2.

Local Council to the Nawuri-Nanjuro Local Council if the Nawuri area was to remain in the Gonja District. Finally, the Nawuri demanded that the Nawuriwura should be made the president of the Alfai Local Council, and that the Nawuriwura and the Nanjurowura should be empowered to elect the traditional members on the Council.<sup>105</sup>

Before registration of voters and election of the members to the Alfai Local Council could be done, the District Commissioner at Salaga allegedly visited each village in the Nawuri area to explain the system of the registration and voting. The Nawuri, however, deny this allegation and claim that the District Commissioner visited only Konkomba and Basari villages loyal to the Gonja. The Nawuri also claim they were not informed about the registration in time. In fact, it was barely a week to the end of the registration that the District Commissioner at Salaga wrote a letter to Yawovi Datsa informing the Nawuri about the registration, by which time it was almost impossible to get all eligible Nawuri to register.<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, the Gonja and some sections of the Konkomba and the Basari loyal to the Gonja were already fully registered. The Nawuri regarded these tactics as a machination to manipulate the elections in favour of the Gonja.<sup>107</sup> Aside this, there were instances where the Gonja Levy Collectors deliberately refused to collect taxes from the Nawuri in order to disqualify them for the registration. As a pre-requisite for registration, one must have been a taxpayer and there must have been satisfactory evidence of payment of taxes. Lamenting on this development in a telegram message to the Minister for Local Government, Nana Atorsah Agyemang, Nawuriwura stated that:

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<sup>105</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p. 49

<sup>106</sup> Letter from the District Commissioner's Office at Salaga to Yawovi Datsa dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 1952. Dispatch No 0009/11/238.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

Gonja Levy collectors refused to take levy from Nawuris and register them though fully qualified for elections local councils stop Instructions and advice by you to co-operate form one council with Gonja despite our ardent desire to join Buem-Krachi has therefore been stultified by minority Gonjas who by virtue of native administrations ordinance have legal armour to commit any crime without question stop Unless you instruct them take basic rates from Nawuris and allow them to vote their people to local council it will mean in future quote no representation no taxation unquote stop Two thousand seven hundred Nawuris qualified for registration stand firm demanding quickest action from Government stop Acknowledge receipt.<sup>108</sup>

A week after the first telegram message, Nana Atorsah telegraphed the leader of Government Business and the Governor, Arden Clarke demanding immediately the setting up of an independent and impartial commission to investigate the affairs of the Alfai Native Authority and actions of the Gonja Levy Collectors.<sup>109</sup> In another telegram message, Nana Atorsah warned of the outbreak of riots if nothing was done to prevent the Gonja from disqualifying the Nawuri. In it Nana Atorsah stated that:

pray bring pressure bear upon government set up independent impartial committee probe Kpandai area affairs where Gonja native authority using all tactics prevent Nawuris from taking part in Local Council elections stop Out of population of about five thousand two thousand seven hundred are members of Cipiipi stop Immediate action necessary stop Troubles likely to provoke riot are pilling.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Telegram from Nana Atorsah Agyemang, Kpandai Via Krachi to Local Government, Accra dated 21 February 1952

<sup>109</sup> Telegram from Nana Atorsah, Nawuriwura to the Leader of Government Business and Governor Arden Clarke dated 29<sup>th</sup> February 1952.

<sup>110</sup> Telegram from Yawovi Daisa on behalf of Nana Atorsah Agyemang, Nawuriwura to C.P.P. Secretary, Accra, and dated 19<sup>th</sup> March 1952. The Nawuri's petition to the C.P.P. was meant to win the sympathy of the party. The Gonja had branded the Nawuri as anti-C.P.P and their petition was meant, in part, to refute that allegation

In response to Nana Atorsah's allegations, the District Commissioner at Salaga sent George Mahama, a Gonja who was also then secretary of the Gonja Native Authority to Kpandai area to investigate.<sup>111</sup> After a visit to Katiejeli, George Mahama returned to Salaga and reported to the District Commissioner that Nana Atorsah's allegations were false.<sup>112</sup> Based upon the report, the District Commissioner wrote a letter to Nana Atorsah dismissing his allegations.<sup>113</sup> Nana Atorsah decried the bias of George Mahama in his report and wondered why the District Commissioner did not send an impartial person to investigate the allegations. In a letter to the District Commissioner, Nana Atorsah, among other things, stated that:

what baffles me a little is when and how your investigations were conducted, I cannot say. But I think if you are referring to a visit paid by Mr. Mahama, the G.N.A. Secretary about a week or two ago, then I believe he ought to have told you without bias that the people of Katiejeli informed him that your assistant Registration Officers did not take the trouble and pains to explain the complicated machinery of local Government to them. How then Nana's allegations be found true when people who are already prejudiced are sent to make such important investigations?<sup>114</sup>

Whatever was the case, the elections to the Alfai Local Council held on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1952 proceeded smoothly in all the Wards except in Wards F and G. (Kabonwule and Katiejeli Wards respectively). The Nawuri in those Wards boycotted the elections claiming they were not fairly given the opportunity to register. Consequently, a second opportunity was given for registration in Wards F and G, and this time the Nawuri

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<sup>111</sup> Letter from the District Commissioner at Salaga to Nana Atorsah dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 1952. Dispatch No. 0024/SF 1/80.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Letter from Office of Nana Atorsah Agyemang, Nawuri to the District Commissioner at Salaga dated 12<sup>th</sup> March 1952 Dispatch No 029/NA/11.

registered, voted and elected their representatives.<sup>115</sup> The Nawuri were, however, still dissatisfied with the second registration claiming it was still not conducted fairly since it was only restricted to the Kabonwule and Katiejeli Wards. The Nawuri were of the view that had all the Nawuri who were eligible to register been registered, they would have obtained a majority of members on the Alfai Local Council.<sup>116</sup>

On the day of the inauguration of Alfai Local Council, a disturbance broke out in Kpandai between the Nawuri and the Gonja. It was alleged that in that disturbance, the Yagbumwura Ewuntoma who attended the inauguration as the guest of honour was *bundled up* in a local (zanna) mat and *smuggled out* of Kpandai.<sup>117</sup> Some Nawuri were arrested, sent to Salaga in container vehicles and fined for disturbing the peace.<sup>118</sup>

After its inauguration, members of the Council met periodically and discussed various issues of interest to the Alfai Local Council Area. Some of these issues included the payment of salaries and allowances to the staff, improvement of the educational facilities in the Local Council Area, building of Kpandai Police Station and construction of Katiejeli Dam. The rest included budgeting, financial management and providing Roofing Loans to citizens in the Local Council Area. Apart from the above socio-economic issues that the Alfai Local Council discussed, it also discussed the future status of the Nawuri area. For example, following the visit of the UN visiting Team to the Nawuri area in September 1952, a motion on the future status of the Nawuri area (the

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<sup>115</sup> Dixon. *op. cit.*, p 20.

<sup>116</sup> The elected members to the Alfai Local Council were Kasta Nawuri, Kofi Mbowura, Najar Konkomba, Kwame Amoah, Lemumba Konkomba, Nyorfam Basari, Munyinba Konkomba and Akwesi Gonja for Balai, Djadigbe, Dodoai, Kabonwule, Kitarc, Lugni, Nkanchina and Tangelan respectively. The rest were Dawuni Basari and Kujati Konkomba for Bladjai, Issaka Basari and Tadow Konkomba for Bunya, S.G. Frico and Aforstin (both Nawuris) for Katiejeli, and Adamu Gonja, Konde Basari and Abdulai Gonja for Kpandai. The four (4) traditional members on the Council were Kanakulaiwura and two of his Council members, and Amoani Balai (Kankpe Fetish Priest) appointed by the Kanakulaiwura.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Frico at Katiejeli on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

question whether the area should be taken from the Gonja-Volta District and added to Krachi-Buem District) was tabled and voted upon by members of the Alfai Local Council<sup>119</sup>. It was decided by eighteen votes to nil (three abstaining) that the area should remain in the Gonja state.<sup>120</sup> The voting was conducted in the presence of the Trusteeship Council Visiting Mission.

As indicated in article eleven of the instrument establishing Alfai Local Council, second elections to the Local Council were to be held on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 1955, and subsequently on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of April in every third year.<sup>121</sup> Sadly, however, in April 1955 the Alfai Local Council deliberately refused to conduct elections to elect members to the Council. By a stroke of pen by the Kanankulaiwura, the president of the Alfai Local Council the sitting members were simply reinstated to serve another three-year term of office.<sup>122</sup> According to the Nawuri, the Gonja refused to conduct elections in 1955 because they feared that this time round, with the Nawuri fully registered, the latter would win the elections.

In December 1954, the Governor of the Gold Coast visited Nawuri towns and villages and received representations containing the grievances of the Nawuri and the Nchumuru.<sup>123</sup> As a result Dixon was appointed in March 1955 to investigate the

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> The three Nawuri on the Council abstained from voting claiming the council was unrepresentative to decide on that matter. The only Nawuri who voted on the motion was Amoani Balai, nephew to the Gonja chief, Kanankulaiwura.

<sup>121</sup> Gold Coast, Local Government Ordinance, 1951: The Instrument Establishing the Alfai Local Council, p. 2

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Dixon, op. cit. p. 1.

grievances of the Nawuri and the Nchumuru.<sup>124</sup> The terms of reference of Dixon's investigation were

to investigate the representations made to the Governor in December 1954 from persons from the area of the Gonja District lying in Togoland and to advise on the administrative arrangements appropriate to the area, and in part, local government organization having regard, inter alia, to the traditional relations between the inhabitants of this area and inhabitants of neighbouring states.<sup>125</sup>

The main grievances of the Nawuri were the questions of the allodial ownership of lands in the Nawuri area and the affairs of the Local Council. The Nawuri decried the activities of the Alfai Local Council and requested for immediate measures and changes. They again asked that the Nawuriwura should be made the president of Alfai Local Council. They maintained that until the introduction of indirect rule in 1932, the Nawuri did not share common traditional rule with the Gonja. The Nawuri further maintained and still maintain that they are owners of the lands in the Nawuri area, and in consonance with Local Government Ordinance of 1951 therefore, the Nawuriwura should be made the president of the Alfai Local Council. Dixon, however, dismissed the claims of the Nawuri saying that:

the [Nawuris] have no traditional claim to substantiate their demand for the presidency of Alfai Local Council.<sup>126</sup>

The Nawuri also demanded that the name of the Alfai Local Council should be changed to the Nawuri/Nchumuru Local Council. According to the Nawuri, Alfai was

<sup>124</sup> Dixon was a Colonial Officer Class 1 in-charge of Agriculture who was appointed in 1955 by Colonial Government to investigate the Grievances of the Nawuri and the Nanjuro against the Gonja.

<sup>125</sup> Dixon. op. cit. p. 1.

<sup>126</sup> Dixon. op. cit. p. 26.



not a representative name of the whole the Nawuri area. In fact, Alfai was a cognate name of a small geographical area on Balai land where the first Muslims before the arrival of the Gonja in the Nawuri area settled.<sup>127</sup> The Nawuri maintain that the name Alfai conceals the Nawuri as the owners of the lands in the Nawuri area. Besides, the Gonja hid behind the cloak of the name to exercise the authorities and duties, which were deemed the prerogatives of the landowners as far as the Local Government Ordinance of 1951 was concerned.<sup>128</sup> In his characteristic bias in favour of established rule, Dixon dismissed the demand of the Nawuri and the Nchumuru when he stated that:

...no valid grounds have been produced as to why the Alfai Local Council should be renamed in this manner (Nawuri/Nanjuro Local Council). This request presupposes that the Nawuris and the Nanjuros will be joined into a separate Local Council. The feelings of the Bassaris and Konkombas are not considered. Although in a majority, they are regarded by the Nawuris as having no say in the matter. For with their disregard of the rights of others the Nawuris seek to establish a degree of dominance never attempted by the Gonjas.<sup>129</sup>

The Nawuri further demanded the transfer of the Alfai Local Council to the Krachi-Buem District. As was the case of the other demands of the Nawuri, this demand was squashed by Dixon claiming that it was unimaginable.

The payment of salaries to the Oti River Fetish Priests was another demand of the Nawuri. The Nawuri argued that since fishermen who formerly supported the Oti River

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<sup>127</sup> "Alfai" is derived from the Nawuri words "Alfai" which meant Muslim and the Suffix 'ai' which meant home. Alfai therefore, literally means the 'home of the Muslim'. The name Alfai was used to describe a small parcel of land in the eastern corner of Balai where the first Muslims in the Nawuri area prior to the influx of the Gonja lived. In fact, Alfai was synonymous to "Zongo" outskirts or quarters in most settlements where Muslims live.

<sup>128</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

<sup>129</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

Fetish Priests paid taxes to the Alfai Local Council, the Local Council should pay the Fetish Priest salaries.<sup>130</sup>

Dixon, however, is of the view that the demand of the Nawuri is not realistic as stated in the following words:

...in the first place, Fetish Priests are not supported by Local Councils unless they also hold a traditional office entitling them to membership of a council; and secondly, according to the Gonjas, the Fetish Priests never did receive regular payments from the fishermen who, in point of fact, paid sundry dues to the Kanankulaiwura. The only reasonable explanation for this proposal is that the Nawuris seek to gain the support of the River Oti Fetish Priests to confirm their claim that in the olden days they had a boundary at the River Oti...<sup>131</sup>

In the concluding pages of his report, Dixon recommended that:

their [the Nawuri] proposals for the reorganization of the Alfai Local Council should be left to the test of ballot box in the Local Government elections which are due to take place early next year. It will then be seen if they command a majority on the Council. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of two more Nawuri Traditional Members on the Alfai Local Council. This would, under present circumstances, be the most appropriate manner to restore the status which they held in the indigenous organization prior to 1932...<sup>132</sup>

In December 1955 the Governor wrote a letter to Nana Atorsah indicating his acceptance of the Dixon report, and also intimated Nana Atorsah of the creation of two

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<sup>130</sup> The Oti River is a deity in itself. The Fetish Priests were responsible for offering sacrifices to the deity to prevent and avert disaster, ensure rains to maintain and increase the watercourse, and to ensure bumper catch of fish. Until the introduction of Local Government, the Fetish Priests had supported themselves on fish paid to them on every Monday and Friday of every week as taxes by fishermen.

<sup>131</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p. 28.

<sup>132</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p. 35.

seats on the Local Council for Nawuri traditional members.<sup>133</sup> These were, however, not without a condition: Nawuri traditional members would occupy the seats provided the Nawuri allowed the Gonja to appoint them.<sup>134</sup> In a reply, Nana Atorsah stated that:

...we should like to make the election ourselves. Otherwise, there may be some inconvenience. Sir, in your para. 2 step (c) of your letter, it is stated that the Nanjurowura has been added to the Panel of the Kpembe Native Court. I should be grateful if we are also considered in that line. We should be very glad to accept the two seats in the Alfai Local Council if it would be given to us. But we do not accept the condition attached to it. We shall still demand for our rights. We wish you to consider more about our case.<sup>135</sup>

Notwithstanding the petition of the Nawuri to the Governor, the condition attached to the inclusion of two more Nawuri traditional members on the Alfai Local Council was not scrapped. Consequently, the Nawuri refused to take up the two seats. As a result until 1966 when the Alfai Local Council was merged with that of Salaga, there was only one Nawuri traditional member on the council.<sup>136</sup> After the over-throw of the CPP-Government in 1966, the National Liberation Council (NLC) that replaced the CPP Government merged some Local Councils. Among the Local Councils affected by this Local Government policy of the NLC was the Alfai Local Council. In 1966 the Alfai Local Council was merged with the Salaga, Kasawgu and Prang Local Councils to form one Local Council with its capital at Salaga. A Management Committee was set up to over-see the smooth administration of the Salaga-Kpandai-Prang Local Council. It was

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<sup>133</sup> Letter from His Excellency, Governor Arden Clarke to Nana Atorsah, dated 13<sup>th</sup> December 1955.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Letter from Nana Atorsah Agyemang I, to the His Excellency, Governor Arden Clarke dated 8<sup>th</sup> April 1956.

<sup>136</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

alleged that the Alfai Local Council elected one member to the Management Committee though the identity, ethnic background and name of the person were not known to the Nawuri.

In 1967 the NLC appointed the Siriboe Commission to enquire into electoral and local council reforms in the country.<sup>137</sup> The Commission recommended the creation of a Nanumba-Kpandai Local Council with its Capital at Bimbilla.<sup>138</sup> It was expected that the NLC or the Progress Party that took over government from the NLC would implement the Commission's report. Unfortunately, this was not achieved. However, when the Progress Party Government took over office from the NLC, it rather established a 'Delimitation Commission' to determine the electoral and Local Councils re-organization in the country.<sup>139</sup> At its sitting in Tamale, the Nawuri and the Gonja made representations in protest for and against the establishment of Kpandai Local Council with its District Council at Bimbilla as proposed by the Siriboe Commission respectively.<sup>140</sup> In a petition on behalf of the Nawuri against the merger of Kpandai/Alfai Local Council with Salaga, Mbimadong contented that:

Kpandai Local Council area is always neglected anytime it merges with Salaga Local Council and as such there is no development there up-to-date...That about three quarters of the total revenue of Salaga/Kpandai Local council is derived from Gonja East constituency, and obviously the Kpandai Local Council can stand by itself and manage its own affairs well when honest and rightful managing(sic) people are given the chance...The Volta Lake formed by the river Daka cuts away Kpandai from Salaga for the

<sup>137</sup> Petition by J.K. Mbimadong to the Chairman of the Delimitation Commission, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1971.

<sup>138</sup> Siriboe Commission of Enquiry into electoral and Local Council Reforms, Parts I and II, Item 107, p. 56.

<sup>139</sup> Petition by J.K. Mbimadong to the Chairman of the Delimitation Commission, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1971.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

greater part of the year, and the distance from Kpandai to Salaga is far greater as compared with (sic) that of Kpandai and Bimbilla. That means of transport and communication between Kpandai and Bimbilla is far easier, more economical and preferable as compared with (sic) that of Salaga.<sup>141</sup>

Similarly, in November 1971 Nawuri chiefs protested to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Electoral Commission against the amalgamation of their Council to that of the Salaga Local Council.<sup>142</sup> In a three-page petition by a five-member delegation led by Nana Asaseadwo, Paramount chief of the Nawuri Traditional area to Mr. N.Y.B. Adade, Minister of Internal Affairs, and Mr. G.K. Bonsu, the Electoral Commissioner in Accra, the petitioners expressed their support for the creation of the Nanumba-Kpandai District Council as indicated in the Siriboe Commission. The petition, signed by twenty-four chiefs of the Kpandai District Council, regretted that the Gonja, a minority group of people

are using their privileged position to force the Kpandai District council area to join Debir, Tulewe, Kusawgu and Salaga Local 'Councils.<sup>143</sup>

In reaction to the protest of the Nawuri published in the Daily Graphic, the Gonja presented a petition to the Chairman of the Delimitation Commission labeling the allegations of the Nawuri as unfounded.<sup>144</sup> The Gonja petitioners stated that:

the petitioners (the Nawuri) alleged "that the means of transport and Communication between Kpandai and Bimbilla is far more easier, more economical and definitely

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<sup>141</sup> Petition by J.K. Mbimadong to the Chairman of the Delimitation Commission, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1971.

<sup>142</sup> National Daily Graphic, Friday, 19 November 1971, p. 4

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> Petition by the Kanankulaiwura and his sub-chiefs to the Minister of Internal Affairs and Electoral Commissioner dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1971.

preferable". We the traditional authority of the East Gonja constituency view the allegation as highly provocative. Does it mean that because of easier transportation Gonja land should be annexed to Nanumba? The petitioners should know much better the consequences over boundary disputes.<sup>145</sup>

In another development, Jawula Ababio I, the Kpembewura petitioned the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Electoral Commissioner to ignore the petition of the Nawuri and branded the petitioners as self-styled chiefs. He intimated that:

...these settler tribes have no hegemony, being attached to the Gonjas and that the titles claimed by the signatories to petition are borrowed ones if not non-existent. At best the self-styled paramount chiefs could be described as headmen of their respective villages. The whole Gonja tribe has only one paramount chief, the Yagbumwura, who resides at Damongo...<sup>146</sup>

For reasons unknown to the Nawuri and the Nchumuru, their areas were not detached from the Salaga District, but continued to be administered as an integral part of it to date. It was, however, probable that the Gonja were responsible for the turn of events against the recommendations of the Siriboe Commission in respect of the Nawuri and Nchumuru areas.

### 3.7 Development in the Nawuri under the Local Council

Throughout its existence, the Alfai Local Council had to grapple with the problems posed by the Nawuri. The Nawuri protested against the establishment, nature, activities of the Alfai Local Council as well as the registrations and the elections to the

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<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Petition by Kpembewura Jawulla Ababio II to Minister of Internal Affairs and Electoral Commissioner, dated 25<sup>th</sup> November 1971.

Council. Nevertheless, the Council was not pinned down to these daunting problems and challenges it faced. It initiated various programmes to develop the Nawuri area.

As an antecedent to the establishment of the Alfai Local Council, two buildings to house the Council were put up. These were the Council's Court Hall and Conference Room. The architecture of these buildings served as models for the erection of private and public structures. Today, these buildings serve as classrooms. These facilities were first used by the Roman Catholic Middle School from 1981-1990, followed by Kpandai Technical and Vocational School in 1996, and currently by Morning Star, a private school.

At its fifth session held in February 1953, the Alfai Local Council approved a fund of £640 for development projects in the Nawuri area.<sup>147</sup> The breakdown of the estimated expenditures and projects are as follows: £350 for the reconstruction of classrooms for Kpandai Local Council Middle School; £100 for the construction of Teacher quarters in Kpandai; £100 for the construction of Police Cell in Kpandai; and £70 and £20 for the construction of Market Sheds in Katiejeli and Buya respectively.<sup>148</sup>

In 1954 the Alfai Local Council decided to take over the Katiejeli Primary School from S G Friko to relieve guardians from contributing three shillings to pay teachers' salary, which had been fixed since 1953.<sup>149</sup> The Local Council saw it unbearable when the guardian's quota increased to four shillings following the recruitment of Mr. J.K. Mbimadong as the second teacher for the Katiejeli Primary School.<sup>150</sup> In the 1953-54

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<sup>147</sup> Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Session of the Alfai Local Council held in Kpandai on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1953, p. 1.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Log Book of the Katiejeli Private Primary School 1953, pp. 1-5. Friko established the Katiejeli Primary School to provide educational opportunity to the children of school going age in Katiejeli since they could not commute to Kpandai every day to attend school. (The distance between Kpandai and Katiejeli is 5miles).

<sup>150</sup> Log Book of the Katiejeli Private Primary School 1953, pp. 1-5.

budget of the Alfai Local Council, provisions were made for the salary of the Teachers of and books and stationery for the Katiejeli Primary School.<sup>151</sup> These were estimated at £100 and £40 respectively.<sup>152</sup>

In 1953-54 out of a total capital expenditure of £791 made by the Alfai Local Council, the Nawuri area alone received the sum of £338.<sup>153</sup> Similarly, in the 1954-55 fiscal year, out of a total capital expenditure of £3,018 made by the Council, the Nawuri area received the total expenditure of £2,400.<sup>154</sup> The amounts were expended on the construction of a Local Council Middle School, Market Sheds and Butchers' shop in Kpandai.

In May 1955 the Council awarded a contract to Inland Contractors Company to construct a Police quarters in Kpandai for a sum of one thousand, four hundred and ninety-five pounds, ten shillings (£1,495.10s).<sup>155</sup> This was for the construction of five single rooms, kitchen and bathrooms.<sup>156</sup>

The Alfai Local Council also undertook the development of transport and communication facilities in the Nawuri area. Among these included the construction of the Kpandai-Nkanchina, Kpandai-Kumidi, Katiejeli-Kabonwule and Kabonwule-Bladjai feeder roads. In April 1957 the Council discussed and approved of the construction of the Kabonwule-Kitare road.<sup>157</sup> In the same year, the Council also considered and applied

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<sup>151</sup> Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Session of the Alfai Local Council held in Kpandai on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1953, p. 1.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Dixon, op. cit p. 20.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Letter from Inland Contractors Company to the Clerk of Alfai Local Councils, dated 17<sup>th</sup> May 1955.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Minutes of Alfai Local Council held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1957.

to the Assistant Controller of Post and Telegrams in Tamale for telephone facilities at Kpandai.<sup>158</sup>

On salary payments, the Local Council achieved much success. The Council paid the full salary of the Postal Messenger and half of that of the Postal Agent; with the government paying the remainder.<sup>159</sup> The Alfai Local Council also paid the salary of its President and Revenue Collectors, which in 1954 were £36 and £4.3.4 per month respectively. The salary of its President and Revenue Collectors were later increased to £48 and £6 per month respectively.<sup>160</sup>

The Alfai Council also instituted a Roofing Loan Scheme to assist people in the Nawuri area. In January 1957 out of seven applications received on the Roofing Loan Scheme, five were granted a loan of £200 each.<sup>161</sup>

The Council derived its revenue mainly from basic rates. In 1954 the Council initiated a tax innovation to increase its revenue base. A rice export tax of one shilling per bag on rice 'exported' from the Nawuri area was introduced<sup>162</sup>.

The chapter has traced the developments in the Nawuri area from the era of the partition of Africa up to 1966. Before World War I, the Nawuri area was autonomous. After the defeat of Germany in the World War I, the Nawuri area lost its autonomy. It was simply added to the Gonja state and District without the consent of the Nawuri. It was this political phenomenon that unfolded the political developments and discords

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Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Interview with Donkor (Postal Agent), Kpandai on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2001.

<sup>159</sup> Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Session of the Alfai Local Council held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1953.

<sup>160</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Roofing Loan Board held at Kpandai in the Council's Meeting Hall on 31<sup>st</sup> Day of January 1957. The beneficiaries were Abdulai Mahama and Abudulai Dagomba of Kpandai. The rest were Sawli G. Friko, Yaw Barima and Bukari Kotokoli, all of Katchehi.

<sup>162</sup> Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Session of the Alfai Local Council held in Kpandai on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1953, p. 1.



between the Nawuri and the Gonja between 1932 and 1966. In fact, if Germany had not been defeated in the World War I, the Nawuri area would not have been added to the Gonja state and District.

Another factor responsible for the political development and discords in the Nawuri area was the Local Government policy of the colonial Government as seen in the Native Administration and Local Government Ordinances of 1927 and 1952 respectively.

Besides, it was most likely that if the British colonial Government had not pursued a policy of indirect rule as evidenced in the Native Administrative rule and the establishment of Local Councils, the discord between the Nawuri and the Gonja would not have erupted. It was the policy of indirect rule that compelled the British colonial Government to re-organize the Native States on the Gold Coast into larger ones. It was against this background that the Nawuri area was added to the Gonja District for the expediency of colonial administration. As would be recalled, the Nawuri opposed the introduction of the Native Authority and Local Councils in the Nawuri area. It was in this light that the Nawuri regarded the strengthening of the few Gonja aristocracy over them (the Nawuri) through the colonial Government policy as an anomaly, since they (the Nawuri) are the aborigines and landowners of the Nawuri area of the East Gonja District.

The dispute between the Nawuri and the Gonja over the authority and position of the Nawuri and the Gonja in the Native Authority and Local Council was closely linked to the main question that determined the relations between the Gonja and the Nawuri from the 1930s onwards – the question of the owners of lands in the Nawuri area. Being the landowners of the Nawuri area, the Nawuri therefore demanded the change of the name of the Gonja Native Authority and Alfai Local Council in the Nawuri area to

Nawuri Native Authority and Nawuri/Nchumuru Local Council respectively. However, the Gonja refused to heed the demands of the Nawuri claiming that they (the Gonja) were the owners of the land in the Nawuri area. Probably, the rising discord between the Nawuri and the Gonja over the Native Authority and Local Council would have been mitigated if the two local Government structures had contributed meaningfully to the social and economic development of the Nawuri area. Unfortunately, the developments in transport, health, market and recreational centres and schools in the Nawuri area were woefully inadequate. For example, shoddy feeder roads were constructed, market sheds were poorly erected and few schools were established. Worse of all was the health sector. In fact, up to the 1980s the inhabitants in the Nawuri area relied on traditional healers and the Leprosarium Centre established in Nkanchina in 1949. It was in the 1980s that a public health centre was established in Kpandai, but it was poorly staffed and lacked essential drugs. It was against this background that the Nawuri refused to pay taxes to the Gonja Native Authority and the Local Council alleging that their taxes were used to develop the Gonja areas of the District.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE NAWURI, THE GONJA, THE TOGOLAND QUESTION AND POST – 1956 POLITICS IN GHANA

#### **4.1 Togoland Question: the attitudes of the Nawuri and the Gonja**

In the late 1940s and the early 1950s the question of the future status of French and British Togolands dominated the political scene in French and British Territories of Togo. The people in these territories made various oral and written representations to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organization concerning the future status of French and British Togolands. The arbitrary division of Togo into British and French spheres of Togoland and the attendant agitations of the inhabitants in these territories either to maintain the administrative status quo or re-unite the two territories culminated in the formation of political movements and parties. These political parties canvassed and championed either the unification with or separation of British Togoland from the Gold Coast. Some of these movements and parties included, the All Ewe Conference (AEC) formed in January 1946 and the Comité de l'unité Togolaise (CUT) formed in 1947. Others included the Movement de la Jeunesse Togolaise and the Togoland Congress both formed in 1951 and the Movement Populaire Togolaise (MPT) formed in 1954.

The Convention people's Party (CPP) and the Northern People's Party (NPP) formed in 1949 and 1954 respectively though formed as a result of the political conditions in the Gold Coast, also took active part in politics on the Togoland question.<sup>1</sup>

Three parties were popular in the Nawuri area. They were Togoland Congress, the CPP and the NPP. The first stood for separation of Togoland from the Gold Coast, and the last two stood for unification. The Togoland Congress drew its support from the Nawuri. The Gonja, on the other hand, supported the NPP and the CPP. The Nawuri, one of the ethnic groups in British Northern Togoland, campaigned vigorously for the separation of British Togoland from the Gold Coast. In fact, the campaign for separation in general was not engendered by political and ethnic considerations alone, but also by other issues as well. The campaign for separation in the Northern section of British Togoland was engendered by the manipulation of local issues. The advocates of separation in the Northern section of British Togoland appealed to the Basari by equating their continual subjection to the Paramount chief of the Dagomba. Similarly, in the Nawuri area, the advocates of separation appealed to the Nawuri by equating the perpetual subjection of the Nawuri to the obnoxious Gonja rule.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the Nawuri joined the trail of the advocates for the separation of British Togoland from the Gold Coast since that was the only way for them to liberate themselves from Gonja rule. It was against this background that the Nawuri made various oral and written

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<sup>1</sup> The Togoland Question was a political question that arose following the arbitrary division of Togo and into French and British spheres of Togoland after the defeat of Germany in World War I. The arbitrary division of Togoland into French and British spheres and the administration of the latter as part of the Gold Coast bred two conflicting sentiments on the future status of these two Togoland Territories. While some inhabitants in the two Territories clamoured for a re-union of the two Togolands, others called for a union of British Togoland with the Gold Coast. These sentiments were heightened when it was imminent that Gold Coast was about to gain her independence.

<sup>2</sup> Amenumey, D.E.K. The Ewe Unification Movement: A Political History. (Ghana Universities Press, Accra. 1989), p 265

representations to the United Nations Organization stating their desire for the unification of British and French Togolands.

Nevertheless, the Nawuri's call for separation was not uncompromising: a stance that clearly depicted that their conviction was occasioned by their objection to Gonja rule. In a petition to the UN Visiting Mission to Togoland in 1952, the Nawuri stated that:

... (g) we forever wish to be under the British Rule and with the Gold Coast but under the Colony Administration and never to be within the framework of the Northern Territories.<sup>3</sup>

The picture was even clearer in a petition the Nawuri sent to the Government of the Supreme Military Council in 1975. In it the Nawuri stated that:

... it is the Gonja marital rule we have for long been struggling to remove the yoke from our necks that has led Messrs J.K. Mbimadong and Friko, our advisors and honorary secretaries to associate themselves with the Western Togolanders for separation in order to free us from Gonja dominion... Frankly speaking, we want to remain in Ghana and have our Local council retained at Kpandai without Gonja dominion or interference...<sup>4</sup>

In order to create a platform for consultation and representations of the peoples of French and British Togolands on the future status of their territories, the British and French administering powers established the Enlarged Joint Togoland Consultative Commission (EJTCC) on July 14, 1950. The Commission was to consist of forty-five representatives to be freely elected— twenty-eight from French Togoland and seventeen

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<sup>3</sup> Petition of the Nawuri and the Nanjuro in the Northern Section of Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship to the August Body of the United Nations Visiting Mission. Undated, p.3.

<sup>4</sup> Petition from Nana Bakianso Asasiadjo (Nawuriwura) and Karikari Ata (Senior Asafo-ache), Kpandai to the special Action Unit. Accra of the Supreme Military Council, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1975.

from British Togoland.<sup>5</sup> In British Togoland, fifteen members were to be directly elected, and one each nominated by the Togoland Union and All Ewe Conference (AEC). The Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas under the Gonja rule in the Northern Territories were to elect one representative. Consequently, the Nawuri, the Nchumuru, the Basari, the Konkomba, the Kotokoli, the Dagomba and even some of the Gonja met at Kpandai on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1950 and unanimously elected Mr. Sawli Godfred Friko as their representative.<sup>6</sup> The Rev. Messrs Theobald and Chris, both Missionaries of the Worldwide Evangelisation Crusade (WEC) supervised the election. Rev. Mr. Chris wrote a letter on behalf of the inhabitants in these territories to the Governor of the Gold Coast, which was copied to the District Commissioner at Salaga and the United Nations in August 1950 testifying the election of Friko as the representative of the Nawuri and Nchumuru areas on the Enlarged Joint Togoland Consultative Commission.<sup>7</sup> As a representative of the Nawuri and Nchumuru areas, Mr. S.G. Friko was to have attended the first session of the Commission scheduled for early October 1950 in Lome. However, for reasons unknown to the inhabitants in the Nawuri and Nchumuru areas the meeting was postponed to 7<sup>th</sup> November the same year. The Nawuri and the Nchumuru welcomed the postponement since, to them, it would enable them adequately organise their oral and written representations to the Commission. Things, however, did not work well as the Nawuri and the Nchumuru expected. A dramatic turn of events unfolded in the Nawuri area a few weeks before the first session of the Commission in November. On October

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<sup>5</sup> The Administering powers later increased the representation from French Togoland to thirty, thus bringing the total membership of the EJTCC to forty-seven.

<sup>6</sup> Resolution adopted by the People of Nanjuro and Nawuri in the Kpandai Area of the Trust Territory of Western Togoland at a Meeting held at Banda on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1950.

<sup>7</sup> Telegram Communication Transmitted by Sawli, Katiejeli, to Commissioner, NT<sup>S</sup>. Tamale, dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 1950.

10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Kpandai, the Nawuri capital, was said to have been besieged by the District Commissioner for Salaga and a contingent of police demanding immediately the withdrawal of S.G. Friko as a representative of Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas on the Commission.<sup>8</sup> A great tussle ensued between the Nawuri and the Gonja on that issue as the former alleged that the Kabachewura J.A. Braimah influenced the District Commissioner. Though the Nawuri were not, however, certain about the identity of the person behind the District Commissioner's action, they did not rule out an under-hand dealing by the Gonja to hinder the Nawuri from sending their own kinsman to represent them on the Commission. The District Commissioner, however, claimed that the inhabitants in the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas, particularly the Nawuri and the Nchumuru had no right to nominate a member to represent the areas on the Enlarged Joint Togoland Consultative Commission. The District Commissioner and the Gonja argued that since the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas were under the Gonja Traditional Authority, it was within the purview of the Gonja to nominate a Gonja regardless of whether he resides in these territories under Trans-Volta Togoland or in the Northern Territories in the Gold Coast to represent the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas on the Enlarge Joint Togoland Consultative Commission. Whatever was the rationale and whoever was behind the District Commissioner's action, the former seized the documents attesting to the nomination of S.G. Friko. Besides, Rev. Mr. Chris was allegedly banished from Kpandai by the District Commissioner for allegedly supervising the election of Friko and writing a letter on behalf of the Nawuri and the Nchumuru attesting to his election. Violence nearly broke out in Kpandai, but for the presence of the contingent of police who had unalloyed allegiance to the District Commissioner and the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Gonja disturbance was averted. Though violence was averted, the District Commissioner's action further triggered off the soured relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja. In reaction to the District Commissioner's action, the Nawuri as well as S.G. Friko transmitted communications to the United Nations about the District Commissioner's action. In his telegram transmitted to the United Nations, S.G. Friko stated that:

...following communication transmitted United Nations and Secretary Accra for your kind intervention reads have honour repudiate action Gold Coast Government Consultative Commission Togoland in respect Kpandai area represent them. My name submitted august stop meeting scheduled Lome early October postponed November but on October 10 and 13 District Commissioner Salaga Gold Coast in Consultation with Kabachewura Gold Coast Gonja chief encroached upon liberty and rights peoples Kpandai area of Trust Territory following petitions from Nanjuros and Nawuris join Krachi move south by forcing up self made plebiscite of alien majority against natural owners of land thus violating the Atlantic Charter and Trust Territory declaration stop. All correspondence frontier permit allowance papers and instructions consultative commission submitted to me by Gold Coast government unlawfully seized by Kabachewura thus fleecing (sic) me of all the powers virtually conferred on me by natural rulers approved by government to attend Consultative Commission Lome stop Immediate Intervention of special enquiry instituted otherwise capital unrest stop.<sup>9</sup>

In another petition, the Nawuri demanded the unconditional return of all the documents on the Enlarged Joint Togoland Consultative Commission to Friko.<sup>10</sup> In it the Nawuri stated that

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<sup>9</sup> Telegram Communication transmitted by S.G. Friko of Katiejeli to Commissioner of Northern Territories, dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 1950.

<sup>10</sup> Resolution Adopted by the People of Nanjuro and Nawuri in the Kpandai Area of the Trust Territory of Western Togoland at a Meeting held at Banda on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1950.

...all documents thus seized from Mr. Friko Sawli, the accredited representative of the Nanjuros (Nchumurus) and Nawuris, since Mr. Allassan Mahama Jawula is a Gonja man, from the Northern Territories who does not represent our views as Togoland, be forth with returned to our accredited representative Mr. Friko Sawli who was elected at Kpandai on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1950, to represent us in subsequent meetings of the Enlarged Consultative Commission...<sup>11</sup>

Troubled by the action of the District Commissioner and Kabachewura J. A. Braimah, the Nawuri filed a suit against them in the Magistrate's court in Salaga.<sup>12</sup> The court, which was presided over by one J.H. MacGiffen, a colonial official ruled in favour of the defendants.<sup>13</sup> The verdict of the court came as no surprise to the Nawuri, since as a colonial mechanism, it was overtly biased in favour of established institutions. Besides, it was almost impossible for the court to pass a judgement against the defendants who were carrying out actions that were part of the overall policies of the British administering power to retain and integrate British Togoland in the Gold Coast.

In April 1951, the Nawuri further petitioned the Assistant District Commissioner, Salaga and appealed to him to use his moral and rational conscience to ensure a consideration of their plight in order to afford them the opportunity to send a Nawuri to represent them on the Commission. In the petition the Nawuri intimated that:

we wish to intimate you that the last session of the consultative commission held at Lome was not attended by a Togolander on our behalf, but by a Gonja man who is at the moment somewhere in the service of the Gonja a native Authority in the Gold Coast.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> A petition by Council of Nawuri Elders to the Assistant District Commissioner at Salaga dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 1951

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Notwithstanding the request, no redress was made to the Nawuri plight. Meanwhile, the Kabachewura was alleged to have unilaterally nominated Alhassan Jawula to represent the Nawuri and Nchumuru areas on the Enlarged Joint Togoland Consultative Commission. In frustration and demonstration of their anger, some pockets of the Nawuri resorted to a kind of violence tantamount to guerrilla warfare. They laid ambush on farm paths, captured the Gonja and molested them. At other times a *horde* of the Nawuri congregated in the night *preying* for suspecting Gonja.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Nawuri women pounced on their Gonja counterparts at the riverside and beat them. The insecurity and disturbances in Nawuri area, especially in Kpandai, necessitated the establishment of a police post in Kpandai in 1951 to maintain peace.

The Enlarged Joint Togoland Consultative Commission was short lived: it functioned for a short while. In July 1952 the British and French administering authorities sent a memorandum to the Trusteeship Council requesting for the implementation of effective political and fiscal policies on the future of Togoland to tentatively reflect the wishes of the people.<sup>16</sup> The Authorities also maintained in the Memorandum that the political organisation of the territories must be economically, fiscally and politically practicable.<sup>17</sup> The administering authorities called for the setting up of a Joint Togoland Council with executive and legislative powers to extend over both territories. The Council was to be made up of members of the two territories of

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong at Kpandai on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2001

<sup>16</sup> Amenumey. *op. cit.* p-101.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

Togoland<sup>18</sup> The United Nations Trusteeship Council approved of this idea, and the Joint Togoland Council was established in July 1952 to replace the defunct Enlarged Joint Togoland Consultative Commission. Members to the Council, who were to be elected by adult suffrage, should be over twenty-one years, literate in English and should be natives of the area they represented.<sup>19</sup> It was also agreed that political parties and the ethnic groups concerned in the Togoland territories should be informed. The Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories wrote a letter to the Nawuri through S.G. Sawli to that effect.<sup>20</sup> The Commissioner also explained the structure of the Council in the letter. He intimated that:

you will be aware of the existence of the Joint Council for Togoland Affairs and the fact that it has hitherto been constituted, on the British side, by nine members from the Southern section of Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship and by eight members from the Northern section. It has been decided that in future each section shall be represented by three (3) members and I decided on the following distribution: (i) one member for the Alfai Local Council Area, and that part of the Kpembe Local Council Area with Togoland. (ii) One member for the Yendi, Chereponi, Gushiego, Nanumba Kworli, Sunson and Yelzori Local Council areas, and for those parts of the Karaga and Mion Local Council area which may lie within Togoland. (iii) one member for the Yunyoo, Bunkpurugu, and East Agolle Local Council areas and for that part of the Bawku Local Council area which lies within Togoland.<sup>21</sup>

The Trusteeship Council pointed out that the methods to be adopted for the election of members to the Council should be based on adult suffrage. It also instructed the administering powers to accordingly inform the parties and ethnic groups in their

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> A letter from the District Commissioner (G.A), to S.G. Friko of Katiejeli dated 20<sup>th</sup> June 1952.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

territories about the establishment of the Council and the methods of electing members. In the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas, the situation was different; the methods of election were alluded to. The Nawuri and the Nchumuru were not officially informed about the establishment of the Council, neither were they nor the inhabitants in the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas given the franchise to elect a representative of their choice through the ballot box. Instead, the Alfai Local Council arrogated such rights to itself and unilaterally nominated one Mr. Alhassan Jawula as the representative of the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas. Since the Nawuri, the Nchumuru and their loyal Konkomba and Basari allies regarded the Alfai Local Council as a rubber stamp, they were not slow to read the action of it as the machinations of the Gonja. Subsequent events vindicated this view of the Nawuri and the Nchumuru. It was later revealed that the Kabachewura J. A. Braimah masterminded the Local Council's action.<sup>22</sup> The Nawuri demanded the holding of elections to elect a representative in accordance with the methods outlined by the Trusteeship Council.<sup>23</sup> However, the demands of the Nawuri were not met, neither was the membership of Alhassan Jawula withdrawn nor were elections conducted. The Gonja stuck to their policy aimed at absorbing the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas not only in the Gonja Kingdom, but also in the Gold Coast. This explains why they were adamant to the demands and plights of the Nawuri and the

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<sup>22</sup> It was alleged that the Kabachewura wrote to Alhassan Chamba, a Nanumba and a friend of the Nawuri, concerning the representative on Enlarged Joint Togoland Consultative Commission. It was alleged that in the letter the Kabachewura pleaded with Alhassan to convince the Nawuri to accept Alhassan Jawula as their representative. According to Friko, Alhassan Chamba came to him and told him to forget about the previous scuffle over his representation on the Enlarged Consultative Commission and told him to convince the Nawuri to do same. Alhassan Chamba was also alleged to have told Friko to convince the Nawuri to accept the candidature of Alhassan Jawula on the Joint Togoland Council and urged all to rally behind him. The Kabachewura was the chief of Kabache in the Kpembe division of the Gonja Kingdom. The Kabachewura during this period was J. A. Braimah. He was a member of the Coussey Committee of 1949 and one of the six chiefs elected by the Electoral College in Northern Ghana to the General Assembly in 1951-1954.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with S.G. Friko of Katiejeli on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2001.



Nchumuru. The Gonja believed that adherence to the Trusteeship Council's methods, particularly the holding of elections, would ensure the victory of a candidate chosen by the Nawuri and the Nchumuru: a situation they loathed. This was because numerically, the population of the Nawuri and the Nchumuru was about six times that of the Gonja. For example, as late as 1948 the population of the Gonja in the Nawuri area was four hundred and thirty-six while that of the Nawuri was one thousand one hundred and ninety-five.<sup>24</sup> When the Joint Togoland Council met for the first time in Lome in August 1952, it was reported that the member from the Nawuri area, Alhassan Jawula, was the only representative from Northern section of British Togoland that attended the meeting. The Mamprusi, the Dagomba and the Nanumba Districts had declined to elect their representatives.<sup>25</sup> Alhassan Jawula continued to attend the sessions of the Joint Togoland Council until its dissolution later in the same year. Meanwhile, Alhassan Jawula did not brief the Nawuri of the resolutions on the Council; neither did he consult them to obtain a consensus on oral and written representation of the Nawuri area.<sup>26</sup> Just like the Enlarged Joint Consultative Council, the Joint Togoland Council was ineffective and could only function for months. In fact, it was defunct since the beginning of 1953.

On 8<sup>th</sup> December 1953 the United Nation's General Assembly passed a resolution reaffirming the re-establishment of the Joint Togoland Council and recommend that members should be directly elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage.<sup>27</sup> However, the issue of re-establishing the defunct Joint Togoland Council was resurrected by the middle of 1953. While this issue was in the pipeline, in June 1953 the Government

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<sup>24</sup> "African Population According to Tribal Divisions, 1948" in Gold Coast Colonial Office Report on British Sphere of Togoland for the year ending 1949, pp. 146-147.

<sup>25</sup> Amenumey, op. cit. p. 104.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Nana S. G. Friko at Katicjeli on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

<sup>27</sup> Amenumey, op. cit. p. 106.

Agent on the Alfai Local Council briefed the Council on the impending re-establishment of the Joint Togoland Council and urged the Alfai Local Council to take a decision on it before long. The clerk maintained that the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas were the only territories in the Northern section of British Togoland, which sent a representative to the defunct Joint Togoland Council when it was in session; the Dagomba, the Nanumba and the Mamprusi had declined. He also further claimed that Southern Togoland had unanimously resolved to boycott elections to the Joint Togoland Council. Consequently, the clerk argued that there was also the need to disassociate the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas from the Joint Togoland Council. A motion was tabled in one of the sessions of the Alfai Local Council to vote on it.<sup>28</sup> The three Nawuri members on the Local Council objected to the clerk's view claiming that the citizens in the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas but not the Local Council had the right to decide on that issue. Hence any action by the Local Council to decide on this matter would be ultra-vires.<sup>29</sup> However, their view, which was indeed valid, was turned down as Gonja propaganda had already succeeded in winning the sympathy of the members on the council, who were already pro-Gonja. Annoyed by the action of the Alfai Local Council, the three Nawuri members walked out of the meeting and refused to vote on the motion.<sup>30</sup>

Disgusted by the unilateral action of the Alfai Local Council, Nana Atorsah re-echoed the methods outlined by the Trusteeship Council for the election of representatives to the Joint Togoland Council in a letter to the Government Agent on the Alfai Local Council. He stated that:

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<sup>28</sup> A Letter from Nana Atorsah Agyeman I. Nawuriwura to the Government Agent, Salaga, Northern Territories, dated 19 June 1953.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

the General Assembly's resolution which approved the establishment of the Joint Council for Togoland also emphasizes that the method to be adopted must be based on universal adult suffrage, and urges that the two Administering Authorities must fully consult with all the political parties concerned as to what method is best suitable for the election (sic). I have not heard of any alteration in the General Assembly's resolution concerning the method of election (sic) to the council as yet. That if there is any need of consulting the Nawuri tribe in connection with this election (sic), the Local Council which is the government organisation is not the appropriate body...<sup>31</sup>

Deploing the action of the Government Agent and Alfai Local Council when it got wind of it, the Togoland Congress intimated that:

the secretariat has been given to understand that you have instructed the Alfai Local Council to reject participation in the elections to the Joint Council for Togoland Affairs...According to the General Assembly Resolution and the statement from the secretary of State the method of election to the Joint Council and the composition of the Council will be decided after full consultation with the leaders of the various groups and parties by the Administering Authorities has been held...<sup>32</sup>

In fact, Nana Atorsah and the Togoland Congress were just crying over spilt milk as the Council had already taken an entrenched and irreversible decision to disassociate the Nawuri area from the Joint Togoland Council. The dreams of the Nawuri to get a Nawuri member on the Joint Council for Togoland were further shattered and sealed when the British Administering power linked its participation in it to the impending general elections in 1954. Consequently, the Joint Togoland Council was not re-established. Nevertheless, the Nawuri continued to stress their demand for their area to

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>32</sup> Letter from the Secretariat of the Togoland Congress. National Headquarters, Hohoe to the Government Agent. Salaga. dated 24<sup>th</sup> Junc 1952.

be united with French Togoland and southern British Togoland on various United Nations platforms and to the United Nations Visiting Mission to Togoland. For example, during the tour of the UN Visiting Mission to Togoland, various petitions were received on the question of the integration of British Togoland to or separation from French Togoland. In 1952 in one of its visits the Mission reported that:

the leaders of the Mamprusi, Dagomba and Nanumba tribes asked again as they have done in the past for continued integration with the Gold Coast<sup>33</sup>

The report of the Mission further stated that the only apparent dissident note was in the Gonja area [the Nawuri area] where three Nawuri members on the Alfai Local Council asked that their area should be transferred to the southern section and added that British Togoland should be unified with Togoland under French administration.<sup>34</sup> The UN Visiting Mission, however, indicated that:

this part of their demand was quite secondary to their controversy with the Gonja; this controversy had arisen because the Nawuris were subjected to the Gonja under the Native Authority system.<sup>35</sup>

In the same year, the Nawuri and the Nchumuru authorised Mr. H.E. Anku Morny to represent them at the UN General Assembly's session in October 1952.<sup>36</sup> The letter authorising him read that:

We the under mentioned Natural rulers of Nawuriland and Nanjuroland in Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship do hereby authorise the bearer, Mr. H.E. Anku

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<sup>33</sup> Amenumey, *op. cit* p 176.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>36</sup> H.E. Anku Morny was a Southern British Togolander and a member of the Togoland Congress. He, together with Antor visited the Nawuri area periodically to campaign for separation of British Togoland from the Gold Coast and to listen to the views of the Nawuri.



Morny to present our firm and foremost desire of being separated from the protectorate of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast and be placed in the Southern Section of Togoland, as were (sic) during the German Regime, and do hereby request our delegate and representative to protest against the arbitrary (division) of the Nanjuro tribe between the Krachi state and Salaga district in the protectorate of the Gold coast. That we also authorise the bearer, the said H.E. Anku Morny to protest vehemently against imperialists form of Administrative union which has absorbed our land which is part of the Togoland into the protectorate which is part of the Crown Colony of the Gold Coast before the General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation, and to demand on our behalf the immediate unification and independence of Togoland.<sup>37</sup>

In another development, the Nawuri and other ethnic groups in the Northern section of British Togoland mandated Alhassan Chamba to present their oral and written representations to the Trusteeship Council in December in 1952.<sup>38</sup> Commenting on the mandate and speech of Alhassan Chamba to the Trusteeship Council, Amenumey states that

Alhassan Chamba, who claimed that the chiefs and peoples of the Nanumba, Nawuri, Nanjuros, Konkomba and B'moba tribes in Northern Togoland had unanimously asked him to speak on their behalf, accused government officials in the territory of conducting propaganda on behalf of those who wanted integration, and he argued that the only solution possible was a plebiscite under UN supervision.<sup>39</sup>

Similarly, in 1954 the Nawuri and the Nchumuru mandated Alhassan Chamba and S G Antor to present their representations [both oral and written] at the U.N General

<sup>37</sup> Mandate from the Chiefs, the Elders and Peoples of Nawuri and Nanjuro in that part of Togoland under the United Kingdom Trusteeship situated between Krachi and Nanumba states Authorising Mr. H.E. Anku Morny to speak on their Behalf at the General Assembly of the U.N.O., dated 20<sup>th</sup> October 1952.

<sup>38</sup> Alhassan Chamba (the father of Mohammed Ibn Chambas) was a Nanumba native in the Northern Territory of British Togoland. He was one of the few supporters of the Togoland Congress in Northern Territory of British Togoland.

<sup>39</sup> Amenumey. *op. cit* p. 244

Assembly's Session held that year.<sup>40</sup> The content of the mandate was the same as that in October 1952.

#### **4.2 The Togoland Congress, the Nawuri and politics in the Nawuri area 1951 – 1956**

The Togoland Congress was the offspring of the Togoland Union, the Togoland Farmers Union, the Togoland United Nations Association, and Togoland Youth Conference. The Congress, formed in 1951 grew out of the division within the ranks of the Togoland Union on the question whether there should be collaboration with the administering authorities or not and whether Togoland unification should be pursued within the existing administrative framework.<sup>41</sup> The following were the executive members of Togoland Congress in the Gold Coast: Amanier, Regent and representative of the paramount chief of Buem (chairman and president), Sekyere I of Atendo Native Authority (vice-chairman and vice-present), and Antor, the party's originator (Secretary-General).<sup>42</sup>

Antor, already well known in the Nawuri area, embarked on the party's campaign to that part of the Northern section of British Togoland. As part of its effort to show concern for its members and to step up manpower development needed for its campaign network in the Gold Coast, the party sponsored a Nawuri to Akome Gbogame College. In 1951 Mbimadong was admitted into Akome Gbogame College with a scholarship

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<sup>40</sup> Mandate from the Chiefs, Elders and peoples of Nawuri and Nanjuro in that part of Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship situated between Kete-Krachi and Nanumba states Authorizing S.G. Antor and A.A. Chamba to speak on their behalf at the U.N. General Assembly's meeting, dated 30<sup>th</sup> October 1954.

<sup>41</sup> Amenumey. *op. cit.* p 139.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*

package from the Togoland Congress.<sup>43</sup> Even at school when Mbimadong was asked by the school authorities to pay an additional five pounds five shillings for boarding and feeding, the Togoland Congress accordingly paid the said amount when it received a letter to that effect.<sup>44</sup> Determined to become a territorial party, the Togoland Congress soon appointed Regional Secretaries for the North and Central British Togoland.<sup>45</sup> Mbimadong was appointed the Regional Secretary of Northern British Togoland.<sup>46</sup> In December 1952 the Togoland Congress sent a delegation to make oral and written representations to the Trusteeship Council. The delegation included Mbimadong who declared that contrary to what the Committee had often been told, the people of the Northern section of British Togoland were anxious to be united with Togoland. He further intimated that the people of the Northern section of British Togoland were certain that their progress would be far more rapid if a single government administered the whole of Togoland.<sup>47</sup> Mbimadong further asserted that the only reason why the inhabitants of North British Togoland had not expressed their wish for unification earlier was the pressure they were being subjected to.<sup>48</sup> Mbimadong also indicated that the people of North British Togoland were enjoined to express their opinion only through tribal chiefs who, being subjected to the authority of the District Commissioners, were liable to serious penalties if they stayed too long in the south since the administration feared they would become aware of all that they lacked.<sup>49</sup> Finally, Mbimadong stated that the people of North British Togoland had decided to support their brothers of the south and French

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<sup>43</sup> A letter from Joseph K. Mbimadong. Akome Gbogame College to S.G. Friko of Katiejeli dated 20<sup>th</sup> May 1955.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Amenumey. op. cit. p 142.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

Togoland, a decision that had long been suppressed by the administering authority that had *imported* inhabitants of the Gold Coast and appointed them chiefs of British Togoland.<sup>50</sup>

At the local scene, young and enterprising Nawuri Youth, especially those with the rudiments of reading, writing and articulation of English were recruited by the Togoland Congress to campaign in the Nawuri area for the separation of British Togoland from the Gold Coast.<sup>51</sup> These staunch Nawuri supporters of the Togoland Congress were tasked to explain the benefits and necessity of the separation of British Togoland from the Gold Coast to the Konkomba and the Basari Communities in the Nawuri area.<sup>52</sup> They were also instructed to entrench the slogan of the Togoland Congress, *ablorde gbadjaa* among the electorate in the Nawuri area.<sup>53</sup> The assiduousness with which these Nawuri sympathisers of the Togoland Congress worked in the Nawuri area succeeded in making the party's slogan extremely popular. Such was the entrenchment of the slogan *ablorde gbadjaa* that even an infant of about six years at that time associated it to S.G. Antor and also likened it to France. Symbolically, it demonstrated the role Antor played in the Togoland Congress. Besides, it also demonstrated that the Congress stood for the separation of British Togoland from the Gold Coast. In fact, it can be conjectured that almost all supporters of the Togoland Congress in the Nawuri area, with the exception of the few educated elite, did not know the actual name of the party except its slogan. When asked the name of the party the

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Ibid

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

<sup>51</sup> Some of the Nawuri supporters the Togoland Congress recruited for campaign in Nawuri area were Sawli Godfred Friko, Attah Karikari and Ayadong.

<sup>52</sup> *Ablorde Gbadja* is an Ewe phrase that means "Freedom for all."

Nawuri supported in the plebiscite to determine the future status of British Togoland, and the benefits they derived from it, an informant remarked that:

*ablorde gbajaa* was our party. The party “opened our eyes”, made us to know our rights. It also stepped up the chieftaincy institution among us (Nawuris) and finally, *ablorde gbajaa* emboldened us to challenge Gonjas and “English” (British) without fear<sup>54</sup>

Apart from some of the Nawuri youth who were recruited to campaign for the Togoland Congress, campaign for it was also conducted in the palaces of Nawuri chiefs and during festive occasions. It became apparently common for court proceedings in the palaces of Nawuri chiefs to end with politics. The chiefs publicly announced to the bystanders as well as the plaintiff(s) and defendant (s) the party they would vote for (Togoland Congress [separation]) and asked all to support that party. Similarly, on festive occasions such as *Ejo ji* and *Ayuji*, chiefs and Nawuri politicians took turns to explain the need to support the Togoland Congress and vote for separation in the impending plebiscite.<sup>55</sup> Apart from the Nawuri campaign for the Togoland Congress, they also made financial and material contributions to it. To become a member of the party, each Nawuri procured a membership card for one shilling (1s); thereafter members paid six pence (6d) monthly as membership dues.<sup>56</sup> In addition, the Nawuri presented gifts such as foodstuffs and livestock to the party officials anytime they visited any Nawuri community.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Mbowura Boila of Kpandai, Ayafalewura. 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2001

<sup>55</sup> *Ejoji* and *Ayuji* are yam and guinea corn festivals respectively among the Nawuri. The time for their celebrations varies as it depends on the length of the agricultural season. Generally speaking, however, *Ejoji* is celebrated between July and September, and *Ayuji* between November and December every year.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Nana S G Friko at Katiejeli on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

<sup>57</sup> Amenumey. *op. cit* p167.



#### 4.3 The Convention People's Party (CPP), the Gonja, the Nawuri and politics in the Nawuri area, 1951-1956

After its formation in 1949, the Convention People's Party<sup>58</sup> initiated various programmes and policies to secure the independence of Ghana. In the 1950s when the Togoland question came to a climax, the CPP canvassed vigorously for the integration of British Togoland with the Gold Coast. To this end the CPP adopted various but effective measures. Firstly, it succeeded in winning some of the All Ewe Congress members such as K.A. Gbedemah, Amegbe, F.Y. Asare and G.O. Awuma.<sup>59</sup> Secondly, the party embarked on the politicisation of traditional chieftaincy or land disputes among contesting groups in areas where there were breeding grounds. The staunch support the Anfoega gave the CPP, for example, has been attributed partly to his rivalry with Vakpo.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, in the Nawuri area, the CPP supported the Gonja chiefly clans against the Nawuri in the question of the allodial title of lands in the Nawuri area. Consequently, all the Gonja in Northern British Togoland supported the CPP.<sup>61</sup>

The CPP enjoyed a kingly ride in the hearts of the Gonja in the Nawuri area. In addition, the Northern Peoples party (NPP) formed in April 1954 complemented the CPP's campaign for union of British Togoland with the Gold Coast.

The Gonja ardently embarked on campaigns in the Kotokoli, the Basari and the Konkomba communities in the Nawuri area to vote for a union of British Togoland with

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<sup>58</sup> Hereafter the CPP.

<sup>59</sup> G.K. Amegbe was a member of the Working Committee of the All Ewe Conference who opened the CPP branch at Ho in October 1950 in his capacity as the Regional CPP Chairman. F.Y. Asare who won the south Togoland constituency parliamentary elections in 1951 on the ticket of the CPP was formerly a Togo unionist. G.O. Awuma was also a former advocate of Togoland unification who later became a CPP member. Also see Amenumcy, *op. cit.*, pp. 69 - 170.

<sup>60</sup> Amenumcy, *op. cit.* p. 169.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Nana Ayadong of Kpandai on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2001.

the Gold Coast in the 1956 plebiscite. Though support for a union with and separation from the Gold Coast were stratified on ethnic lines between the Gonja and the Nawuri respectively, it was not absolute. A small section of Nawuri elite who were teachers supported the CPP and its campaign for a union of British Togoland with the Gold Coast. Among them were Agbedji, Asuo and Fedelis Atorsah. They were not only sceptical of their prospects under French colonial rule, but also their reaction was based on a careful juxtaposition of the French and British colonial policies. According to Friko, Atorsah argued that the *corvée* system of the French colonial power was diabolical and would be applied to British Togoland if that area came under French rule and stressed that it would lead to labour unrest and stifle economic activities in the Nawuri area.<sup>62</sup> Another argument advanced by the elite was that it was politically unwise for all the Nawuri to throw their weight behind the Togoland Congress and its call for separation. Commenting on this argument, Agbedji asserts that:

our loyalty to the Togoland Congress meant disassociating ourselves from the CPP. At the same time the CPP had won the support of the Gonja in the Nawuri area and that explains why the CPP government was blind to our plight. Throwing our weight behind the CPP would help us win the confidence of the party and this would necessarily oblige the government to change its adverse policies against us. Our stance was aimed at breaking the monopoly that the CPP and Togoland Congress enjoyed among the Gonja and the Nawuri respectively. As elite we want to prove the point that party politics is not necessarily equivocal to ethnic identity. In other words, it does not mean that once the chief and his elders are supporting a particular party, then it was traditionally binding on all the members of the tribe to support that party. In fact, we were proving the point that support for party is not a product of the collective decision of a tribe, but that of an individual.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with Nana S.G Friko at Katiejeli on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Nana Agbedji Kasikor, Nkanchina-wura on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2001.

Finally, the support of some Nawuri elite for the CPP and its campaign for a union of British Togoland with the Gold Coast was a product of a careful study of the likely pattern of votes in the plebiscite. The Nawuri elite were of the conviction that the votes in the impending plebiscite in 1956 would be in favour of a union of British Togoland with the Gold Coast. Consequently, since the CPP campaigned for a union, it was rationally prudent and expedient to support it. Explaining this further, Nana Agbedji hinted that:

it was politically disastrous to support a losing party. Our votes were our power, hence casting our votes for a winning party meant gaining our power. On the other hand, knowingly voting for a losing party meant losing our power. Even if the policies of the CPP were not in our favour, there was need for our support for the goals or ideals it stood for if such ideals would attract the highest votes in the plebiscite. It is politically and tactically catastrophic for one to support a friend against an enemy in a war that the latter becomes victorious. It was better to support an enemy who would win elections than to support a friend who would apparently lose.<sup>64</sup>

The events of the day were vindictive of the visions of the Nawuri elite as the results of the 1956 plebiscite showed that a majority of the people in the territory favoured union with an Independent Gold Coast.<sup>65</sup>

However, though the Nawuri elite fraternised with the CPP, their relations with Gonja pro-CPP and pro-union of British Togoland with the Gold Coast members was not cordial at all. In fact, the Gonja leadership of the CPP in the Nawuri area refused to accept the Nawuri in the party claiming the Nawuri were intruders and not faithful supporters of the party. Consequently, the Gonja leadership of the CPP in Nawuri area

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> The results of the plebiscite showed that 3,166 voted for union of British Togoland with the Gold Coast while 2,729 favoured a separation.

opposed vehemently the recognition of the membership of the Nawuri in the CPP fraternity by the regional executive of the party. In late 1955 the Gonja sympathisers of the CPP in the Nawuri area planned a demonstration in Tamale against the recognition of the CPP membership of the Nawuri by the Regional Executive of the party.<sup>66</sup> A dramatic scene unfolded in Tamale on the appointed day. The leadership of Nawuri supporters of the CPP - Agbedji and Fedelis Atorsah - were said to have mobilised their Nawuri party members and left for Tamale a day ahead of the scheduled date for the Gonja demonstration.<sup>67</sup> The Nawuri CPP supporters quickly organised a demonstration against the intended Gonja demonstration against the Regional Executive of the party.<sup>68</sup> On the following day, the Gonja arrived at Tamale to embark on their demonstration. As the Gonja disembarked from their buses to stage their demonstration, the Nawuri CPP members pounced on them, turning the scene into a chaotic and brutish one.<sup>69</sup> But for the intervention of police detailed to the scene to quell the violence, it would have degenerated into a war between the Nawuri and the Gonja.

Back to the Nawuri area, the situation was not different from the nasty scene in Tamale. In Kpandai in particular, Nawuri supporters for separation clashed with their Gonja opponents almost everyday on trivial issues. In pito bars, arguments on social matters between a Nawuri pro-separatist and a Gonja pro-unionist soon took a political dimension and often resulted in clashes. In such situations, the Nawuri and the Gonja respectively fraternised with their kinsmen, thus protracting and adding an ethnic dimension to the clashes. In such clashes between the Nawuri and Gonja, the Nawuri

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<sup>66</sup> Interview with Nana Agbedji Kasekor, Nkanchinawura on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2001.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

CPP members went to the aid of their kinsmen. According to Nana Agbedji, they did so because they (the Nawuri CPP members) had an axe to grind with the Gonja for liberation and ownership of their lands.<sup>70</sup> These clearly epitomised how local feuds between the Nawuri and the Gonja in the Nawuri area often took political dimension and vice versa. Kpandai market days saw the worst clashes between the Nawuri and the Gonja every week. On such days belligerent Nawuri, mostly under the influence of alcohol, came to Kpandai and destroyed the party paraphernalia of the CPP to the provocation of the Gonja, resulting in clashes.

#### 4.4 The 1956 Plebiscite and after

On the day of plebiscite itself, 9<sup>th</sup> May 1956, there were no incidents. The heavy presence of the police at all polling centres helped to maintain peace. The polls in the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas of the Gonja District in British Togoland stood at 3,166 and 2,729 in favour of union and separation respectively.<sup>71</sup> Though dissatisfied with the results of the plebiscite in the Nawuri area and British Togoland in general, there was nothing the Nawuri could do. They, however, contended that the polls in the Nawuri and Nchumuru areas took the turn they did because of the support of the Konkomba for a union. The Nawuri clam that the Gonja succeeded in enticing the Konkomba with attractive packages. This included tax exemptions, allocation of lands free of charge for agricultural purposes and education of their wards. Nevertheless, one could not overrule the role played by the Konkomba members on the Alfai Local Council in the plebiscite. However, the main reason why the Konkomba and the Basari voted for a union of British

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Bening. op. cit. p 88

Togoland with the Gold Coast in the 1956 plebiscite was that a majority of the Konkomba detested a union of the two Togolands. It was feared that the separation of British Togoland from the Gold Coast might lead to an eventual unification of British Togoland with French Togoland in future. According to a Konkomba informant, the reminiscence of their gruesome treatment in the hands of the French compelled them to vote for the unification of British Togoland with the Gold Coast.<sup>72</sup>

Whatever the voting pattern of the Konkomba in the plebiscite, the relations between them and the Nawuri were not marred. On the other hand, the results of the plebiscite unleashed another lethal stroke on the already ruptured relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja. In fact, mutual co-operation between the Nawuri and the Gonja was almost extinct. From 1956 up to the overthrow of the CPP government in 1966, the Nawuri hardly participated in politics. During visits of government officials to the Nawuri area, the Gonja refused to allow them to visit Nawuri chiefs or interact with them. It was not therefore surprising that when the Nawuri heard news of the overthrow of Nkrumah some of them took to the streets in jubilant mood.<sup>73</sup> Consequently, the Nawuri did not hesitate to petition the National Liberation Council for the creation of a constituency for the Nawuri and Nchumuru areas in East Gonja District, though it was full of condemnation of the erstwhile CPP government.<sup>74</sup> In the petition, the Nawuri stated that:

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<sup>72</sup> Interview with Pastor Njebi Konkomba at Kpandai on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2001. Njebi contended that the Konkomba adage *ubu ka nyi France abor* (a child doesn't know the problems in France – apparently in French Togoland) reminded them of their ordeals in the hands of the French. He contended that some of the Konkomba had their right forefinger chopped off on trivial issues or crimes by the French and that this compelled their first ancestors to migrate to the Nawuri area. The main reason why the French chopped off the right forefinger of the Konkomba in French Togoland was to prevent them from shooting the arrow.

<sup>73</sup> Letter from S. G. Friko of Katiejeli on behalf of the Nawuri to the Chairman of the Constitutional Committee dated 4<sup>th</sup> June 1966.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

... during the period of the deposed Kwame Nkrumah untold sufferings and injustice had been meted to the people of Nawuri, in that, upon persistent requests and petitions to detach Nawuri Traditional Area from that of Gonja which it was unconstitutionally annexed by the former Government against the wishes of the people ... The Army and the Police had successfully toppled that dictatorial and corrupt regime with the spontaneous response and support of the people of Ghana and elsewhere... LONG LIVE THE NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL.<sup>75</sup>

Consequently, the Gonja East Constituency (now Kpandai Constituency) was created for the Nawuri and Nchumuru areas in Salaga District in 1967.<sup>76</sup> In 1969 the differences between the Nawuri and the Gonja were again given expression in multi-party politics. In that year while the Gonja supported the Progress Party (PP), the Nawuri threw their weight behind the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL). With the support of the Nchumuru, the Konkomba and the Basari, the Nawuri candidate (John Kwesi Mbimadong) won the seat of the newly created constituency on the ticket of the NAL. Though the PP candidate did not win the seat of the Gonja East Constituency, the Gonja were, however, happy because their party won the overall parliamentary and presidential elections. Besides, their kinsman, J.A. Braimah was appointed as the Regional Chief Executive of the Northern Region. Since the executive of the Progress Party in Gonja East Constituency were all Gonja, all government functionaries who visited Kpandai apparently dealt with only the Gonja. In most cases, the party executive in Gonja East Constituency only led the functionaries to the palaces of Gonja chiefs to the neglect of their Nawuri counterparts. This latter development made the Nawuri to brand the PP

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Ibid.  
Ibid.

government as a government that sought to enhance the interest of the Gonja. Consequently, the Nawuri hardly reposed any good confidence in the PP government, and just like the CPP government, the Nawuri wished for the collapse of the PP government. It was against this background that the Nawuri and the Nchumuru sent a congratulation message to the National Redemption Council (NRC) on its assumption of power. The message read:

we the undersigned persons in the Kpandai Local Council area wish to congratulate and pledge the support of Nchumurus and Nawuris to the Chairman and members of the National Redemption Council. Long live the National Redemption Council and Ghana.<sup>77</sup>

All this while the Nawuri had not lost the nostalgia for the unification of the former British Togoland with French Togoland. Consequently, in 1975 the Nawuri sent a delegation to Lome to attend a meeting of Togoland to discuss the issue of re-opening the struggle for the Union of former British Togoland with Modern Togo.<sup>78</sup> The Nawuri delegation was made up of J.K. Mbimadong, Attah Karikari and S.G. Friko. On their return to Ghana, the NRC government arrested the first two (Mbimadong and Attah Karikari). Friko, however, managed to escape.<sup>79</sup>

The local feud between the Nawuri and the Gonja was again given expression in the politics of Ghana when party politics resumed in 1979. Just like the previous elections, the local issues between the Nawuri and Gonja also determined their support for political parties in the general elections of 1979. In these elections, while the Nawuri supported the Popular Front Party (PFP), the Gonja supported the People's National Party

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<sup>77</sup> Letter from Nawuriwura and Nanjurowura to the Chairman of the National Redemption Council dated 24<sup>th</sup> January 1972.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Nana S.G. Friko at Katiejeli on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2001.

<sup>79</sup> Petition from Nawuriwura Nana Bakiansu Asaseadwo and Atta Karikari, the Head Asafoache in Kpandai to the Special Action Unit of the National Redemption Council dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1975.

(PNP) Besides, while Mr Agbedji, a Nawuri contested the parliamentary election in Kpandai Constituency on the ticket of the PFP, the Gonja who had the support of the Nchumuru this time fielded Mr. Odzidzator ( a Nchumuru) on the ticket of the PNP. Mr. Odzidzator did not only win the parliamentary election in Kpandai constituency on the ticket of the PNP, but also the PNP [the party the Gonja supported] won the general presidential elections. In addition, Haruna Jawula, a Gonja was appointed the Regional Minister of Northern Region. In fact, the appointment of Haruna Jawula as the minister for Northern Region increased the Nawuri hatred for the PNP. Just like any opposition member to a ruling government, the Nawuri had always wished for overthrow of the PNP government. It was therefore not surprising that some pockets of the Nawuri took to the streets in jubilation when the PNP government was overthrown on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1981. It was reported that when the executive of the PNP in Kpandai constituency made up of Zakari (Chairman), Dare Mahama (secretary) and Issaka Mbema (Treasurer), all Gonja– were arrested and detained in Kpandai Police Station, some Nawuri regularly went to the Police Station and scorned them<sup>80</sup>. In fact, some of these Nawuri went to the extent of calling for the murder of these executive members of the PNP in Kpandai Constituency alleging that they had embezzled state funds.

From the above political developments in the Nawuri area, one can see how local feuds between the Nawuri and the Gonja determined their stance in international politics in the 1950s and politics in Ghana's multi-party elections in 1969 onwards. It is only by understanding the local feuds between the Nawuri and the Gonja that politicians can manipulate them to the advantage of their parties. It can also be envisaged that the Gonja and the Nawuri would not support the same political party concurrently in the current

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<sup>80</sup> Interview with Nana Agbedji Kasekor, Nkanchinawura on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2001.

democratic dispensation in Ghana if the former had not fled from Kpandai to Salaga and Kpembe after the 1991 conflicts.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### NAWURI-GONJA CONFLICTS,

#### **5.1: The immediate causes of the conflicts**

The relationship between the Nawuri and the Gonja from the 1930s onwards had been uneasy and fragile culminating in occasional disturbances between them. As this uneasy and fragile relationship between the Nawuri and the Gonja lingered on, it was not surprising that it degenerated into ethnic conflicts (wars) between them in 1991 and 1992. In these years (1991 and 1992) the Nawuri and the Gonja went to war three times: two occurred in 1991 (7<sup>th</sup> April 1991 and 17<sup>th</sup> June 1991) and one in 1992 (23<sup>rd</sup> May 1992).

The remote causes of the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts were the developments, the differences and the discords between the Nawuri and the Gonja, which were discussed in chapters one through to four. These related to the question of the ownership of lands in the Nawuri area and the disregard of Nawuri chiefs by the Gonja. Others were the impact of Gonja rule on the Nawuri, the amalgamation of the Nawuri area to the Gonja District, and the refusal of the United Nations Organisation, colonial and Independent Ghanaian Governments to satisfy the aspirations of the Nawuri. Since these developments have been explained substantially in the previous chapters, they will not form the focus of this chapter.<sup>1</sup> Instead, only the immediate causes of the conflicts will be discussed here.

One of the immediate causes of the conflicts was the intended convening of the Gonjaland Youth Association meeting in Kpandai between 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> March 1991.

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<sup>1</sup> See pp.36 – 45, 89 – 98, and 117 – 141 of this book. Also see Mbowura, C.K.: "Nawuri-Gonja Conflicts, 1991 – 1992". Unpublished dissertation presented to the Department of History, University of Ghana, Legon, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Award of Bachelor of Arts Degree in History, 1998, pp.18 – 34.



Since the meaning and the objective of the Gonjaland Youth Association were the main reasons why the Nawuri and the Nchumuru objected to the convening of its meeting in Kpandai, which further sparked off violence between the Nawuri and the Gonja, it is rational to make a brief study of it.

In the 1970s the Youth in the Gonja area formed the Gonja Youth Association.<sup>2</sup> This was followed by the formation of other Youth Associations by ethnic groups in the Gonja Traditional area. These included the Nawuri, the Nchumuru, the Vagla, the Basari, the Konkomba, the Kotokoli and the Mo Youth Associations. In about 1984 a conflict erupted between the Gonja and the Vagla in the Sawla area of the Bole District pertaining to chieftaincy affairs.<sup>3</sup> At its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1984, the Northern Regional Security Council (REGSEC) discussed the Gonja-Vagla Conflict and decided that both the Gonja Youth Association and the Vagla Youth Association should be banned in the interest of peace, law and order.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, on 11 May 1984 the two Associations were banned.<sup>5</sup>

The Gonja Youth Association protested against the ban.<sup>6</sup> It is not known what the outcome of their protest was. It is, however, interesting to note that in its protest letter, the Gonja Youth Association described itself differently as the Gonjaland Youth Association.<sup>7</sup> It claimed that:

the Gonjaland Youth Association includes all inhabitants of Gonjaland irrespective of their ethnic groups. It therefore stands to reason that Gonjas, Nchumurus, Konkombas, Nawuris, Lobis, Vaglas, to mention some, all belong to the Gonjaland Youth Association...<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of Emergency Meeting of REGSEC held on 4 May 1984 at Tamale.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* p. 29.

<sup>7</sup> "A protest letter of Gonja Youth Association Against the Ban of the Gonja-land Youth Association", (undated)

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

On 28<sup>th</sup> April 1984 the Secretary to the Gonjaland Youth Association, on the direction of the Association, wrote a letter inviting to certain chairmen of the ethnic Youth Associations in the Gonja Traditional Area to a meeting.<sup>9</sup> Significantly, the chairmen of the Nawuri and the Nchumuru Youth Associations were not invited.<sup>10</sup> It was at the meeting that the Gonjaland Youth Association was formed. The redefinition of the Gonja Youth Association to the Gonjaland Youth Association meant that all lands in Gonja Traditional Area belonged to the Gonja. Analogously, it meant that the land on which the Nawuri and the Nchumuru live is part of Gonjaland or belongs to the Gonja.

One of the objectives of the change of name was ostensibly to bring together all the youth in the Gonja Traditional Area irrespective of their ethnic groups. It was envisaged that this phenomenon would foster the spirit of brotherhood among the people in the Gonja Traditional Area.<sup>11</sup> The Nawuri objected to the convening of the Gonjaland Youth Association meeting in Kpandai on the grounds that Kpandai belongs to them, but not to the Gonja. The Nawuri argued that the convening of a meeting, tagged the Gonjaland Youth Association in Kpandai, had the tendency of indicating that Kpandai, and for that matter all lands in the Nawuri area, belong to the Gonja. At the same time the Gonja decided to hold their Traditional Council meeting in Kpandai to coincide with the meeting of the Gonjaland Youth Association. Tension began to mount in the Kpandai area over the impending meetings. Upon the petitions of the Nawuri and the advice of the Regional Security Committee (REGSEC) in Tamale and the Bureau of National

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<sup>9</sup> A letter from Secretary Gonja land Youth Association to Chairman Vagla, Mo. Lobi. Safalba, Choruba and Norma Youth Associations, dated 28<sup>th</sup> April 1984

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

Ampiah, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 14.

Investigation (BNI), the Northern Regional Administration cancelled the two meetings. This was after the REGSEC had met representatives of the Nawuri, the Gonja and the Nchumuru in Tamale. Indeed, the government banned the activities of all Youth Associations in the Northern Region. One would have expected tension to settle down, but the contrary was the case. This was because while the Nawuri regarded the cancellation of the meeting as a vindication of their cause, the Gonja did not understand why they were prevented from holding a meeting in an area they regarded as theirs. A stage was therefore set for a confrontation between the Gonja and the Nawuri with regard to their respective claims to the ownership of lands in the Nawuri area.

A second immediate cause of the Nawuri-Gonja conflict was a dispute over a parcel of land acquired in January 1985 by the Roman Catholic Church at Kpandai. The Nawuri regarding themselves as landowners allocated that piece of land to the Catholic Church in Kpandai for an agricultural project. The Kanankulaiwura, on the other hand, allotted the same piece of land to one Alhaji Abu, a Gonja, who intended to sell it to a fitter mechanic to erect a workshop. Several dignitaries including John Seidu Karimu, the PNDC Secretary for East Gonja Distract, and His Grace Peter P. Dery, the then Archbishop of Tamale were consulted to help resolve the matter.<sup>12</sup> Matters came to a climax when Nawuri chiefs prevented Alhaji Abu from selling the land to the mechanic on Sunday, 7th April 1991. An argument about who had the right to allocate lands to people in Kpandai and other Nawuri settlements led to a war between the Nawuri and the Gonja.

Two events led to the eruption of the conflicts. These were the flow of arms from Salaga to Kpandai on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1991 and the disturbances that occurred between the

<sup>12</sup> Ampiah *op. cit.* Part I, 134, p. 33.

Nawuri and the Gonja on the following day. On 6<sup>th</sup> April 1991 the police searched Nawuri houses for firearms and ammunition. Around midnight the same day, it was reported that ammunitions were being off-loaded from one Alhaji Haruna's car to his house.<sup>13</sup> The Nawuri eyewitnesses to this scene were said to have reported the matter to the police early in the morning of the following day.<sup>14</sup> It was expected that the police would act upon this information to either search Alhaji Haruna's house or arrest him to assist investigation. Unfortunately, the police did not take either of these actions to allay the fears of the Nawuri about the preparation of the Gonja for a war. The action of the police gave the Nawuri a cause to think that the police were simply collaborating with the Gonja for the latter to launch a surprised attack on them (the Nawuri). Consequently, the Nawuri also began to prepare for a war.

The second event leading to the outbreak of conflicts was the 7<sup>th</sup> April 1991 disturbances. At about noon on 7 April 1991, a disturbance occurred between the Gonja and the Nawuri. Two Nawuri youth, Njimine Samuel Ntiamoah and Kwame Beyifine, were reportedly attacked and wounded by some Gonja young men.<sup>15</sup> The police report contained that Alhaji Tahiru Jawula and his sons allegedly stabbed the two young men. When the Nawuri heard of the news of the attack on the two Nawuri youth, they marched on suspecting Gonja youth and inflicted wounds on them. The climax of it all came when Anekor, a Nawuri, was shot dead by one Asimeni, a Gonja. The Nawuri took arms to avenge the death of their kinsman. Hell then broke loose at this stage and everybody

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<sup>13</sup> A report by an eyewitness. Piki Yakubu Okuma, a Nawuri at Kpandai.

<sup>14</sup> The Diary of the Police in Kpandai did not contain a record of the report the Nawuri made on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1991.

<sup>15</sup> Ghana Police Station Diary at Kpandai. (hereafter G P S.D., Kpandai) 26/3/91 – 14/5/91. The Police Diary indicated that Alhaji Tahiru was the first to report of having been stabbed by the Nawuri. The report further said that Samuel Kwame Beyifine and later Samuel Ntiamoah, both Nawuri, also reported of having been stabbed by the Gonja.

started to run. What followed was a pandemonium. Houses were set ablaze and exchange of gunshots became rampant.

The Police in Kpandai tried to restore peace and therefore went on patrols in their armour car around Kpandai, notably Nawuri and Gonja sections. Suspecting people holding ammunitions such as cutlasses, guns, bow and arrows were arrested and their ammunitions confiscated. However, the Nawuri allege that the Police did not only confiscate the ammunitions of heir kinsmen, but also molested them and that all the victims of the Police patrol actions were the Nawuri.

## 5.2 Phases of the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts

The Nawuri-Gonja conflicts of 1991 – 1992 occurred in three phases. The first outbreak occurred in April 1991, the second in June 1991, and the third in May 1992. The first war which erupted on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1991 is tagged *the first Atorsah Yakoro*.<sup>16</sup> It occurred immediately after the death of Anekor.<sup>17</sup> The Nawuri had the upper hand during the first two days of the war. The Gonja were chased to Kanankulaiwura's house, which became their hideout. To ensure total victory, the Nawuri besieged the Gonja in their hideout, but the police persistently prevented them from achieving their objective. A turning point in the war came on the third day when a fleet of vehicles from Salaga carrying Gonja warriors arrived at Kpandai.<sup>18</sup> Eyewitnesses estimate the number of the warriors to be around two thousand.<sup>19</sup> Being beefed up by the reinforcement from Salaga, the Gonja

<sup>16</sup> The first *Atorsah Yakoro* means the first exodus sparked off by Nana Atorsah. Felix Kwaku Atorsah was the son of Nana Atorsah Agyemang I who was Nawuriwura from 1951 to 1968. Felix Kwaku Atorsah was the Kpandaiwura and in fact, the opinion leader of the Nawuri during the outbreak of the Nawuri-Gonja wars.

<sup>17</sup> Anekor was a Nawuri warrior. He was the first to be killed in the Nawuri-Gonja wars of 1991 and 1992.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Yawdu on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1998.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



launched a full-scale attack on the Nawuri and sacked them from their villages. On their way to Kpandai, the Gonja warriors from Salaga first attacked Balai. In a fierce encounter, which lasted for a day, two lives were lost – one on each side. Nawuri houses in Balai were set ablaze and their properties were looted. Later on the same day the Gonja mercenaries set ablaze Nawuri houses in Kpandai, which were already deserted. The Gonja then carried the war to Katiejeli, Kabonwule, Bladjai and Kitare on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of April 1991 respectively and brought those areas under sanguinary end. The Nawuri fled their settlements and sought refuge in Nkwanta and Nanumba Districts. The bulk of the refugees were in Nanumba District in places such as Tampoi (Tampoaye), Kajasu, Kpengasei, Jimang, Lungni, Wulensi and Bimbilla. In Nkwanta District alone, it was reported that there were about four thousand, five hundred of the refugees in Kecheibi, Tutukpene, Ketane, and Kpasa while a few others were found in Nkwanta and Damanko.<sup>20</sup>

The ease with which the Gonja defeated the Nawuri is not far fetched. While the Gonja used sophisticated weapons such as AK-47 rifles and double-barrel guns, the Nawuri used inferior ammunitions such as single-barrel guns, cutlasses and clubs. Though this was a decisive factor in the defeat of the Nawuri, it would be rather naive not to take into account other factors. Lack of political unity was a serious factor that resulted in the defeat of the Nawuri. After the death of Nawuriwura Asaseadwo Bakianesu in 1986, Nawuri traditional area passed through a period of anarchy and schism as a result of a protracted chieftaincy dispute. The Nawuri owed divided allegiance to two claimants to the Nawuriwura stool, Nana Gyakun of Nkanchina and Nana Atorsah Kwaku Felix of Kpandai. This development did not only weaken the Nawuri politically, but also robbed

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<sup>20</sup>: People's Daily Graphic, Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 1991. p. 16.

them of the unity and political leadership desired in such a crucial moment. Despite the fact that the Nawuri were able to discard their political differences and came together to fight the Gonja, their services were not fully knit together and co-ordinated by a central political leader. Each Nawuri village or town decided to protect its settlement and people rather than deploring troops to Kpandai to defeat the Gonja. This uncoordinated action of the Nawuri made them militarily weak and susceptible to defeat.

One cannot also overrule the fact that the Nawuri were ill prepared for the war. The Nawuri felt that the cancellation of the Gonjaland Youth Association and Traditional Council meetings was enough to restore peace in Kpandai and its surrounding villages. Consequently, they did not envisage a war let alone prepare for it. On the other hand, the Gonja who were annoyed by the cancellation of the meetings began to prepare for war. This development gave the Gonja the upper hand over the Nawuri, hence, the defeat of the latter

Another serious handicap of the Nawuri was the part played by the various ethnic groups in the Nawuri area – the Konkomba, the Basari, the Kotokoli, the Ewe and the Akan. In the ensuing war, most of the ethnic groups either collaborated with the Gonja or remained passive. It was anticipated that the various ethnic groups in the Nawuri area would have entered the war on the side of the Nawuri to defeat the Gonja and extricate themselves from Gonja tyranny and feudalism. If these ethnic groups had collaborated with the Nawuri, the course of the war would have been different.

There was a two-month lull after the defeat of the Nawuri in the first phase of the conflict. On 17<sup>th</sup> June 1991 the Nawuri resumed hostilities against the Gonja. The second phase of the conflict is called *the second Atorsah Y'akoro*, meaning 'the second exodus

sparked off by Atorsah'. The main cause of the second outbreak was the Nawuri's desire to recapture their land from the Gonja. Another cause of *the second Atorsah Y'akoro* was the maltreatment meted to some of the Nawuri who went to Kpandai after the Bimbilla Mediation meeting<sup>21</sup>. It was expected that after the mediation meeting in Bimbilla, reconciliation between the Nawuri and the Gonja would have been established, and thus ensure the return of the Nawuri to their settlements. As a litmus test of this expectation, some of the Nawuri came to Kpandai to work on their buildings that were dilapidating, but Gonja mercenaries chased them out.

In another development, a Nawuri woman who was on her way from Bimbilla to Kabonwule accidentally made a stop over at Kpandai because of vehicular problem. Unfortunately, the Gonja mercenaries thrashed this woman mercilessly. This development made the Nawuri think that the Bimbilla meeting did not in any way bring peace and that the only way they could return to their land was to attack and sack the Gonja.

*The second Atorsah Y'akoro* was also motivated by the departure of the Gonja mercenaries from Kpandai. After the defeat of the Nawuri in the first war, the Gonja mercenaries occupied Kpandai for two months, and thereafter returned to Salaga. Immediately after their departure, the Nawuri returned from their hideouts and launched a full-scale onslaught on the Gonja and the remnant mercenaries. The war dragged on for three days during which the Nawuri killed Asiemeni, the Gonja mercenary leader.<sup>22</sup> This

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<sup>21</sup> For details of the Bimbilla Reconciliation Meeting see pp. 192–194 of this study. The Bimbilla Reconciliation Meeting of the Nawuri and the Gonja in the Bimbilla-Na's Palace was the first step at resolving the Nawuri-Gonja Conflicts.

<sup>22</sup> In fact, I witnessed the gruesome murder of Asiemeni in the war. Asiemeni was shot several times, but did not die. Though he laid prostrate on the ground, he made several attempts to get on his feet, but on each count he was sent down by a shot. The Gonja warriors also made several efforts to take Asiemeni

struck panic among the Gonja who fled Kpandai in the night. One cannot also lose sight of the fact that the Gonja army was cut off from supplies of food and re-enforcement from Salaga. In such cases, the Gonja were either bound to fight a war of death or abandon it when situations became critical. Whatever was the case, the Gonja were defeated in the second war.

For almost one year after the second war, the Nawuri area enjoyed a respite. In fact, almost all refugees, with the exception of the Gonja returned to their settlements and began brisk business and farming. Every body thought and wished that the wars were over and that permanent peace had returned to the Nawuri area. Perhaps what was left was reconciliation between the Nawuri and the Gonja, reconstruction of dilapidated structures and putting the economy back on track.<sup>23</sup> Contrary to this expectation, a third war broke out on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1992 after a fleet of vehicles carrying Gonja warriors from Bole, Damongo, Salaga and Kpembe arrived at Kpandai to fight the Nawuri. The Gonja had the initial upper hand in the war. They sacked the Nawuri, occupied Kpandai and celebrated their victory. Gonja warriors were said to have congregated under a big tree and installed Alhaji Musah Jawula as their new Kanankulaiwura.<sup>24</sup> After receiving homage from the Kotokoli and some sections of settler ethnic groups loyal to the Gonja, the newly installed Kanankulaiwura and his forces marched to the butcher's shop in an incessant jubilation and chanting of war songs and seized chunks of meat.<sup>25</sup> They were also said to have moved to the Kpandai yam market and seized many tubers of yam to

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away, but failed in their bid. Asiemeni was dragged from where he was shot down by one of the Nawuri warriors to another spot while alive, burnt and chopped into pieces.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Bunju Samuel Ninkab a Basari teacher at Kpadnai on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1998.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



prepare their meal<sup>26</sup> This was happening while the Nawuri were in the bush planning strategies to be adopted. In the bush, some of the Konkomba and the Basari joined the Nawuri.<sup>27</sup> The Konkomba joined the Nawuri in retaliation for the murder of a Konkomba man by the Gonja. With a large number of the Nawuri, the Konkomba and the Basari warriors gathered in the bush, a three-pronged attack was launched on the Gonja. The Gonja were taken unawares and started fleeing to the Kpandai Police Station. However, most of them were shot and killed before they could get to the police station. Meanwhile, another fleet of vehicles carrying a contingent of the Gonja warriors to Kpandai was attacked at the over-bank of river Dakar by the Nchumuru and the Konkomba and killed all the Gonja warriors on board. This event completed the phase of the war in the Kpandai area. However, this was to begin another phase of the third war in Salaga and Kpembe. After laying ambush for two days in Kpandai, the Nawuri, together with their allies, now decided to carry the war to the Gonja in Salaga and Kpembe. The combined Nawuri-Nchumuru-Konkomba-Basari army was, however, prevented from destroying Salaga by the timely arrival of a peacekeeping force. However, some of the Konkomba from the western side of Salaga managed to make their way into that section of Salaga and destroyed much property. Meanwhile, Gonja villages such as Kitoe, Kayeresu and Kulupi were attacked and destroyed by the combined force of the Nchumuru and the Konkomba.

Apart from it being an extension of the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts, and a product of the general cases of the conflicts, the third war had its unique causes. One of such factors was the delay in the release of the government's White Paper on the Justice Ampiah

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<sup>26</sup> **Ibid.**

<sup>27</sup> Eyewitness account by Yawdu, a Nawuri warrior given to me on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1997.

Committee's report. After the second war, the government set up the Justice Ampiah Committee and spelt out its terms.<sup>28</sup> Having been inaugurated on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1991 at the premises of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs in Tamale, the Committee held its sittings in Tamale and then visited the villages affected by the wars.<sup>29</sup> Its report was then submitted to the government in February 1992, but the Government did not take any action on the Committee's report. It is believed that perhaps it was to forestall the government issuing a White Paper on the Committee's report that the Gonja resumed hostilities against the Nawuri.<sup>30</sup> It is also thought that if the government had issued a White Paper on the Committee's report the third war would probably be averted since each faction's position would have been clearly defined.<sup>31</sup>

Another factor that caused the eruption of the third Nawuri-Gonja war in 1992 was the evacuation of the Military Task Force from Kpandai. Following the two inter-ethnic conflicts in April and June 1991 respectively, the task of peacekeeping that was being done by the Police in Kpandai and its surrounding villages was extended to the Military. The Military presence injected fears in all those 'contractors of the wars'. As a result their presence ushered in a period of relative peace in Kpandai. By these developments, the Gonja who hitherto could not come to Kpandai after their defeat and subsequent flee to Kpembe and Salaga in the second war, returned to Kpandai to harvest their crops. The Military Force mounted barriers at some notable points in and around Kpandai to check and prevent violence. After six months of operation, the Military Force was evacuated from Kpandai. With the last hurdle for revenge alleviated, the Gonja

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<sup>28</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Interview with John Kofi Daborney at Kpandai on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1997.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

prepared for a war against the Nawuri. Thereafter, rumours of a possible Gonja attack became widespread until the eventual explosion occurred. It can be asserted that if the Military Peace Keeping Force had not been evacuated from Kpandai, it is quite probable that the third war would not have occurred.

Finally, the renewed military vigour of the Gonja accounted for the eruption of the third war. The Gonja did not only mobilize a large number of sophisticated weapons, but also a contingent of warriors. Psychologically, Gonja warriors were said to have acquired a lot of 'charms' and 'spiritual' protections that enabled them to 'vanish' when the tide was sliding against them. The 'spiritual preparations' were also alleged to have given the Gonja warriors 'bullet-proof protection'. It was further alleged that the 'spiritual preparations' enabled the Gonja war leader, Alhaji Musah Jawula, to gather a swarm of bees around him, which he could release to attack the Nawuri. As a result of these military and psychological motivations, the Gonja felt it was high time they attacked the Nawuri.

### **5.3 The Nawuri victory in the second and third wars**

Several factors account for the victory of the Nawuri in the second and third wars. One factor that accounts for the victory of the Nawuri was the unity they fogged after the first war. After their defeat in the first war, the Nawuri patched up all their scattered political pieces together and fought for a common goal. It would be recalled that one of

the factors responsible for the defeat of the Nawuri in the first war was their disunity and uncoordinated military tactics. In the second and third wars, however, the Nawuri discarded their political differences and raised one formidable army capable of repulsing the Gonja.

Closely related to the above was the new military tactics adopted by the Nawuri. In the first place, the Nawuri adopted guerrilla warfare after their defeat in the first war. Some courageous Nawuri warriors sneaked into the heart of Kpandai where the Gonja congregated and emitted sporadic gunshots, killing the Gonja and wounding many of them. This struck panic among the Gonja, most of whom fled Kpandai to Salaga. In another development, the Nawuri warriors laid ambush on the paths leading to farms and killed the Gonja. Consequently, the Gonja could not go to their farms to cart foodstuffs home, thus resulting in shortage of foodstuffs. This therefore made it extremely difficult for them to maintain the large number of their mercenaries stationed in Kpandai. Consequently, their mercenaries left Kpandai rather than remain there to be starved to death. The evacuation of the Gonja mercenaries paved the way for the victory of the Nawuri in the second war. Moreover, in the second war, the Nawuri adopted a deceptive military strategy. The Nawuri army was divided into three groups, the advance, the rear and re-enforcement. The advance army was about a hundred metres away from the re-enforcement, and the same distance between the latter and the rear army. The first two armies lay ambush without shooting. It was the rear guard that shot indiscriminately, a ploy that tempted the Gonja to think that the whole Nawuri army was congregated at the area where the gunshots emitted from. In an attempt to explore ways to attack the Nawuri, the Gonja army ran into the Nawuri advance army, resulting in the death of their

‘spiritual’ leader, Asiemeni; whose death culminated in the evacuation of the Gonja army from Kpandai.

The determination on the part of the Nawuri also played a great role in their victory. Having suffered much from their defeat in the first war, the Nawuri became determined to fight to retrieve their lands. This new military vigour was whipped up after a meeting of all the Nawuri was convened at Tampoi. Here, the Nawuri received the backing of the people of Tampoi, Kpengase, Kajasu, Jimang and Wulensi. This strengthened the Nawuri army, resulting in the defeat of the Gonja in the second war. One cannot also rule out the fact that the Nawuri were irritated by the inflammatory statements the Gonja made when traders of the two ethnic groups met on Lugni Market days. This development struck a light in the cold hearts of some of the Nawuri who gave their lives to the war. The Nawuri therefore became determined to fight a war of death. Consequently, many of the Nawuri were drawn into the second war than was in the first. In fact, it was estimated that the Nawuri army in the second war multiplied by almost tenfold.

There was also a psychological factor, which contributed to the victory of the Nawuri in the second war. The Nawuri were said to have acquired juju from the Konkomba chief at Lugni, a powerful and well-acclaimed juju man. The prophecy of the juju man incensed the Nawuri who waged a determined war to fulfil the prophecy.

Finally, the support of the Konkomba and the Basari ensured the victory of the Nawuri in the third war. While in the first and second encounters her allies were neutral, in the third war the Nawuri had the support and collaboration of the Konkomba, the Basari and the Nchumuru. The support of their allies enabled the Nawuri to launch a

three-prolonged attack on the Gonja resulting in the defeat of he latter. Besides, the Nawuri allies also killed all the Gonja warriors on board that formed the second contingent and re-enforcement army of the Gonja at the over-bank of River Daka. In addition, the support of Nawuri allies helped them and their allies to carry the war into Salaga and its surrounding Gonja villages.

#### **5.4 Resolving the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts: the Bimbilla mediation meeting and Ampiah Committee of Inquiry**

In a bid to resolve the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts, a series of conferences including the Bimbilla Conference were held. At its meeting on Tuesday, 23 April 1991 in Tamale, REGSEC decided to visit the Nawuri-Gonja conflict areas.<sup>32</sup> A sub-committee was also appointed under the leadership of Alhaji W.W. Zakari, then PNDC Deputy Regional Secretary to conduct on-the-spot investigation into the causes of the conflicts and suggest possible remedial steps as early as possible.<sup>33</sup> On 7<sup>th</sup> May 1991, REGSEC met the parties involved in the conflicts in Tamale.<sup>34</sup> It was decided at that meeting that the PNDC District Secretaries for East Gonja and Bimbilla should join the Deputy Regional Administrative Officer and the Registrar of the Northern Region House of Chiefs to visit Kpandai on 25 May 1991. The team visited Lugni, the border town between Nanumba and East Gonja Districts where some of the Nawuri had sought refuge. Finally, it was also decided that the Bimbilla-Na should mediate between the Nawuri and the Gonja and resolve their differences. Consequently, the Bimbilla-Na convened a meeting for the Nawuri and the Gonja in his palace in Bimbilla on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1991.<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately, the

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<sup>32</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* I 140, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* Part I, 141, p.35.

<sup>35</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* Part I, 141, p. 35.



Bimbilla-Na failed in his efforts to resolve the conflicts. This was because none of the parties wanted to compromise on its demands. At the meeting, the Gonja made several claims and demands. They claimed that the Nawuri area was an integral part of Gonja empire and that they (the Gonja) were the landowners. The Gonja further declared that the Nawuri would not be allowed to return to Kpandai unless they accepted to serve them. In addition, the Gonja stated that, on their return from their refugee camps, the Nawuri would be resettled at the outskirts of Kpandai town.<sup>36</sup>

The Gonja further maintained that the Nawuri would be requested to pay a war indemnity to be determined by the Yagbumwura. Besides, the Gonja maintained that the Nawuri would be required to provide regular services such as the provision of labour on the farms of the Kpembewura and the Kanankulaiwura, though this could be paid off in cash.<sup>37</sup> Finally, the Gonja demanded that the Nawuri would be requested to pay annual taxes in the form of cash and agricultural products to the Kanankulaiwura during Damba festivals.<sup>38</sup>

The Nawuri also made their demands. These were contained in a memorandum, which was earlier submitted to REGSEC. In the memorandum the Nawuri demanded that

... the ownership of the land (Nawuri areas) should be re-vested in the hands of Nawuris who will exercise complete control over it as it was before and during the German regime; that there must be the recognition and gazetting of the Nawuri chiefs and the establishment of a paramountcy for Nawuris to enable their chiefs exercise their traditional powers; that pending the creation of

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<sup>36</sup> "Speech by the Kanankulaiwura, Alhaji Adamu, at a Meeting of the Northern Regional Security Committee on the Alfai conflict on Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> April 1991".

<sup>37</sup> "Speech by Alhaji Musah Jawula at a meeting of Gonjas and Nawuris at Bimbila-Na's Palace on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1991".

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

substantive District as envisaged by the National Commission for Democracy (NCD) in Kpandai, a sub-district should be created with immediate effect to take control of the local administration of the Nawuri areas as well as supervise collection of revenue in these areas; that the GPRTU of Trade Union Congress(TUC) in Kpandai, which had been used by a few Gonjas to frustrate the efforts of Nawuri farmers through extortionist activities should be banned and that an Interim management Committee (IMC) should be set-up to take over its functions; that the Kpembewura be prosecuted for supervising the inhuman and barbaric murder of a Nawuri service person, William Takpa, at Kpembe; lastly that the Kpembewura and his sub chiefs should, with immediate effect, cease exercising any political control over Nawuris and the Nawuris areas.<sup>39</sup>

After the Bimbilla meeting, no serious efforts were further made to resolve the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts until the Ampiah Committee of Inquiry was set-up in October 1991. The Committee consisted of Justice A K B Ampiah, Chairman, Togbe Tepre Hodo III (Paramount Chief of Afoega), Member, Professor R. B. Bening, member, and E.K. Musah Esq., Secretary. The terms of reference of the Committee were:

(i) to investigate the circumstances that led to the Communal Violence at Kpandai on 7<sup>th</sup> April and 12<sup>th</sup> June 1991 and find out the extent of loss and damage resulting from the incidents; (ii) to determine the nature of the tenure system in the Kpandai area and to define the right of the Gonjas, Nawuris and Nanjuros in the allocation and utilization of land; (iii) To determine the nature and practice of traditional allegiance of the Nawuris and Nanjuros to the Gonjas and to determine whether any inequities or anomalies exist in the system (iv) To investigate any other matters that is in the opinion of the committee incidental there to; and (v) To submit its findings and recommendations to the Provisional National Defence Council within three months.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Memorandum submitted at a Reconciliation Meeting with the Northern Region Security Committee (REGSEC) held at Tamale on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> May 1991, in connection to the Nawuri-Gonja Conflict.

<sup>40</sup> Ampiah, op. cit. pp. 74-75

After its inauguration in October 1991 at the premises of the Northern Region House of Chiefs in Tamale, the Committee started hearing evidence from Monday 21 October. It received submissions from Counsels on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1991 and made its findings and recommendations. The findings of the Committee included, among others, the following:

(6)... The Nawuris and the Nchumurus were on the land before the arrival of Jakpa and his Gonja Army and that there was no fighting between the Gonjas and either the Nawuris or the Nchumurus, and that neither of the two peoples, i.e. the Nawuris and the Nchumurus were ever conquered by the Gonjas. (7) During the invasion of Gonja land by the Ashantis, the Nawuris and Nchumurus fought as allies of Gonjas. (8) The boundary between the Gonjas and the Nchumurus is the Daka River and that there is no immediate boundary between the Gonjas and the Nawuris...(10) the words 'ALFAI' and 'KANANKULAI' are Nawuri words and could have been used only by the Nawuris to describe their land, and that the names of all the Rivers, streams and villages in the Kpandai area are all Nawuri names, a fact which supports their claim to the land. (11) the allodial title in the lands occupied by the Nawuris in the KPANDAI area resides in the Nawuris...(13) the Gonjas have possession only to that part of the Nawuri lands which they have reduced into their possession and effectively occupied...(22) there is no evidence of the swearing of oath of allegiance by the Nawuri and the Nchumuru chiefs to any of the Gonja chiefs...<sup>41</sup>

In the light of these findings and many others, the Committee recommended that:

- (1) the Nanjurowura and the Nawuriwura be accorded recognitions as the paramount chiefs of their respective people.
- (2) The sub-chiefs of the Nawuris and Nchumurus be also recognized as chiefs in their respective areas.
- (3) The Nawuri and the Nchumuru chiefs be registered in the National Register of chiefs and be gazetted accordingly.
- (4) Separate Traditional Areas and Councils be created for the Nawuris and Nchumurus
- (5) Membership of the Nawuri

<sup>41</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* pp. 67-70.



Traditional Council to be created, be extended to include the representatives of all heads or chiefs of other ethnic groups, including the Kanankulaiwura, chief of the Gonjas at Kpandai, if he so wishes to attend. The Nawuriwura should be the president... (6) These traditional heads of the Nawuris and the Nchumurus should take their seats at the Northern Region House of chiefs. And, in accordance with the practice obtaining at the House they be given opportunity to represent the House at the National House of Chiefs without any discrimination...<sup>42</sup>

The Committee also recommended that in view of the very strained relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja, and in view of the fact that Nawuri District Assembly members could not take their seats during the Assembly's meetings in Salaga, a District should be created for the Nawuri and Nchumuru areas.<sup>43</sup> The Committee further observed that the Police Station in Kpandai was too small and could not adequately serve the whole of the Nawuri and Nchumuru areas, which are about, 1,100 square kilometres. For the effective policing of the area, the Committee suggested that more Police Posts should be opened in the areas.

In the interest of peace in the area, one would have expected a quick implementation of the recommendations of the Committee by the government. Unfortunately, neither did the government issue a White Paper on the Committee's report nor were efforts made to implement the Committee's recommendations. The main reason for this was the politicisation of the conflict by the government. It is alleged that the government did not issue a White Paper on the Committee's report because that would incur the displeasure of the Gonja. In such a situation it was likely that the then PNDC would lose votes from the Gonja in the impending 1992 elections and subsequent

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<sup>42</sup> Ampiah . op. cit. pp. 74-75.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

elections in the country. It was to avert such catastrophic consequences on the PNDC that the government deliberately refused to issue a White Paper on the Committee's report. One cannot also overrule the influence of some Gonja personalities such as John Bawa, the then PNDC Secretary for the Northern Region on the government. These personalities were said to have influenced the government and prevented it from issuing a White Paper on the Committee's report.

### 5.5 Consequences of the 1991 and 1992 conflicts

The Nawuri area is beset with such problems as poor road network and lack of potable drinking water, schools and health facilities. The wars were to worsen the already bad conditions in the area. While citizens of other parts of the country addressed issues of socio-economic development by contributing towards community development projects such as the provision of schools, water, clinics, electricity and roads in the area during the past few years, the Nawuri were rather involved in wars with the Gonja over the ownership of land in the Nawuri area.

The first major consequence of the Nawuri-Gonja conflict was the loss of human lives. The official figure on the death toll in the wars in 1991 is put at twenty.<sup>44</sup> Deputy Commissioner of Police in Northern Region, William Atu Kumi gave the breakdown of the death toll as follows: fourteen deaths in the first war of whom five were Nawuri, seven were Gonja and two from other ethnic groups.<sup>45</sup> Mr. Kumi further explained that in the second clash there were six deaths: four Gonja, one Nawuri and one Frafra.<sup>46</sup> However, as of 1992 when the third war broke out the official figure on the death toll was

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<sup>44</sup> People's Daily Graphic, Friday, 25 May 1992.

<sup>45</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit* Part I, p.37.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

put at a hundred excluding those killed at the over-bank of River Daka.<sup>47</sup> If one considers the number that sustained wounds and died later those who were killed at the over-bank of River Daka and those who died in the bush along the Daka, the number would be higher.

The loss of material property was another effect of the Nawuri-Gonja conflict. Properties such as houses, physical cash, foodstuffs and a variety of paraphernalia belonging to both factions that were burnt or looted during these conflicts were enormous. In all three hundred and twenty-three houses were burnt in the 1991 and 1992 Nawuri-Gonja conflicts. Other properties destroyed include two tractors, a corn mill, a flourmill, two old Bed Ford trucks and one Mercedes Benz car belonging to the Nawuri and the Gonja.<sup>48</sup>

The wars also rendered many people homeless. Many people lost their homes and had to put up with their neighbours for months. Others had to flee to other areas for protection, and brought about refugee problems in the neighbouring Districts and Ghana as a whole. The wars also engendered psychological shocks, frustrations and anxieties that could not be quantified. These affected the life patterns and status of many of the Nawuri and the Gonja as well as other ethnic groups that were affected by the wars.

The pursuit of economic activities ground to a halt as people lived in constant fear. Outlets for yams produced by the majority of farmers became a problem because the yam buyers who were mostly from the south, feared to go to the Nawuri area. There was therefore not only a glut of the produce, but also rural incomes were reduced seriously. Besides, many crops were left on the farms to rot. This resulted in lack of incentives for

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<sup>47</sup> People's Daily Graphic, Friday, 25 May 1992.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*



farming and consequently affected future agricultural plans of the farmers. Agricultural activities in the area suffered most. All the three wars erupted at the peak of the farming season: a time when new farms were either prepared or worked on. In 1991 several farmers could not harvest their produce. Others could not prepare land for the cultivation of foodstuff. Obviously, in the short and long runs this affected agricultural activities in the area due to lack of planting materials and incentives, neglect of farms and many others. This dealt a big socio-economic blow to these subsistence farmers. Moreover, not only was precious time for economic activities wasted in planning and waging wars, but also capital for economic purposes was spent in buying ammunitions. Moreover, the government in restoring peace in the affected areas, spent huge sums of money. This thus affected the government's recurrent budget for those years. For example, as of June 1994, the Government was said to have spent ₦5.05 billion on the operations to restore peace and order in the conflict areas of the Northern Region.<sup>49</sup>

Education was also affected. Teachers and students in Primary, Junior and Senior Secondary Schools in the conflict areas fled in the wake of the wars. This worsened the already deplorable staffing situation and academic performance in the schools. Besides, Nawuri students in Salaga Secondary School fled from the school for safety. Most of them who were 1990/91 GCE 'O' Level candidates could not write their papers and no contingency plans were made for them by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) to write their papers. These students were therefore forced to wait for another year before writing their GCE 'O' Level examination papers. In other areas, refugee children of both the Nawuri and the Gonja could not gain admission into schools due to the sudden influx, which was beyond the capacity of existing school structures. In these

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<sup>49</sup> People's Daily Graphic, Saturday 11 June 1994, p. 9.

situations, the academic future of these students was jeopardized through no fault of theirs. The Kpandai Senior Secondary School suffered most from the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts. The school was barely a year old when the first war broke out. All its teachers fled in the wake of the wars and never returned. At the same time, service personnel refused to accept postings to the school. In such a situation, the school had to rely on the Post-Secondary Teachers, Voluntary 'A' Level and 'O' level holders.<sup>50</sup> Given this phenomenon, it was not surprising that the first three batches of the school performed poorly in their final Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE).

Like many areas or District Assemblies, revenue from markets is vital for financing development projects. There is no denying the fact that the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas are the main sources of revenue for the Salaga District. With the occurrence of the wars, revenue from these areas to Salaga District Assembly ceased abruptly. The Nawuri, the Nchumuru and all inhabitants in the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas refused to pay levy to the Salaga District Assembly to undertake development projects in the District. They claimed that revenue mobilized from their areas was used for the development of the Gonja areas to the detriment of theirs. Until 1999 when the inhabitants in the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas resumed the payment of levies, revenue was not collected from those areas between 1991 and 1998. This phenomenon retarded developments in the Salaga District and also altered the long-term plans and strategies of the District Assembly.

Moreover, the effects of the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts and the 1994 general ethnic wars in the Northern Region compelled the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to

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<sup>50</sup> The author of this thesis was one of the then 'A' level volunteer teachers in Kpandai Secondary School during the inter- and post-war years of the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts of 1991 – 1992.

suspend indefinitely all electoral processes and district level elections fixed for 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1994 in all the affected areas. The effects of this delay were disastrous. Apart from the anxiety it engendered, the delay robbed the Nawuri area of getting competent people to contest the elections.

The Nawuri-Gonja wars also resulted in the divorces of a number of marriages between the Nawuri and the Gonja. Such divorces engendered many socio-economic problems on the parties concerned. More seriously, the divorces soured the long-standing understanding and co-operation between the families of the couples. Families therefore broke apart, and siblings had to spend the greater part of their lives with one parent without the opportunity of interacting with the other.

Finally, the chaos that followed in the wake of the wars affected social gatherings and occasions in the Nawuri area. The result was that the youth were deprived of opportunities to entertain, choose marriage partners during such occasions, and to recreate themselves after a day's hard work.

The Nawuri-Gonja conflicts also produced some positive impact. Prior to the conflicts, the differences between the Nawuri and the Gonja had always determined their support for political parties in multi-party elections in Ghana. The two ethnic groups did not support one party simultaneously. It has already been pointed out that in 1969 while the Nawuri supported the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL), the Gonja in Kpandai supported the Progress Party (PP). Similarly, in 1979 the Nawuri supported the Popular Front party (PFP) while the Gonja supported the People's National Party (PNP). However, this was not a strict generalization as some insignificant pockets of the Gonja and the Nawuri supported one and the same party at a time, but a bulk of them supported



different parties. After the eruption of the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts, the Gonja in Salaga and Kpembe (where a bulk of the Gonja in Kpandai now reside) and the Nawuri supported the same party, the NDC in the 1992 and 1996 multi-party elections in Ghana. The view was that either ethnic group did not want to incur the displeasure of the ruling government [PNDC/ NDC] by supporting an opposition party. It was feared that support for a party other than the NDC by one of the ethnic groups would influence the NDC to implement policies which would favour the ethnic group that supported it to the detriment of the other. It was against this background that the Nawuri and the Gonja supported the NDC in the 1992 and 1996 parliamentary and presidential elections in Ghana. However, as if by design, the Nawuri and the Gonja shifted their support for the NDC to the NPP in the 2000 elections. According to an informant, though there were several considerations why the Nawuri shifted camp from the NDC to the NPP, it was likely that the Nawuri did so because news was heard that the Gonja in Salaga had shifted their support for the NDC to the NPP.<sup>51</sup>

#### **5.6 The 1994 ethnic wars in the Northern Region of Ghana and Mediation Bodies**

A disturbing phenomenon in the Northern Region of Ghana has been the intermittent eruption of ethnic conflicts. During the last twenty years, Northern Region experienced the eruption of about twenty inter-and-intra-ethnic wars since 1980.<sup>52</sup> It is not unusual for a single issue or dispute to dominate an entire region. This was the case when ethnic conflicts erupted in the Northern Region in 1994. In fact the immediate

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<sup>51</sup> Interview with Clement Kwasi Mbowura at Kpandai on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2001.

<sup>52</sup> See Brukum, N.J.K. "Pito, Mango and Guinea Fowl wars: Episodes in the History of Northern Ghana, 1980 – 1994". Inter-Faculty Lecture delivered on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2000.

cause of the 1994 ethnic conflicts in the region was over the price of a guinea fowl. It was therefore not surprising that the wars had been described as *the guinea fowl wars*. Nevertheless, there were remote causes of the 1994 ethnic conflicts. It is not my duty to discuss the causes of the 1994 Northern conflicts. Generally, however, it can be stated that the main remote causes of the conflicts were diverse: they included litigation over land lordship, stigmatisation of some ethnic groups, struggle for freedom, and others.<sup>53</sup>

Though the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts of 1991 and 1992 and the ethnic conflicts in the Northern Ghana in 1994 had unique factors and involved different factions, there was, however, a correlation between them. In 1980 the Nanumba suffered a humiliating defeat in the hands of the Konkomba. Similarly, in 1992 the Gonja, in an attempt to avenge the June 1991 defeat in the hands of the Nawuri also suffered a humiliating defeat. In that war the Konkomba, the Basari and the Nchumuru went to the support of the Nawuri and inflicted a heavy defeat on the Gonja. Since the 1980 and 1992 clashes, the Nanumba and the Gonja had always sought an opportunity to enable them raise a combined army to defeat the Konkomba. It was highly probable that the 1994 ethnic clashes in the Northern Region erupted because the Nanumba, the Gonja and the Dagomba saw the Konkomba military power as a menace to their own survival. The Gonja, the Dagomba and the Nanumba therefore thought it militarily prudent to eliminate the Konkomba threat. However, this could only be achieved by inflicting a crushing defeat on the Konkomba. Since the Konkomba had a large and strong army, the Gonja, the Dagomba and the Nanumba, it was alleged, decided to forge a military alliance aimed at defeating their common enemy, the Konkomba. The Gonja, the Nanumba and the Dagomba were of the view that if they launched a three-pronged attack on the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Konkomba, the latter would be defeated. Furthermore, the Gonja, the Nanumba and the Dagomba were of the view that this would prevent the Konkomba from raising one army against one ethnic group. Consequently, while the Gonja were engaged with the Konkomba in and around Salaga, the Nanumba locked horns with the Konkomba in the Nanumba District. The Dagomba, on the other hand, sorted things out with the Konkomba in the Dagbon state. The Gonja embraced the military alliance with the Nanumba and the Dagomba because it would not only succeed in eliminating the Konkomba threat, but also would pave the way for their mercenaries to traverse to the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas to attack the Nawuri and the Nchumuru. This was because since the Konkomba would be drawn in a war against the Nanumba and the Dagomba, they (the Konkomba) would neither attack the Gonja on their way to the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas nor support the Nawuri and the Nchumuru or both as they did in the 1992 Nawuri-Gonja conflict. Nevertheless, the Gonja mercenaries could not traverse to the Nawuri and the Nchumuru areas as they envisaged because they were pre-occupied in the war with the Konkomba in Kpembe and Salaga areas.

Though the 1994 ethnic conflict was not fought in the Nawuri area, the Nawuri did not stay out of it. The Nawuri did not fight in the war as one of the factions, but went to the support of the Konkomba. The Nawuri regarded their alliance with the Konkomba in 1994 as an alliance of convenience for two reasons. Firstly, the Nawuri entered into the military alliance with the Konkomba in the 1994 ethnic clashes in Northern Region because the two ethnic groups had a common enemy, the Gonja. Judging from the impact of the Nawuri-Konkomba alliance on the defeat of the Gonja in the third Nawuri-Gonja conflict in 1992, the Nawuri felt that similar military alliance with the Konkomba would

ensure the crushing defeat of the Gonja. Secondly, the Nawuri saw the alliance with the Konkomba in 1994 as a reciprocal measure to the 1992 alliance in which the Konkomba entered into the support of the Nawuri in the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts. The 1994 Nawuri-Konkomba alliance was therefore the turn of the Nawuri to go to the support of the Konkomba in the war. There was, however, another interpretation of the 1994 Nawuri-Konkomba alliance. According to a Nawuri informant, the Nawuri were dragged into the war on the side of the Konkomba against their wish.<sup>54</sup> Dari explains that the Konkomba threatened to fight the Nawuri if they (the Nawuri) refused to help them in the war.<sup>55</sup> It was against this background of the Konkomba menace that the Nawuri supported them in the 1994 ethnic conflict, though against their wish. Whatever was the interpretation of the 1994 Nawuri-Konkomba military alliance, it is interesting to note that the Nawuri did not enter the war to fight the Nanumba since the relations between the Nawuri and the Nanumba since the pre-colonial period had been mutual. On the contrary, the Nawuri entered the war on the side of the Konkomba to fight the Gonja, their common enemy.

In the wake of the 1994 conflict that engulfed most areas in the Northern, Bono Ahafo and Volta Regions, the government set up a Permanent Peace Negotiating Team (PPNT) to investigate the causes of the conflict, to mediate between the warring factions and to submit its findings to the government. The Nawuri-Gonja conflict was also brought under the ambit of the PPNT for mediation. The Team met the Nawuri and the Gonja delegates in Kumasi and Accra on several occasions.<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately, however,

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<sup>54</sup> Interview with Abladong Kotoka Dari at Kpandai on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 1997.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Apart from the Nawuri and the Gonja, the Konkomba, the Basari, the Nchumuru, the Nanumba and the Dagomba also attended the mediation meeting organised by the PPNT in Kumasi.

the Team could not find solutions to the causes of the Nawuri-Gonja conflict; neither did it submit its findings to the government.

One reason why the PPNT failed was the accusations the Nawuri levelled against it. The Nawuri branded the Team as biased, and hence did not have any confidence in it. It was against this background that the Nawuri questioned the logic behind the setting-up of the Team and demanded rather the implementation of the recommendations of the Ampiah Committee of Inquiry. Consequently, the Nawuri boycotted the PPNT.

Another reason why the PPNT failed to resolve the conflict between the Nawuri and the Gonja was its inability to devise different formulae in resolving the various inter-ethnic wars under its purview. Since the Dagomba-Nanumba-Konkomba conflicts erupted mainly because of chieftaincy, the yardstick to be used in their resolution automatically had to differ from the Nawuri-Gonja conflict, which had ownership of land as its underlying cause. It was anticipated that the PPNT would devise different schemes to resolve the ethnic wars since each had unique underlying factors.

In its further quest for peace, the Government encouraged an Inter-NGO Consortium and the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI) under the umbrella of the OAU to organize and facilitate a series of peace and reconciliation workshops among the warring ethnic groups to work with the NPI and the Consortium. Five workshops were held and this culminated in the signing of peace treaties between the Konkomba and the Nanumba, between the Konkomba and the Gonja, between the Nchumuru and the Gonja, between the Dagomba on the other hand and the Konkomba and the Basari on the other.<sup>57</sup> The

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<sup>57</sup> Brukum N J.K.: "Pito, Mango and Guinea Fowl Wars: Episodes in the History of Northern Ghana, 1980-1994". Inter - Faculty Lecture delivered on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2000.



agreements, which were reached on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1996 are known as the Kumasi Accord.<sup>58</sup> The Gonja and the Nawuri, however, refused to sign any agreement even though they agreed to recognize that there were several outstanding issues of dispute between them that require peaceful resolution. It can therefore be said, without reservation, that technically the wars between the Nawuri and the Gonja have not ended. A state of war still exists between the Nawuri and the Gonja since no peace treaty has been signed.

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ibid.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to examine Nawuri-Gonja relations between 1913 and 1994. The main determinant of the relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja has been the dispute over the ownership of lands in the Nawuri area in the East Gonja District. In fact, the question whether the Nawuri or the Gonja are the rightful and legitimate owners of the lands in the Nawuri area in the East Gonja District has been the pivot upon which all the disputes and differences between the Nawuri and the Gonja have revolved. The Nawuri and the Gonja differed in the name, nature and composition of the Native Authority and Alfai Local Council in Kpandai. The Nawuri and the Gonja also had differences in chieftaincy (legitimate ruler in Nawuri area), international politics and multi-party politics in Ghana. Generally, however, the ownership of lands in any area is determined by three variables, namely, by birthrights, conquest and lease. In the Nawuri area, the last two determinants (conquest and lease) are inapplicable since there is no evidence of any Gonja conquest of the Nawuri.<sup>1</sup> Neither is there any evidence of the ownership of the land in the Nawuri area changing hands by a lease agreement.<sup>2</sup> Hence the issue of birthright is the only variable upon which the rightful and legitimate owners of lands in the Nawuri area could be determined. However, the issue of birthrights is intricately linked to aboriginal status, just like how the latter is linked to the traditions of

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<sup>1</sup> Ampiah *op. cit.* – Appendix B2 – Nawuri memorandum containing a Brief Account of Nawuri History to the Committee of Enquiry into the Gonja – Nawuri Land Conflict. (p. 2 of the Appendix).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

origins. It is in this light that the traditions of origins of the Nawuri and the Gonja are important and relevant. It is also against this background that the Gonja wilfully distorted the tradition of origin of the Nawuri in order to justify their (Gonja) claim of ownership of lands in the Nawuri area. Since the relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja differed in the pre-colonial and colonial period and after, they are summarized under such headings.

### **6.1 The pre-colonial history of the Nawuri and the Gonja**

The Nawuri, one of the Northern Guan ethnic groups, settled in the present day Ghana over a thousand years ago.<sup>3</sup> The cradle of the Nawuri, as is the case of most Guans, was in the Afram Plains. From there the Nawuri are believed to have migrated to their present settlement. On their way to their present settlement, the Nawuri first made a stopover at Larteh. However, being adventurous hunters, fishermen and farmers, the Nawuri found the mountainous area of Larteh unsuitable for their vocations.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, under the leadership of Krunkpaw, they migrated from Larteh and passed through Senchi and Anum. They are believed to have moved along the Senchi River and crossed it northwards at Akrosu in present day Kete-Krachi and settled at Nawuri Kupo near Dwan in the Brong Ahafo Region. Here their leader, Krunkpaw is said to have died, and his descendants moved eastwards to the present day area under Nana Attara. The Nawuri moved along the *Lee* (Oti River) and settled at Otisu for a short period, and finally crossed the Oti and settled and founded the village of Attara (now known as Kitare). Kitare was the last communal settlement of the Nawuri. From Kitare various

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<sup>3</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.* Part 1, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Nawuri clans dispersed and founded Kpandai, Katiejeli, Balai, Bayim, Nkanchina, Dodoai, Kabonwule, Kotiko, Kitare and Bladjai, all in the Northern Region. Across the Oti River, the Nawuri founded Njare, Disare, Awuratu, Oprusai, Linkpan, Abrioko, Kpasa and Suruku now in the Volta Region of Ghana.

It is not certain when the Nawuri arrived at their present settlement; neither is it certain when the above Nawuri settlements were founded. However, one thing is certain: the Nawuri arrived in their present settlement before the Gonja. Mathewson's excavation in Kitare reveals that the Nawuri inhabited Kitare before the Gonja arrived in the Nawuri area.<sup>5</sup> Though Dixon agrees that the Nawuri arrived before the Gonja, his prejudice against the Nawuri made him to give a mythical connotation to that fact. In his report in 1955, Dixon stated that:

linked with the myth that the people of Balai descended from the skies on chains it is probable, and more cannot be said, that Nawuris arrived in Alfai area in advance of the Gonjas.<sup>6</sup>

The history of the Gonja is well documented to be recounted here in detail. Suffice it, however, to state that the traditional story of the origin of Gonja is that the Mansa of Mali sent an army to Begho, the great gold mine lying on the north eastern fringes of the Akan forest country to conduct a punitive war for the decline of the gold trade to Mande in Mali. Begho was overrun and occupied. Ndewura Jakpa, the commander of Ngbanya horsemen, did not return to Mali after the military expedition. He is said to have moved further north, along the line of the Black Volta, occupied Buna, now in Cote d'Ivoire, and founded his Ngbanya Kingdom east of the Black Volta. After

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<sup>5</sup> Mathewson, *op. cit.*, pp 403-421

<sup>6</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.*, Para 18, p. 5.

conquering a large area from Bole to Sansanne Mango, Ndewura Jakpa is said to have *sat down* at Nyanga and divided his Kingdom into six divisions among his brothers and sons.<sup>7</sup> These divisions are Bole, Buipe, Wasipe (seat at Daboya, probably since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century), Tuluwe, Kasawgu and Kpembe (with the Kpembewura ruling Salaga from his village about two miles outside the town). The Kpembe divisional area is made up of three gates or families: the Lepo, Kanyanse and Singbung. It was members of the Lepo family who were the first Gonja to arrive in Nawuri area probably in the closing decades of the seventeenth century or early eighteenth century. The immigration of the Gonja into the Nawuri area was peaceful. The alliance between the Nawuri and the Gonja was the main reason for the immigration of the latter into the Nawuri area. The traditions of the Nawuri and Gonja say that the two ethnic groups were political allies until their relations became strained in the third decade of the twentieth century onwards. As political allies therefore, there was free movement of the Nawuri and the Gonja to Salaga and the Nawuri area respectively. The free movement of the Nawuri and the Gonja to and from each other's territory also facilitated trade among them. The oral traditions of the Nawuri say that the Nawuri conducted trade to Salaga and that some Gonja traders came to the Nawuri area while some of went as far as Krachi to purchase goods for sale in Salaga. It is also possible that when a Gonja rheumatic patient came to the Nawuri area to be treated by the first Mallam that settled at Balai, his (the Gonja rheumatic patient) kinsmen occasionally paid him visits. Enticed by the warm hospitality accorded the Gonja rheumatic patient, his kinsmen decided to stay in the Nawuri area permanently.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Braimah(1970), *op. cit.* p. 122.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Nana Ayagei at Bladjai on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

This was followed by a series of migration of the Gonja to Nawuri area in the fifth decade of the eighteenth century and closing decade of the nineteenth century. The Asante defeat of Gonja in 1744-5 and the Kpembe civil wars of 1892-3 and 1895-96 sparked off a wave of unrest in Kpembe, which also resulted in the migration of some Gonja refugees to the Nawuri area.

Whatever were the reasons responsible for the migration of the Gonja to the Nawuri area, by the early eighteenth century, the Nawuri area was inhabited by the Nawuri and the Gonja. There is no documentary evidence that Ndewura Jakpa, the founder of the Gonja empire ever crossed the Dakar River into the territories lying to the east of it to conquer either the Nchumuru or the Nawuri. Dixon admitted this in his report when he asserted that:

it is not clear whether "Ndewura Jakpa" had actually reached Balai which is little west of Kpandai, the headquarter town of the Alfai area, or whether he was still further west with some of his people scouting.<sup>9</sup>

Besides to date, there is no archaeological evidence of the inhabitation of the Nawuri area prior to the Nawuri. In his report of 1955, Dixon acknowledged this when he said that:

there is no archeological (sic) evidence of inhabitation of the Alfai area prior to the arrival of the Nawuris. Although it is claimed by the Gonjas that the Konkombas were there and were driven out (by Nawuris).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.* p 4

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*



In addition, there is no evidence of any fighting between the Nawuri and the Gonja when the latter arrived in the Nawuri area. According to Dixon:

the most reasonable explanation for the absence of any fighting arising from Gonja invasion or infiltration, linked with the comparatively small number of Gonjas living in the area, is that the Nawuris have already accepted the overlordship of the Gonjas before arriving in the area and had gone ahead of the main Gonja invasion to drive out the Konkomba inhabitants of what must have been a very sparsely inhabited territory.<sup>11</sup>

Dixon's view is questionable because it is merely speculative, and attempts to justify Gonja hegemony over the Nawuri. He did not explain the point of contact between the Nawuri and the Gonja where the Nawuri were alleged to have expressly or tacitly accepted Gonja overlordship before they moved to the Nawuri area. Whatever is the case, from the period of contact up to the 1930s, relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja had been cordial. Apart from the peaceful social, economic and cultural interactions with the Gonja, the Nawuri helped the Gonja when the Asante attacked East Gonja in 1744-5. Besides, in 1892-3 and 1895-6 when Kpembe was plagued by two civil wars, the Nawuri went to the aid of the Lepo, probably because the Lepo Gonja were the first among the Gonja to migrate to the Nawuri area.

From the above explanation five facts are overt. Firstly, the Nawuri arrived in their present settlement before the Gonja. Secondly, there are no records of Gonja conquest of the Nawuri when the former arrived in the Nawuri area. Thirdly, there is no evidence of the Nawuri accepting Gonja overlordship before arriving at their present

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<sup>11</sup> Dixon. *op. cit* p 5.

settlement, as there was no point of contact between the two ethnic groups before the Gonja arrived in the Nawuri area.

Besides, there is no evidence of the Nawuri leasing their land to the Gonja when the latter arrived in the Nawuri area. Finally, it is observed that all settlements and geographical features in the Nawuri area such as streams and hills bear Nawuri names. For instance, the names of streams such as Kuwaa, Dobun, Kpasa, Buya, Bukpa are all in Nawuri. Based on these facts, it is reasonable to conclude that the Nawuri are the owners of the land at their present settlements.

## 6.2 The colonial and post-colonial situation

It has already been pointed out that in 1899 a treaty was signed between the British and the German governments by which the Nawuri area and parts of the Gonja state were placed under German Administration. The Germans, it was pointed out, had been active in the area since 1884. Prior to 1899, the Nawuri area and parts of Northern Ghana were regarded as part of the neutral zone. The boundary was defined in the Anglo-German Conventions of July 1890 and February 1900.<sup>12</sup> Between 1899 and 1919 Nawuri area was administered from Krachi District under German colonial administration.

In 1919 the German Colony of Togoland was partitioned between Britain and France. Prior to the partition of Togoland, the Gonja petitioned the Governor of the Gold Coast to consider the unification of the Nawuri area in German Togoland with the Gonja state in the Gold Coast. In a petition to the Provincial Commissioner at Tamale, the District Commissioner, Salaga stated that:

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<sup>12</sup> Metcalfe, op. cit. p. 505.

as the question of divisions of Togoland is likely to come up for decisions shortly, I forward for information of the Chief Commissioner list of villages claimed by the head Chief of Kombi (Kpembe) (B) Gonja villages under the Chief of Alfai who resided at Kpandae on the main Kratchi-Yendi Road: (1) Kpandae (Kpandai) (2) Nkanchina (3) Balai (4) Dodopa (Dodoai) (5) Katageri(Katiegeli) (6) Kabonyeri (Kabonwule) (7) Punayerima (8) Belajai (Bladjai) (9) Kanapu.<sup>13</sup>

At the negotiations of the partition of Togoland, Britain demanded the modification of the boundary mark between former German Togoland and the Gold Coast to ensure the unification of the Mamprusi, the Dagomba and the Gonja Kingdoms. This was acceded to and resulted in the unification of these states.

By the British Sphere of Togoland Order-in-Council of 1923, it was decreed that 10,577 square miles of the Mandated Territory should be administered as an integral part of the Northern Territory.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, the Nawuri area and the whole of Kete-Krachi were added to and administered as part of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. All this while the Nawuri and the Gonja co-existed peacefully, and the Nawuri area was still administered as part of Krachi District. The severing of relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja began in the 1930s following the introduction of indirect rule, which was packaged in the Native Administration Ordinance of 1932. By this Ordinance, the Nawuri area was carved out from Krachi District and added to the Gonja District. By order No 11 of 1933, the Yagbumwura of Gonja and his Council were appointed Native Authority of the lands subject to the Yagbumwura of Gonja situated within the Northern

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<sup>13</sup> ADM 56/1/92. A letter from Harrold Branch, the District Commissioner at Salaga to the Provincial Commissioner, Tamale, dated 28<sup>th</sup> July 1919.

<sup>14</sup> Gold Coast Colony. Report on the Northern Territories for the Year 1937-38. para. 4. p. 2.

Territories and within the Northern section of Togoland under British Mandate.<sup>15</sup> By Order No. 13 of 1933, the Kpembewura and his Council were appointed subordinate Native Authority for the division of Kpembe, which included the Nawuri area.<sup>16</sup> This was the beginning of the discord between the Nawuri and the Gonja. Since the Kanankulaiwura was a Gonja, the Gonja Native Authority did not only regard him as a sub-chief of the Kpembewura in the Nawuri area, but also empowered him as the *de facto* chief over the people in the Nawuri area including the Nawuri. It was this local government policy of the colonial government that enforced Gonja hegemony over the Nawuri. In fact, the Gonja interfered with Nawuri traditional practices as evidenced in the Balai Kankpe priest affair of 1951. The Gonja also exacted taxes from the Nawuri, arrogated to themselves the right to sell lands in the Nawuri area and disregarded Nawuri chiefs. These developments led to a series of unrest in the Nawuri area.

In 1935 the Nawuri resisted the amalgamation of their area to the Gonja Native Administration, but this did not change their plight. The rising discord between the Nawuri and the Gonja came to a head in 1943 in the wake of recruitment of soldiers for the West African Frontier Force in the World War II. The Kpembewura, possibly in excess of zeal, sought recruits from the Nawuri. In order to avoid recruitment, the Nawuri paid the Kpembewura £200 to recruit Moshi soldiers in Kumasi Zongo to take their place. The Nawuri, however, were compelled by the Kpembewura to provide their quota of recruits even though they had given him money for that purpose. The Nawuri believed the Kpembewura had swindled them of £200.<sup>17</sup> This discord led to the secession bid of the Nawuri from their settlements under Gonja Native Administration to those in the

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<sup>15</sup> Dixon, *op. cit.*, p 14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Ampiah, *op. cit.*, part 1, para 88, pp. 19 – 20.

Krachi District. The Nawuri, however, returned to their settlements under Gonja Native Administration in 1949 and 1950, allegedly under the condition to remain subservient and loyal to the Gonja.

A year after their return, the Nawuri installed Nana Atorsah Agyemang as their paramount chief and demanded the abrogation of the chiefly authorities of the Kanankulaiwura, the Gonja Head Chief in the Nawuri area. In addition, the Nawuri petitioned the District Commissioner at Salaga, the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, the colonial Governor and the United Nations Trusteeship Council to regard Nana Atorsah as senior to the Kanankulaiwura. Nana Atorsah's struggle to wrestle power from the Kanankulaiwura worsened the already ruptured relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja.

In the wake of the rising discord between the Nawuri and the Gonja came the establishment of Alfai Local Council in April 1952 and the refusal of the Gonja to register eligible Nawuri for the impending Local Council elections. In February 1952 the Nawuri intimated this to the Minister of Local Government in a telegram message, which stated that

Gonja Levy collectors refused take levy from Nawuris and register them though fully qualified for elections local Councils stop Instructions and advice by you to co-operate form one council with Gonja despite our ardent desire to join Buem-Krachi has therefore been stultified by minority Gonjas who by virtue of native administrations ordinance have legal armour to commit any crime without question stop unless you instruct them take basic rates from Nawuris and allow them to vote their people to local council it will mean in future quote no representation no taxation unquote stop two thousand seven hundred Nawuris qualified for

registration stand firm demanding quickest action from government stop Acknowledge receipt.<sup>18</sup>

A month later, the Nawuri telegraphed the Secretary of the CPP and warned of a looming danger if an impartial committee was not set up immediately to probe the Nawuri area affairs and to stop the Gonja from refusing to register qualified Nawuri for the then forthcoming Local Council elections.<sup>19</sup> These grievances, including differences between the Nawuri and the Gonja during the inauguration of the Alfai Local Council in 1952 culminated in disturbances between them in that year. In that disturbance some Nawuri including Nana Atorsah Agyemang were arrested, sent to Salaga and charged for lawlessness. In 1956 when a plebiscite was organised to determine the future status of British Togoland, the Nawuri associated themselves with the Togoland Congress and voted for a separation. In fact, Nawuri advocates for separation appealed to the Konkomba, the Basari and the Nawuri by equating their continual subjection to the Paramount Chiefs of Dagomba and Gonja respectively if British Togoland was unified with the Gold Coast. The Gonja, on the other hand, supported the CPP and NPP and their call for the union of British Togoland with the Gold Coast. After the results of the plebiscite were declared, scattered cases of disturbances occurred in Kpandai and Katiejeli. Some pockets of the Nawuri were said to have molested the Gonja on their farms as a demonstration of their dissatisfaction with the results. Since the 1956 plebiscite, differences in local issues between the Nawuri and the Gonja always determined their support for a political party in multi-party elections in Ghana. In fact,

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<sup>18</sup> Telegram Communication from Nana Atorsah Agyemang, Kpandai via Krachi to Local Government, Accra dated 21 February 1952.

<sup>19</sup> Telegram Communication from Yawvi Datsa for Nana Atorsah Agyemang, Nawuri-wura to secretary CPP, Accra dated 19 March 1952.

the Nawuri and the Gonja did not support one political party simultaneously in any election. For example, in 1969 while the Nawuri supported the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL), the Gonja supported the Progress Party. Similarly, in the 1979 general elections, the Nawuri supported the Popular Front Party (PFP) whereas the Gonja supported the People's National Party (PNP). If the Gonja had not fled from Kpandai after the 1991 Gonja-Nawuri conflicts, it is highly probable that the two ethnic groups would never have supported one political party simultaneously in the current democratic dispensation in Ghana. In 1980, a disturbance erupted between the Nawuri and the Gonja following the visit of Yagbumwura to Kpandai. As grievances between the Nawuri and the Gonja remained unresolved there were bound to be further disturbances. Matters came to a climax in 1991 when the Gonja intended holding their Gonjaland Youth Association meeting in Kpandai. The Nawuri protested against the proposed Gonja Association Meeting and threatened war if the government did not prevent the Gonja from holding their Gonjaland Youth Association meeting on Nawuri land. Tension began to mount in Kpandai about the impending meeting. To avert any violence, the Northern Regional Administration prudently cancelled the proposed Gonjaland Youth Association Meeting. Indeed, it banned the activities of all Youth Associations in the Northern Region. Nevertheless, the cancellation of the Gonjaland Youth Association meeting did not restore peace in the area. This was because while the Nawuri regarded the cancellation of the meeting as a vindication of their cause, the Gonja did not understand why they were prevented from holding a meeting in an area they regarded as theirs. In the midst of these mixed feelings came a dispute between the Nawuri and the Gonja over a piece of land. The Nawuri, regarding themselves as landowners allocated a piece of

land to the Catholic Church in Kpandai for an agricultural project. The Gonja on the other hand, sold the same plot to a fitter mechanic to erect a workshop. An argument over who had the right to allocate land to people in Kpandai led to a war between the Nawuri and the Gonja in April 1991. The Nawuri were defeated in the first phase of the war and fled their settlements and sought refuge in Nanumba and Nkwanta Districts. In June of the same year the Nawuri resumed hostilities against the Gonja and defeated them. The Gonja therefore fled Kpandai to Salaga and Kpembe. In May 1992 the Gonja launched another attack on the Nawuri and the Nchumuru. The Konkomba and the Basari entered the war on the side of the Nawuri and the Nchumuru and defeated the Gonja. In 1994 when ethnic conflicts broke out in the Northern Region, the Nawuri entered into an alliance of convenience and common interest with the Konkomba, the Basari and the Nchumuru against the triple alliance of the Dagomba, the Nanumba and the Gonja.

To restore peace in the Nawuri area, various attempts were made. It was in this circumstance that the Bimbilla Mediation Meeting was held for the Nawuri and the Gonja in the Palace of the Bimbilla-Na in June 1991. It was also in the same vein that the Government set up the Justice Ampiah Committee of Inquiry and the Permanent Peace Negotiating Team (PPNT). However, the Bimbilla Mediation Meeting failed to restore peace between the Nawuri and the Gonja because each party took an entrenched position and refused to compromise. Similarly, the PPNT could not get the Nawuri and the Gonja to accept to cease hostilities because the former accused it of biases against them. Consequently, the Nawuri agitated for a change in the membership of the Team, but when this failed the Nawuri had little confidence in the team and therefore refused to sign a peace agreement mediated by it. Though the Justice Ampiah Committee did not

succeed in resolving the conflicts, it is likely that the 1992 conflict would have been averted and peace restored if the PNDC Government had implemented the findings and recommendations of the Committee. A change of attitude of subsequent governments is paramount and necessary in resolving the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts. This will involve, among others, implementing the findings and recommendations of the Justice Ampiah Committee of Inquiry without further delay. As a long-term measure, the government should assist chiefs to document their lands. This will help mitigate land litigation in the country that often culminates in ethnic wars especially in Northern Ghana. It was in this light that the former Minister of Communication, John Mahama, appealed to the Lands Commission in 1998 to document all lands in Ghana.<sup>20</sup> He noted that the non-existence of documentation of lands in Ghana has been the main source of land conflicts, which he said is due to a misunderstanding of land tenure rights by satellite farmers that often assume it to mean automatic ownership.<sup>21</sup>

This study on the Nawuri-Gonja relations from 1913 to 1994 establishes various facts that need to be reiterated in the conclusion.

Firstly, the study establishes that the Nawuri are the aborigines of the Nawuri area, and that despite Gonja claims to the contrary, allodial rights in the Nawuri area rest in the hands of the Nawuri. This, notwithstanding, the Gonja have simultaneously arrogated to themselves the right to allocate lands in the Nawuri area to settlers, an anomaly that arose from the overlordship of the Gonja over the Nawuri.

The study further establishes that the traditional system of land ownership in the research area is birth right, and that there is no evidence of Gonja conquest of the

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<sup>20</sup> People's Daily Graphic, Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> April 1998 p 12.  
<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



Nawuri, neither is there evidence of the Nawuri sub-letting their lands to the Gonja in a lease agreement

Thirdly, the study establishes that the institution of chieftaincy among the Nawuri is not a recent development. The Gonja claim that chieftaincy was a mid-twentieth century development among the Nawuri is a fabrication aimed at belittling the status of Nawuri chiefs as well as justifying Gonja hegemony over the Nawuri.

Furthermore, the study establishes that before the imposition of colonial rule on Ghana, the Nawuri were not under Gonja rule. Neither were the Nawuri subjects of the Gonja. It was colonial rule, especially the British colonial policy of indirect rule, which amalgamated the Gonja and the Nawuri areas to the Gonja empire and thereby subjugated the Nawuri to Gonja political control from 1932 onwards. The Gonja took advantage of this colonial political arrangement to accord themselves allodial rights to the lands in the Nawuri area

The study further establishes that the local feud between the Nawuri and the Gonja determines their stand in international politics concerning the status of British sphere of Togoland from 1914 to 1956 as well as politics in Ghana from 1966 onwards.

In addition, the study establishes that though there are several remote and immediate causes of the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts of 1991 and 1992, the Gonja claim to allodial rights over lands in the Nawuri area and political control over the Nawuri, particularly their non-recognition and suppression of Nawuri chieftaincy formed the root causes of the conflicts between the Nawuri and the Gonja both during the colonial and the post-Independence era, notably the Gonja-Nawuri wars of 1991 and 1992.

Finally, the study establishes that the wars between the Nawuri and the Gonja have technically not ended, and a state of war still exists between them since no peace treaty has been signed. The Justice Ampiah Committee that was set up in 1991 by the erstwhile PNDC Government to investigate the causes of the Nawuri-Gonja wars submitted its findings and recommendations to the government the following year. Perhaps for political reasons, a Government White Paper was not issued approving the findings and recommendations of the Committee.

Nawuri-Gonja relations will continue to be sour unless a proper solution is found or unless the Nawuri and the Nchumuru are given their District and Traditional Councils. On the other hand, the impasse in the Nawuri-Gonja relations could be resolved if the Gonja relinquish their claims to Nawuri land and their political dominion of the Nawuri.



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### D. INTERVIEWS

Name	Occupation/status	Age	Place	Date of interview
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2. John Kofi Daboyney	Teaching	62	Kpandai	28 <sup>th</sup> Dec, 1997
3. Yawdu	Farming	41	Njare	28 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 1997 & 28 Jan.1998
4. Samuel Ninkab (Basari)	Teaching	45	Kpandai	10 <sup>th</sup> April 1998
5. Nana Obempeh Mbimadong	Balaiwura	83	Balai	8 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 2000
6. Mbowura Clement Kwasi	Teaching	37	Kpandai	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2001
7. Nana Ayadong	Regent Kpandai	85	Kpandai	7 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2001
8. Nana Ayegai	The eldest person in Bladjai	115	Bladjai	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2001
9. Yaw Goglogo	Teaching	43	Kabonwule	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2001
10. Mbowura Boila	Ayafolewura	62	Kpandai	10 <sup>th</sup> March 2001
11. S.G Friko	Member of the Council of Elders in Dodoai	95	Katiejeli	17 <sup>th</sup> March 2001
12. Pastor Njebi (Konkomba)	Rtd. Pastor	72	Kpandai	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2001
13. Donkor Anjefene(P. A)	Postal Agent	48	Kpandai	11 <sup>th</sup> July 2001
14. Nana Kasekor Agbedji	Nkanchinawura	69	Nkanchina	10 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 2001



DISTRICT

Government Commissioner's Office,

No. G. D. 254/8/1919.

S A L A G A

Tamale, N.T.

one of reply the number  
is of this letter should  
it.

28th July, 1919.

Sir,

As the question of the divisions of Togoland is likely to come up for decisions shortly, I forward for information of the Chief Commissioner-list of Villages claimed by the Head Chief of Kombi.

(A) GONJA VILLAGES on left bank of DAKA~~X~~ claimed by the Chief of KANYASSE.

1. KALIAKO. (2) KAFANPUE. (3) KOBATE. (4) GYAGI.

All these Villages are close to the DAKA~~X~~ RIVER situated to the East and North East of Degankadi, the Northernwest GYAGI being due East of Turu. The Northern Boundary with BUMBILLA being the DIA RIVER.

(B) GONJA VILLAGES under the CHIEF OF ALFAI who resides at KPANDON the MAIN KRATCHI YENDI ROAD.

1. KPANDAE. (2) ISKANCHIMA. (3) BALAI. (4) TOTOPA.

(5) KATA GERI. (6) KOBON YERI. (7) PUMAYERIMA. (8) BALAJAI.

(9) KAWAYEN. Most of the Villages are situated between the KRATCHI and the MAIN ROAD and the DAKA~~X~~ RIVER, a few are to the East of the road near the OTI RIVER. They bound on the North <sup>with the</sup> BUMBILLA VILLAGES and on the South with the CHUMERUGU VILLAGES mentioned in D. and on the East partly by the OTI RIVER.

(C) Villages claimed by the Chief of Kule.

1. BEDELE (OR UKAUBERE). (2) KAPUAYE. (3) NEW TINKRANKU.

These are situated on the bend of the Daka~~X~~ River near the ...  
to, all close to the Daka~~X~~.

7.5

As [REDACTED] VILLAGES under the Chief of N'GERO who since  
the [REDACTED] Occupation were placed under the Head Chief of  
KETCHI-KRATCHI. All these Villages formerly served KOMBI and are  
wishing to return.

1. N'GERO. (2) BRAI. (3) DAMBAI. (4) KACHTANKA. (5) WANKA  
(6) AGIMBILLA. (7) WUYAE. (8) FAMANI. (9) BANKAMBA. (10) N'KUMDEPA  
(11) KUDJO BENEPA. (12) BANDA. (13) PAPTIA. These Villages  
are situated between the Dakah River and on both sides of the  
KRATCHI-YENDI MAIN ROAD and bound on the North with the ALFAI  
VILLAGES described in (B) and on the South with the Kratchi  
Villages who are Brengs. A.H.C. and D. form therefore  
one continuous piece of Country.

In the final settlement of the new Districts to be  
possibly formed to the East of the Dakah and Volta River I put  
forward the claims of the Salaga District to have the above  
mentioned villages incorporated, as they would then return to  
their rightful Head Chief and give a much needed augmentation  
to this thinly populated District. The bulk of the Villages  
claimed are nearer to Salaga than to either Kratchi or Yendi  
and the Salaga Krups Road could be continued via Sabu Gidaa to  
connect with the MAIN KRATCHI YENDI ROAD.

I have the honour to,

Sir,

COMMISSIONER,  
WESTERN PROVINCE  
F. C. H. A. L. E

Your Obedient Servant  
(and) Harrel Branch,  
DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,  
SOUTHERN PROVINCE,  
TAMALE N.T.,

NT-992  
REC<sup>d</sup> 18 AUG 25

17th AUGUST, 1925

MEDALLIONS.

—:0:—

No medallions have been issued to the KRATCHI District.

2. The Acting District Commissioner suggests, and I recommend, that the following Chiefs be given medallions.

Title.	Place.	Size of Medallions.
Omanbene	KRATCHI	4 inches
Wurubon	KPANDAI	3 inches
Osuri Wura	SIARI	2 inches
Eju Dele	TUTUKPENE	2 inches
Oware	NENJERO	2 inches

*Howell Brown*

COMMISSIONER - SOUTHERN PROVINCE

THE ACTING CHIEF COMMISSIONER.

NORTHERN TERRITORIES,

TAMALE.

S.M.Y.



	TOWN OR VILLAGE	SIZE	No.	DATE PRESENT
OKUDAJENTE	KRATCHI	3"	59	28. 7. 1926
BOH	PANDAE	3"	61	28. 7. 1925
BA	ENJURO	2"	65	28. 7. 1925
SEWURA (BROWIA)	SIARI	2"	82	16. 8. 1926

United Nations New York

Have honour repudiate action gold coast government north  
territories regarding membership enlarged consultative commis  
sion in respect kpankai trust territory stop have been  
unanimously elected by natural rulers and peoples kpankai area  
represent them my name submitted gold coast government with e  
1st august stop meeting scheduled lone early october postponed  
november 7 but on october 10 and 12 district commissioner sal  
gold coast in consultation with kabachewura gold coast gonja c  
encroached and liberty and rights peoples kpankai area of tru  
territory following petitions from nanjwura and nawalis join kr  
love worth by forcing up self made plebiscite of alien majority  
against natural owners of land thus violating the atlantic chart  
and trust territory declarations stop all correspondence frontier  
permit allowance papers and instructions consultative commission  
submitted to me by gold coast government unlawfully seized by  
kabachewura thus freeing me of all powers virtually conferred  
to me by natural rulers approved by government to attend consulta  
tion lone stop immediate intervention or special enquiry  
initiated for revelations of undemocratic atrocities before session  
commission otherwise capital unrest stop SAGLI KAUREFARI VIA KRACI  
UNDER UNITED KINGDOM TRUSTEESHIP

1. Whereas We the Natural Rulers and People of the Tribes of Nanjuro and Nawri inhabiting the area of Kpandai Vide Map attached to the 1949 Togoland Reports have studied carefully the gradual plans being formulated by the Gold Coast Government to swallow up the Kpandai Area into the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast;
2. And whereas the Trusteeship Council at its seventh Session, 27th Meeting in July, 1950, at Lake Success recommended an Enlarged Consultative Commission to be composed of the indigent Togolanders to sit and determine the fate of Togoland especially for the Unification of Togoland under a Progressive and Competent Government;
3. And whereas we the Nanjuros and Nawuris, and the aliens on our land for the purpose of livelihood namely, the Bassaris, Kotokolis, Dagombas and Gonjas, have on the 29th August, 1950 met at Kpandai and unanimously elected Mr. Frico Sawli, an indigene of the Nanjuro and the Nawuri land to represent us on the Enlarged Consultative Commission as published in the Gold Coast Government Bulletin and all the Gold Coast Dailies;
4. And whereas to the eleventh hour of the sitting of the Consultative Commission at LOME and on the 13th October, 1950 the Kabachewura, a village headman in the Salaga District of the Gold Coast and a Government-made Member of the Gonja obnoxious Native Authority has arbitrarily conspired with the District Commissioner, Salaga in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast and seized all Documents bearing Mr. Frico Sawli's name as our accredited representative on the Enlarged Consultative Commission;
5. And whereas a Cablegram was despatched to the Trusteeship Council to this effect;
6. And whereas the Kabachewura and the District Commissioner, Salaga have aggressively chosen one Mr. Allasan Mahama Jawula, a Gonja man from the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast and who has all resided in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, to represent US the Nanjuros and the Nawuris in the Trust Territory of Togoland contrary to the Articles laid down in the United Nations Charter and the Trusteeship Agreement and our Freely expressed wishes;

THEREFORE Be it RESOLVED and it is hereby RESOLVED By US the Natural Rulers and the People of the Tribes of the Nanjuros and Nawuris assembled here at Banda this 8th Day of November, 1950 THAT:-

- (a) All Documents Thus seized from Mr. Frico Sawli ~~and the~~ accredited representative of the Nanjuros and Nawuris since Mr. Allasan Mahama Jawula is a Gonja man, from the Northern Territories who does represent our views as Togolanders, be forthwith returned to our accredited representative Mr. Frico Sawli who was elected at Kpandai on 29th August, 1950, to represent US in all subsequent Meetings of the Enlarged Consultative Commission

- (b) We the Natural Rulers and the peoples of the Nanjuro and the Nawuris numbering over four thousand each of our land with the Krachis as it was in

ENDIX V CONTINUOUS

German Regime.

<u>NANJUROS:-</u>		<u>NAWURIS:-</u>	
	Their		Their
1. <u>Kojo Kumah</u> Chief of Nanjuro	X	1. <u>Atoasa Nawuri</u> Kpandal Chief	X
2. <u>Kofi Brukun</u> Chief of Wia	X	2. <u>Kwadjo Nawuri</u> Dalai Chief	X
3. <u>Dente Brukun</u> Chief of Bankama	X	3. <u>Adiei Nawuri</u> Nanchena Chief	X
4. <u>Kwabena Gyato</u> Chief of Fuman	X	4. <u>Anewamene Nawuri</u> Kabonwre Chief	X
5. <u>Kwadjo Kumah</u> Chief of Farman	X	5. <u>Kwame Amoah</u> Kabonwre Chief	X
6. <u>Kwabena Mensah</u> Chief of Tirae and Chakon	X	6. <u>Kotokro Nawuri</u> Kitare Chief	X
		7. <u>Keresim Nawuri</u> Ketalleri Chief	X
		8. <u>Alidu Nawuri</u> Dodope Chief.	X

I certify that the above Resolution was read and interpreted in the Nchumuru and Nawuri languages to the signatories and they seemed to understand same perfectly before touching the pen or make their Marks or Right Thumb Print.

Sgd. Friko Sawli.  
.....

The Assistant District Commissioner,  
D. C.'s Office,  
Salaja, Gonye  
Gold Coast. (NTS)

Elders of Mamari  
in Council  
at Ratiejeli  
26<sup>th</sup> April 1951

Dear Sir,

The Next Session of the Enlarged Consultative Commission  
for Togoland.

It has come to our notice that the next session of the Enlarged Consultative Commission for Togoland will sit at Ho on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1951.

The validity of the information at our disposal is a matter we cannot prove, as such you being the District Commissioner who controls this part of Togoland we demand from you to intimate us with the correct position of affairs.

Whilst we are awaiting your advice on the matter we wish to intimate you that at the last session of the Consultative Commission held at Lome we were not attended by a Togolander or by a Gonye man who is at the moment somewhere in the service of the Gonye Native Authority in the Gold Coast. There was considerable trouble about this matter last year, which ended in the Magistrate's Court Salaja presided over by the Senior C. Mr. J. H. Mac Giffen who passed judgement that the accused was not guilty of the charge against him. The fact is we desire to know that the justice must have its course and we should have our own representative now. Please let us have your letter in bearing on the matter.

P. T. O



We

Your Good friends,

Merisem Yao	Chief of Katigjeli	his mark	His Thumbprint
Miolen Dodofo	Chief of Dodofo	his mark	His Thumbprint
Kwame Amuah Bonamasi	Representative of Chief of Kabonwuli	his mark	His Thumbprint
Atorsa for Kodjai	Chief Elder of Kodjai	his mark	His Thumbprint
Honwula for Kodjo Balai	Chief of Balai	his mark	His Thumbprint
Kerewura for Manaise	Chief of Kitarri	his mark	His Thumbprint
Acho for Bladjawura	Nawuri Amewamena	his mark	His Thumbprint
for Agbedji	Chief of Nkanchora	his mark	His Thumbprint

marks and Thumbprints  
 Friday Written Free of Charge.

11th July, 1941.

Sir,

Thank you for your letter dated the 13th July, 1941, inviting me to become a member of the so-called Alfai N. A. Court.

I respectfully have to inform you that on the receipt of your letter I had to meet with the Elders of Nawari and the following are our united decision :-

- (a) That we are not aware of any Administration established in the Nawari Land called "ALFAI N.A." how much more to have its Court. The authorities have not brought this to the notice of the people of Nawari Land;
- (b) That we are aware of a Court-house being constructed at Gondal but we want to know if this Court will form part of the Gondal Native Authority;
- (c) That "NAWARI" is the name known since from time immemorial and not "ALFAI" which is a Gondal ward meaning "Walled", and it was given to a small village which was named after a stranger-Wallah who resided there in the olden days, on Nawari Land;
- (d) That by your letter it is assumed that the Authorities have established a Native Authority in Nawari, and therefore this Native Authority should be called "The Nawari Native Authority" the President of which should be a Nawari and not a Gondal;
- (e) That the membership on the proposed Court and Native Authority should be properly constituted with the appropriate number of Nawaris on them since it is essentially a Nawari affair.

An early reply will be welcome before I can take a decision.

Yours faithfully,

ALFAI NAWARI,

His

THE MEMBER OF EQUAL GOVERNANCE,  
THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, GONDAL.  
THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER, P. S. S.

The accredited successor, Fetish Priestmaker (Kingmaker), the accredited successor of the Balai Fetish Priest and Elders of BALAI in the Nawuri land in the Northern Section of Togoland under U.K. Trusteeship have the honour most dutifully to petition you.

2. Now that since we came to form one Native Administration with the Gonjas under the name Gonja Native Administration about sixteen years ago, we must be frank to say that our customs of installing our Fetish Priests (chiefs), have not been interfered with by anyone.

3. Your Honour, your humble petitioners have to state that on Friday 17th August, 1951, the day on which we were to install Alechu as the traditional Fetish Priest of Balai, a gang of about forty Gonjas strong, led by Kanankulaiwura (chief of Kpendai) his clerk and two Native Authority Policemen came to Balai without any previous information to the Elders.

4. On their arrival they went to one Mr. Amoani a nephew to the Kanankulaiwura, and after a while came out together themselves under a tree in the town when they sent for Opanyin Rojo, Fetish Priestmaker of Balai, Alechu the accredited successor to the Fetish Priesthood, and the Elders of Balai.

5. The Kanankulaiwura, upon their arrival informed them that he came with his retinue to install the Fetish Priest in the person of his nephew Amoani, in succession to the late Opanyin Yaw who died on the 8th August, 1951.

6. Your Honour, at this juncture, one of your humble and dutiful petitioners, Opanyin Rojo, the Fetish Priestmaker told the Kanankulaiwura that the installation of a Fetish Priest in Balai was not their concern and also that his nephew Amoani was not the right man to succeed, but that Opanyin Alechu was the right man.

7. The Kanankulaiwura insisted and said that he knew that it does not fall their lot to come and interfere with their customs, but that he was instructed by the Kpembwura, the Yagbawura and the District Commissioner to come and install a man suitable for him, therefore whether we liked it or not they have already chosen Amoani.

8. An argument over the issue ensued and the two Native Authority policemen brought by the Kanankulaiwura and his gang started beating the Nawuris with sticks which they brought along with them.

9. After the policemen and the Gonja youngmen have beaten the Nawuris to their satisfaction, they went to the spot where customary rites are performed for the installation of Fetish Priests and (with the Traditional Fetish Bag which Amoani had stolen from the house of the late Opanyin Yaw on the day of his death) installed Amoani as Fetish Priest of Balai without the knowledge and consent of the Priestmaker and the Elders of Balai.

10. That your humble petitioners seeing the havoc done by the Kanankulaiwura and his Gonjas and with more threats from the said gang a number of us have deserted the village of Balai to seek refuge in Lamulaland.

11. Your Honour, in order that your humble petitioners should be secured under the British Flag, we humbly implore you to:




(a) Conduct an immediate impartial inquiry into the brutal attacks meted out by the Gonjas to the poor Balai villagers of Balai on the 17th August

(b) Instruct the District Commissioner Gonja to advise the Kpembwura, the Yagbawura and his nephew Amoani to leave immediately the traditional Fetish Bag to the Priestmaker and the Elders of Balai and to allow the traditional process to proceed, and to advise the



12. Your honour, your humble petitioners, in order to help maintain Peace and Order in this area are still remaining in exile in Mamumbaland waiting for your immediate action.

13. Your honour, your humble petitioners have the pleasure to be,

- 1... Alechu..... <sup>his</sup> Mark 
- 2... Kaja Balai..... <sup>his</sup> Mark 
- 3... Yaw Mamfui..... <sup>his</sup> Mark 

Information copies to:-

- 1. The Minister of Local Government.
- 2. Leader of Government Business.
- 3. Honourable J.A. Braimah.
- 4. Senior District Commissioner, Gonja.
- 5. Northern Territories Territorial Council.
- 6. Trusteeship Council, Lake Success.
- 7. Southern Togoland Council.

is to certify that the above has been read and related to full understanding of the petitioners to mark MB

From Balai  
Care Native Authority  
Bimbila via Yendi

Ludjai Nawuri,  
Kpandai, Togoland under U.I  
PROTECTORATE.

4th September, 1951

Sir,

ALFAI COURT.

I respectfully beg to refer to your letter  
No.0035/S.F.7/14 dated the 30th August, 1951.

2. Touching upon the subject of the conversation  
(Ludjai - Asst. D.C., Salaga, C.A.McLaren) during  
which you allege that I intimated accepting the  
request of the Gonja N.A. to take my "place as a  
Court Member on the new Court to be established", I  
regret to say that I do not remember ever intimating  
you of my willingness to accept the said membership.

Rather, I made it abundantly clear to you that if  
the Court were Nawuri Court (and not Gonja N.A. Court),  
then I was prepared to accept the whole Court as a  
whole for Nawuri when we the Nawuris would be fully  
represented as indigenes and the strangers given only  
their limited places.

3. In the present circumstance it seems that the  
would-be Court is being established solely for the  
Gonjas and the strangers and just giving a place to us  
Nawuris who are the natural owners of the land.

4. You are aware, sir, that I speak no English  
and am not in a position to know whether your Interpreter  
did interpret me correctly.

I shall be very grateful if you will reconsider  
this matter to bring satisfaction to all of us.

NATIVE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE,  
P.O. Box. 1.  
DANOMBO, N.Ta.

26th October, 1951.

EMBARKMENT OF ATORSA NEWURA.

I have been informed that you intended to install one Atorsa Newura as the Chief of Nawuri land at 3 p.m. on Sunday, the 28th October, 1951. I have also been informed that there is a possibility of Atorsa leading a procession to Kandai.

2. I have never heard of the title of chief of Nawuri land but at the present moment I am not concerned as to whether your activities are or not in accordance with your own custom. My main concern is the maintenance of peace. I have reason to believe that if Atorsa Newura and followers proceeded to Kandai and seek recognition for what they refer to as the chief of Nawuri land, they will bitterly/resisted by a considerable majority of the people of Kandai and may lead to disturbances.

3. As I am responsible to Government for perfect peace in this part of the Northern Territories, I am not prepared to risk disturbances and therefore I must call upon you to carry out the activities to which you refer in your petition, a copy of which has been shown to me, strictly within the limits of Kutiakeli village and in no circumstances whatever must a procession such as described above proceed to Kandai.

4. As I have said before I am not giving judgement on the rights or wrongs of your action in relation to your own customary law which can be settled later by those who are traditionally responsible for such matters and in due course I hope to receive a report of their findings.

I have the honour to be,  
Your Obedient Servant.

**YABURUWURA**  
**LEWENENOMA**  
CHIEF-NATIVE AUTHORITY.

Elders of Nawuri Land,  
Katiejeli, Nawuri,  
Togoland under U.A. Trusteeship

3rd November, 1951.

Sir,

We the under-marked, Elders of Nawuri Land  
humbly place this application before the Government for  
kind consideration :-

(i) That we have now elected and installed our own  
Nawuri Chief, NANA ATORSA NAWURI (NAWURI-WURA)  
and therefore pray that in the new Council soon  
to be opened at Kpandai for Nawuri should be  
properly constituted with NANA ATORSA NAWURI and  
each of the Elders who are the signatories here-  
under as Members with only the appropriate  
place given to the stranger-elements.

(ii) That in the Court to be opened at Kpandai the  
membership be allotted to NANA ATORSA NAWURI and  
representatives from each of the towns we represent  
& the stranger-elements considered in their proper  
status.

2. We humbly believe that this will receive the  
serious attention of Government.

We are,  
Sir,  
Your very Good Friends,

..... *Huda* *Nawuri* *ns/mark*  
ELDER, KPANDAI.  
..... *Habe* *Nawuri* *ns/mark*  
ELDER, SPANCHINA.  
..... *Kwari* *Hwark* *ns/mark*  
ELDER, ZANGHULI.  
..... *Hayi* *Nawuri* *ns/mark*  
ELDER, BAWAT.

..... *Yap* *Kereyem* *ns/mark*  
ELDER, KATIEJELI.  
..... *Kajo* *Nawuri* *ns/mark*  
ELDER, BAWAI.  
..... *Abdu* *Nawuri* *ns/mark*  
ELDER, BODONS.  
..... *Koloko* *Nawuri* *ns/mark*  
ELDER, KETIARA.

THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER,  
SALATA GA, T. To.

Copy to :- The Minister of Local Government, A  
....., The U.S.H.S., Lagos.



Logoo Accra ✓

Gonjas levy their elections and form despite ~~and~~ minority Administrations commit you and council representation seven hundred stand firm government stop Levy from through local advice one our Krachi has therefore been stultified by Ordinances who by virtue of National Ordinance have legal authority to commit any crime without question stop unless you instruct them to take basic rates from their people to local council it will mean in future no taxation unquote stop Two thousand Nawwas qualified for registration demanding quickest action from stop acknowledge receipt Refused and qualified stop you to co-operate with Gonjas desire to join in full harmony to stop unless you instruct them to take basic rates from their people to local council it will mean in future no taxation unquote stop Two thousand Nawwas qualified for registration demanding quickest action from stop acknowledge receipt

Mawa Atersah Agyemang, Kpandai via Krachi.

No. 0004/11/238

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,  
GOBUA, SALAGA.  
8th March, 1952

Sir,

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

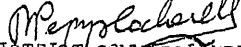
Reference your query of today, March 8th, the closing date for applications being made for inclusion on the register of voters is March 14th.

2. The forms can be obtained from any Assistant Registration Officer but it would be as well to get them from the officer concerned with the particular ward in which you live.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant



ASST: DISTRICT COMMISSIONER.

TSA,  
DAI.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,  
P.O. BOX 100,  
TAMALE.

No. SC. 3/50/II/298.

20th June, 1952.

Sir,

JOINT COUNCIL FOR TOGOLAND.

You will be aware of the existence of the Joint Council for Togoland Affairs and of the fact that it has hitherto been constituted, on the British side, by nine members from the Southern Section of Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship and by eight members from the Northern Section. It has been decided that in future each Section shall be represented by three members and I have decided on the following distribution:

- (i) One Member for the ~~Nanumba District Council Area~~, the Alfai Local Council Area, and that part of the Kpembe Local Council Area within Togoland.
- (ii) One Member for the Yendi, Chereponi, Gushiego, Kworli, Sunson and Yelzori Local Council Areas, and for those parts of the Karaga and Mion Local Council Areas which may lie within Togoland.
- (iii) One Member for the Yunyoo, Bunkpurugu, and East Agolle Local Council Areas, and for that part of the Sawku Local Council Area which lies within Togoland, *and of Nanumba District Council area*

2. I now invite you, in co-operation with the Chairman of other Councils concerned, to hold joint meetings as soon as possible in order, if you wish, to elect a member. I am instructing the Government Agents at Sawku, Gambaga, Yendi and Salaga to give you and other Chairmen all the assistance you may require in holding this meeting, and you will no doubt approach your Government Agent if you require assistance. I have been asked to communicate the names of persons selected as soon as possible, and I shall be grateful if these elections can be arranged to take place on July 1st, but certainly not later than July 7th.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,

CHIEF REGIONAL OFFICER.

CHAIRMAN, THE NANUMBA DISTRICT COUNCIL

*to be met at Kpundai on representative of the Alfai Trusteeship to the above is not yet received.*

CP. No. 029/MS/11.

Office of Nana Atorsah Agyeem I.  
Nawuriwura,  
Kpedadi, Northern Togo  
12th March, 1952

Sir,

I am directed by Nana Atorsah Agyeem I. Nawuriwura to write in reference to your letter No. 0024/SP.1/30 dated 8th March, 1952.

2. You stated in your letter that the allegation made by Nana in his telegram of the 22nd February, 1952 were incorrect and that you would like him to visit Osmongo.

3. What baffles me a little is when and how your investigations were conducted, I cannot say.

But I think if you are referring to a visit paid by Mr. Mahama, the C.N.A. Secretary about a week or two ago, then I believe he ought to have told you without bias that the people of Katiejeli informed him that your Assistant Registration Officers did not take the trouble and pains to explain the complicated machinery of Local Government to them. How then could Nana's allegations be found true when people who are already prejudiced are sent to make such important investigations.

4. Could you sincerely, as a respectable agent of the Government, tell us in a separate letter that the allegations against your Levy Collectors are also unfounded?

5. We hope that as soon as we are able to understand one another and co-operate in this area everything will move smoothly and eventually hasten the condition which we are all desirous of.

I have the honour to be,

JOINT ADDRESS OF WELCOME OF  
NANA APORSAH AGYEMAN I, NAWUREWURA  
AND NANA KOJO KUMA, NANJUROHENE?  
TO  
HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, SIR  
CHARLES NOBLE ARDEN-CLARKE, G.C.M.G.,  
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS VISIT TO THE  
KPANDAI AREA, 24TH NOVEMBER, 1952.

Your Excellency,

We, the Head Chiefs of Nawuri and Nanjuro in North Togoland under U.K.Trusteeship on behalf of ourselves and our people, do heartily welcome Your Excellency to these our parts

It is barely three months now when our land was graced with the visit of the August body of the United Nations Trusteeship Council's Visiting Mission to Togoland and now Your Excellency has also accorded us the honour of visiting us.

Your Excellency, while you are with us here in this our poor country we will always invoke the blessing of the gods on Your Excellency's noble person and that of Lady Clarke that Your Excellency be guided in all Your Excellency's undertakings to rule us wisely.

Your Excellency we are sure is aware of our united and long struggle for our emancipation from the hands of usurpers backed by the white man. These usurpers are the Gonjas who have all these years encroached upon our rights and liberties and exploiting our very existence and when we raise the cry for freedom our cry is being muffled by the powers that be thus backing these Gonjas.

This land is ours by right and by right must we own it ourselves so as to shape our own future and not to be misruled by foreign raiders, the Gonjas. And with Your Excellency's wise judgment we must now and forever shake off the foreign yoke.

If Your Excellency will look into the composition of the membership of the so-called Alfai Council Your Excellency will find that the Nawuris will outnumber the Gonjas.



APPENDIX XVII

THE 5TH SESSION OF THE ALFAL LOCAL COUNCIL  
AT KPANDAI THIS 14TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 1953

Present :-

- All members were present with exception of the following
- Kigbriwura Balai - Member Traditional.
  - Narjar Konkomba - Representing Ward B.
  - Aforson Nawura - " " G
  - Lamunna Konkomba - " " H
  - Akwesi Gonja - " " L
  - Kofi Nawura - " " D.



AGENDA

1. Confirmation of minutes of the last meeting.
2. Reconsideration of the opening of a School at Katiajeli.
3. Discussion on the report of the Finance and Staff Committee which are as follows :-

(a) The draft Estimates for 1953 - 4 has been drawn up by the Committee. All items in the respect of 1952 - 3 remained the same with the exception of an additional item which has been introduced - Rice Export Tax at 1/4 per bag. An amount of £100 has been estimated for this. Also on the expenditure side the salary of the president which is £236 p.a. has been raised to £48 p.a. The revenue Collector Mr. Amos has also been raised from £4. 3/4 p.m. to £6 p.m. An amount of £200 was voted to the reserve Fund Under Capital Works :- the following items were provided :-

1. Reconstruction of Classroom Kpandai	£350.
2. Teacher Quarters Kpandai	£100.
3. Police Cell Kpandai	100.
4. Market Sheds Katiajeli	70.
5. Market " Bunya	20.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>£640.</u>

The question of making provisions for the salary for the Teacher at Katiajeli and for books and stationary and equipment was left for the Council to decide. This was estimated to be £100 and £40 respectively. An estimated surplus balance of £739 was made. It has been considered that the District Council will ask of a precept out of this surplus balance.

(b) The Committee decided that Mr. Mahama the Local Authority messenger who left his Office and went away to the South for four months leaving the Dispensary empty without permission should be dismissed from the service. The Messenger returned to Kpandai on the previous 14th.

The Committee decided to have Mama Gonja as the messenger for of Bakare his brother, because Mama who understood served as interpreter for the Council.

No. 11/16-2131

The Secretariat,  
Togoland Commission,  
National Headquarters,  
P. O. Box 35,  
SOMEA.

24th June, 1953.

Sir,

JOINT COUNCIL FOR TOGOLAND AFFAIRS.

The Secretariat has been given to understand that you have instructed the Alafai Local Council to reject participation in the elections to the Joint Council for Togoland Affairs.

I am to inform you that the Secretary of State has just released his proposals for the Joint Council for Togoland Affairs and invites the various political parties and groups to submit their views on the proposals. According to the General Assembly Resolution and the Statement from the Secretary of State the method of election to the Joint Council and the Composition of the Council will be decided after full consultation with the leaders of the various groups and parties by the Administering Authorities has been held.

Your action therefore is viewed with grave concern, if the report just received is correct. It is also learnt that similar steps are being taken in the various Districts in the North of Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship.

I shall be grateful, however, if you will write immediately to clarify the situation. You will also feel free to state as fully as possible the circumstances which led to the supposed directive given by you to the Alafai Local Council.

Yours sincerely,



SECRETARY OF STATE FOR  
TERRITORIES AND  
TOWNSHIP.

THE GOVERNMENT AGENTS,  
SIEMEA.

Copy to:-

- ✓ MINISTER FOR TERRITORIES AFFAIRS, ACCRA.
- REGIONAL OFFICER, EDU.
- REGIONAL OFFICER, TAMALE.
- ALFAI LOCAL COUNCIL, SIEMEA DISTRICT.
- ✓ BANK AGENT - SIEMEA DISTRICT.
- MR. I. HENNINGSON, REGIONAL SECRETARY  
TERRITORIES AND TOWNSHIP.
- MEMBERSHIP - SIEMEA.
- SECRETARY OF STATE, SIEMEA.
- SECRETARY GENERAL, UNITED NATIONS,  
NEW YORK.

## MANDATE

MANDATE FROM THE CHIEFS, ELDERS AND PEOPLE OF NAWURI AND NANJURO IN THAT PART OF TOGOLAND UNDER UNITED KINGDOM TRUSTEESHIP, SITUATED BETWEEN KEPE-KRACHI AND NANUMBA STATES AUTHORIZING THE BEARERS MR. S. G. ANTOR AND MR. A. A. CHEMBA TO SPEAK ON OUR BEHALF AT THE FORTH-COMING GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE U.N.O.

We the undermentioned, Natural Rulers of Nawuriland and Nanjuriland under United Kingdom Trusteeship do hereby authorise the bearers Mr. S. G. Antor and Mr. A. A. Chemba who are our delegates and representatives to represent the Natural Rulers and owners of the land before the United Nations General Assembly.

That Messieurs S. G. Antor and A. A. Chemba are hereby authorised to present oral and written petitions on our behalf as our delegates to the General Assembly.

That we have authorised Messieurs S. G. Antor and A. A. Chemba here as our representatives to answer all questions that may arise relative to the oral and written petitions that may be presented to the General Assembly on

We authorize the bearers Messieurs S. G. Antor and A. A. Chemba to present our first and foremost desire of being separated from the Protectorate of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, and be placed in the Togoland ~~part~~ <sup>as</sup> in the Southern Section ~~as~~ we were during the German Regime, and do hereby request our delegates and representatives to protest against the arbitrary division of the Nanyuro Tribe between the Ashanti State and Salaga District in the Protectorate in the Crown Colony of the Gold Coast.

That we also authorize the bearers the Messieurs S. G. Antor and A. A. Chemba to protest vehemently against the Imperialist's form of administrative Union which has gradually absorbed the Land which is part of Togoland into the Protectorate which is part of the Crown Colony of the Gold Coast, before the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization, ~~and to do so~~ ~~on our behalf,~~ ~~the~~ **IMMEDIATE** ~~independence~~ **and INDEPENDENT TOGO AND**

That we again request the bearers Messieurs S. G. Antor and A. A. Chemba to continue in the policy of the administering authorities

administering authority for not recognizing and consulting the inhabitants of indigenous and Natural Rulers of the land, but rather the strangers from our Colony of the Gold Coast. Protectorate which obviously Imperialist form administration absorbing our land into the Goro district to form part of the Protectorate contrary to our wishes.

Under the Seal of our Hands this  
30th day of October, 1954. at

Ref. No. ALC/1.

Alfai Local Council Office,  
Kpandai, Post Yendi, N.Ts.

4th February, 1957.

Dear Sir,

ROOFING LOAN SCHEME.

I am duly directed by the Alfai Local Council Roofing Loan Committee to apprise you that the Committee has unanimously approved to sponsor to give roofing loan of £200: each to the following capable persons within the Alfai Local Council area.

1. Messrs:-
1. Abudulai Mahama of Kpandai:- £200:
  2. Sawli G. Friko of Katiejeli-£200:
  3. Yaw Barima of Katiejeli £200:
  4. Bukari Kotokoli of Katiejeli-£200:
  5. Abudulai Dagomba of Kpandai -£200:

The Committee will be much grateful to meet your prompt action and approval.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Yours obediently Servant.

*Alfai*  
SECRETARY - ALFAI.

THE CHAIRMAN,  
ROOFING LOAN BOARD,  
TAMALKE

THROUGH:- GOVERNMENT AGENT, SALAGA.

NKO.

Vincent Kwame Okoro.  
Ghana Police Force,  
Takoradi.

17th March, 1959.

Sir,

CIVIL CASE OF APPEAL-KOTOKROW KITARE

With many months greetings. My father arrived here on 16th March, 1959, at about 9.30 a.m. and having interviewed him and read all his documents he produced before me, I foresaw that all those troubles in his case arose from our old struggle which has never ended. I instructed him to leave everything which by doing so will catal peace for the time-being. On the part of the palm trees, he has no grounds to appeal but if it is the question of moving on the case of land, he has directed to send his case to Kumasi High Court, which Court deals with Land cases. In my opinion, one man cannot deal with this kind nature of a case. It is quite impossible, and cannot derive any thing of importance.

Upon my instructions he will not make mention of his appeal but if there is any thing you the Nawuris want to talk about, that will mostly depend on your argument. It's quite obvious, and without the fear of man-kind on the part of these irresponsible persons to take advantage. I regret. It's therefore impossible for a single soul to fight the good fight. I have been to Kumasi with my father and found all things as said in para. 1. and therefore this if you want, can still deal with it when the opportunity comes.

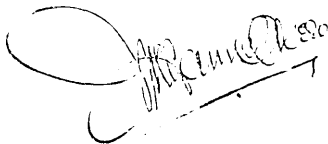
If the Nawuris are protesting against the Gonjas for racial tolerance and equality. I am sure if there were universal adult suffrage in the District of ours, my father who was prosecuted by the Gonja minority will be a very keen education if it is democracy you are after.

In my opinion, the little that I know about politics, I am a neutral person who needs not jump into this affairs, I have therefore very little to say. I will tell you briefly that move your steps with sense.

You need to go to the people, Live among them, learn from them, Love them, serve them, plan with them, start with what they have or know and build on what they have. Politics is a very wide range of self-determination. You have therefore got not to stop, be on it and there will be chance for you to succeed. Our District 'ALFAL' is under the rule of more-or-less imperialists and we have still got to fight the good fight for right until we are free from the 'Gonja Rule'. We are right to fight for our legitimate rights.

We need co-operation.

My sincere greetings.



DISTRIBUTIONS;  
MR. B. FRICCH, KATILJEBI,  
MR. ATOROH, KPANJAI.  
MR. OBLASOMBE, KITARE CHIEF.

FRANK C. FRIKO,  
 KANLEJELI,  
 P.O. BOX 18,  
 KPADAI,  
 Northern Region.  
 4th JUNE, 1966.

Sir,

ADJUSTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS - GHANA.

On behalf of the youth in Nawuri Traditional area, I have the honour most respectfully to submit the following points to you for consideration and your immediate action, please.

2. During the period of the deposed Kwame Nkrumah untold sufferings and injustices had been meted to the people of Nawuri, in that, upon persistent requests and petitions to detach Nawuri Traditional Area from that of Gonja to which it was unconstitutionally annexed by the former Government against the wishes of the people. Nawuri people formed one Ethnic group which was politically recognised as such by the then German Government before the British Government took over.
3. When the Army and the Police had successfully toppled that dictatorial and corrupt regime with the spontaneous response and support of the people of Ghana and elsewhere, I do feel confident and secure that our petition would receive serious consideration and approval.
4. We, the people of Nawuri in Kpadai area were forced or dragged into Salaga Gonja District against our will. For the purpose of reference I beg to quote: Southern Togoland Map by Germans in 1908 which showed clearly that the Nawuris formed one Administrative District with Kratchis and Nanumbes and not repeat not with Salaga Gonja. German Map Soudale Blatt Karte 4, 1908 refers
5. On behalf of the youth of Nawuri Traditional area, I pray the National Constitutional Committee to recommend the recognition of Nawuri area as an autonomous traditional area with her own paramount Chief. It was the tyrant Kwame Nkrumah's regime that we were refused this recognition because we did not support the C.P.P.

LONG LIVE THE NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL.

Your obedient servant,

*Frank C. Frik*  
 .....

To:-

THE CHAIRMAN,  
 CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE,  
 P.O. BOX  
 ACCRA.

C/O MR. S. G. FRIKO,  
KATIEJELI,  
P. O. BOX 9,  
KPADAI VIA YENDI.

5th March, 1971.

THE PRIME MINISTER,  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE,  
AGORA.

Dear Sir,

KANANKULAI SKIN DISPUTE

It is very much alarming to learn that Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula has been enskinned as the Kanankulaiwura. To make Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula the Chief is to impose him once again on the people of Kpandai area contrary to tradition.

2. It is a fact that immediately after the death of the late Kanankulaiwura Harruna on Friday 20th November, 1970, Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula in disguise acted as the Kanankulaiwura and started threatening some people not to farm on his land because Kpandai area is for him. He went to the extent of collecting lumps of meat from Kpandai butchers and similar attempts are being made towards Byya butchers; he tried cases illegally with wild allegations that he had been authorised by his brother Alhaji Abudulai Baba Kpembewura Abadio II and the Northern Region Chief Executive, Mr. Joseph Adom Braimah Kanyaswura to assume power and made references to documents in the Police files at Kpandai, Bimbilla, Tamale and that of the Regional Chief Executive at Tamale confirming his recognition as the Chief long ago. With the same authority and allegations Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula, while favouring some mischievous aliens who follow him, he threatens others with the Government Compliance Order that he and the Kpembewura in January, 1970 caused the deportation of the former Kpandai Basare Chief Gau, Malam Musa Kotokoli, Malam Abudulai Sabonkudi, Mr. Peter Kwasi Kebande, and that he and the Kpembewura have been empowered by the Regional Chief Executive to cover all aliens who own up themselves to two of them, otherwise the names of all aliens who refuse to give up must be submitted to his office at Tamale for immediate deportation action to be instituted against such persons.

3. He further said that it was in connection with the collection of lumps of meat from butchers which caused the transfer of a Police Constable Corporal Yeboah from Kpandai recently, for saying that it is illegal for him (Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula) to be collecting the meat. And he assured them that under the protection of the Kpembewura and himself, aliens who submit themselves shall never be deported even though their presence in the area may be inconducive.

4. As a result of those threats, a host of alien Moslems abruptly quitted the main Kotokoli Mosque at Kpandai to join Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula and his group in the Kpembewura's Mosque also at Kpandai for daily prayers.

5. Earlier, the Kpandai Police Inspector had threatened that he had been instructed to stop Malam Baba Sirifi, Naimi of Kpandai and his Moslem group, a part of which had been threatened to break suddenly to join Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula's group, to stop attending prayers in the main Kotokoli Mosque.

6. As can be observed efforts to own up the truth have been always hampered by the authorities concerned, and all these practices are planned schemes to enable Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula obtain popularity somehow over Kpandai area to rule as an impostor.

7. Despite the allegations made by Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula claiming himself to be the Kanankulaiwura we can still hardly believe that a reputable traditional person and the highest responsible post holder like Mr. J.A. Nindzi, the Northern Region Chief Executive is in consent and will ever come so unfair, so untraditional in condoning and conniving to authorize Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula to present himself as a Chief contrary to custom.

RECEIVED  
RECEIVED  
RECEIVED  
RECEIVED

8. We want to remind you of the facts of the dispute concerning the Kanankulai skin between Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula and the late Kanankulaiwura Harruna. Kanankulaiwura Harruna was onskinned according to custom as the rightful Chief in September, 1968. When he was onskinned Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula raised objections. The dispute was referred to the Gonja Traditional Council for decision. It decided the disputed in favour of the late Kanankulaiwura Harruna. The Kpembewura then appealed against the decision taken by the Gonja Traditional Council, The matter was then referred to the dissolved National Liberation Council who in turn set up a Commission to look into the Kanankulai dispute. The matter was gone into by the Commission. The Commission had not yet made known its findings and decision about the dispute.

9. We feel strongly that the death of the late Kanankulaiwura Harruna does not give Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula any rights that he did not hope. He cannot be imposed on the people of Kpandai area as the Chief by his brother Kpembewura and his clique.

10. We the people of Kpandai area have for many years suffered dictatorship, tyranny, unbearable torture and all sorts of unlimited inhuman intimidations in the hands of the Jawula family, and therefore oppose vehemently any attempts to make Mr. Alhasan M. Jawula the Kanankulaiwura. Such a step will bring endless chaos to the already existing troubles in Kpandai area.

11. In short, anything done without our prior consultation or without the consent of we Nawuri land owners of Kpandai area in the Gonja East Constituency will be regarded as untraditional and shall consequently spark troubles in Kpandai area.

12. On behalf of our people and on our own behalf, we the undersigned persons trust, and wish to crave your indulgence to use your good Offices to look seriously into this matter in order to restore peace, freedom and justice in Kpandai area.

Sir, we are your humble petitioners.

Yours faithfully,

1. NANA BAKGANSO ASASEDWO-KPANDAI  
PARAMOUNT CHIEF OF NAWURI.



2. NANA AMOANI  
CHIEF OF BALAI



5. NANA ALIDU  
CHIEF OF IODOFE



3. NANA ATA KWANILA  
CHIEF OF KPANDAI



6. NANA BABANOLE  
CHIEF OF KADONWULE

4. NANA KOJO YAW  
CHIEF OF KANIBI



7. NANA SEI NAWURI  
CHIEF OF BLADJI



8. NANA KWAKWARNDER  
CHIEF OF KITARE



9. NANA JAKO NATURI  
CHIEF OF NKANCHINA



10. NANA LESENI  
CHIEF OF LESENIPE



11. NANA KWAME ANIAGE  
CHIEF OF JADIGBE



12. NANA/BABA SIRIFI  
NANA OF KPANDAI



13. *Handwritten signature*  
NANA/BABA SIRIFI

c.c.

- c.c. The Yabunwura - Damonga.
- " The Leader of the Opposition - Accra.
- " The Regional Chief Executive - Tamale.
- " The Regional Administrative Officer - Tamale.
- " The M.P. for Gonja East Constituency - Accra.
- " The Assistant Commissioner of Police - Tamale.
- " The District Administrative Officer - Salaga.
- " The Police Inspector-in-charge - Kpandai.
- " The Assistant Superintendent of Police - Dimbilla.
- " The Special Branch Constable-in-Charge - Salaga/Kpandai.

C/o. Mr. R.L. Atabaso,  
P.O. Box 9,  
Kpandai.

10th November, 1971.

Dear Sir,

NAIUMBA/KPANDAI DISTRICT COUNCIL

We the undersigned chiefs and people of the Nchumurus and Nawuris have learnt with profound shock and dismay that certain minority groups of people are using their privileged positions to force the Kpandai Local Council area to join Dobir, Tukuwe, Kasawgu and Salaga Local Councils to form a District Council in the Eastern Gonja. It is also misconstrued that the inhabitants are Gonjas who expressed the desire to be with Salaga, contrary to the wishes of the majority of the people in the Gonja East Constituency.

We wish to express strongly our support for the creation of the Nanumba/Kpandai District Council as indicated in the Report of the Siriboe Commission of Enquiry into Electoral and Local Council Reforms which was accepted by the Government in 1967. It is needless to emphasise that the Commission of Enquiry seriously took into account the popular majority view of the people in the Kpandai Local Council area before giving the recommendation as in Parts I & II, item 107, page 56 of its report disregarding tribalism. It should be recalled that the Petitioners who have been indicating protests against the creation of the Nanumba/Kpandai District Council have not the welfare of the people in the Kpandai Local Council area.

It should be well noted that since Kpandai Local Council area (East Gonja Constituency) was amalgamated with Salaga area after the 1st World War for Administrative purposes, the Gonjas took undue advantage to misappropriate and unnessel funds collected in our area and eventually left it completely undeveloped.

We would like to bring to your notice the following sixfold issues:-

1. That many a time we have been discriminately denied representation in the Local Council and we are still denied representation on the Salaga Local Council Management Committee.
2. That the means of transportation and communication between Kpandai and Bimbilla is far more easier, more economical, and definately preferably.
3. That the creation of the Nanumba/Kpandai District Council would (bring or) provide the people with the pressing basic and social amenities e.g. good drinking water, education and health facilities.
4. That the Gonjas in the above villages are only a handful.
5. That we would be very grateful if the Electoral Commissioner

.. That we would be ..  
.. That we would be ..  
.. That we would be ..  
.. That we would be ..  
.. That we would be ..  
.. That we would be ..

- 2 -

and the Minister of Internal Affairs would support our case. Personal contacts should be embarked upon to ascertain the facts herein adduced, democratically before giving the final discussion.

That we consider this matter so serious that we feel obliged to send a delegation of chiefs and elders to present this petition.

Lastly, we appeal to you to use your good offices to salvage the present alarming situation prevailing within our traditional area.

We are,

Yours faithfully,

Signatories:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. NANA KOJO KUMAH<br>(Paramount Chief of the Nchumurus) | 2. NANA BAKIANSO ASASENDWO<br>(Paramount Chief of the Nawuris) |
| 3. NANA KWASI KALLO<br>(Chakoli Chief)                   | 4. NANA AMOANI MAMFOI<br>(Balai Chief)                         |
| 5. NANA KWASI BURUKU<br>(Bankamba Chief)                 | 6. NANA ATA BOAYILA<br>(Kpandai Chief)                         |
| 7. NANA ANANE CARPENTER<br>(Ekumindi Chief)              | 8. NANA KOJO YAW<br>(Kotiejeli Chief)                          |
| 9. NANA KWASI ANIJIWANGI<br>(Kojeboni Chief)             | 10. NANA ALIDU DRAMANU<br>(Dedape Chief)                       |
| 11. NANA KWAME DEMBIA<br>(Wiahi Chief)                   | 12. NANA NYIMFOR<br>(Kaborwule Chief)                          |
| 13. NANA KWAKU<br>(Kachinke Chief)                       | 14. NANA LESENI<br>(Lesenipe Chief)                            |
| 15. NANA KWASI MENSAN<br>(Jambuai Chief)                 | 16. NANA SEI NAWURI<br>(Bladjai Chief)                         |

3/....

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 17. NANA KWAME<br>(Lonto Chief)     | 18. NANA YAGANE<br>(Kitare Chief)            |
| 19. NANA KOTORIWE<br>(Kabasa Chief) | 20. NANA KWAME AMOAH<br>(Kabmwale Sub-Chief) |
| 21. NANA WAM II<br>(Kpadjai Chief)  | 22. NANA JAKO BAMFIANE<br>(Nkachina Chief)   |
| 23. NANA AKWASI<br>(Gulubi Chief)   | 24. NANA NANFIE-KWAME<br>(Tankulonku Chief)  |

DISTRIBUTION

1. The Electoral Commission,  
Accra.
2. The Hon. Minister,  
Ministry of Internal Affairs,  
Accra.

*w/w to memo*  
*SS/TK*

Copies to:-

The Prime Minister,  
The Castle,  
Osu.

The Leader of the Opposition,  
Parliament House,  
Accra.

Kanankulaiwura's Palace,  
P.O. Box 2,  
Kpandai Via Yendi, N.R.

23rd November, 1971.

Dear Sir,

NANUMBA/KPANDAI DISTRICT COUNCIL

We the undersigned Chiefs (the Kanankulaiwura and his sub chiefs) have read in the Daily Graphic of Friday November 19, 1971, No. 6571 page 4 a protest seeking the amalgamation of Kpandai with Nanumba to form a District Council, by the self-styled Nana Bakiaso Aasandwo (Paramount Chief of the Nawurics) and his chiefs and also their petition dated 10th November, 1971. We the traditional chiefs according to the constitution have to refute allegation as follows:-

1. The Nawurics and the Nohumurus were never denied representation on the Kpandai Local Council. To the best of our knowledge the Kpandai Local Council has been in operation since 1952 and  $\frac{2}{3}$  of its members were elected democratically through the ballot boxes. If the Nawurics and the Nohumurus now say they have been discriminated against and denied representation on the Salaga Local Council Management Committee - the question is by whom? Naturally by the same Gonjas; and if so, is there any Gonja member serving in the present Salaga Local Council Management Committee? The answer is that no Gonja from Kpandai nor the Nawurics is a member of the present Salaga/Kpandai Local Council Management Committee.

2. The petitioners alleged "that the means of transport and communication between Kpandai and Bimbilla is far more easier more economical and definitely preferable". We the traditional authority of the East Gonja constituency view the allegation as highly provocative. Does it mean that because of easier transportation Gonja land should be annexed to Nanumba? The petitioners should know much better the consequences over boundary disputes.

3. Article 150(4) of the Ghana Republican Constitution provides that nothing containing in this article shall be deemed to effect the allegiance owed under Customary Law and usage by any traditional authority or by any community immediately before the coming into force of this constitution to any other traditional authority. Instead of dismembering Gonja they should as well suggest the whole of Gonja joining Nanumba to form a District Council. To suggest part of Gonja land joining Nanumba to form a District Council, we strongly object to because it will affect our traditional allegiance greatly.

3. At present East Gonja provides all amenities which the petitioners think they would get if Kpandai joins to form a District Council i.e. there are at present three health Clinics, four Middle Schools including several Primary schools in almost all the villages; there are Septic tank latrines in all the assemble towns and villages; we have also slaughter houses, feeder roads markets including a most up-to-date social centre. These amenities have been through the hard work of the Kpandai Local Council. The petitioners are also aware that Kpandai will soon be given pipe born water for which communal labour is being supplied.

- 2 -

4. The petitioners said and we quote "That the Gonjas in the above villages are only a handful". Yet the Gonjas won all the representation in all the Local Council election and denied the petitioners representation. This indicates that the petitioners are not trying to portray the true picture of the situation to the authorities.

5. We strongly believe that both the Electoral Commissioner and the Minister of Internal Affairs will not support such wrong views expressed in the petition. Finally we kindly wish to point out emphatically that we would never support the move to join the Nanumba to form a District Council. We would in this connection mention the previous boundary dispute with the Nanumbas which is still fresh in our minds.

Yours faithfully,

1. (Sgd). A.M. JAWULLA  
KANANKULAIWURA.
2. (Thumb Printed)  
ALHAJI ADAM SAAKA  
BLADJAIWURA
3. (Thumb Printed)  
ALHAJI SALIFU  
DUSAIWURA
4. (Thumb Printed)  
IDISAH SULEMANA  
LEPONURA
5. (Thumb Printed)  
SALIFU SULEMANA  
NJAWURA
6. (Thumb Printed)  
LEMPU ABUDU  
LEPO CHUUMURA

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER,  
ACCRA.

THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

- cc. The District Admin. Officer, Salaga.  
The Reg. Chief Executive Officer, Tamale.  
The Ghana News Agency, Accra.  
The Editor, Daily Graphic, Accra.

C/O MR. S.C. FRIKO,  
L.C. MIDDLE SCHOOL,  
P. O. BOX 9,  
KPANDAI.

24th January, 1972.

Sir,

We the undersigned persons in the Kpandai Local Council Area wish to congratulate and pledge the support of Nchumurus and Nawuris to the Chairman and members of the National Redemption Council.

Long live the National Redemption Council and Ghana.

(1) NANA KOJO KUMA (NCHUMURU CHIEF)

(2) NANA BAKIANSO ASASEDWO (NAWURI CHIEF)

(3) W/T/M. *sgl...*

THE CHAIRMAN,  
NATIONAL REDEMPTION COUNCIL,  
ACCRA.

TIRO  
THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONER, TAMALE.

cc: The Regional Commissioner,  
Northern Region;  
Tamale.

C/O THE POSTAL AGENT,  
KPADAI, VIA  
YENDI, N.R.

22ND SEPTEMBER, 1975.

Sir,

CAUSE OF ASSOCIATION WITH THE WESTERN  
TOGELANDERS

We the undermentioned Nawuris wish to bring to your notice that we Nawuris and Nanjuro Chusurus in the Genja East Constituency in the Northern Region of Ghana are being dominated by minority Genja in our two tribal areas. The original villages and towns have been founded by Nawuris and Nanjuro Chusurus. The Genjas are seen only in a few Nawuri and Nanjuro Chusuru villages or towns, but they have none.

It is the Genja martial rule we have for long been struggling to remove the yoke from our necks that has led Messrs J.K. Khimadong and Prike, our advisors and honorary secretaries to associate themselves with the Western Togelenders for separation in order to free us from Genja domination, hence their involvement in arrest and detention till their release on Friday, 8th August, 1975.

Frankly speaking, we want to remain in Ghana and have our Local Council retained at Kpandai without Genja domination or interference. We prefer our District Council being at Bimbilla to Salaga.

We want Nawuris and Nanjuro Chusurus to be a separate entity and have our chiefs recognized by the government.

Except the Government of the National Redemption Council the subsequent governments from the colonial time have been petitioned, but our grievances have been turned down. Our main problem is the Genja domination and with these few points we crave your indulgence for immediate redress on behalf of our people and on our behalf.

Yours faithfully,

NANA BAKIANSO ASAYICHO  
(NANURI CHIEF)  
KPADAI.

ATA KARIKARI NANURI  
(THE HEAD ASAYICHO)  
KPADAI.

THE SPECIAL ACTION UNIT,  
THE OSU CASTLE,  
ACCRA.

cc: The Director,  
Military Intelligence,  
Ministry of Defence,  
Boma Camp, Accra.

NATIVE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE,  
P.O. Box 1.  
DAMONGO, N.Ts.

4th September, 1951.

Sir,

Your letter to the Kanankulda wura has been referred to the Native Authority by whom I am directed to reply and to comment on the points-raised in your letter as follows:

Regarding your paragraph (a) it is in-correct to speak of the Alfai N.A. as no such body has been set up in accordance with Cap. 85 of the Laws of the Gold Coast. Possibly you are referring to the Alfai Council.

3. Regarding your para. (b) it is proposed to set up a Grade "C" Court at Kapnadaí in accordance with the terms and the conditions set forth in Cap 85 of Sec. 35 of the Laws of the Gold Coast. In view of the fact that Alfai is within the jurisdiction of the Gonja Native Authority naturally the New Court will be connected with the Native Authority. The panel of court Members will consist of persons residing within the limits of the court's jurisdiction.

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4. Regarding para. (c) the Native Authority has little interest in ~~xxx/name~~ should be applied to the council and court for the area to which you refer. It considers that this question could be best dealt with by the newly constituted Alfai Council when it meets in early October. In view of the fact that the majority of the members to this council will be elected members and will represent the popular interests of the area the Native Authority is prepared to recommend.

5. Regarding your para. (d) Your assumption is in-correct.

6. The Native Authority cannot accept your contention that the Nawuras should receive ~~xxx~~-preferential treatment. In view of the cosmopolitan nature of the Alfai area it is proposed to introduce the system of elected village representatives. The Native Authority are of opinion that provided that a man resides in a constituency and pays his tax he should be entitled to have his vote for the local council, irrespective of whether he is a Nawura, a Gonja, a Konkomba, a Bassari, etc. However, points such as this you will be able to raise through your elected representatives when the newly constituted council is established.

LUJAI NANUPA,  
KPNADAI.

Copied to:

- THE AG. SENI. DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, DAMONGO.
- THE ASST. DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, SALAGA.
- THE MEMBERS, KPEMET, SALAGA.
- THE HONOR. C.C.N.T. TINALI.
- THE PRESIDENT, ALFAI COUNCIL, KPNADAI.
- THE PRES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ACCRA.

