

NOTES

THE NEW MIM OATH

Meka Osagyefo Fiada se mene wo nni asem biara : that is, 'I swear by Osagyefo's Friday that I am at peace with you'.

This oath was sworn by a man and his wife at the end of an arbitration by the elders of Mim at which I was present. Subsequent enquiries showed that it had a widespread usage.

It is well known that among the Akans of Ghana oaths used to be instituted to commemorate untoward events in chiefdoms: military defeats, violent deaths of kings and chiefs, outbreaks of famine and epidemics were recorded, dated and so immortalised in oaths which became, so to speak, legal injunctions and writs of summons binding on king, chief and subject.

Oaths thus chronicled the fate of the chiefdom. It is therefore not surprising that the people of Mim in the newly created region, Brong-Ahafo, have a new oath as stated above.

Osagyefo's, Osagyefo the President's, Friday is an allusion to a Friday in June, 1949, when the President, then Secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention, is said to have wept at a meeting at Saltpond when he broke from the Convention and formed the Convention Peoples' Party. By the oath, the people of Mim commemorate what they consider an eventful and fortunate decision. This is a departure from tradition since oaths of old were allusions to disasters.

Unlike the oaths of old, also, this oath does not presage litigation as in any case the swearing of oaths no longer forms part of legal processes in this country. The oath merely establishes two sets of related facts: the ascendancy of the President as the supreme authority in this country and Ahafo's local independence of Ashanti.

Hence the oath, unlike in the days of old, has no legal, but merely a social sanction. It is used among friends and relatives who are among the Party faithful.

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