

RESEARCH REPORT ON DANGME STUDIES PROJECT

by E.O. Apronti\*

Background

At a general staff meeting early this year (1972), the Institute decided to embark on a number of inter-disciplinary area study projects, on the model of the Ashanti Research Project. One such project is the Dangme Studies Project in which scholars specializing in Social Anthropology, Linguistics, Literature, Music, Food and Nutrition, and History have come together to do an intensive problem-oriented study of the Dangme area.

The project is expected to involve the collection, analysis, archiving and publishing of data on the Dangme area. This area, comprising seven traditional authority areas, was chosen because of its relative accessibility to Legon and the availability of staff to embark on it. The seven areas are Many Krobo, Yilo Krobo, Shai, Osudoku, Prampram, Ningo and Ada. Kpone is also on the periphery of the area, whose proper designation is Dangme, since other names such as Krobo and Shai are clearly sub-divisions of the larger area.

Scope

The project lends itself to both long and short-term approaches. The long term aims are to collect, analyse and publish materials on the following:

- (a) The Land and the People: geography, topography, ecology and occupations of the people.
- (b) Social organization of the Dangme people.

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- (c) Religion in the Dangme area: the organization and roles of churches and shrines.
- (d) Linguistic and socio-linguistic characteristics of the area.
- (e) History and Traditions: world view, oral traditions and oral literature.
- (f) Music of the area: musical forms, instruments and their organization.
- (g) Land tenure and agriculture, food and nutritional matters.
- (h) Drama in its relation to oral literature, ritual, religion and the performing arts.
- (i) The economy, food supply, migration of labour, market systems.
- (j) Art and artefacts in their anthropological perspective.

As the expertise that has been assembled in the group would seem to favour an inter-disciplinary approach, the following short-term subjects have been selected for joint research:

- (a) The Priesthood in Dangmeland
- (b) The Concept of Fertility (rites of passage)
- (c) Mortuary Usages (texts, kinship structure)
- (d) Social control
- (e) Dangme festivals.
- (f) Krama as a mechanism of social control and as an art form.
- (g) Market surveys (in association with the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research).

## (h) Dialect and socio-linguistic survey.

In the Ada Traditional Area, Nene Picco Padiator III, Chief of the Kujragbe clan has provided the group with useful contacts in all the coastal fishing towns and villages as well as some towns and villages in the immediate hinterland.

The Ada Traditional Area has been selected as a pilot area for the project.

Personnel

The group consists of the following:

Mrs. A. Akita	-	Food, Nutrition and Health
Dr. E.O. Apronti	-	Language and Literature
Mr. D. Copeland	-	Music
Mr. L. Christophersen	-	Music
Dr. M.E. Kropp Dakubu	-	Language and Literature
Mr. K.O. Odoom	-	Islamic Studies
Dr. A.K. Quarcoo	-	Social and Visual Anthropology.

Some local scholars such as Messrs E.A. Addy and T. Pupilampu, Headmasters of Secondary Schools at Dodowa and Ada Foah respectively, have expressed interest in contributing to the historical study of the area. Local support in the form of reporters on festivals and allied activities are also to be used.

It is expected that, with the help of field assistants, much work on the project will be undertaken in the long vacation of 1972.