

- (4) The pursuers of the Ashanti appear to have been Nchumuru from Bajemeso who, like Nanumba and Krachi, were under Juaben influence. Juaben had of course rebelled against the authority of the Ashantihene after the defeat by the British in 1874 and now attempted to control trade down the Volta valley. It was the Juaben who instigated the Chief of Atebubu to prevent the passage of Bonnat to Salaga; the latter was acting as an agent for the Ashantihene after his captivity in Kumasi (see Theophil Opoku, *Eines Neger-Pastors Predigtreise durch die Lander am Volta-Strom*, *Evangelisches Missions-Magazin*, Basel, 1885, pp. 270-1; G.E. Ferguson, *Report on a Mission to the Interior*, 9/12/1892, C.O. 96/230; Jules Gros, *Voyages, aventures et captivite de J. Bonnat chez les Achantis*, Paris, 1884).
- (5) The Ashanti prohibited trade in weapons and powder to the north, which is how they maintained their military dominance of the area.
- (6) Ngua is a ward (Hausa). Ngua Kuku was the ward inhabited by the traders of Bomu origin, the Beriberi.
- (7) According to A. Burns, *History of Nigeria*, 5th edition, London, 1955, Masaba died in 1872 (p.137).

Translation by
T.M. Mustapha, notes by Jack Goody

BRONG TRADITIONS

Nweneme (Suma capital of the Nweneme Traditional Area is situated at one hundred and fifty two miles from Kumasi on the Berekum - Bontuku road. The chief used in historical times to be the Nifahene (head of the right wing) of the Gyaman State and second in rank to that chief.

The present chief asserted that, like the chief of Mampong in Ashanti, he occupied the (Dwete) Silver Stool of the Gyaman State. I went to Nweneme for information about the origins of the Gyaman State and its relations with Ashanti in former times because the present occupant of the Gyaman Stool is resident in Ivory Coast and not quite accessible for enquiries.

The following tradition of the origin of the Gyaman State and especially of Nweneme was given to me by the present chief, Nana Konadu Ababio, assisted by Kwame Fori (well recognized as the court historian albeit, comparatively, a stranger), Ohene Kyeame Asi Kofi and Kwasi Dwiriw, an elder brother of the Chief of Nweneme. I follow as much as possible a literally translated version of what I was told in Twi or Brong.

Origins of the Gyaman, Suma and Dorma State

Shortly before the reign of Obiri Yeboa of Ashanti, the immediate predecessor of Osei Tutu, the future founders of the Gyaman State (Aduhene,) of Dormaa (Yeboa Asiaman), of Suma i.e. Nweneme (Konadu Yladom) were resident in the Akwamu Capital as heads of minor lineages within the Akwamu royal matrilineage of the Eduana Clan. All three were possible heirs of the Akwamu Stool.

MIGRATION OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS

Cause of migration:

The King of Akwamu had two possible heirs, Atta Panyin and Atta Kuma. Before he died, he told two of the leading kingmakers separately that he wanted both Atta Panyin and Atta Kumah to succeed him. Thus when the Kingmakers met to select his successor, the two rivals were named, with each of the kingmakers and their adherents ready to fight for them and do what they thought was the dead king's will. Therefore a dispute arose over the succession, and a civil disturbance ensued.

When Akoto (one of the Attahs) was made king in face of the opposition of the three founding fathers of the Brong (Gyaman, Dormaa and

Suma) States, they left with their immediate kinsmen and adherents and settled for some time in Jukwa as the guest of the King of Denkyera.

After a period in Denkyera, the founding fathers had to move on because their kinsmen and henchmen were increasing and had little room for manoeuvre. The leaders also probably desired to exercise authority on their own. Thus they moved on and settled at Asantemanso, in Adansi before the rise of Ashanti and in the reign of Obiri Yeboa. For much the same reasons as led them to leave Denkyera, they moved again to Suntreso (Bantama). But here they had to contend with the political ambitions of Obiri Yeboa who insisted on their adherence to him as their overlord. In the ensuing conflict, Obiri Yeboa was killed and was succeeded by Osei Tutu, the founder of Great Ashanti.

Osei Tutu's war of vengeance and expansion:

Osei Tutu, like his uncle and predecessor, wanted to subdue the Brongs and also to avenge his uncle. The future Brongs were subjected to constant pressures and had to move on, taking roughly the main route from Kumasi to Berekum. They settled at Abampirease, just over fifty miles from Kumasi. Osei Tutu followed and the future Brongs moved on, this time, under Gyaman leader Abo Miro (Aduhene had died at Suntreso) and Dormaa Kusi (son of Yeboa; Yeboa had died) and the Nwenemes under Adane (Konadu had died). The future Brongs scattered at Abampirease.

Opoku Ware and the Gyamans

Opoku Ware continued the Ashanti traditional policy of war with the Brongs under the King of Gyaman. He attacked them, fought them at the river Firi (Asuofiri) and pursued them into Kong territory. The King of Kong also attacked the Brongs, apparently in self-defence, so that the Brongs were wedged in between two hostile forces. The signal suffering of the Brongs was immortalised in the oath, "Mia bi ara nkyen yei" i.e. no suffering surpasses this.

The war ended in the subjection of the Gyaman State.

Suma wars of consolidation:

This tradition is recounted for the general light that it may throw on the spread of the Akan peoples, and the consolidation of their Kingdoms and Chiefdoms.

In the lull of peace that followed the return of Opoku Ware to Kumasi, the Chief of Suma, Adane, decided to embark on a more thorough subjection of the neighbouring territory. The Nweneme immigrants were too restricted for room while the relations between their chief and the neighbouring indigenous chiefs were uncertain. The recalcitrant chiefs were fought and defeated while others peacefully surrendered.

The Chief of Asire, for instance, peacefully surrendered. But the chiefs of Koti (Nyara), of Gyamara (Safufu), of Boroko in modern Ivory Coast (Antow), of Ntantamato (Gyakora), of Asomanto (Bino), of Dankomanto, of Koransa (Wurukye), of Wuradabio (Wuradabia) were all defeated and brought under the chief of Nweneme.

Notes on Ashanti Gyaman Relation:

Tano River was the earliest boundary between the King of Gyaman and the King of Ashanti. The Ashantis passed through the Brong country to Bontuku to exchange gold for slaves (they never sold slaves at Bontuku) beads, and kyekye a locally woven cloth. It is not true (I had quoted Dupuis to the informants) that the Ashantis employed slaves to dig for gold in the river Barro (known to the chief and his courtiers as Bar). Nor did the Ashantis collect annual tributes from the Gyaman State. The Gyaman people, like other subject peoples were, at the end of the Ashanti wars, asked to pay a share of the war expenses assigned to them by the King of Ashanti. Nor did the Gyamans generally fight in the Ashanti wars. Specifically, only four villages, namely Biriasou, Kahoe, Sahou, Wurukuso, which were granted in fief to the Akyempimhene by Opoku Ware, ever fought in Ashanti wars.

The Chief of Bantama - Krontihene - of the Kumasi State was the Adamfo of the Brongs at the Ashanti King's Court. That is to say, the chief of Bantama introduced Brong or Gyaman chiefs to the King of Ashanti

and acted generally as their intermediary with the King.

The people of Gyaman, who wanted to go to the coast (Accra) did not pass through Kumasi. Their route lay through Nkoranza to Attebubu, Krachi and thence to Accra.

The last Ashanti - Gyaman War 1818-1819

Osei Bonsu Panyin (Osei Tutu Kwame 1800-1824) sent Butuakwa to demand from the King of Gyaman Adinkera, a Golden Stool, which he was alleged to have made and a fine of a thousand pounds for having made it. The people of Gyaman refused to deliver the stool and pay the fine. The Brongs were attacked and the forces joined at the river Tano. The informant refused to discuss the outcome of the war.

Kwame Arhin.

THE WIDER BACKGROUND OF THE SALAGA CIVIL WAR

Amongst the Salaga Papers which I have been compiling, are a number which deal with the Salaga Civil War of the 1890s. Some of these papers suggest that the dispute was of long standing and throw light on a little-known period of Ghana history. Most of the works cited in this paper are included in the Salaga Papers now being issued by the Institute of African Studies.

The Civil War which broke out in Salaga in 1892 had its immediate cause in a succession dispute. The Kpembe skin has, or is supposed to have a rotating succession between the three branches of the ruling family, Affai, Sungbum and Kanyase; these three chieftainships are known as the three "gates" to Kpembe, whose chief had to pass through one of them. The immediate cause of the dispute was that no Kpembe chief had been appointed from the Kanyase family for many years.

Succession disputes in the Kpembe division are nothing new. In 1817, we hear of the deposition of an Alfai chief, and the attachment of his stool (skin) to the "Chief of Premehinia" (?Kpembehene, i.e. Kpembe-wura), his brother, on the orders of the Ashantihene.¹ This arrangement does not seem to have become permanent.

In the 1820s, there was a full-scale civil war. Kpembe tradition remembers this in the reign of Dosi against whom Lepo and Kanyase families were allied.² The Qissat Salgha speaks of fighting for twelve years;³