

or a plague. The event itself is hardly ever referred to directly. Thus we have weeks days - Dwoda, Benada, Wukuda, etc. as ntam. This is only a periphrastic way of referring to the actual incident or event which is the ntam. The name of the week is a word taboo only by association. Ntam is, therefore, to some extent, at least, the counterpart of apae - the heroic song or recitation, which recounts the glories and achievements of a chief's ancestors. The ntam records failure, disaster or defeat. Apae is fuller, as an oral record or history, than ntam, since the ntam refers to a single, particular episode, incident or event. It is the skeleton in the cupboard - as it were.

A.S.Y. Andoh.

NOTES ON THE NAYO FRIKO SHRINE IN AWUNA

There are two places in Awuna where this shrine can still be found. These are Vodja and the capital of Awuna, Awunaga.

According to an Ewe written account:

"Nayo Friko was a shrine of Nortsie to where it was brought from Ketu (which is regarded as the original home of the Awunas and the other Ewe tribes). It is said they are male and female and that they have power and control over many heavenly and earthly things. Formerly the people of Awuna, Accra, Akposo and Kpele made pilgrimage to Nortsie to worship it; they made sacrifices to it with rum, fowl and wine before the shrine in turn gave them their needs. Now the shrine is in a town called Prewu in Adele to which the Awunas still travel to worship it".¹

The shrine, as it is said, comprises twin deities - Nayo the female deity is the shrine of Pereu, and Friko is the male shrine which is at Dipongo. The two villages are a few miles apart in Adele.

It is not certain when and why the ancient shrine - Nayo Friko - was removed from Nortsie to be established in Adele. However, from the following account by Debrunner, it may be conjectured that

probably the shrine was removed to Adele for security reasons - to find protection for it safe from centres of inter-tribal warfare and ravages arising from the slave traffic.

"In Dedease at the foot of the Adele Mountains it required patience and skilful persuasion to procure permission for him (i.e. Debrunner) the first European² to visit the sacred village Dekpenko, the place of the tribal guardian spirit, Friko.

"The next day the steep path led first for three hours up the mountain, 2,000 ft. in height, past forests full of monkeys, then over the grassy mountain ridge to the eight small round huts of Dekpengko, hidden in a corpse. On the way no human settlement could be seen"³.

Indeed in Adele, the high mountains on which Nayo Friko was established, have since offered it the desired protection debarred from all other human habitation.

Just as the Ashantis used to consult the Dente shrine at Kete Krachi, so the Awunas also, undoubtedly since time immemorial, made many offerings to Nayo Friko in order to secure its assistance in wars against their enemies. Shrines were of great political as well as religious importance to the Ashantis, hence their anxiety to extend their empire east of the Volta can be regarded in a sense as an attempt to gain control over the mountain shrines, which of course included Nayo Friko.

Among the insignia of the shrine was a "large wonderfully carved Ashanti stool...with bells which he (i.e. Jaopura, the priest of Friko) sends ahead to every great assembly as a sign that he will appear himself"⁴.

Of Jaopura, a German officer wrote: "Jaopura's fame is widely known; with the king of Ashanti he stands or rather stood, in high esteem. He visited Kumasi several times and traders from there came in numbers to Adele"⁵. Moreover, the people of Dadiase spoke Ashanti, and had had an Ashanti governor⁶. Friko was thus closely associated with Ashanti.

To seek the help of this shrine during the Awuna-Ado crisis in 1865-66 when the British and many other coastal tribes in the then Gold Coast Protectorate backed the Adas, Geraldo de Lima journeyed to Adele during the second half of 1865.⁷ At Adele, Geraldo de Lima appealed to the shrine to help the Awunas overcome their enemies. At the end of the war the Awunas were victorious.

After celebrating their victory at Awunaga, during which, among many things, the Awunas made many offerings to their war-gods, particularly the principal war-god Nyigbla,⁸ Geraldo de Lima again travelled to Adele to thank the shrine. There, among other things he offered a maiden to the chief priest, Jaopura. When the girl grew up she became one of the wives of the chief priest. She was still there when Kling visited Dipongo in 1890. This is attested by his account which runs thus:

"Among the wives of Jaopura there was a dainty negress with extraordinarily small hands and feet, but pronounced negro type. She had been brought several years ago with a man /F.e. Geraldo de Lima/ from Amra /F.e. Awunaga/ which is said to lie in the neighbourhood of Kitta /Keta/, to Dipongo and given to the priest as fetish maid, and he had made her one of his wives. She spoke fairly good Portuguese and wanted to give me her dainty little boy so that he could also learn English".

Though this has still to be investigated, I am inclined to think that it was during this second visit that Geraldo de Lima, probably due largely to his financial influence, managed to acquire a similar Nayo Friko shrine which he established at Vodja. (Its grove can still be seen at Vodja). One may ask: why did Geraldo de Lima bring Nayo Friko to Vodja in Awuna? The answer is not difficult; in the first place he brought it for war purposes, so that he and the Awunas could consult it readily, without travelling far away, to secure its assistance in national emergencies. Apart from this, Nayo Friko played a significant role in the social and economic life of the people of Awuna. Since time immemorial, as already stated, they had been making many offerings to it in order to get their needs - for example, to bring rainfall so as to eradicate famine from their land, to help traders to reap large profits

from their traffic and be protected against their enemies, especially the British government which was trying to suppress smuggling in Awuna¹⁰, and to help parents whose babies frequently died at birth or shortly after, to begin to have their children live and grow¹¹. Just as in Adele at the present time, the Awunas regarded Nayo Friko as a deity which gave almost all good human needs after the necessary customs were performed at the shrine.

It is unfortunate that, probably because of mainly political changes in Awuna, many of the traditions regarding Nayo Friko in Awuna are lost to the present-day descendants of Geraldo¹². Not many of them could remember the time when it had not been there, and even those who could, did not cherish the memory except that all believed that it had been brought from Adele. The only tradition of the Nayo Friko shrine, which I was told by a native of Vodja is that, if you are a member of the shrine, you are not to eat, for example, maize and yam immediately harvesting begins. You are permitted to eat these products only after they have been offered to the shrine. This agrees with the rites performed for the Adele shrine which were recorded by Debrunner in 1958.

He happened to be there during one of the festivals - probably an annual festival - of the shrine. He wrote:

"From all the towns of western Adele delegates had come, chiefs, queens, priests. We were received with dignity by the head of the priests, Nana Bosumfo Akwasi Bofo, and by the head-priestess of all the women in western Adele, Nana Abena Aasakwi. The priestess, as a sacred person, only nodded to us. It would be dangerous to offer her one's hand. My visit was unprecedented. Until a few years ago, Dekpengko was accessible to priests alone"¹³.

He went on to record what one could regard as the traditions of the shrines which were given him by the priests and elders of Adele.

"Our guardian spirit Nana Friko has been since the very earliest times the king of western Adele. He hates all that is not good and knows what you are thinking. He cures illnesses and protects from magic and witches. Everything belongs to him. When you prepare a new field, you must pour out on the soil of the field a drink offering for Friko. When our tribe goes to war, we first approach Friko, for him to help us and send red ants against the enemies. No one may eat new yams until Friko has eaten some. The Friko priest and a couple of porters from every village bring 5-6 yam tubers to Dekpengko, as well as sheep, or fowls if the village is only a small one and has had a bad harvest. The Friko is the first in all Adele to eat of the new yams. The priest prays for forgiveness for all the people of Adele and for blessing on the new year. Then the priests and messengers go all together to the place, Dedease, where all the western Adeles have assembled. There, a sheep is sacrificed and the head of the priests reports to the silent crowd all that took place in Dekpengko, the sacred place and that the guardian spirit of the tribe had accepted the yams and the sacrifice. At night, old muzzle-loaders are fired and the people weep in their huts in memory of their dead and their ancestors.

"During the next three days amid rejoicing, singing, dancing and the beating of drums the new yams are eaten"¹⁴.

When one compares these ceremonies with those described earlier from the Ewe Reader, one can see that in almost all ways they are similar. People who have found themselves in grave calamities or misfortune, for example, famine resulting from bad harvest, war, frequent loss of children at birth, continuous loss in trade, general insecurity in a state, and many other such difficulties experienced in life, make offerings in various forms, probably depending on the nature of their plight, to the shrine to help them overcome them.

It appears that a time limit is given by the chief priest during which the deity is expected to solve the problem. At the end of the time, the supplicant is expected to thank the shrine with other gifts.¹⁵ Thus at the end of the battle of Dasutagba in 1866, Geraldo de Lima went to Adele, and, offered, probably with other gifts, the maiden to the chief priest.

After the death of Geraldo de Lima in 1904, according to Awuna traditions,¹⁶ his children went to Adele, and having reclaimed the girl (who had by then undoubtedly grown into an elderly woman) brought her back to Awuna. It is alleged that soon after this, the whole of the Awuna kingdom began to get involved in misfortunes and hardships. There was, for example, a great famine and disunity in the kingdom. People could not make head or tail of the cause of all this. They became so desperate that the priests and chiefs of the kingdom decided to consult a soothsayer in order to find out the cause. The outcome of this move was that they were told that the basic cause of their plight was the removal of the maiden sent to Adele by Geraldo de Lima. It was because of this that the Nayo Friko shrine was having vengeance on the kingdom, because the maiden was offered partly in return, and partly as an appreciation of the great help given by the shrine to the Awunas during their encounter with the British and their allies in 1866, with the result that the Awunas emerged triumphant.

After they had heard this, they decided to pacify the Nayo Friko shrine at Adele. Shortly after the coronation of Torgbui Sri II, they sent delegates to ask the shrine to forgive and pardon them. The priest in charge of the shrine was very sympathetic with them and promised to comply with their request. The delegates also asked the chief priest to bring a daughter shrine to Awunaga to be established there. This request, too, was granted and on their return, the chief priest delegated some priests to accompany the Awuna delegates to Awunaga where they established, in the name of the King, Torgbui Sri II, a Nayo Friko shrine in the Awuna capital. The site is still there, just behind the new site of the Police Station.¹⁷

The chief priest of Adele gave the Awunas three years within which the shrine would solve their problem. After this time, they were expected to offer, this time no longer a human being as Geraldo de Lima had done, but a cow, to the shrine at Adele. The three years have elapsed long ago, but up to now the Awunas have not yet been able to fulfil their promise - they have not sent the cow to Adele as a thank-offering to the shrine. In Awunaga, in the circle of the priests and elders, there is a feeling of insecurity and threat which is attributed to their failure to settle matters with the Adele shrine. Because of this feeling, preparations are now afoot to select delegates from the five divisions of Awunaga to be sent to Adele, together with a cow, in order to pacify their ancient shrine.

As has been stated already, the Nayo Friko shrine, probably because of political upheavals since the close of the nineteenth century, has lost a great deal of ground among the Awunas. There are no proper priests in charge of the two centres of the shrine in Awuna, and no-one in Awuna who can say exactly how the annual festivals are performed.¹⁸

In Adele, Debrunner described one of the festivals as follows:

"Then the escorts and all the delegations went to the nearby shrine of Friko, which the author, not being initiated, was not allowed to visit. They sprinkled themselves for cleansing with water that had no doubt been prepared with wondrous herbs and roots of magic power. Each one received from a "medicine" a spot of colour in front on his forehead, at the side on both temples, on the chest and on each upper arm as a sign of belonging to Friko. When they came back they drank together as a sacred rite of fellowship. It was very solemn and impressive to watch. The high priest and a fellow priest sat on the sacred rock of sacrifice; the worshippers laid their hands on the rock and bowed their heads. Then the high priest poured palm wine out of a calabash slowly

over the rock and partly over the hands of the worshippers, whilst he prayed long litanies in the Adele language; the assistant joined in the prayer. When he had finished praying, the worshippers wiped a little of the palm wine moisture on the rock into the hair. Then the calabash was handed to each one as a sign of the unity of the tribe with its guardian spirit Friko".¹⁹

Debrunner was right to have formed the impression that Nayo Friko was the symbol of unity in Adele. The shrine represents "tribal unity by means of a kind of theocracy; the priest of the tribe's guardian spirit acting as the mediator of the will of that spirit who is considered the head of the tribe".²⁰

In Adele, this guardian spirit has all along been aware that it could not continue to maintain its position as the head of the tribe by letting the people go on empty stomachs - hence its first and foremost concern is to see that agriculture, that is the cultivation of the chief products, yam and rice, always prospers. Next, it helps the tribe to overcome their enemies in war. Generally speaking, it always seeks the welfare of the tribe and sees that peace abounds everywhere in Adele.²¹

But when we come to Awuna, especially during the second half of the nineteenth century, the importance the tribe attached to Nayo Friko was quite different. It is most probable that in the olden days the Awunas also regarded Nayo Friko as their head which provided almost all their daily needs and maintained peace, especially when it was in Nortsie. However, since the intensification of the trans-Atlantic slave traffic, when the shrine was removed from Nortsie to Adele for security reasons, the former importance and role of Nayo Friko began to decline in Awuna. Nayo Friko appeared to the Awunas as not so powerful as to help them meet the exigencies of those harsh times. Like the "Krobo of the Gold Coast who at this time of the slave trade adopted as their tribal guardian spirit a charm demanding human blood and thus made themselves feared far and wide, the Anglo too accepted a charm called Nyigbla and made him their tribal guardian spirit. He is said to come from Gbugbla (i.e. Prampram)..."²²

During the slave traffic, the Awunas came to regard Nyigblas as the guardian spirit which protected them against "all the terrors of the slave hunt, of the exchange of slaves in the interior for salt, and against war with the people of Ada, their old hereditary enemy beyond the Volta".²³

The fact that Nyigbla was solely for war purposes was again demonstrated when after the abolition of the slave-trade, especially from about 1867, the power of Nyigbla began to wane, and by the close of the century was relegated to insignificance. Its usefulness was over with the end of inter-tribal warfare, principally aimed at the capture of slaves for sale to the Europeans.

The people of Awuna, especially the descendants of Geraldo de Lima and the priests and elders of Awunaga are seriously considering turning again to the ancient shrine of Nayo Friko.

There is no doubt about the fact that it was Geraldo de Lima who began to revive the interest of the Awunas in this ancient shrine of their forefathers. Should the present generation of Awunas succeed in reorganising the Nayo Friko shrine, it will serve not only as a "monument" to perpetuate his memory, but also as an indication that the Awunas are retracing their steps to the former allegiance which their ancestors, before the intensification of the slave traffic, owed to the Nayo Friko shrine. We are now in a world where man's immediate and basic need is food to feed the ever-increasing population, and the chief concern of Nayo Friko is agriculture - how to enable the food production of the people who worship him to increase by leaps and bounds as the main pre-requisite to their peace and welfare.

REFERENCES

1. Ewe Reader, Part IV, G. Haerter, J. Speith and G. Dauble, (Bremen 1906) p.90.
2. At least one German officer went to Dipongo in 1890s, but did not enter the shrine itself. Kling's report of his visit to Dipongo, Mitteilungen und de deutschen Schutzgebieten, 1890.
3. H. Debrunner, A Church between Colonial Powers, London 1965, p.40.
4. Kling, op.cit.
5. Ibid.
6. D. Asante, Diary of journey to Salaga and Obooso, Geog. Gesellschaft zu Jena, 1886.
7. See Appendix 10 of my thesis "Geraldo de Lima and the Awunas", 1862-1904.
8. Geschichte der Ewe-Mission - G. Muller (Bremen 1904) pp.110-116.
9. Kling, op. cit. No-one knows the origins of the maiden, but from the fact that she "spoke fairly good Portuguese", it appears she was probably one of the daughters of Cesar Caquira de Lima, the ex-master of Geraldo de Lima, who died at Vodja where he had a slave-trading establishment in 1862. Apart from Madam Nyamafo, his Awuna wife who hailed from Tegbi, Cesar Carquira de Lima had other African wives and it is most likely that the girl was the daughter of one of these other African wives, all of whom, together with their children, Geraldo de Lima claimed after the death of his master. See also "Memorandum of the Hon. F. Evans on Geraldo de Lima" dated 19 January 1885.

10. Geraldo de Lima, being a great trader - up to about 1874 he was a great slave trader, and later a trader in spirits, textiles, guns and gunpowder - probably brought the shrine to Vodja to get protection for his business and more wealth from it; this could be his second major reason for bringing the shrine to Vodja.
11. The present chief of the Geraldo stool at Vodja and Mr. Philip Gbeho told me that they were initiated into this shrine during their childhood by their parents because their children had been dying at birth. Therefore, when they were born, fearing that they might also die, the parents made offerings to the shrine at Vodja to have mercy on them and help the children grow into men. It was on that day that the tribal marks on their faces were made. (See Appendix 2 of my thesis).
12. The present chief of the Geraldo Stool at Vodja told me that the family of Geraldo de Lima is contemplating sending representatives of the family to go to Adele and arrange for the reorganisation of the Nayo Friko shrine at Vodza and to bring back to life its traditions and rites.
13. Debrunner, *op. cit.* p.40.
14. *Ibid.*, p.40-44.
15. It appears that, as in the case of Geraldo de Lima, most people swear to the shrine that if they overcome their difficulties successfully, they will make a sacrifice to it.
16. See Appendix 10 of my thesis.
17. The fact that the Nayo Friko shrine was established first at Vodja and later at Awunaga, does not mean that it was the Adele shrine itself which was removed to Awuna. As in many other places in West Africa, shrines such as Atingere are established in other places when people who desire to own such shrines go to their original home and ask for them. When agreement is reached, usually after the necessary rites are performed, the chief priests either go themselves or delegate someone to go to the places where the new shrines are to be established.

They stay there until such time as the shrines are established, and then return to the headquarters of their own shrines. They do not remove the mother shrine, but, as it were, transplant daughter shrines to the new sites.

18. In Vodja the occupant of the Geraldo Stool appears to be in charge of the shrine there. He himself told me that he has a very faint and limited idea as regards the traditions and rites of the shrine. He assured me that it was high time they reorganised the shrine. He directed me to Awunaga where he expected me to be informed about how ceremonies are performed annually for the shrine. I was disappointed to find there nothing beyond what the Vodja chief told me in this connection. Not only did I find the shrine in ruins near the Police Station, but I was also informed that the real priest in charge of it is now settled far away in one of the Akan districts and rarely visits home. It seems he has shunned his responsibilities especially since the British government destroyed the ancient forest of the "Fifth Landing State" of the Awunas early in the 1950s and established the present police station - a policy which strained relations between the Awunas and the British Government. The Nayo Fiko shrine was also in the forest, and it is strange that it was not destroyed along with the forest, and has retained its site.
19. Debrunner, *op. cit.*, p.40.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, p.41-42.
22. *Ibid.*, p.61-62.
23. *Ibid.*, p.62.