

# **Tindaanaship and Tindaanas in Traditional Gurensi (Frafra) Communities: Land Use and Practices**



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# **Dedication**

I owe the information that is contained here to the Gurensi and Boosi people because it is their contributions that have led to the production of this book. I dedicate this book to them.

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# Preface

Admittedly though the Gurensi and Boosi, and for that matter the Frafras, living in the Bolgatanga and Bongo District Council Areas have flourished for nearly over five hundred (500) years, their history and traditions have for these centuries laid almost buried and forgotten. Their history has in fact been relatively neglected by comparison with the period of the Mamprusi, Gonja, and Dagomba histories. The works of early researchers, ethnologists and so forth on the Gurene and Bone speaking peoples such as Allan Wolsey Cardinall (1921), R.S. Rattray (1932), T.E. Hilton (1956, 1959) and Dr. Luvig Rapp (1967) are devoid of the oral traditions and history of these people at the local level. In the case of R.S. Rattray and A.W. Cardinall, their works are not only brief, but they appear in a rather unusual sequence.

It must be said that the Gurensi and Boosi have their history, but it is mostly oral. This book, therefore, is the first of its kind dealing specifically with the legendary origins, genealogies, political, social and economic life of the Gurensi and Boosi peoples.

This book has taken me a little over twenty-nine years to complete. The reasons for the delay have been explained in the proceeding discussions. This book has been written for four main reasons. The first reason is that historians, anthropologists, ethnologists and other social researchers have not been able to write about the Gurensi and Boosi culture and history because of their inability to trace first the history of the individual communities or towns that make up the Gurensi and Boosi. It is also probably due to the intricate problem of the origin of these people.

Comparing Gurensi history to the history of the Ibos of Nigeria, Leonard remarked that the Ibos history is a “very maze within a maze.”<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, while sharing the same views with other historians, the history of a people is vague when emphasis is not given to the history of its people at the local or grassroots level. An analogy is made here to the fact that only a poor engineer would begin the construction of a building without fully understanding the nature of the raw materials he uses and how the various materials interact to produce the finished product. Also, an organic chemist can make only headway unless he thoroughly understands the raw materials he uses in the construction of molecules, namely, the atoms of Carbon, Hydrogen, Oxygen, Nitrogen, and so on. He must have an intricate knowledge of the behaviour of his raw materials under different conditions and the particular preferences or antipathies of one atom to another. Therefore, the historian must first have knowledge of the origins, genealogies and inter-ethnic relationships at the local levels before writing on the history of the ethnic group.

A second reason is that so much is changing rapidly in the towns and villages of the Gurensi (Frafra) Area and the country as a whole. Therefore, it is proper that past events are recorded before the records get lost through fires and rainstorms, Westernization, schooling, etc. This concurs with Mr. R. O. Bonsu Kyeretwie in Item 34 of his *Ashanti Heroes*, where he writes:

In an age when European civilization is spreading through Africa and being absorbed into the cultural life of the people thus tending to oust so much of the African own cultures it is essential if not imperative for research to be made into African life and culture. Such research would save the African way of life from dying out completely and provide a priceless legacy for the present generation to leave behind for their children and their children’s children.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Glyn Leonard, *The Lower Niger and Its Tribes* (London: Macmillan, 1906), quoted in Francis Arinze, *Sacrifice in Igbo Religion* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970), 31.

<sup>2</sup> K.O. Bonsu Kyeretwie, *Ashanti Heroes* (Accra, Waterville Pub. House, 1964).

Third, the Gurensi history and life have been misunderstood, distorted or exaggerated by early Western scholars. According to the Black American scholar, Prof. Jacob Carruthers, “World history has been written from an European perspective. There have been a lot of distortions and exaggerations. For a start, the role of ancient Egypt in civilization has been underplayed in relation to Greece. We need to put Africa in the proper place. The goal is within black people’s reach.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, taking cue from Prof. Jacob Carruthers, I want to put the Gurensi and Boosi (Frafra) history and culture in their proper place.

Fourth, we all know that no country, town or village can progress if it neglects her history. This research is therefore intended to compel the present generation and those to come to have the likeness for their own history because that will help them become wiser and help them to progress. It is easier to understand other fields if you know history. History makes a person know what is happening in his/her village, country, continent and the world. One great Scottish philosopher of the eighteenth century once said, “a man acquainted with history may, in some respect, be said to have lived from the beginning of the world.”<sup>4</sup>

Last but not least, it is clear that since the introduction of Western type of education, foreign history and culture has been emphasized, thus relegating the local history to the background. The effect of this is that both the elderly and the young are unable to trace their origins, migrations and let alone their family genealogies. Many of the old and young people do not even know their nearest ancestors and ancestresses. The few old men who can trace their ancestors do so up to three or four generations back. This was observed during my field trips to the communities. Whenever I met a cross-section of the literate folk, I posed such questions like:

1. Who was the first authentic chief of Bolgatanga?
2. Who was the founding father of the Boosi?

Some of the respondents would tell me they were not born at that time to know the history. Some would tell me that they are not old men to sit down and trace genealogies. Some said that they were so busy with their work that they could not share with me the history of their communities. There were even others who frankly said that they did not know and promised to check up the answers from some old men and women in their communities who can tell them the history.

Many of the respondents, in fact, evaded my questions under the pretense that they were busy. By comparison, when the same respondents (the literate folk) were asked the following questions on foreign history they gave perfect answers:

1. Who was the founder of Rome?
2. Who was the first king of Asante?
3. Who was Jakpa and Tohajie, the Red Hunter?
4. Who was the father of Jesus?
5. When was Jesus born?

This gave me the impression that the youth of today are not interested in their own histories and culture. At this point I should quote Ross S. Leith to support my claim: “The young men are content to have no past so long as they have a future”<sup>5</sup>. I will also cite a few cases to buttress further the people’s attitude towards their own culture and history. During one of my field trips to Zaare (a suburb of Bolgatanga) in 1986, I met some old men gathered at the chief’s house. While I was with them some young men stood at a distance and were laughing at me. They took me for a crazy man. After I had finished interviewing the old men, these young men approached me and prompted me with the following questions:

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *Daily Graphic*, 1986.

<sup>4</sup> David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2006), 561.

<sup>5</sup> Sylvia Leith-Ross, *African Women: A Study of the Ibo in Nigeria* (London: AMS Press, 1939), 54.

1. Why do you worry yourself to learn the history and genealogies of these people (i.e. the Zaare people)?
2. Are you paid for recording these things?
3. Does this have any relation with the present educational reforms?
4. Do they set questions on traditional history in the West African Examination?
5. Are you capable of making a perfect recording of these people?
6. Are the people willing to give you the information freely and without prejudice?
7. Do the old men demand gifts before giving you the information?
8. What relationship exists between your current job and the research you are conducting?

My answer to their questions was simply that we need to put our history and culture in the right place. My concern was to record the skills, technologies, social life and wisdom of the old men which are fast disappearing. One would realize that both Western and missionary education has taught us a great deal about who they are, where they came from and why they are here. Our situation is quite disheartened because we cannot tell who we are, what we are, where we came from, etc. In fact, we cannot claim to be ignorant of the fact that we are losing things that are so dear and valuable to us in exchange of what is alien to us, losing treasures that are priceless to our lives in exchange of wealth that can be measured in monetary terms, losing our Earth god priests (tindaanas) to acquire a catholic priest or a pastor, replacing our medicine men with conventional doctors, losing our rivers in exchanges for piped water. We have, in fact, lost much and gained little. We have lost our dances, our rituals and values, our material culture and medicines, and our languages. We have lost our land together with its sacredness. We must all be concerned with this great loss and act decisively to prevent further degeneration of our indigenous knowledge and traditions. Their remarks infer that the Gurensi and Boosi have for a long time been marginalized. To others it is our own culture and history. Contrary to the views of the young men, some of the old men and chiefs who met me congratulated me on my efforts to maintain the originality of their customs and history. At some gathering in Zuarungu on 11/5/86, the Chief of Zuarungu, Naba Charles Ayeltige Afeghera and his elders commended as follows: "Your materials will go a long way to help social scientists, administrators, Ethnologists, Schools and the general reading public." At Yikene and Sumbrungu the old men expressed similar sentiments especially about their genealogies. Asona from Sumbrungu said "If we had such inquisitive people like your type during our days we should not be having problems of tracing our genealogies. Your work will make the White man also fear us."

## **II. Methodology**

In 1976, I realized that there were no books on the history, genealogies and cultural life of the Gurensi and the Boosi. Under these circumstances I felt compelled to undertake a positive step in this direction so as to fulfil the reasons I outlined in the previous section. In the attempt, I approached several old men and women and expressed my desire and intentions to record down their histories, genealogies, technologies and socio-cultural practices. I set about this in May 1976. Unfortunately, the project was suspended because of a three-year weather observation course I had to undergo at Legon, Accra, in the summer of 1976.

In the early part of 1980 it was abundantly clear that the project would take off but due to financial constraints and serious transportation difficulties I could not make any meaningful start. By the middle of 1980, I had to undergo another training course in co-operative management at the co-operative college in Kumasi. Early in January 1982 it was quite clear that the research could not be carried out during a military takeover, so it was postponed indefinitely. Nonetheless, I took the final decision in the middle of 1982, but it was not until on the 17th May 1983 that I obtained first-hand information on the Gurensi and Boosi peoples from some selected old men and women. Before I began the research, I carefully selected those old men and women who were witnesses to the following events:

- a. Babatu and his gang of slave-raiders in the North-West in the period between 1860 and 1897.
- b. The arrival of the British military officer, Captain Donald Stewart in Bolgatanga on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 1896.
- c. Those who resisted the British entry into their towns and villages in 1892, 1896, 1899, and 1900.
- d. The British occupation of Zuarungu in May 1910.
- e. The murder of Nangodi-Naba Na Tii in January 1910.
- f. Those who saw the British conquest of Tongo in 1911.
- g. The disturbance in Bongo in April, 1916.
- h. Those who served in the two World Wars, i.e. World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-45). Altogether they were about 200 respondents (both men and women) selected from about fifty communities of the Bolgatanga and Bongo District Council Areas.

The ages of my respondents (using the above events as a yard stick) were as follows:

60 were over 90 years and more but less than 120. 80 were between the ages of 75-80 years. 40 were about 60-75 years old. 10 of them were between 55-60 years. And the other 10 were above 50 years but less than 55. Those who were 90 years and above were Abraham Akumbilige Mborah (from Gowrie), Ayele-Yamga (from Gowrie), Akoma-Yamga (from Vea), Asumbaseme and Abunbii-Kologo (from Bolga), Avaam-Bunga (from Zurungu-Daborin), Awonga- Kologo (from Yikene), Anokino (Giba), Abeerese and Asona (from Sumbrungu), Ateekela, Adaare Adua and Apaalazaya (from Zaare), Bon-Naba Aberinga (Sapeliga) from Bongo and Gowrie-Naba Albert Akobga (from Gowrie) to mention a few.

Before undertaking the project, I would travel to these old men and women who occasionally met around some bonfire in the evening, and chattered and exchanged views concerning their histories, culture and religion. I would also sit among them and ask some questions which some of them would claim to be inciting. Before making my enquiries, I will present them with kola, tobacco and drinks and then proceed to narrate the rationale behind the research. I will then ask them for their co-operation and even promise them their anonymity. Interviews were almost invariably carried out in a Ghanaian language, and mostly in Gurene (the most common language of the Gurensi and Boosi). The Gurensi have it in their proverb that *gareseko nde bogro*. This literally means “detail enquiries are soothsaying”. This has in it the idea that he who gets into the bottom of a matter by detailed questioning is like the one who has consulted a soothsayer. This is so because I would ask a series of questions about their origin, migrations, chieftaincy, social, economic and ethnic relations. I would ask questions about their indigenous political system and how this system came to be superimposed by the Mamprusi and the British systems of government. I also probed into the families that contest for chieftaincy in a town and village, the order of succession of the chiefs, the surnames, personal appellations, names and skin names of their chiefs, the enskinning authorities and the rites, and the ceremonies associated with the enskinning of a chief and a tindaana. I also went further and made enquiries as to the animals, birds and reptiles which they do not eat or cause harm to and some of the important beliefs and customs related to chieftaincy. A lot was also asked about their sacred places, especially the trees, mountains, caves, rivers and grasslands, which they worship. I would ask the old men to tell me how their towns and villages came by their names. The Gurensi presupposes that an old man should not talk lies; those old men I interviewed presumably gave me frank and honest answers. There were some old men and women who would give long and winding answers and in conclusion will remark: “This is what I personally saw, and this is what I heard from my grandparents and so on”. I had the patience to listen to all the narrations which my respondents gave me. This was to enable me to extract the correct answers out of them. I was rather careful in the reliability of some of the facts since the Gurensi have a saying that one does not point his left finger in the direction of one’s mother’s natal village. Another saying goes that no one would dare add sand to his own millet grains. Both sayings suggest that no one would ever

dare or want to tell bad things about himself and for that matter his family or clan. Taking cognizance of the above saying, whatever information or answers were given by any old man in any village was cross-checked in collaboration from another lineage or clan elders. It was then noticed that when narrations were compared with others, there was a great similarity amongst them which I believe testified to their veracity.

### **III. What Some of the People Did Not Like**

During my field trips to the communities I observed that certain people did not like it to be said about their family, clan or community that they are descendants of sister's sons, slave people or migrants from unknown origin. Some did not want to accept the fact that their forefathers had at one time been subjugated by another and there were some people who did not agree that their grandparents never contested for chieftaincy. But the facts are facts, and these are the very ones that have been recorded in this book. To quote Fortes: "If a sister's child is buried at our place his house will become many and ours will die out."<sup>6</sup> In other words, be careful not to let a sister's child or a bought person forget his stranger origin. In an editorial commentary captioned "Conflict Resolution" in the Daily Graphic Mr. E. K. Fosu (Ag. Central Regional Minister) was quoted as saying that those who have settled on lands belonging to other communities should let their children know of their real status so that they do not grow up to compete for or lay unnecessary claims to lands that do not belong to them.<sup>7</sup> In the same issue of the Daily Graphic the following commentary was made: "We find it extremely difficult to understand why settlers tend to believe that they can lay claim to something that does not justifiably belong to them, why those who do not come from any royal family suddenly see themselves as qualified to be chiefs."<sup>8</sup>

### **IV. Where I Derived My Information**

One of the major sources of information for this book was the memory of old men and women. I must in fact add that even though much of what is contained in this book is legendary, there are contemporary references to the Gurensi and Boosi in the National Archive's offices in Tamale and Accra. I devoted several years and months in the Archive's offices cross-checking to have less doubt about the information given by the people. I was able to go through thousands of books, articles, files and bundles in the National Archives. Extensive research was done, and information was obtained from Administration (ADM) 56/1/1 TO 56/515 (Northern Region Records), and ADM 60/4/1 to ADM 60/4/6 (Gambaga District). The other archival sources are:

- a. ADM 63/4/1 to ADM 63/4/13 (Navrongo District)
- b. ADM 68/4/1 to ADM 68/4/12 (Zuarungu District)
- c. Government Gazette ADM 6/1/1- ADM 6/1/260
- d. Legon Observer NP 24/1 – NP 24/9
- e. Daily Graphic NP1/1-NP1/116
- f. Ordinance of Gold Coast (1903 – 1909)
- g. Laws of the Gold Coast from 1920-1954

Reference was also made to Journals, Theses, Dissertations, Magazines, Diaries, Letters and Newspapers to mention a few. Besides these documents, information on Gurensi culture, folklores, linguistics, religion and technology, written by the few knowledgeable Gurensi, was consulted. In addition, during my field work in the 1980s, I occasionally gathered information by talking with professional and amateur historians,

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<sup>6</sup> Meyer Fortes, *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi: The Second Part of an Analysis of the Social Structure of a Trans-Volta Tribe* (International African Institute, Oxford University Press, 1949), 28.

<sup>7</sup> "Conflict Resolution," *Daily Graphic*, Saturday, 1 April 1985 (No.13788), p.5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



anthropologists, sociologists and so on. I also visited some of the museums and monuments' offices in the country – Accra, Kumasi and Bolgatanga. Many of the country's libraries such as the Balmes Library at the University of Ghana, Legon, the African Research Library and the Regional Libraries in Accra, Kumasi, Bolga and Navrongo were extensively consulted. Information was also gathered from publications of learned societies, unpublished documents and papers, copies of field reports by visiting scholars and those submitted by research affiliates of the Institute of African Studies (IAS) from foreign universities, etc. (See References).

## **V. Problems and Difficulties Encountered during the Research**

There were several problems and difficulties which militated against the early completion of the project. *First*, the old men I visited were scattered over an area of 1940 km<sup>2</sup> which I covered either on a bicycle or on foot under the blazing sun because most of the research was done between November and May. *Second*, ignorance and suspicion were and are still the prevailing feature of much of the Ghanaian population. *Third*, there was the problem of the inability and reticence of some chiefs and their elders, tindaanduuma and even Government officials to either disclose information or release inaccurate information. This was probably because the project coincided with the takeover of the civilian Liman's government by the military headed by J.J. Rawlings. In lieu of that regime's concept of the Committee of the Defence of the Revolution (CDR) I was taken for a spy for the Government.

The *fourth* difficulty concerns people's traditional beliefs. There was unwillingness of the people to trace their genealogies for the fear that they would be bewitched. Some of the chiefs, Earth god priests and tindaanduuma did not like their real names mentioned for fear that their enemies would use that to bewitch them. Despite assuring them of anonymity, many still refused to respond to my enquiries. *Fifth*, there was lack of books or relevant information on the Gurensi and Boosi, especially on their clan and skin histories. The absence of this fifth problem compelled me to spend several years in the National Archives offices and the Libraries. Sixth, farming activities and funeral performances during the wet season (May-October) and in the dry season (from January to April) respectively were a few of the main problems which hindered my research.

Seventh, a considerable problem was the lack of funds. Some of the old men boldly demanded some fixed fee from me before they could share with me the secrets of their lives. But, unfortunately, I did not have money with me to give as incentives to the old men because I was not funded by any agency or organization. In fact, there has been a wrong notion which is deeply rooted in Ghanaian society. It is that people carrying out research are often loaded with money by the government. Even though I encountered these problems and difficulties this by no means prevented me from giving me ample time to observe many of their cultural practices such as the annual festivals connected with land and its resources, such as the worship of Earthgods, the 'Ndan Koya' and Bugum Festivals, etc. It further gave me enough time and privilege to observe and take snapshots/pictures of the chiefs, tindaanduuma, etc. It further enabled me to draw or obtain maps which I feel could not have been possible if I had hurried to complete the project on time.

## **VI. How I Arrived on the Dates**

Many of my readers may be inclined to question the authenticity of the dates that appear in this book. The answer is very simple. Truly, events especially the enskinment of chiefs before colonial rule in the 1800, have no dates. And while I wish to state that some of the dates are true recordings of professional historians and commissioners during the British colonial administration of the Northern Territories, some are merely estimations. In the latter case, before arriving on a date, I would first construct the genealogical family trees

of the founder of that community or clan giving approximately 29 years to each generation. In this estimate, supposing the ancestor of the Boosi (Asigekuluga) lived in the town about nine generations ago, my estimations show that the descendants of Asigekuluga or a person have been living in the town for about  $9 \times 29 = 265$  years. This is worked out (based on a person who was born 1975) as  $1975 - 261 = 1714$ . Another clan whose ancestor lived thirteen generations back (e.g. Abeka in Bolga), is said to have lived in the area for about  $29 \times 13 = 377$  years. Or  $1975 - 325 = 1698$ . This same method was also used in estimating the years of my respondents (as spelt out in the methodology). According to the genealogies, if my respondents said that Mr. A. was found to be in the third generation, I considered that as  $29 \times 3 = 87$  and if he was in the fourth generation, then he was  $29 \times 4 = 116$  years old at the time of the research in 1980.

## VII. An Apology

I wish to take the opportunity to render my apology to my readers and informants. They should bear with me that the mere commencement of a fresh project of this nature harbours the possibility of many shortcomings. Nonetheless, the facts in this book are written without bias or prejudice. As the Gurensi and Boosi read through this book they would wish that much is written about their clans. Others would even not like anything to be written about their families. There are even others who would not know about themselves but would disagree with my collections anyway. In the former case the blame is not entirely mine. The information on each clan or community depends on several reasons. Detailed account of some villages and towns was due to the willingness of members of that community to provide the needed information. Also, as pointed out, there were some areas where very little information was gathered while in some places the people refused entirely to cooperate. There were even others who made promises of gathering information from their clans but failed to fulfil them. As a result, therefore, I was compelled to write with the little information I obtained from the few knowledgeable people of those villages. I only pray that when many people come to realize the importance of my work, they will come forward and give freely what they have about their towns and villages. I should be very glad to receive such people and those who will want to offer realistic criticisms and useful suggestions about the books and for the good of the society. The information in this book should be treated as a starting point. If the reader goes through this book, he may realize that the names and spellings which are used for certain places and people in the days of colonial rule are in many cases different from what has been spelt today. The spellings of place names varied from Commissioner to Commissioner. It is therefore impossible to agree on a standardized spelling since this has yet not been well developed in the Gurene language. I have sometimes to be content with the conventional Anglicized form or the typed up, often very inaccurate information that appears on the 1: 250,000 Ghana Ordinance survey maps. For instance, the reader may come across such spellings as Navarro is commonly spelt Navrongo, Goree or Gawri for Gowrie, Vier for Vea, Lcheni for Yikene, Inko for Winkogo, Sumbruno for Sumbrungu, Fwegu for Feo, Longo for Lungu, Uwa for Yuwa/Yuam, Biung for Beo, Namogo for Namoo. It has also become appropriate to use the names known today. For example, Zuarungu District is (now Frafra District) further split into Bongo District and Bolgatanga Municipal Assemblies. Navrongo District is now Kasena-Nankana District. Alabassare, for example, has spellings such as Adabase, Bazaanam for Azanam, Adakura for Adekura. Unless otherwise indicated, here Frafra is used in a broad sense to include the Gurensi, Talensi, Boosi and Nabnams (and to the White man Nabdams).

I should state that a total of over forty towns and villages have received attention in the research. The towns and villages subordinate to Bolga-Naba are Zuarungu, Kumbosego, Dulugu, Soe, Yikene, Sherugo, Kalbeo, Sumbrungu, Yorogo, Zaare, Gambibigo, Yipala, Yarigabisi and Bolga-Nyarega. Those subordinate to Bon-Naba are Gowrie, Vea, Namoo, Dua, Beo, (under Bongo), Adaboya, Feo, Boko, Soe, Soboko, Sambologo, Lungu, Balungu, Gorugo, Bogorogo, Nyarega, Asubiga, Apatanga, Taronko, Gamborogo, Kodurogo, Kadare, Goo, Kanga and Nayorogo. Etc. This, however, is not the whole list of towns under Bon-Naba.

## **VIII. Hypothesis**

The researcher assumes that the causes for loss of history, culture, religion and genealogical memory, etc. are due to modernization, frequent migrations, and the introduction of Western history and names (Islamic names, Christian names) by the people.

## **IX. Expectation**

The expectation from this research is that:

1. Once a register of skin makers and lineage or families entitled to each skin are documented, chieftaincy disputes will be greatly minimized.
2. The documentation of the history of the Gurensi and Boosi would expose their cultural and religious concepts to a wider audience outside the peoples' own localities.
3. People will correct the anomalies as misrepresented by most researchers on the Gurensi, and Boosi.
4. The information will help change the people's negative attitude and dislike for their own history and religion.
5. It would serve as a source of valuable information for the local people, Ghanaians and the world at large.
6. It will serve as lessons to be taught in schools (both formal and non-formal institutions).
7. People will be able to trace their origins and reasons for migrations.
8. People would be able to know their kinship groups; especially which clans are interrelated by blood so that they can avoid incestuous marriages.
9. People will maintain their original names in contrast to what they are been called.
10. The tentative dates in this book would help readers to determine their grandfathers' and grandmothers' birth dates, etc.

## **X. Appeal**

I am of the conviction that people who see custom and tradition worthwhile do not wish its destruction. It is for this reason that I am fighting to preserve it in its original form - not necessarily for my own sake but for the good of mankind, and for that matter, the Gurensi. Do not say that because you are not a Gureja you care less whether our custom is preserved or not. I am therefore appealing to everyone to come to my aid without hesitation so that what is contained here is passed to our children and our children's children.

# Acknowledgements

I should begin my acknowledgements quoting Dennis Austin (1970) who wrote in the Twi language *Tikoro nko agyina*. This expression seeks to explain that one man alone is insufficient for the full deliberations of an undertaking. Truly, progress is greatest when people work together sharing information freely. During the preparation of this book I relied greatly on the co-operation and services of several people of proven intelligence, talents and wisdom. If these people had not cooperated I would not have had the information that is contained here. I will first mention here the indefatigable energy displayed by some assembly persons, chiefs, tindaanduuma, opinion leaders and so on in the gathering of the information contained here. I must mention that it was these people who brought the old men and women together to give me the information. In this connection, the following tindaanduuma and old men and women deserve special thanks: Tindaan-Yuure Adingo (Dapore Tindaana), Tindaan-Kulibe (Tindonmoligo tindaana), Bon-Naba Aberinga Anane (Sapeliga), Gowrie-Naba Albert A. Akobga (Zankanga), Abunbi-Kologo (Bolga-Atubabisi), Asumbaseme (Ana-Andongo-Loko) (Tanzui), Awonga-Kologo (Yikene), Avaam-Bunga (Zuarunga Daborin) to mention a few.

The following teachers and assemblymen who co-operated fully during the research also need special mentioning: Alika-Dongo (Zaare-Abandoobisi), Michael Amobila (Bukere), Adabere Donald (Bukere), Thomas Adaye Asumbura (Yikene), Seidu Atia (Zaare-Anokobisi) and Emmanuel Adondaa Atusiya (Bolga-Atubabisi). I am particularly grateful to the following people who showed interest in my work and helped greatly in cash and in kind. These people provided me the necessary stationery, computer service and diskettes which made it possible for the materials to be stored. They are: Prof. Kasim Kasanga (LARC, KNUST), Dr. David Millar (CECIK/Lecturer UDS), Dr. Tampugre, Dr. Kwame Adogboba, Mr. Roy Ayarega (Regional Director, MOFA, UER, Bolgatanga), David Azira Adongo (Regional Internal Audi-tor Ghana Water Company Ltd, Bolgatanga), Ben Anyelom Anaba (Deputy Director CNC Tamale), Robert Agene (Principal, Bolgatanga Polytechnic), Mgr. Roger Abotiyuure (Catholic Secretariat Accra), Rev. Fr. Moses Akebule (Parish Priest) Bolga and Paul Agoos (Accountant Feeder Roads, Bolga). I still wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Kwame Arhin (Director of the IAS, Legon at the time) and Mrs. Evelyn Twumasi (Administrative Secretary, IAS, Legon, Accra) for their consideration and kindness in Legon in 1991.

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My thanks go to Mr. Cletus Azangweo Apiribila (Director of PRAAD, Accra), Miss Judith Botchwey and Frank Ablorh (National Archives Search Room, Accra) who did not hesitate in meeting my request for information from the Archives documents. I also acknowledge the services given to me by the staff of the Frafra District Council and Frafra Traditional Council, the Regional House of Chiefs, Bolga, Balme Library (University of Ghana, Legon, Accra), African Research Library, Accra, Accra Central Library and Staff of the Bolgatanga, Navrongo, Kumasi and Tema Libraries.

I do not forget to mention the staff of Corporations and Governments Department who were very approachable and gave me the needed assistance. My debt to previous scholars can be seen from the

bibliographies/reference. I have also profited greatly at co-operative meetings, harvest festivals, funeral places, at durbars, in pito bars with drinkers and praise-singers (who recited the titles and exploits of past chiefs during important occasions in the district capitals).

The URA-Radio FM has also been my source of information because I rarely miss the popular choice music in Gurene, some of which contain reference to historical persons and the Gurensi culture. I would also like to mention those schoolchildren in the many schools of the Bolgatanga and Bongo District Assemblies who willingly filled in the questionnaire for my work. I am very grateful to Madam Modesta Akologo (Catholic Secretariat, Bolgatanga) who despite her work load at her office, still gave my work a priority. She has typed one of my manuscripts in its entirety. To all friends, brothers and sisters whose individual names have not been mentioned I am very grateful.

Finally, I recognize the burden that this book has placed on my suffering wife and children. It is hoped that as the years progress this book will be modified to meet the need of the student population and the general reading public based on the suggestions and criticisms that may be given by any individual person or group of persons. I believe that future generations of the Bolgatanga Municipal Assembly and Bongo District will find in this book an account of their forefathers' beliefs and practices, technologies and the foundations, on which their civilization is built. It will also appeal to the general readers who are interested in history. It can also be used as a source book by the teacher of history, the Regional and National House of chiefs, etc. It is equally hoped that my readers, historians, anthropologies, ethnologists, sociologists, social scientists, teachers and administrators will find the material in this and subsequent volumes on the Gurensi and Boosi very useful and guiding. As much as I appreciate the aid given me by my informants in writing this book, I should hold myself liable for all errors, omissions, misinterpretations, which may appear in this book.

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In Joe (2-25) the LORD said:  
“And I will restore to you, the years that the locust hath eaten.... And He did”

# Abbreviations

ACC	Accession
ADM	Administration
Ag.	Acting
BNI	Bureau of National Investigation
BONABOTO	Bongo Nangodi Bolga Tongo
CaP	Chapter
CC	Chief Commissioner
Cf.	Compare
CCC	Chief Commissioner's Court
CMG	Commandant of the Most Grand
CCNTS	Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories
CID	Criminal Investigations Department
CNP	Commissioner of North Province
CRB	Civil Record Book
CRB	Criminal Record Book
CS	Colonial Secretary
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DC	District Commissioner
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
GA	Government Agent
GCO	Gold Coast Order
GCR	Gold Coast Regiment
GES	Ghana Education Service
IBID	In The Same Place
IHL	Imprisonment with Hard Labour
MO	Medical Officer
MD	Medical Doctor
MDC	Mamprusi District Council
NAG	National Archives of Ghana
NCO	Non – Commissioned Officer
NEP	North East Province
Nd.	No Date
NPP	Northern Peoples Party
NWP	North West Province
NTCF	Northern Territories Constabulary Force
NTS	Northern Territories
OBE	Order of British Empire
OUP	Oxford University Press
Par.	Paragraph
PC	Provincial Commissioner
PCNEP	Provincial Commissioner of the North East Province
PRO	Public Record Office
Pte.	Private
Rex	Republic
SCGCC	Supreme Court of the Gold Coast Colony

## Glossary and terms worthy of note

**Brothers and Sisters:** As used in this book brothers and sisters include step-brothers and step-sisters.

**Relatives:** The word relative in this context includes parents, brothers and sisters, guardians and paternal uncles who are bound in the case of marriage to contribute by paying some cattle. They are also bound in the case of murder, when another person is killed, or they are entitled to share in bride prices proper when a girl is married or share in bride price cattle when a person of the bloodline has been killed by another person.

**Family Trees:** These are charts that show the earliest known ancestor of a family and all the persons who are descended from him.

**Genealogies:** In this study genealogy means a socially recognized link between a person and his forbearers or ancestors. This could be patrilineal, matrilineal double unilateral, ambilineal or bilateral.

**Clan:** Refers to a group of people who are believed to have descended patrilineally from one common putative ancestor and who share the same totemic taboos.

**Daana:** Is a suffix meaning “owner of, possessor of,” in the sense of being responsible or being a trustee for what one owns.

**Tinga:** Refers to the clan settlement which includes the land with all the divisions from sections right down to the basic unit, the single compound inhabited by the individual household.

**Tindaana:** Refers to the one who oversees or is responsible for the tinga.

One important thing also worthy of note is the fact that in those days the parent or father was omnipotent about his power over his children. It was a very common thing for parents to pledge their children for debt and these children became wives to the man who they were pledged with as soon as they were old enough. The descendants of the sons of these pledge wives have their established clans in Bolgatanga, Bongo, etc.

I should also state that in almost all the villages there is an intricate interlacing of groups and it would be an impossible feat to draw an exact political map of each town and village.

On demography: there was no census taken in 1941 because of the 1939 World War. The last official census of population in respect of the country was taken in 1984. Therefore, the figures for towns and villages in 1994 are estimates based on the census held in 1984. They are, in fact, provisional figures. Figures in respect of areas of towns and villages were not immediately available.

It is worthwhile to note that all the relevant documents about the Frafras were destroyed by fire at the Zuarungu station (then headquarters of British administration) on the 22 Nov. 1910. Another incident occurred on the 2 August 1929. The mail van which was carrying the District Record Books from Tamale to Accra was completely burnt causing a great loss of reference material.

## **PART I TINDAANASHIP AMONG THE GURENSI**



# Chapter 1 Tindaanas in Gurensi Society: Selection, Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities

## 1.1 Introduction

When one travels through the whole Gurensi area, one will certainly come across some large stretches of grasslands and forest.

What immediately comes to one's mind is that they are bush lands; no man owns them. Unfortunately, this is a wrong assumption. It is far from being true. There is, in fact, no part of country, town and village where land is not owned by people. We know that every bush land or forest land (as one may describe it) in every part of the country is owned by people. This could be some particular group of families, in the village or town.

It could be that due to some social, political or ecological reasons the group withdrew to create settlements elsewhere. What we must understand here is that the basic principle upon which landownership in a traditional Frafra society is hinged is that land is owned by a group or community represented by a skin. To quote from Woodman, which is further collaborated by Ollennu in proceedings of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, Volume xi (1974), p. 10:

“Although there may be extensive tracks of unfarmed land these areas are not there for any one's taking: they all belong to someone. This someone will almost invariably be found to be one of the traditional customary law communities such as a stool, skin, clan or family.”

Also, N.A. Ollennu in *Principles of Customary Land Law in Ghana* (1962) writes that in Africa land is said to belong to “a vast family of whom many are dead, a few are living and countless host are still unborn.”<sup>9</sup>

Before the advent of colonial rule in Northern Ghana in 1900 land in the Gurensi country was mapped into *tingana* –Earth God -- areas. Every *tingane* area was and is still believed to be the home of certain powerful land spirits, called locally as *tinkuuga* (pl.) and *tinkugere* (sg.), and the ancestors (*yabaduuma*).

A few of these *tingana* areas (from which some towns and villages derive their names) are Bolga, Bongo, Balungo, Akanseriga, Zaare, Zoko, Gorugo, Ve, Dua, Nyariga, Apatanga and so on. These towns and villages derived their names from the *tingana* (meaning Earth Gods). The boundaries of these *tingana* areas were so defined that every *tisabisi/tindaana* (pioneer settler) could tell where his land began and where it ended.

Even at the minimal lineage level every compound owner (*yidaana*) was capable of tracing without difficulty the boundaries of his farm lands. Every *tingane* area (now mapped into towns and villages) had a *tindaana* who in loose speech is called “land owner.” This means that wherever there is a settlement (town/village), there is a *tindaana*. He was and is still in the position of a trustee; he held the land for the general good of the community. Any member who wanted a plot of land to cultivate or to build a house on would go to him for it.

Land is communal and sacred. Neither the *tindaana* nor any one individual could sell out land. The reason for the prohibition is that land belongs to the ancestors who live underneath the Earth. These ancestors still

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<sup>9</sup> N.A. Ollennu, *Principles of Customary Land Law in Ghana* (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1962), 4.

have vested interest in the preservation of the land which they have left behind for the living descendants. Owing to the religious, social and economic values the Gurensi place on land one is bound to face fierce resistance in one's attempt to cut down sacred sites (where the ancestors reside) or taking soil from it. F.C. Scott's (Inspector General of Police of the Gold Coast colony) report on customs relating to the tenure of land in the Gold Coast lends credence to the fact that land cannot be sold or destroyed.

There is a superstitious fear on behalf of a representative of a family that if in his time any landed property of the family is sold or by any other means it ceases to belong to the family, his spirit after death would be perpetually troubled by those of his predecessors for having permitted the land of his ancestors to go into the possession of others.

Our next discussion will be the "tindaana" or "land owner" as he is loosely called. We will understand who and what the tindaana is, how he is enskinned, who installs him, what functions he actually performs in the society, what his rights and privileges are, what he forbids, the beliefs and taboos associated with him, etc. We will also learn about his "costume" regalia, the mode of succession, kinds of tindaanaship held and the impact of Westernization and government on tindaanaship in Traditional Gurensi Society.

## 1.2 Who Is a Tindaana?

Tindaana in the first place is derived from two words "Tiɔa" and "Daana." Tiɔa is used in various ways. It could be applied to the territory of a community, the same way as a country.<sup>10</sup> It also means a community itself; home, land, territory or settlement for agriculture. "Daana" is a suffix which has in it the idea of possessor of, in the sense of being trustee for what one owns. Tiɔa daana (shortened to *Tindaana*) connotes appointment by the will of the community, land owners, responsible for the land. According to Danquah:

The Stool [skin] occupier is in common parlance or by courtesy, referred to as the owner for the land, but he is only so in so far as he occupies the stool and represent the sovereignty of the people giving due respect to the sacredness of the stool [skin]. If we were pressed for an answer to the fundamental question as to ultimate ownership of stool [skin] property we should readily say that thing called stool [skin] whose supremacy is acknowledged by members of the family, section of the tribe or subjects of the state and to which they are bound by their tradition and laws to serve and respect, in the ultimate and absolute power.<sup>11</sup>

In the literal sense of the word "tiɔa daana" or "tindaana" means "owner of the Earth or settlement." Different Ethnic groups have different names for the tindaana. For example, the Mossi, Dagarti and Gurensi call him "tindaana," the Talensi say "tendaana" while in the Gbanyito, Vagala, Issala, Kasem and Lobi language, he is called "Kasa welinwuri," Hen beɔ," "Tieratina," "Tangwantu" and "Tingansob" respectively.

## 1.3 The Government of the Early Gurensi

Apart from the Mamprusi settlers in Bongo who knew about the secular form of rule, there was not anyone amongst the Gurensi who was a chief in the real use of the white man's word. Even if there were chiefs, their influence did not go beyond their own wards or families. Those who probably assumed the position of chiefs (*naduuma*) were those people who had plenty of wealth and large followings in terms of cattle and popularity.

The only person whose authority almost equaled the chief (in the modern sense) was the tindaana but he more or less performed religious functions (which we shall soon study). He was the link between the

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<sup>10</sup> Rattray, R.S. *The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, Vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932, p. 255.

<sup>11</sup> Danquah, *Akan Law and Customs*, p. 200.

ancestors and the living descendants. He was responsible for the worship of the community earthgods and deities located in his ward.

Even though, he was styled “tindaana” he never actually owned the land. He was only a mere keeper. He somehow holds the Minister for Lands and Forestry. This was the position of the tindaana centuries before the Mamprusi and Mossi arrived in the area and introduced real chieftaincy amongst the people. But these alien groups, while in this country, did not interfere with the religion of the indigenous people whose beliefs were centered on the honour of ancestors.

Therefore, any time there was famine or misfortunes the tindaana (who was and still is the traditional religious leader) was approached for the answer. The occupation of the alien group brought in its wake two controlling powers - the Tindaana and the Naba (the chief). Both of these two institutions were operating side by side, with the indigenous political institution having an historic priority over the alien political institution. The tindaana was more concerned with territoriality while the chief s power was tied down with the number of people he commanded. The Gurensi have it in their proverb that “Neriba naba” (literally “people are a chief”). This proverb has in it the idea that the people make a chief.

The tindaana was and is still merely the priest of the land and had/has no influence other than in spiritual matters such as sacrifice and advice in times of drought and so on. The chief s role was and is still to sit in court and judge cases amongst his subjects and give fines. Therefore, he was the dispenser of justice.

The following is often spoken to give testimony to the differentiation of roles between the tindaana and Naba: “The chief is for the people and the tindaana is for the land.”<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 1** The differentiation of roles between a Tindaana (left) and a Chief (right) as spoken by the proverb “Tindaana suo ‘tinga’ and Naba suo ‘Neriba.’”

<sup>12</sup> NAG-A-ADM 56/1/179, paragraph 60; Riehl, Volker, 1988, p. 32.

As a matter of historical fact, no chief in this society ever assumed the role of the tindaana and vice versa. A broad distinction is made between the two office bearers with regard to the fact that the chief is forbidden to make sacrifices to the tinkugere (earth stone). The tinkugere is believed to contain the spirit of the entire community.

By the custom and tradition of the people, a chief does not allocate or assign a portion of the community land to people who would want to farm or build in the community.

This does not overrule the fact that a chief can locate his own farmland to a neighbor, friend or a stranger if he so desires. Between the two the chief is an ordinary man. He does not possess more land than his subjects. According Meyer Fortes, "Chiefs and tindaanas have no overriding rights of ownership entitling to rent, tax or tribute for land. They have, indeed, no more land than they have acquired in the same way as any other elder."<sup>13</sup>

Allocation of community land to prospective farmers and the religious functions of a tindaana are forbidden to a chief and his offspring. A chief who ignores these prohibitions feels more enlightened and wants to play down traditional values. It is a common knowledge that if both the tindaana and the chief are called upon to swear an oath to the community earthgod (tinkugere) as to the person responsible for allocation of community land, the chief will surely refuse to do it for fear that he will be killed by the land spirits.

Yet, about the beginning of the twentieth century, another revolutionary government emerged in the Ghanaian scene. This time it was the British colonial powers. During this period some tindaanduuma, besides their religious functions, became involved in secular functions (administration of the people). It was impossible then to distinguish in certain towns and villages who a chief was and who a tindaana was. Roles (especially allocation of land, etc.) which the chief and his offspring had been denied were performed by chiefs while chiefly functions were now performed by the tindaana.

Consequently, the system of traditional government was completely disrupted and replaced by secular rule. In fact, people are still in the dark as to the functions and responsibilities of a chief and a tindaana amongst the Gurensi, because in the urban areas such as Bolgatanga the chief has almost usurped the functions of the tindaana.

It is unlikely that we shall ever have complete details of the exact functions and responsibilities of a tindaana and the relations between chiefs and tindaanduuma. Nonetheless, our next discussion will highlight and itemize the functions and specific roles of the Tindaana in traditional Gurensi setup.

#### **1.4 The Functions and Roles of a Tindaana in a Traditional Gurensi Society**

The Tindaana in traditional Gurensi Society performs a variety of functions and roles which range from political, economic to social and religious functions. Some of these functions include:

1. The Tindaana's function as the administrator of land. Since European occupation this function, in principle, has undergone little change. Nonetheless, in some areas land seems to be controlled by chiefs.
2. He settles land disputes in concert with the heads of the domestic sub-groups. The latter groups together with the tindaana would help individuals to reach a settlement; he reconciles people in conflict. Usually the judicial process (involving a plaintiff and a defendant and their witnesses) in land cases by a tindaana

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<sup>13</sup> Fortes, Meyer and E. E. Evans-Pritchard. African Political Systems. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 250.

employs supernatural as well as natural methods. In extreme cases, one or both parties is/are made to take an oath to a major earth god in order to establish the truth of the testimony.

This function has been relegated to the background, because land cases are now settled by the traditional ruler's courts or Government Courts.

3. He is the main custodian of the society's tradition.

4. He is the centre of the community communication system.

Recently these functions have become entirely the responsibility of the chief and Government functionaries such as the CDR's, and assemblymen during the PNDC/NDC era.

5. If people wish to build houses they get land from the tindaana of that place.

6. He exercises his authority over land within his town or village boundaries. He gives land on his own authority but he is not the owner. He merely holds it for the community. Neither he nor anyone else can sell land.

7. He is often called upon to make a symbolic scratch – “clear the land/ the ground” -- when a new house is to be built. Also, after a house is built the Tindaana is invited to bless the new house for good health and many children in the house. In all state functions that take place in a community the tindaana is invited to pour libation before the official commencement of the function.

8. He grants permission to people to dig new graves. He regulates the activities and lives of both indigenous and migrant settlers, especially in the performance of funeral rites.

9. He introduces newly enskinned chiefs to the Earth God. He also blesses newly enskinned chiefs. But he has no role in determining who must be selected as a chief.

10. He is the custodian of the important land stones (tinkuuga) or Earth God in a community.

11. Rites which concern the village as a whole such as the New Year renewal rites, farm rituals, rain rites are often led by the tindaana.<sup>14</sup>

12. He protects his community from mystical agencies by means of his tindaanaship medicine and his knowledge of witchcraft.

13. He warns the community against pending cataclysms and suggests ways and means of warding off the misfortunes by way of libations and sacrifice.

14. He is approached in cases of affecting a breach of the society taboos, sex in the bush, murder, etc. When there is a blood spill, following inter-clan wars or family fights, he performs the Tiṇa Salengo (smoothing the land) or Ziim vaare (collection of blood) (some cleansing rite). Note that in a purification rite (such as in murder, etc.) the blood of the animal killed is made to flow into a hole in the ground

15. He is the link or mediator between the ancestors and the living people. When any hazards occur in his community he leads the community to appeal to the Gods to intervene.

16. He prevents war between two factions by putting his guinea-corn stock or casting his skin garment between the Combatants. The Tindaana is to ensure that peace, harmony, prosperity and abundance prevail in his area of jurisdiction. Individuals and community members are rewarded by Mother Earth for their toil.

To the traditionalists, the tindaana is regarded as the High Priest or Chief Priest of his people whose duties are summed up as in two words: Tiṇa Yele (land matter) and Ziim Yele (blood matter).

### **1.5 Who Nominates and Installs a Tindaana?**

Except in a very few cases when tindaanduuma are selected by their chiefs (such as in Winkogo and Bongo) it is in all cases wholly fetish. It is decided by soothsaying. No single person or elder has absolute power over the choice of a candidate for a tindaana. The practices of selecting a tindaana vary in detail among the communities in the Gurensi area.

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<sup>14</sup> Fortes, Op. CIT, p. 185.

But the general procedure is that when a vacancy occurs, following the death of a tindaana, the elders of the Tindaana will meet and choose the eldest son (bi-kεεma). If the said son is too young or a lunatic the Tindaana's eldest or younger brother is selected to fill the vacancy. He takes charge of the Tindaana's affairs until the funeral rites of the deceased are performed. The care taker will be in continuous occupation for three years after which date a series of consultations are made with the soothsayer to identify the next successor.

## **1.6 Those Eligible to Contest or Become a Tindaana**

In the majority of cases a tindaana is not elected by virtue of his age, wisdom, status and wealth. The belief is that the election and installation of a tindaana is the gift of the ancestors. That is someone must have a "good head" (i.e. a man who the spirits desire). Like a traditional ruler, a would-be tindaana must have the following qualities:

- a. He must be a good man (i.e. nεrεsoma). This means that he must be a person who is good, humble, just and honest. He must be a man of peace and he must be modest in his personality.
- b. He must be sound in mind and body.
- c. He must be transparent (open to everyone); he must be loved by all.
- d. He must not be a thief.
- e. He must not be an adulterer.
- f. He must not suffer from epilepsy, fits and leprosy. The last two cannot always be true and as such cannot be a bar to becoming a tindaana. This is because the election is by the ancestors and gods.
- g. Women are not disqualified from becoming a tindaana because if there is no suitable candidate in the family of the tindaana, a woman can be appointed. The daughter's son (grandson) of a woman tindaana can be appointed. The best example of a woman tindaana is Benkoote (in Zuarungu). Usually when a woman is selected as a Tindaana she does not perform the actual offering of sacrifice. She does it through a male descendant.
- h. Brothers, nephews and uncles of the late tindaana can be considered for the office.
- i. The eldest son of a tindaana (acting as care-taker) might not necessarily be chosen as a tindaana.
- j. Whether the tindaana is appointed by a chief (as in the case of Winkogo and Bongo) or through soothsaying, the tindaana-elect must be of the same family as the late tindaana. Selection is in fact, done exclusively from those lineages which claim to be descendants (sons and brothers) of the first occupant of the tindaanaship.

Even when the family has expanded and split into smaller units and located at distant places, the office is still contested (in a loose language) by the different family units who are genealogically related within or without the territorial boundary of the town.

## **1.7 Place of Enskinment**

A new tindaana is usually installed in office at the residence of the late tindaana or the most senior male member of the deceased tindaana's clan. The towns and villages which do this are Bolga, Beo, Zuarungu, Vea, Balungo, Bolga-Soe, Bongo, Namoo to mention a few.

## **1.8 Traditional Methods of Selecting a Tindaana**

The installation of a tindaana of any degree requires the co-operation of the entire community whether from the Nabissi (Royal), Tiqabissi (pioneer clans), Tindaanabissi (land owners), the commoner estates and migrant settlers and so on. But this does not mean that it is a public election that makes the tindaana (i.e. not

through the voting procedure). By Gurensi custom a new tindaana cannot be selected and installed unless the funeral of his predecessor has been performed. But where a tindaana is removed by gross moral misconduct a new Tindaana is decided by the soothsayer.



**Figure 2** A traditional diviner/soothsayer. Photo taken by author.

Usually whenever there is a vacant tindaanaship, the elders of the Tindaana will convene after the completion of the funeral rites and will go soothsaying to find out the appropriate successor to the late tindaana. They are then guided by the results of the soothsaying which is final. Inevitably, the choice by the soothsaying must fall on one of the offspring of the late tindaana. It could also fall on the tindaana's daughter's son, nephew, a sister's son or even a child yet to be born. Nonetheless, some tindaanas are appointed by the chiefs, e.g. Winkogo, Bongo, etc. and must be of the same family as the late tindaana.

At a later date the entire members of the community composing the Nabissi, Tindaanabissi, Tiḡabissi and the general public are informed about the installation of a new tindaana. Even the daughters of the village who may be married elsewhere (*pogeyabilisi*) will converge at an open space in front of the late tindaana's house to witness the ceremony. Usually at the open space close to the entrance of the main house another long and arduous consultation is made with the soothsayer by the Tindaana's elders.



**Figure 3** Process of divining to select a new Tindaana at the house of the deceased Tindaana. Photo taken by Author.

This is often preceded by the pouring of libation with flour water (*zom koom*) and the sacrifice of a chicken to invite the ancestors. The successful candidate is then communicated to the elders and the general public. Neither the elders nor the chief have the right under custom to reject the choice of the soothsayer as directed by the soothsaying. If no suitable man is available, a woman may be chosen. As soon as the soothsayer identifies the successor, wherever he may be, he is searched for, arrested and presented to the people by way of introduction. Thereafter, the tindaana-elect is stripped naked and robed in either a goat or sheep skin. This is known as *tankoloɔɔ*. These are usually two, one as the *gansegalega* (serving as knicker) and another as *ganyɛɛrega* (serving as cloth). This is to mark his entry into new statutes. Thereafter, he is lifted on the people's shoulders and then sent to his own house amid singing and dancing.

A summary of the procedure of nomination and installation is contained in the works of Rattray:

The elders met and discussed the possible candidates and having decided upon one he was sent for and put in a room by himself... When the discussion was over he was told to come out and no sooner did he do so than he was seized and stripped. If he happened to have any clothes even down to his loin cloth and a new sheep or calf or antelope skin put around him and a new string hat was put on his head.<sup>15</sup>

In the first three years of his installation he wears only the *tankoloɔɔ* and some blue black triangle. It is forbidden for him to put on the calabash, the *miisi zuvɔka* (cap made from strings of robes) because within the three-year period of his actual installation he is not a tindaana yet. Three years after his actual installation,

<sup>15</sup> Rattray, *The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, Vol. 2. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932, p. 256.



the tindaana elect will provide malt (ke'e)/pito (damolega) to be brewed. He also provides a cow and other smaller animals, birds, etc. The tindaana and the general public will once again gather at the new tindaana's house. This next and final ceremony is meant to pacify the gods and to seek blessings and protection for the new tindaana.

On this date many fowls and animals are killed and drinks such as the damolega offered to the Gods. During the sacrifice the tindaana will pray that droughts should never occur in the town, that young men and women must intermarry and that young married women should give birth to children. After the sacrifice, the installing authority or elder will proceed to shave the tindaana's head completely. This is to show his actual placement on the tindaanaship. The tindaana-makers will follow to admonish him on the duties of a tindaana. Presentations of the *bagere wula* to the new tindaana climax the whole ceremony. He is also given all the secrets relating to the horn (*dongo*) which serves as the insignia of his office. He is also coached on the meaning and purposes of the actions and symbolic uses in the ceremony. He makes solemn vows, and swears solemn oaths to the Earth God (Tinkugere). The new tindaana is given a new name apart from his actual or surname by the Nabisi clan. He will hence be called by the new name. After having gone through the final ritual he is led by the elders around the area under his jurisdiction. He is also shown all the resources on his land so that if any person or another tindaana tries to claim what is not his, he would be punished by the wraths of the land spirits.

These beliefs effectively maintain the tindaana's right over land and trees in his territory. Plenty of food and native beer (such as damolega) are consumed after the essential rites are completed. From this date on, for the rest of his life, he represents the people as owners of all land under his respective skin. He is now the priest of the land. During times of distress, misfortunes, drought, strange diseases and so on the new tindaana is approached for explanations of the cause of the misfortunes. At the request of individuals or groups he will bless the land and make it productive. Individuals can petition the Earth God for increase in their wealth, plenty children, many wives, longevity, promotions in the workplace and so on. If a farmer wants a piece of unbroken land in the bush, he would go to the tindaana to which the land he wishes to occupy belongs. Building on land follows the same customary rules as acquiring farmland.

In the context of the Gurensi custom a man who undergoes the rituals associated with the installation of a tindaana is said to "eat tindono" (a dii la tindono) or "A bobo la tindono" (he is "tied" with tindono). The etymology of the phrase points to its true meaning. Tiṇa is associated with the Earth in its mystical aspect. "Dongo" refers to a horn. "Dono" is the plural of dongo. This holds some mystic ingredients and human life that is a captive soul which supplies the tindaana with power. The word Tindono (a derivation of Tiṇa and Dono) implies the notion of ritual ceremonies which lead to the possessions of the Earth horn (which is in the form of a medicine horn).

If for one reason or another the would-be tindaana refuses to accept the tindaanaship by the mere excuse that he is a Moslem or a Christian, he risks himself being killed off by the ancestors and gods.

### **1.9 The Robes and Sacred Articles of a Tindaana**

The power and influence of the tindaana over his people is held in his costume and other items (which are believed to have mystical connection with the Earth). In practically all cases it appears that the following items are the sacred items of all tindaanduuma (even though some have other proscribed articles which were not known to the author) that symbolize his high and noble office:

### 1.9.1 Tankolno (pl.)/ Tankoloᵛᵛ (sg.)/Malgongo

These are some tanned goat or sheep's skin. Some may be made from antelope's skin. There are usually two, one is worn over the shoulders and kept in place by a fore and hind leg sewn together. Another is worn round the waist covering only the genital portion. This serves as the garment of the tindaana and he wears it wherever he finds himself, even at bed time.

### 1.9.2 Miisi-Zuvᵛka or Tindaan-Zuvᵛka



This hat -- usually a blue-black dyed twine cap -- is the sign of the tindaana's dignity (see Figure 4A). It is usually worn to match with the dress. It must be worn always during public appearances and when performing tindaanaship duties. There are only few people who are specialists in weaving Miisi-Zuvᵛgesi (pl.). Some tindaanduuma wear this cap to indicate for arbitration; he is preparing to settle a land dispute.

### 1.9.3 Calabash/Bagere Wula



This is usually some medium sized calabash used as a cap by most tindaanduuma (see Figure 4B). It replaces the Miisi-Zuvᵛka. The primary use of the calabash to the tindaana and to every traditional religionist is for pouring libation at the Tinkugere and at the Tingane. And like the chief's red cap, the calabash cap or Miisi-Zuvᵛka are the symbols of a tindaana's authority. It is the most sacred of all the Tindaana's articles. It is handled with utmost care. It must be pointed out that even though some ordinary people use calabash caps (such as juju men, shepherds, herbalists, soothsayers, etc.), theirs can easily be distinguished by either a rope or cowry shells sewn on it. It is believed that one's guardian spirit called pa-ala (or destiny god) can prescribe a calabash as one's cap.

### 1.9.4 Talaᵛa

This is often a hand bag of a tindaana. This is some tanned skin bag prepared from a goat's skin. The Talaᵛa is meant for storing his valuables and other articles such as the bagere-wula (sacrificial calabash) and his small knife (sua). This is a symbol of his capabilities in rearing animals.

### 1.9.5 Lebere

A lebere is the Gurene language for a triangle. This is a triangle piece of cloth worn on the waist by some tindaanduuma to cover the genital area. This triangular loin-cloth is usually black in colour.

### 1.9.6 Knife



The knife called "sua" (in Gurene) is the real emblem of a tindaana (see Figure 4C). It serves as an averter of evil spirits. Its primary use to the tindaana is for cutting the throats of the animals and birds during sacrifice.

### 1.9.7 Tindaan-Doore

Like a chief, the tindaana has a walking stick (tindaan-doore). This is often cut from some special trees. Some are made from okro plants called ma ampurᵛkᵛ. The majority are cut from the stock of a guinea-corn plant. It is not all tindaanduuma who possess a walking stick. The tindaan-doore signifies the presence of the ancestor spirits wherever they may be. It is replaced with a new one every year. The number of old stocks replaced shows the number of years he has reigned as a tindaana.

### **1.10 Beliefs and Taboos Associated with a Tindaana**

The following are the beliefs and taboos associated with a tindaana:

1. He must not wear a red cap (munga).
2. He must not swear oaths on any of his subjects.
3. He must not swear by hitting the ground with the palm of his hands.
4. He must not be involved in subversive activities or gross moral misconduct.
5. A tindaana cannot be displaced. My informants differed in opinion here because some said that a tindaana cannot be displaced and others maintained that he can by his own family if he misconducts himself such as the case of Tindaana Abanga of Dapore-Tindongo.
6. A tindaana is perceived to be endowed with more than ordinary power. It is believed that the life of a community is literally embodied in its tindaana. A tindaana's authority is strengthened by the belief that disaster will befall those who eat of their new harvest before he has performed the rites associated with it.
7. Tindaanas rely more on the belief in ritual punishment for breach of taboos than in their ability directly to punish those who do not bring them tribute.
8. A tindaana cannot become a chief. This may vary from a community to community.
9. It is forbidden to a tindaana to use cloths or other textile materials which are foreign. The spirits will withdraw their protection and assistance if he does so.
10. He must not attend the selection ceremony of his fellow tindaana. They will die if they have a chance to meet each other face to face.
11. It is forbidden for one to wear the string cap (Miisi-Zuvoka) in the presence of a tindaana.
12. A tindaana must not be called by his proper or surname. He is called by his title, tindaana.
13. It is forbidden for combatants to shoot arrows over the tindaana's skin garment or guinea com stock.
14. It is forbidden to enskin a new tindaana when the reigning tindaana is still alive.

### **1.11 Characteristics of a Tindaana**

The characteristic features of a tindaana are the following:

1. Wherever there is a settlement or a village there is a tindaana.
2. There is no promotion amongst tindaanduma.
3. He cannot be removed from his position. Once a tindaana, he is always a tindaana.
4. He officiates at ceremonies connected with the land spirits (tinkuuga) and other major rituals (such as murder) of the community.
5. A tindaana is selected by the soothsayer through soothsaying at an open space. The position of a tindaana is not openly contested amongst candidates as in the case of a chief.
6. A tindaana is not selected by virtue of one's status, wealth, influence and personality.
7. There is often no prior information or preparation in becoming a tindaana. He assumes and learns about his duties only after becoming tindaana.

### **1.12 Rights and Privileges of a Tindaana**

By virtue of his role in the society as a priest he enjoys the following rights and privileges:

1. It is customary for any users of land to pay tribute to the tindaana for the use of the land. The tribute is paid in kind: guinea-com or early millet. The amount of tribute is optional and payment cannot be forced.
2. He receives farm services and respect from his people.
3. From hunters, he gets a hind leg.
4. From fishermen, he gets some fish.
5. He has a claim to a share in precious metals found in his community.

6. He receives goats, sheep and birds during traditional festivals and in funeral rites. For instance, he receives a sheep when he performs the “Ziim Vaare” ritual (the ritual that is preformed when blood spills as a result of war or fight).
7. People who wish to obtain land for farming or favours from a Tingane in his area accompany their pleas with gifts such as tobacco, kolanuts and drinks.
8. Objects (e.g. bangles), stray animals whose owners cannot be traced are taken by the finder to the tindaana of the town. Usually, when a tindaana receives the lost animals he proceeds with the elders of the community to offer them to the Earth God (tingana or tinkugere). The meat is distributed amongst the various households. The skin is kept with the tindaana.
9. Whenever a good harvest results the people in the community give him millet, chickens, flour and so on as offerings to the Earth God. What remains after the sacrifice is claimed by the tindaana.

The practice of making presentations to the tindaana is only of symbolic significance and must preclude their being termed tribute. Even though it is the tindaana’s right to receive gifts from his people and it is his people's duty to make them, hardly do they comply. It is rather the chief who enjoys these privileges more than the tindaana.

The next chapters will discuss the various types of tindaanaship, i.e. how some communities or families came to possess tindaanaship and how it has since then been maintained by these families.

# Chapter 2 Categories of Tindaanaship

## 2.1 Introduction

According to tradition and customary rules and practices, the office of a tindaana is strictly a hereditary office. It is usually the eldest son of a father who succeeds him when he dies. Even though this is the case a son does not ascend to the office when his father is still living. There is also the belief that women do not ascend to the office of tindaanaship and priesthood in general. But there are exceptions to this rule. In a few cases some women have ascended to the office of a tindaana and bakologo (soothsayer). It is strictly forbidden for one who is not a descendant of the first originators of the tindaanaship to occupy the office of the tindaana. Those who ascend to the office without any valid claim or without being selected through soothsaying will have their doom spelled as impostors. An exception to this rule is the case of an aged tindaana or a clan elder who can hand over his function and responsibilities to his son but would be still honored by the family or community as the real tindaana.

From a study of Gurensi culture, it is realized that only one system of inheritance prevails and this is the primogeniture. Under this system of succession, the rule is that on the death of a man his office and property devolves on his eldest son or his eldest son's eldest male descendant. If the eldest son has died leaving no male issue, the next son or his eldest male descendant inherits and so on through the sons respectively.

Even though it is very clearly laid down by native common law that a female cannot inherit property if a man has daughters but neither sons nor ascendants in the male line, his office (whether Tindaanaship or chieftaincy) could be inherited by his nearest male relative, usually his sister's eldest son. Therefore, in Gurensi native common law the legitimate sons of daughters do have the right to inherit property and office from their unmarried mother's brothers even though succession here is a succession of "males through males." In fact, the preceding statement refers only to men who die leaving no heir in their own or brother's line.

The Gurensi have about four main succession patterns of Tindaanaship. Certain clans came to acquire the position of tindaanaship in the following ways: by occupation, by conquest, by way of gift, by inheritance and by the dictates of a shrine or an Earth God. A brief discussion of each of these categories will help elucidate my point.

## 2.2. Tindaanaship Inherited through Conquest

Tindaanaship of this category amongst the Gurensi asserts that some of the Gurensi during their migrations or inter-village wars fought with earlier clans and dispossessed them of their lands and became land owners (tindaama). Since they did not want the Earth to go unworshipped they took over the Earth Gods that dwelt in the community they conquered and performed sacrifices on them. They also took over the rites connected with land, murder and adultery. The descendants of these conquerors in parts of the Gurensi area are referred to as Tindaama or Tindaanbisi.

The Awubugu-Lagtababisi (in Bongo) are believed to have conquered the Busansi and dispossessed their lands. They are now the Tindaanbisi in Bongo. Another clan which is referred to as Tindaama by their neighbours is the Atotebisi (in Gowrie) because these people fought wars with the original settlers (tiqabisi) -- the Booduuma -- and drove them out of their territory and became tindaama themselves. The Atotebisi in

Gowrie perform a dual role of tindaanaship and chiefship with a bias toward the latter. Because of the dual role, the chiefs of Gowrie do not wear the Red fez (munga) – it is a taboo.

### **2.3 Tindaanaship by Occupation**

Tindaanaship of this category is based on the fact that some of the ancestors were the first to discover and occupy a piece of land. Occupation of a land is only established if the pioneers settled on the land with the aim of staying there permanently. Tindaanaship of this category recognizes the fact that ownership or title to land passes to the male side of the first occupant of the land. Succession to the office of the tindaana is restricted to only the offspring of the first founders. One very important characteristics of this category of Tindaanaship is that members do not contest for *nam* (chieftaincy).

Tindaanaship of this category can be found amongst the Amiirabisi (in Boko), Agongobisi (in Balungo), Animoabisi (in Zuarungu), Avoesegobisi (in Sumbrungu), Alupalagabisi (in Vea), etc. Certain clans migrated from their original home sites to their new settlements with their chieftainship. Tindaanaship and chieftainship are not sharply divided in these clans. The best examples here are the Animoabisi in Zuarungu, Amiirabisi in Boko and Abonposegobisi in Winkogo. Members of these clans contest for chieftaincy.

### **2.4. Tindaanaship by Gift**

Tindaanaship of this category asserts that some of the Gurensi during their migrations were received into the compound of a chief, a tindaana or a tiṅabia (pioneer settler). There was, therefore, fission of the offspring of the unknown origin and the chief's or Tindaana's family. The original settlers later transferred ownership of their land or part and all the resources on it to the newcomers. These people acted more the less as the tindaama and led at the community sacrifice. The group was responsible for the ritual and practical obligations concerning the entire community. Any later group which came to the area was received and granted land by the newcomers to farm and build on. Land ownership, and for that matter tindaanaship, is restricted to only the offspring of the newcomers. Tindaanaship of this category exist amongst the Azorebisi in Sumbrungu.

### **2.5 Tindaanaship of the Sister's Son Type**

Tindaanaship of this kind is complex and full of contradictions. Nonetheless, traditions of this category assert that the tiṅabisi (pioneer settlers), Tindaanbisi or the Nabisi (royal clan) probably became extinct leaving only a sister of these pioneer settlers or the Nabisi. Undoubtedly, this sister inherited the tindaanaship and passed it on to her offspring. The descendants of this woman were later to become the tindaama family. This sister's son type operates amongst the Alokrebisi (in Balungu) and Benkuute (in Zuarungu).

Yet in certain towns and for some reasons the original settlers (tiṅabisi) could not themselves hold the tindaanaship involving jurisdiction over land and Earth Gods but as residual siblings decided to transmit his office to their sister's son even though they are not entitled to the tindaanaship. These sister or daughter's sons (who may be referred to as "Yiwia-koma" or "Ta'apa-koma") were often appointed to tindaanaship in a very similar way to the part played by the pioneer settlers. This kind of succession to Tindaanaship exists amongst the Na-abisi in Namoo and Alakmabisi (in Gowrie). In Tindonmologo and Tindonsoblego, the original creator of Tindono was the sister's son of Aduure, Apitanga. Another way by which daughters' sons or sisters' sons became Tindaama was that some women fled their homes following unwelcome or unhappy marriage, harsh treatment from their husbands, hunger, accusations of witchcraft, etc. to live with

their brothers who may be the tindaana. The offspring of these females of the first founders were given jurisdiction over a portion of the community land and the Earth Gods which dwelt in the area. They were made responsible for allocating lands to strangers. They were later concerned with rites pertaining to the village as a whole. The office of this daughter or sister's son became hereditary and therefore passed from father to son or elder to younger brother. In those days any member seeking a favour from the Earth-oriented deities accompanied his plea with gifts such as grain flour (zoon), millet, chickens and animals.

The sister's son (who was marginalized in society) was often required to receive the items and make the necessary libations to the Earth Gods. Succession to this category operated amongst the Azoo family or Ake'erabisi (in Zoobisi) for a long time until 1988 when it was reverted to another sister's son's clan, and the Ayorebisi (in Zaare). Another example is the Beo tindaanaship. Currently they are in a loose term referred to as the Tindaanas of Zaare even though the pioneer settlers are the Anokobisi/Amirabisi. In certain towns and villages, the daughter's or sister's son tindaanaship seem to dominate. In these towns, it was narrated that one of the most powerful Earth gods (tingane) in the town designated the daughter or sister's son as its custodian or priest. All rites pertaining to the God was then the responsibility of the daughter or sister's son of the pioneer settlers. This tindaanaship operates amongst the Akumbiligabisi (in Gowrie), Adurebisi (in Yorogo) and Apoligabisi (in Zoko-Goo).

Some communities assert that in the greater part of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries inter-clan fighting characterized the area. As such when the pioneer settlers were fleeing their areas they invited their daughter's or sister's sons and transferred their lands and all the resources in and on them to take care of. These daughter's or sister's sons still perform ritual sacrifices in connection with land and harvest rites in the communities in which they live. This type of tindaanaship operates in Lungu, especially the Amungabisi. To some degree members of this group or clan also contest for chieftaincy. Both royalty and tindaanaship are not sharply distinguished amongst the descendants of Amunga even though the Akolbaabisi are the tindaama.

One may conclude from this study that unlike chieftaincy, tindaanaship is inherited through the sister's son (even though inheritance through the father to son exists). We should mention in passing that some of the tindaanduuma who rule over a large area may have and nearly always has other junior tindaama under them as each section has its tindaana. But these can only allocate land by reference to the senior tindaana. The best examples here are Beo, Dua, Sumbrungu, Zuarungu, Feo and so forth.

## **2.6 Rituals in Breaches of a Tindaana's Taboo**

The attributes of the tindaana amongst the Gurensi with regard to land are very powerful. He is supposedly the Minister for Lands and Forestry. Land is vested in him. He is the religious as well as the political authority. He is the source of rights to cultivate land and to fish in ponds and dams. Owing to his religious, political, social and economic roles in society it is forbidden for someone to:

1. Display anger before a tindaana.
2. Insult or abuse a tindaana.
3. Fight a tindaana.
4. Beat a tindaana.

The general rule is that when someone beats a tindaana, he and his closer agnatic relatives are bound to pay some compensation. The general articles to be paid to a tindaana for fighting, quarrelling and beating him include a sheep or two, a cow, a fowl and tobacco. The payment of a cow or the number of sheep depends very much on the degree of the relationship, especially if the wrongdoer is an agnatic relative of the tindaana.

A reduction in the amount of compensation may depend also on the state of the mind of the wrongdoer, whether he did it intentionally, unintentionally, through grave provocation, in self-defense, or whether he is insane or an idiot. Usually if a man is charged with assaulting a tindaana he may admit it and either beg him or arrange for an elder in his lineage to beg for him. This is expressed in Gurene language as “ba belem.” Once the tindaana has accepted the plea it is customary for some concession to be made. According to the specific circumstances, the wrongdoer may be warned and excused without punishment or more frequently he may be enquired to offer a few items to satisfy ritual requirements. Usually some millet flour water (zom-koom) is prepared by a woman of the tindaana’s house and drunk by the elders of both the tindaana’s and the wrong doer’s lineage.

The tindaana does not partake in drinking the flour water but at the end of it he pronounces as follows: “Man Katare taale la en,” “Man dike a yelebero boe, ” implying that he has no evil intention against the wrongdoer and that he has forgiven him his sins. This is often followed by the people (the elders in attendance) tapping their hands against the palms of each other, a gesture spoken of in Gurene as “Nuu pu 'uɔ” (begging).

The offering and acceptance of a sheep as pacification is a final sign of reconciliation and burying of the dispute. Any refusal of the wrongdoer to satisfy the ritual requirements or to pay the fine will expose him to the risk of vengeance by the land spirits and ancestors.



## PART II LAND AND ITS RELATED MATTERS

This part discusses a wide range of topics on Land Administration and Tenure amongst the people of the Bolgatanga and Bongo Districts who call themselves Gurensi and Boosi respectively. Consideration is given to the division of community land and the significance of each of the divided areas. Emphasis is also given to the traditional mode of acquisition of land for farming and building on, land rights (especially ownership of things on and under land, loss of title to land, etc.), and beliefs and taboos connected with land.

In discussing these topics, it is important to understand British colonial land policy in the Northern Ghana and how chiefs came to perform the functions of land allocation in the area, contrary to native custom.

According to the traditional Gurensi belief, the ancestors and spirits live under the land and in some of the trees that stand on it (tingana). Invariably land belongs to the ancestors (yaabaduuma) or tingana but administered by the tindaana. It is for this reason that the ancestors continue to take vested interest in the preservation of the land which they have left behind for their living descendants. The tindaana who acts as the link between the ancestors and the living controls and propitiates the lands and gods. He gives land on his own authority but he is not the owner as explained earlier. He is merely holding it for the community and neither he nor anyone else can sell it. Land, therefore is communal and sacred.

In view of the religious, economic and social value of land to the people of the Gurensi land, attempts to destroy the groves by cutting them down, and taking soil without permission and the appropriate rites are often fiercely resisted. Mr. F.C. Scott (one-time Inspector –General of Police (Gold Coast) in his contribution to a Report upon the customs relating to the Tenure of Land on the Gold Coast stated:

There is a superstitious fear on the part of the representation of a family that if in his time any landed property of the family, is sold or by any other means it ceases to belong to the family his spirit after death would be perpetually troubled by those of his predecessors for having permitted the land of his ancestors to go into the possession of others. The fear is manifested in the prohibition of not selling out land and its resources.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Enclosure in Gold Coast, No 412 of 12 Oct. 1895.

## Chapter 3 Land Policy in Northern Ghana (1902-1979)

It is useful to give some account of the land policy typical of Northern Ghana, traced from the colonial to the post-colonial era. To begin with, until the aftermath of colonial rule in the Northern Ghana, the people had no legislature that enacted laws for the management of land and its resources such as the trees and metallic ores. Before this period the inhabitants of Northern Ghana had customary rules which regulated the administration of the land. It is these rules, which have since been passed onto succeeding generations. Some of these rules are still observed today. A few of the customary rules in regard to land are as follows:

1. One must not claim land which one's ancestors never owned.
2. One must not (and even the Tindaana) buy or sell out land, the trees and their fruits.

This is now a thing of the past. The ethnographic survey of the people of the Bolgatanga District of the Upper East Region of Ghana shows that land is absolutely inalienable. There is the belief that if one sells or alienates land, he or she will be killed off by the ancestors and spirits. There is absolutely no real taboo when one sells out land except that land was not thought by these people as an economic asset. This is to say that the inhabitants did not grow crops for sale. In traditional Gurensi law, an individual has no absolute ownership of land. This is so because land in its strictures cannot be destroyed. It is also based on the theory that all land is ultimately held by the community – land rights are communal.

By absolute ownership, I mean the right of free as well as exclusive enjoyment, including the right of using altering, disposing of, or destroying the thing owned.

Land is believed to be spiritual – it serves as the home of the ancestors and gods.

The said customary laws (though unwritten) were enough to guide them against destruction of land and forest.

The strict adherence to the customary rules ensured proper management of land and its resources. Additionally, litigation was minimal. Following the aftermath of colonial rule, it was important for the British to understand the land rights of the people of Northern Ghana under their rule. So that they could use them as part of their land policy, especially when making grants of land for plantation.

The British Colonial officials in Ghana observed that in the Southern states of the then Gold Coast (Ashanti and the Colony) chiefs had and still have greater control over land than chiefs in the Northern Ghana. This led to extensive land litigation and a break-up of the older usages in regard to land. It is interesting to note that land selling which was and still is a characteristic feature of the chiefs and people of Southern Ghana was on grounds of drastic poverty, mineral exploitation and in exchange of employment. It was the result of land selling, by the Ashanti and colony chiefs at the expense of their people, which gave reasons to the colonial administration to enact laws to check any possible abuses of land use in the Northern Ghana. For this reason, the British Colonial Administration put in place three very important Ordinances regarding land administration in the Northern Territories:

1. Northern Territories Administration Ordinance of 1902.
2. The Land and Native Rights Ordinance No. 1 of 1927.
3. The Land and Native Rights Ordinance, 21<sup>st</sup> Nov. 1931 (Cap. 147).

The enactment of these Ordinances were meant to prevent chiefs in the Northern Ghana from exercising their prerogatives (as was done in the colony and Ashanti) arbitrarily in the granting and sale of land. The

subject of land in the Northern Territories was regulated by Section 3 of the Land and Native Rights Ordinance of 1927, which declared. “The whole of the lands of the Protectorate whether occupied or unoccupied at the commencement of this ordinance are hereby declared to be public lands.”

Section 4 (1) of the Ordinance further provided:

Subject to the provisions of section 3 all public lands and all rights over the same shall as from the announcement of this ordinance be under the control and shall be held and administered for the use and common benefits, direct or indirect of the native and no title to the occupation and use of any such lands shall be valid without the assent of the Governor.

The Land and Native Rights Ordinance of 1927 was preceded by the preamble below:

Whereas it is expedient that the existing customary rights of the natives of the protectorate to use and enjoy the land of the protectorate and the Natural fruits thereof in sufficient quantity to enable them to provide for the sustenance of themselves and their families should be assured, protected and preserved.

AND WHEREAS it is expedient that the Rights and obligation of the Government, in regard to the whole of the land within the protectorate, and also the rights and obligation of cultivators and other persons claiming to have an interest in such land should be defined by law.

BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED by the Governor of the Gold Coast with respect to the Northern Territories as follows:

This Ordinance may be cited as The Land and Native Rights Ordinance 1927 and shall come into force on the day of ----192----.

The Land and Native Rights Ordinance of 1927 was revised in 1931 and again in 1951. Both of these revised ordinances laid emphasis on private ownership of land except for lands owned by the Government.

The following objectives were enshrined in the revised 1931 and 1951 Ordinances:

1. To preclude the natives from the temptation to dispose of their lands outright, without regard for the requirement of their descendants and for totally inadequate payments.
2. To ensure that such profits derived from the land are used for the benefit of the community as a whole, and not of any particular section or individual members of it.
3. To minimize the possibility of ruinous litigation. As earlier pointed out, these Ordinances still recognized all lands in the Northern Territories as the bone fide property of the natives even though the Governor remained the dominant land owner (especially in respect of application by non-natives for concessions and plots of land).

The Land and Native Rights Ordinances of 1927 and 1931 conferred the power of land administration on the Governor and the District commissioners (the equivalent of the present day District Chief Executives). The powers of the Governor were later inherited by the President, who in turn conferred it to the Native Authorities, and then to the urban councils and to the local councils.

Section 26 (1) of the Ordinance provided:

The Governor may by order delegate to any public officer the exercise or performance of any of the several powers and duties conferred or imposed upon him by this ordinance either wholly or for such an extent as he may think fit to specify in such order and so far as may be necessary to give effect to such order, this ordinance shall be read as if the official designation of the said public officers were substituted there in for the word “Governor” provided that this subsection shall not apply to the powers conferred upon the Governor by sections 2, 4(2) and 25 or by this section.

Section 22 also read as follows: “Every native who is resident on public lands shall be under the same control of the Native Authorities and shall be subject to the same obligations under native customary law as if such land were not public land. “Although according to this ordinance, the Governor was the sole land owner the customary rules operated (within the frame work of Government ownership) to regulate the use of land among the ethnic communities.

Section 5 of the ordinance made it clear that “The Governor in the exercise of the powers conferred upon him by this Ordinance in respect to any land shall have regard to the native customary law existing in the

locality in which such land is situated”. In practice, the Ordinance operated well in the Northern Territories. But government ownership of all the land in the area was theoretical.

By 1948, several proposals were made regarding the transfer of the management of and control of corporately owned lands from the traditional rulers and their councils to the hands of statutory local Government bodies such as local and urban councils. Between 1951 and 1957 the Land and Native Rights Ordinance of 1931 was still not repealed and so lands in the Northern Ghana were misconstrued as Government lands.

The 1960 regime under Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (the then leader of the CPP) enacted three very important Acts:

- a. Land Registry Act 1962 (Act 122)
- b. Administration of Lands Act 1962 (Act 123)
- c. Farm Lands (Protection) Act. 1962 (Act 107)

All these acts were accompanied with Executive Instruments 87 and 109 of 11 July 1963, which vested lands in certain specified areas in the North to the President and for that matter the Government. The President therefore remained the trustee of lands in Northern Ghana.

For instance, the Executive Instrument 87 of 1963 (Stool Lands) Upper Region declared lands in the area of Bawku, Navrongo, Lawra and Tumu local councils and the Wa and Bolgatanga urban councils as lands managed by the respective local and urban councils. This Executive Instrument provided that no valid alienation of or concessions of lands in the said areas were possible except by the local and urban councils.

The Executive Instrument 109 of 1963 (Stool Lands) (Northern Region) vested lands in the Tamale urban council along with Savelugu, Yendi, Salaga, Bimbila, Damongo, Bole and Walewale local councils. These councils were empowered to control or manage lands in their areas of jurisdiction. The Land Registry Act of 1962 only sought to secure easy access to farm lands for agriculture including timber extraction and urban lands for estate development.

The Administration of Lands Act 1962 (Act 123) did not interfere with title to land that was vested in the Stool or Skin. The main intention of this Act was to provide all the machinery requisite to make the traditional corporate ownership of land or effective instrument for development of all kinds. The relevant provisions of this Act in line with the aims mentioned in the preceding discussions are sections 1 and 7 (Subsections 1, 2 and 10), which state the following:

- Section 1 provided that “the management of stool lands” shall be exercised by the Minister in accordance with article 267 of the Constitution.
- Section 7 (1) declared: “Where it appears to the President in the public interest to do so, the President may, by executive instrument, declare any stool land 10 be vested in the President in trust and accordingly the President may, on the publication of the instrument, execute a deed or do an act as a trustee in respect of the land specified in the instrument.”
- Sub-section 2 read: “Any moneys accruing as a result of a deed executed or an act done by the President under subsection (1) shall be paid into the appropriate account for the purposes of this Act.”
- Section 10 (1) noted:

Subject to article 20 of the Constitution, the President may authorise the occupation and use of a land to which this Act applies for a purpose which, in the opinion of the President is conducive to the public welfare or the interests of the State, and may pay into the appropriate account out of moneys provided by Parliament an annual amount of money which appears to the President, considering

(a) the value of the land, and

(b) the benefits derived by the people of the area in which the land is situated from the use of the land,

to be proper payments to be made for the land, and the moneys so paid into the account shall be applied in the same way as other revenues collected under this Act.

In 1968 proposals were made to the 1968 Constitutional Commission to consider among other matters the transfer of responsibility of chiefs as grantors of lands to the local councils.

But Article 164 (1) of the 1969 constitution reverted Stool Lands in the country to the appropriate stools for the benefit of the people. This was contained in the Lands Commission Decree 1972 (NRCD 24) under the then NRC Government by Acheampong.

Sections 1,7 and 10 of the Administration of Lands Act 1962 (Act 164) of the suspended 1969 Constitution and Section 29 (2) of the National Redemption Council (Establishment) Proclamation and the Lands Commission Decree 1972 (NRCD 24) all sought to give management and control of stool lands to the NRC, acting through the Lands Commission.

During the time of Acheampong's Government in the 1970s similar laws were made regarding the regulation and acquisition of land in the country as a whole. For instance, there was passed the Limitation Act 1972 (NRCD 54) and the Conveyancing Decree 1973 (NRCD 175), which sought to deal with all matters concerning land acquisition problems.

By 1979, during the time of Dr. Hilla Limann, lands in the Northern Ghana were reverted to its rightful owners. Before this period all lands in Northern Ghana was still under the control of the Government and for that matter the President.

Article 18 (3) of the 1979 Constitution made it abundantly clear that "For the avoidance of doubt it is hereby declared that all lands in the Northern and upper Regions of Ghana which immediately before the coming into force of this constitution were vested in the government of Ghana are not public lands within the meaning of clauses (1) and (2) of this article." Article 188 (4) of the 1979 constitution made it much easier and clearer: "Subject to the provisions of this constitution, all lands referred to in clause (3) of this article shall rest in any such person who was the owner of any such land before any such vesting or in the appropriate skin without further assurance than this clause."

### **3.1 The Rights of Control over Land by Chiefs during Colonial Rule**

Apart from social, economic and religious significance, land also has a political importance. Land is a bond of political unity. It is the basis of a chief's power.

The rights of control over land by chiefs during colonial rule was so excessive that they could deprive a headman, sub-chief or people of power over economic trees such as dawadawa and shea in their towns as punishment for misconduct or disobedience.

The Ashantis have a saying (which I beg to quote from R.S. Rattray): “Tumi nyina wo asase so” which is interpreted in English as “Land is the essence of all power” That is, all authority rests upon the land. In fact, the British colonial administration regarded land as the basis for strengthening the authority of the chiefs in the country.

In a West African Lands Committee report in 1912, Mr. C.W. Alexander (a lands commissioner in Southern Nigeria) observed: “The chief’s power is based a great deal on having his people in occupation of the community lands and if they acquire more or less an English freehold, right, they tend to deny the authority of the chief.” At this point we will understand how chiefs in the Northern Ghana came to exert control over lands as grantors of land. The ethnographic account of the Gurensi reveals that land is inalienable and cannot be sold because land rights were and still are communal.

It must be mentioned that before Pax Britannica in 1900, the traditional arrangement from making land available for farming and other commercial enterprises was the prerogative of the tindaana. Tribute for use of land was only paid to the Tindaana in the form of one basket of guinea-corn and other crops. Basil Samson summarises tribute as: “The logic of tribute is that it is sent as “thanks” to an administrator for doing work to make production of the commodity represented possible.”<sup>17</sup>

It is worthwhile to note that before the advent of colonial rule, a chief had no jurisdiction over land unless he happened to be himself the tindaana. But this was a rare situation in the Bolgatanga area. It was following the establishment of colonial rule in the Northern Ghana that chiefs became grantors of land, relegating the functions of the tindaana to the background.

One may ask, what might have been the reasons for this change? The fact is very clear and interesting. According to sources, when Major Northcott first took over the administration of the protectorate/Northern Territories as the Chief Commissioner in about 1898, he sought to revive the authority of chiefs over their people so that they could rule the people through them. This was the concept of “indirect rule.” After the formal integration of the Protectorate into the British empire in 1902, it was the duty of the British officers to tour the country and explain the rationale behind the new system of administration. They also thought it worthwhile to understand the land rights of the people and to respect them. During most of the tours the commissioner found out that nobody came out to make a claim such as “I own this land and if you want to buy I am the man to apply”.

Another answer was that “we don’t sell land.” In moving to towns and villages with chiefs, the answer to the question “who owns this land?” would usually be “The chief owns the land and everything in it.” In moving to societies with tindaana, the answer to the question was “the tindaana owns the land.” In fact, the common expression from each side was “Tumam nso tinga’ (we are for the land) and “Ten la A Tan den” (the land is ours) in the Gurune and Talni languages respectively. Since the colonial government sought to respect chiefs, this function of the tindaana was given to them. This gave power to chiefs to control and distribute land for development projects in their areas. The conclusion that could be drawn from this fact was that the research was conducted more in societies with chiefs than the societies with tindaanduuma. Those chiefs who held both chiefly and priestly functions could make gifts of land to people preceding certain obligations by the grantee. Whenever the chief gave away unoccupied land to would-be land seekers or his own people for either farming or building on, he was given some foodstuffs from the land.

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<sup>17</sup> Basil Samson, “Traditional Economic Systems” in *The Bantu-Speaking Peoples of Southern Africa*, ed. W.D. Hammond-Tooke, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, p. 148.

The rights of control over land by some chiefs in the Gurensi area during the colonial rule was so excessive that he could deprive his subjects over their own farm's economic trees. For instance, the chief of Gowrie (who is invariably a tindaana) deprived his people in Yorogo of their farm lands and dawadawa trees in 1934.

Suffice it to say that the effect of the power of chiefs over land brought in its wake bitterness, political unrest and disunity in the towns and villages.

There also existed in the area a strain of relationship between the tindaana (who are the real owners of land) and chiefs. And this is still so in some of the urban towns of the Gurensiland. Mrs Watson compares the situation of land litigation and political unrest in the Adansi area of Ashanti: "Whatever actually happened it is undisputed that these alleged grants made either in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century had been the cause of the majority of the (Adansi) land disputes and that they in their turn have caused much bitterness political, unrest and disunity."

## Chapter 4 Divisions of Land and Their Usages

In dealing with the subject of ownership of land there are three geographical features of land which should be noted of. These are as follows: 1. **Samane**; 2. **Bu'u**; 3. **Goo/v**.

These are of great economic and social importance. They are very important to the lives of people as well as the lives of their domestic animals such as cattle, goats and sheep. The three divisions of land have no exact corresponding terms in the English language. It is also very difficult to define them. They can only be understood better when described. In making a distinction between the three geographical divisions of land such as goo, bu'u and samane, the first two are subject to communal usage (with very few exceptions). Private rights in these areas are overridden by communal rights.



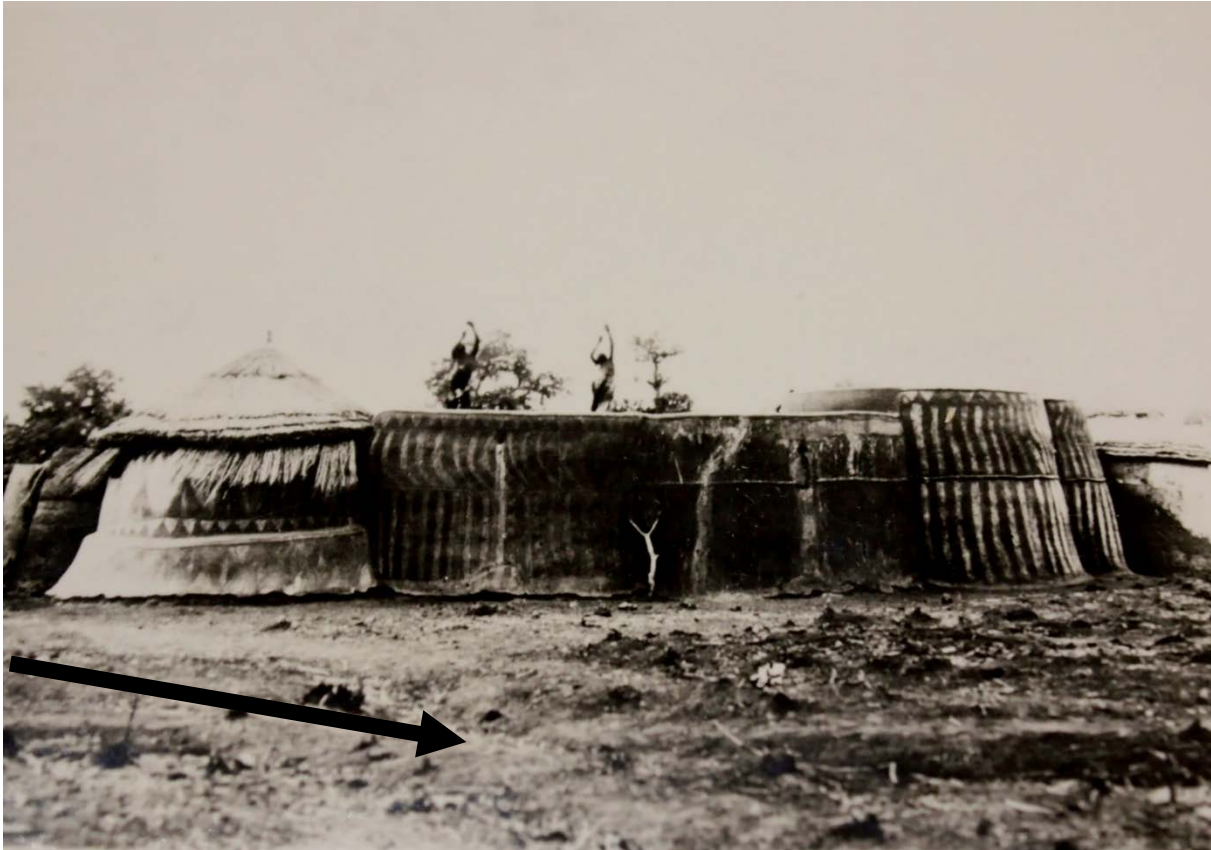
**Figure 5** Samane.

In the bu'u, apart from those areas which are reserved for communal usage, private interests in land or rights are recognized and respected. The community does not tamper with the rights of an individual to have a residence or agricultural land around his house. In the 'samane' the whole land is subject to private interest. The community does not tamper with the rights of an individual to build a house or possess a farm in his house. Every land in Gurensi land has boundaries which are usually marked by certain land features. For instance, on the part of 'samane' (i.e. land under cultivation) the farm boundaries are marked by shallow trenches, stones, rows of stones, margins of long grass or groundnut shells. The boundaries for the goo are such natural landmarks as trees, swamps, boulders, anthills, rock out-crop and so on and so forth. These land marks are handed down from generation to generation. At this juncture we, may discuss the nature, and characteristics of the three geographical divisions of land.



#### 4.1 Samanɛ

Samane means farm or field for cultivation or residential land. It is that part of the land, which is suitable for building houses or permanent settlement. It is also suitable for farming and livestock rearing.



**Figure 6** Land within the back of the house.

In fact, the Gurensi would imagine a life without samane to be a very miserable one. The characteristics of a samane are such that every member of the family has an inherent right to occupy or build a house on. The right of the head of the family to dispose of the samane are restricted on the theory that the land belongs to the entire family or clan. This is in most cases the yaaba-daboo, or the dabo-zuo (i.e. ancestor's old home). The right of an individual member of the ethnic community over his residential land (samane) is so strong that even if he abandons it, it must be kept unoccupied unless he gives consent to a relative to take it over.

#### 4.2 Bu'uɔ

The bu'uɔ is generally a lowland or valley. This is the area where rivers and streams overflow their banks and flood the adjacent plains during the rainy season. A greater part of the bu'uɔ may be some open plain or vast area of land covered by a variety of water plants and grass. The lowest part of the bu'uɔ often remains water logged throughout the year or for some part of the year. The people refer to these areas as beoŋo and some call it 'pawubre' (according to dialectical differences). A few relatively high areas of ground in the bu'uɔ is used as sites for homes. But a greater part of the land is unsuitable for homes and agriculture because of floods. The bu'uɔ is of great importance to the lives of the people of the Gurensi land owing to the fact that they rear cattle in this area. It is a suitable place for cattle to graze because of

its rich pastures. Also, it serves as a good hunting ground for rodents such as grass-cutters, and as a place for collecting top soil (bole). The kulekatima (in Gurune) and *vetrivera nigritina* (Latin) grow in the bu'uo. These kulekatima are used in planting around dam sites to check erosion. The people also use them for thatching or roofing their buildings. The straws of the kulekatima grass are used for making hats and baskets, etc. The highland areas of the bu'uo have forests from which many advantages are derived such as wood for building and firewood. A bu'uo may have drinking pools (called bulusi), which provide water sometimes throughout the year for animal use. Some of these drinking pools contain different fish species such as the Clarian, politerus (mud fish), etc. One very important characteristic of the 'bu'uo' is that everyone has a right to exclusive use of a particular piece of land in the area. Such lands in the bu'uo later become family property. Community members, strangers and everyone have the right to use the bu'uo each on his own accounts, e.g. for grazing his cattle upon it, cutting firewood, collecting top soil, and other uses. An individual has no absolute ownership of land in the bu'uo, especially because Gurensi customary law recognizes the overall communal ownership of the bu'uo.

### 4.3 Goo/ Voto

Goo in the Gurune language is similar to the English word for bush land, forest land or an uncultivated. This may be the area covered by a thick variety of trees, grass and shrubs. The importance of the goo lies on the fact that it is a suitable ground for hunting. Wild animals and birds are attracted to the area. Medicinal plants are found in the goo. Some of the trees have religious significance because of the belief that the spirits of the ancestors live in them. The goo serves as a grazing ground for both domestic and wild life.



**Figure 7** Land in the bush.

Evil spirits such as fairies and other demons live in the area. There may be water throughout the year for both domestic and wild life. This is contained in drinking pools.

The 'Goo' has clay for pottery making. The characteristics of the goo is that it is communally owned. This means that any member of the community – any subject of the skin and every member of the family - has

an inherent right to occupy and develop any portion of an unoccupied land (i.e. land not already in the possession of any other subject or member, stranger or grantee of the skin or family).

The community members have an exclusive right over the animals and fishes within their ‘goo.’ Strangers or members of a different ethnic community may by required permission to enter in order to get fish from the rivers or hunt the game within the ‘goo’. The community has the right as owners of the ‘goo’ to exclude strangers from enjoying certain benefits in it. This means the right to exclude others from fishing or hunting in the area. Also, the community may sometimes exercise their right to exclude strangers or members of different ethnic communities from the use of their pastures if the cattle of these strangers are infected with disease or such animals destroy their crops. A community may also reserve its right to exclude others from fishing in its rivers or ponds if there is a pending dispute or when relations are bad between members of the same community over claims of exclusive rights over parts of the ‘goo’. They may control the fishing rights in their rivers until certain ceremonial rites are performed or fishing may be suspended for a certain convenient period. It should be noted that the right to exclude others from fishing or hunting in the ‘goo’ is not based on ownership of animals and fishes but the ownership of land. The fact here is that one does not have any physical control over things that move about.

Like the bu’uᵓ, an individual has no absolute ownership of land in a ‘goo’. ‘Vᵓᵓ’ are farm lands that have been created by some families in the bush. These could be located eight or more kilometers away from the house.



**Figure 8** Farmlands created by a family in the bush

Vᵓᵓ also refers to that part of the land which was first created by the original man – also old home sites. Some may refer to the “vᵓᵓ” or “puu.”

The benefits to be derived from *goo/vɔtɔ* include firewood, wood for building houses, grass for thatching houses, fruits and so on and so forth. It is interesting to note that in the old days even though the *tindaana* controlled a whole town or territory each geographical division of the land was put under the care of some official nominated by the *tindaana* or the chief. These were styled *sanan-naba* (meaning chief of the arable farm or residential farm) and *goo-naba* (chief of the forest or bush land). There was also the *bu'uo-naba*.

#### 4.4 Procedure of acquiring land for farming and building on



**Figure 9** A *tindaana*.

According to the traditional Gurensi beliefs, land is the property of the *tingana* (earthgods) but controlled by clan leaders *yizukεε'duuma* or *tindaana*, who may be the first or original owner.

The *Tindaana* who is the link between the land spirits and the people is vested with the power to control and propitiate the land and its gods. Where land is sparsely populated or is vacant the owner of the land or the *tindaana* (in particular) is willing to allocate areas for use of other families or clans.

In other words, the arrangement for making land available for agricultural, commercial and industrial uses is the prerogative of the *tindaana*. Through him land is gratuitously assigned to any and all who wish to settle in his town, unless that stranger is considered for some very strong reason undesirable, in which case he would be told to go to his own village for it. But it should be noted that even though the *tindaana* gives land on his own authority, he is not the owner. He is merely holding it for the community.

The following is the recognized procedure of land acquisition for farming and building on in the Gurensi area. Before one procures land for farming or building, one will first 'court' the owner of the land or *tindaana*. The land-seeker, in this case stands in his relationship with the *tindaana* as a prospective son-in-law. It will appear as if the land-seeker has married the sister or daughter of the land-owner or *tindaana*. Since he is yet lobbying for the land (a term used in Gurunε as "lεεka" (wooing or courting), it is customary for him to occasionally visit the *tindaana* and define his relationship to him in terms of gifts such as kola, tobacco and drinks of any sorts.

Even in funerals and other festivals of the tindaana, the would-be land seeker is obliged to contribute towards it. Usually when the land seeker finally gets the land, he will in turn give the tindaana the necessary customary gifts. These gifts include a cock, a guinea-fowl, tobacco and kolanuts as “greeting gifts”. Usually in giving out the land, the tindaana will accompany the land seeker to the uncultivated land in the bush and together they will fix the boundaries of the plot of land which is cut out for him. A tree, a river, an ant hill or a rock outcrop, shallow trenches, rows of trees, margins of long grass and groundnut shells may be used as landmarks in the survey operation.

The land seeker will then clear as much of the land as he can till and the fields together with the trees they contain will become henceforth his property. He has the legitimate right to farm the land in perpetuity. The tenant relationship (between land owner and land seeker) is maintained through the generations. In some communities where the tindaana is not necessarily the land owner (that is, the tinqabia) on approach of the land seeker, the tindaana will first take the matter up with the tinqabia who grants him the permission to cut the land for the land seeker. The land that may be cut for a land-seeker is inheritable and is also transferable to others. That is, he can, in turn, give out his piece of land without the consent of the tindaana.

#### **4.5 Obligations of the Land Seeker**

It is customary for any users of land to pay tribute to the owner of land or tindaana for the use of the land. The usual tribute is a load of guinea-corn, early millet or groundnuts per farm as an acknowledgement of his relationship of dependence. Basil Samson summarizes tribute as “The logic of tribute is that it is sent as ‘thanks’ to an administrator for doing work to make production of the community represented possible.”<sup>18</sup> In this, Samson is referring to the function of a tindaana in allocating land for production and perhaps in performing ritual for propitious weather. Usually the amount of tribute is optional and payment cannot be forced, but by custom it is paid. The usual practice, however, is that after the land seeker has cropped the area allotted to him, he will manufacture local beer (damolega) from the produce of his farm and offer it to both the ancestors and family gods for having given him a plentiful yield. The pot of pito is divided into two parts; a guinea-fowl, a goat and other small presents are taken to the tindaana in order for him to bless the land and make it productive (as summarized in Samson’s quote above). The number and quantity of these items depends on the generosity of the giver. In the case of someone seeking land for building, one has to follow the same customary rules as in the case for farming. In Gurensi land law a land owner can give out a portion of his land to a relative or friend without the consent of the tindaana. But he cannot allow a relative or friend to build on his land without the express permission of the tindaana. This is because it is customary for the tindaana to always cut the sod before building commences.

#### **4.6 Ownership of Things on and under the Land**

One of the practical land laws of the Gurensi is that once the tindaana has assigned or given out land to someone he has no further interest in it: that person is the owner of the land and all that is on and under it. If there is anything that the land owner or tindaana wants in the field, he will ask for permission to make use of the produce of a tree, which may be useless to him. Apart from farms allotted to people, the crops of all trees growing in any uncultivated area are collected by the tindaana or a chief who himself is a tindaana.

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<sup>18</sup> Basil Samson, “Traditional Economic Systems” in *The Bantu-Speaking Peoples of Southern Africa*, ed. W.D. Hammond-Tooke, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, p. 148.

The ownership of things on and under the land belongs to the owner of the land-the person who crops it because the ownership of land goes with things on it and under it. For instance, a farm owner or land owner has exclusive right over the economic or fruit trees that grow on his farm. These economic trees are dawadawa, shea tree, baobab, tamarind, etc. It is not necessary that he planted them himself. He has exclusive right of ownership by virtue of the fact that he has the ownership of the land. If a neighbour or the tindaana come to enjoy the benefits of these things, it is through the express or implied permission of the land owner of certain trees or plants which are very useful as drugs or medicine. The herbs are usually dug from the ground or obtained from trees or plants. An owner of land under which these things remain buried, or on which they are fixed, owns them. It is an accepted principle that things which are found on land and under it are always the property of the owner of the land and they continuously remain his property even if he has abandoned the land, provided that the land still remains unoccupied at the time the things are found or discovered. There was an unanimity of all the village elders on the existence of the rule that no fruit trees may be felled without permission of the owner of the land nor may certain other trees considered beneficial to the soil or welfare of the people. Permission to fell a tree is given if the tree is too old to bear fruit or for a specific use. For example, permission to fell the shea tree (ta-aga) will only be granted for the production of a mortar and pestles and then only if there are plenty of shea trees. Other land tenure and tree tenure laws state that if customarily protected trees are planted or deliberately nurtured they are still the property of the owner of the land. Therefore, his permission is sought in felling a tree. Fruits, barks, leaves, roots or other tree produce are free as long as they are not in a compound farm (i.e. an individual farm) and as long as this does not involve the destruction of the tree. In the same vein, gathering of non-woody plants, roots, greens and fungi is free except in someone's land where wild plants are considered the property of the home or in planted fields, where the plants belong to the cultivator. All firewood is free and may be collected by anyone anywhere except those on private farm lands. By traditional law, all plants found in a sacred grove anywhere in the area cannot be felled or used as firewood. In the case of metallic ore in one's land, it is recognized as one's property by virtue of the fact that one owned the land. Where an individual enters and occupies empty land (apart from other modes of acquisition such as gift or inheritance) he acquires a title and he and his descendants or heirs will retain that title as long as his or their possession of it is continuous. But where he voluntarily abandons his homestead and moves to settle in a new area, he loses his title to the abandoned land.

#### **4.7 Land Rights and Succession to Land**

In traditional Gurensi land law, land given out to an individual by a tindaana is inheritable and transferable to others.

In one example, if Mr. X acquires land from Mr. N (who is the tindaana) and for some reason his relative comes from elsewhere to live with him, he can apportion the land which he has cleared and cultivated to the relative. But if Mr. X is not able to live on good terms with the tindaana and decides to move out of the town he cannot otherwise dispose of his land to a neighbor since it does not belong to him. It must revert to the owner of land (i.e. the tindaana). Suppose also that Mr. X had lived in the area for say fifty years as a headman or clan leader or a chief's representative (kanbonnaba) but withdraws to live in another town. His rights over the tract of land he occupied for the fifty years will cease with his departure.

Usually if after three or four years of occupation of a farm land, the user abandons it, it is at once open for occupation by anyone who may desire it but after having obtained permission from the tindaana.

#### **4.8 Succession to Farm Land (Samanε)**

Upon the death of a person who owns some farmland (samanε) such land may pass to his sons by intestate succession. The property of the deceased such as land is said to pass by intestate succession in circumstances where death takes place and he has not made a will for the distribution of his property such as land.

In reality, land cannot be willed. That is, testate or testamentary succession is unknown amongst the people of the Bolgatanga and Bongo districts. In Gurensi land law, where a person who owns land dies intestate, the following persons shall be his heirs:

- a) Wife (or wives) and children
- b) Parents or brothers, if there are no wife (or wives) and children

The practice amongst the Gurensi therefore is that if a man dies, his eldest son takes over the land and the trees (especially all the economic trees such as the shea tree, dawadawa, baobab, ficus species, etc.) that stand on the farm. The eldest son shall hold the possession of the land as trustee (the equivalence of Administrator or Executor) for the brothers. In a polygamous family (i.e. if the deceased had many wives and sons) the land is divided amongst the sons of the deceased. But if the man left no sons behind all his survived widows are entitled to a piece of the land. Such farms, which are inherited by widows, may be used by them and passed down to their sons after their deaths.

If a man dies while he has neither wife nor children it is the duty of his living kinsmen, especially the head of the clan, to perform his funeral rites using part of his land (this is in rare circumstances).

It is an acceptable norm that the person who performs the funeral of a deceased inherits his property including land. If he has brothers (i.e. whether direct or half or father's brothers) his land could also be shared amongst them.

Another interesting aspect of Gurensi land law is the rule that one who cultivates the land of another (i.e. usufructuary) owns the farm produce but cannot claim any right or interest apart from his 'fruits' on the land. In other words, he does not dream of holding the land as his own. In the circumstances, therefore, if the occupant dies, such land cannot be passed to his sons, wives, parents and to others. The land in question is reverted to the owner's children or parents if there are no surviving wife (wives) and children.

There is also a situation where the owner of an area of arable land allows another person to cultivate his land. It may be for one year or a number of years. The period could also be indefinite. The occupant terminates only after the owner has married a wife and raised children of his own upon which the farm will revert to him. The occupant could also be evicted by the land owner on the expiry of a certain period or for other reasons. This rarely happens.

In another example, a land owner may give his land to someone probably because his wife is sick and the ancestors demand a sacrifice, or his father-in-law is pressing for outstanding bride price cattle, or he is required to pay a fine. He has to borrow from a neighbour and as a pledge he offers land for cultivation. He is entitled to redeem the land at any time by paying back the cattle or money borrowed. There is usually no such calculation as is made in a commercial mortgage of value of land in relation to value of loan. Or there is usually no time limit for payment. Pledges of this nature are often left long un-redeemed and are the sources of land litigation in the Gurensi land. It may be that in the course of years the original right holder is forgotten and land passes from one person to another. There may not be anyone left to remember it when the original parties die.

In view of the circumstances mentioned, usually at the time when these transactions are made people are usually careful to have witnesses. Sometimes they would bring a young man or *tiṅa pogsigira* or *tinguura* to witness the transaction so that they may remember it when the original parties die.

#### **4.9 Rights Enjoyed over the Property of Another Person**

Despite the exclusive right of a man and his family over the residential land (*samanε*), customary law allows the general public to enjoy some limited and specific rights over the property owned by another person. These rights may be in the nature of easements and profits.

A few of these specific rights may be cited as follows:

1. We all know that foot-paths, always pass over the lands occupied by other people. The same applies to motor roads. Any member of the public is entitled to use the path or road despite the fact that it passes over somebody's land. In contemptuous terms, it may be said that a landowner is not entitled to prevent members of the public from the use of that part of the path which goes over his land.
2. Another example is that a member of the public is entitled to go over somebody's property in order to obtain water from a well or bore-hole.
3. Members of the public may also be entitled to enjoy fishing in a 'buluga' (water pool) owned by a family. When the owner of property dies, the property passes to the legal heirs with these restrictions imposed upon it through the acquisition of rights by members of the public.

#### **4.10 Rights which Cannot Be Inherited**

This is another impact of public rights upon succession. As a member of a community or town, a person is entitled to enjoy certain rights which are also commonly enjoyed by other members of the community at the same time. As earlier noted, one has the rights of fishing in the community rivers, dams, water pools; his cattle are entitled to graze in the tribal pastures; one is entitled to obtain various benefits from the community forests. But this must not be misconstrued to mean that they are part of his personal estate, which is subject to inheritance by his offspring. He cannot bequeath or make a bequest of these rights, because they are not his personal rights over which he has exclusive ownership or enjoyment. Nonetheless, his legal offspring can enjoy the same rights, not as sons of the deceased but as members of the same community. Precisely speaking, there are certain rights which a person may enjoy but cannot pass to his sons, because they are also the rights of the public or of the ethnic group.

#### **4.11 Ownership of Animals on Land**

One conflicting set of answers to questions relating to land amongst the Gurensi is the ownership of animals on land (in this case we are referring to wild game). Domestic animals are excluded because every domestic animal has an owner. The question therefore is "Does the ownership of land (as previously mentioned) go with the ownership of animals and fishes? There are often two schools of thought. The first school of thought says "yes" while the second school's answer is in the negative. The second school explains that it is difficult for a community to exert a claim of title to wild animals in that such things do not remain in one area – they are not static or confined by other artificial means (i.e. fencing). This is so because today they are in one ethnic community and tomorrow they are in another territory. This applies to fishes, which always keep on moving from one part of a river to another part owned by another community.

An ethnic community owns only that part of a forest or river that falls within its territory. In this case a community may decide to exclude strangers from hunting within its territory or from fishing in its rivers.



This may give the impression that the community have an exclusive right over the animals and fishes within their territory and that strangers or members of a different tribal community may need permission to enter in order to get fish from the rivers or hunt the game within the territory. Therefore, the right of exclusion here is derived from the ownership of land, rather than the ownership of the animals, and fishes on it because the members of the community have no power of control over the animals and fishes.

One may ask, supposing a member of the Sherugo community shoots and injures a bush cow in their forest and the wounded animal moved to the land of another neighbouring community such as Sumbrungu and is finally killed there: who owns the animal? Is it the Sherugo man or the Sumbrungu people? Obviously the Sherugo man cannot claim the animal based on the mere fact that it came from their territory. If, however, he makes a claim then he should be liable for the compensation of Sumbrungu people who may have been killed or injured by the animal during their encounter with it. This is to emphasize the fact that if a community were entitled to claim ownership of wild animals on their land, they should also have to accept liability for the dangerous acts that may be committed by the animals.

#### **4.12 The Case of Metallic Ore**

Before the coming of the Europeans to this part of the country, metals were locally manufactured by the people from what is known as Ziggi (gravel stones) or slags (siila). The most common include iron, mica and manganese. The “Ziggi” or ‘Siila’ used to be dug in order to make all sorts of implements such as hoes, spears, armlets or anklets. Where “Ziggi” was discovered in one’s land it was recognized as one’s property by virtue of the fact that one owned the land. It could be an individual or the community as a whole.

Unless approved by the appropriate community authority or land owner on whose land the mineral is, mining of any kind in a community will not be tolerated. Recent conflicts in respect of mining in some communities without the express permission of the land owners have seen an increase in the area.

#### **4.13 Land Reserved for Communal Use**

Like the national community or state, every ethnic or local community has reserved lands for communal usage. Because of the value of the ‘Goo’ (forest or bush land) to the life of everybody in an ethnic community and the scarcity that might be created if private individuals were to be allowed to establish exclusive ownership of it, the community reserves the ownership to itself and permits its members to use all the benefits of this area communally or jointly.

Lands declared as reserved for communal usage as previously discussed are the grazing grounds or pastures, hunting areas, fishing pools, markets, dancing grounds and even foot-paths.

Some of these areas are reserved for the purposes of worship (sacred grooves), recreation, sanctuaries for birds and tourism. The community accepts the principle of sharing all the benefits of the reserved lands such as firewood, wood for building houses, fruits, grass for roofing and fishing.

With a few exceptions it may be stated that all the areas in the ‘goo’ are reserved for communal usage. Even members of other ethnic groups (like the Fulani herdsmen) may be allowed to enter and use these benefits, unless there are exceptional reasons why these strangers must be excluded. Members of other communities are allowed to enter the land because there are reciprocal benefits involved here.

But in the case of forest in agricultural lands, a person or some group of persons from the community may obtain parts of it and build their homes there, if their original lands have been flooded or occupied by water in a dam.

The best example here is the case of the Gowrie people whose original lands were affected by the construction of the Vea dam.

It is worthwhile to note here that where such lands are reserved for communal usage, no individual member of the community can alienate that part of the land to a third party without approval of the tindaana who by customary practices holds that land in trust for a clan or community.

#### **4.14 Right of Ownership of Land**

The nature of a community or an individual's right of ownership or interest in land is based on several factors including economic, social, political and religious factors.

By ownership here I mean the right of exclusive enjoyment of a thing – the relationship between a person and a right vested in him.

Amongst the factors mentioned, the religious aspect is seen in a number of cases. Most of the claims to the residential lands (samane) and vɔto in our previous discussion are based on religious or social aspects. For example, if the claimant's ancestors (as illustrated in the Ayidanabisi and Sa-andama/Adamabisi in Yikene) died and were buried in the place, a strong claim of the land may be asserted by the descendants of those ancestors. This area becomes to them "Bayaaba daboo" (their ancestral old home site). It is believed that the spirits of their ancestors still remain in occupation and so no one else should occupy it. The right of the clan or individual member of a community over the ancestral home site (yaaba daboo) or samane is so strong that if they or he abandons it, it must be kept unoccupied unless he gives consent to a relative to take it over.

Usually a long abandoned area is referred to by the name of the owner who has once occupied it but has long since deserted it. For instance, there is Atulba Daboo in Bolgatanga, Zanwɔŋɔ and Boya Daboro (plural of daboo) in Gowrie, etc.

The concept of afterlife is so deeply rooted in the Gurensi mind that in the event of someone's death (of old age) in his new settlement everything is made possible to bring home the corpse and bury it in his ancestral home grave. According to Gurensi land law, even if someone else is allowed to use an unoccupied land in the absence of the owner, on return to his old home it must be surrendered to him.

The right or ownership of certain natural features such as grazing land, fishing and drinking pools are vested in the community or individual whose ancestors were the first to occupy the area. As far as the community is concerned the ownership of land or a territory is vested in the community. And the individual members, whether from the same community or another community, enjoy what appears to be a usufruct or profit because they can clear the forest and build their houses there.

An individual can acquire the ownership or title to his residential and arable land in the same manner as that of the acquisition of land by the community, except in the case of conquest.

# Chapter 5 Mode of Acquisition of Title of Land by a Community

Having discussed the division of land, the procedure of land acquisition, the nature of the individual's right or interest in 'land,' the ownership of things on the land, the modes of acquisition of title to land by a community and the individual member of an ethnic community will be considered. The following are the recognized modes of acquisition of title to land:

- i. By occupation
- ii. By conquest
- iii. By gift or donation
- iv. By marriage

A very brief explanation for each of these modes of acquisition of title may be given here.

## 5.1 By Occupation

Where a piece of land has no owner, its ownership or title may be acquired by occupation. The ownership or title passes to those who are considered to be the descendants of the original occupants of the area – whose ancestors were the first to occupy those parts of the land.

As far as the Gurensi land law is concerned, occupation of a place is only valid if the occupants settle on the land with intent to remain there on permanently. But this however does not mean that any portion of the land of an ethnic community that is empty can be regarded as land which has no owner.

## 5.2 By Conquest

Acquisition of title to land by conquest was most common in the past when the Gurensi migrated from the North to the areas which they presently occupy. The Gurensi claimed that on their arrival in their new home they met the Busansi (from Burkina Faso). They drove away the Busansi and settled in their territory. Also, most parts of the lands north of Bolgatanga and south of Bongo were occupied by a certain Mamprusi group known as Boya and Dulusi.

The Yareba (who now occupy the area) decided to chase the Boya away from their territory. It is not clearly established where the Boya people went and settled after they had been dispossessed of their land by the Yareba people.

## 5.3 By Gift/Donation

A third mode of acquisition of title or ownership of land is by gift. One example which may illustrate this point is a case between the Azorebisi and Amogrebisi (in Sumbrungu). According to sources, the Azorebisi people during their migrations were received in at the compound of Amogre (the first settler).<sup>19</sup> As a result of a passage of time there was fission among the offspring of the Azore's family and Amogre. The original settler, Amogre later transferred ownership of their land or a part of it and the resources on it to the newcomer by way of gift. These, in turn, apportioned their land to any new comer who had come to live with them.

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<sup>19</sup> The information received from Aberesi from Amogrebisi, Anonkino Giba from Azorebisi Adogpae Paul (the first Assembly man of Sumbrungu Azorebisi) collaborates with Archival source NAG.A.ADM 68/4/5, p.136.

## **5.4 By Marriage**

Another mode of acquisition of title or ownership of land is by marriage. This mode was very common in the past. One example which may be used here as an illustration is the Dapore-tindongo and Atulbabisi (the royal clan in Bolgatanga). A long time back, a certain family from the Abekabisi's clan in area of Tanzui left their home because there was no space to build. They went to Dapore-Tindongo and settled among the Tindaama clan (in the area). A member of that family, Adogma, married a girl from the Tendaama in Dapore-Tindongo and it was in order to consolidate this marriage relationship that the Tindaama allowed Adogma's family to occupy the present area of Ayia. All the same, they continued to be part of the people of Dapore-Tindongo and they paid their tribute to Dapore-Tindongo Tindaana. This family has multiplied and are now known as Atulbabisi or Apasenyelombisi. They form the ruling clan in Bolgatanga.

## **5.5 Modes of Acquisition of Title to Land by an Individual**

Land may also be acquired by an individual in the same way as by a community except that he cannot acquire the title or ownership by conquest.

An individual can acquire title to land through the following:

- 1. Marriage; 2. Gift; 3. Inheritance; 4. Sale; 5. By pledge in discharge of a debt or any obligation.**

### **5.5.1 By marriage**

In traditional Gurensi society when a man inherits the widow of a friend or relative, it is the obligation of the man to maintain her and her family. This means that the widow would come with her children under the guardianship of her new husband and it would be his duty to give a part of his land to her to farm. The widow who cultivates the land owns it and all the resources on it. The widow may pass the same land to her son(s), and then the son to his own sons. The offspring of the widow exercise their right of title to the land. But such gifts of land to widows are exceptional circumstances, in which the man has plenty of land but no family of his own. When land is transferred by a man to a widow she owns only the farm produce but cannot claim any right or interest apart from her 'fruits' on the land. In other words, she cannot hold the land as her own. She cannot therefore pass it onto her sons. Because she could be evicted by the relative of the land owner upon his death or for some reasons. The occupation of the land may also terminate after the man has married a wife and raised children of his own when his land will revert to him or his sons.

In traditional Gurensi land law when divorce or dissolution of marriage has taken place the husband is entitled to claim back his land from his widow or her sons (if she is not living).

### **5.5.2 Inheritance**

The Gurensi are patrilineal. The rule is that upon the death of a man who owns some land it is his eldest son who inherits his land and acts as a trustee on behalf of his brothers and widows. But when the man dies without children, his brothers, and if none, his paternal uncle shall have possession of his land as trustees.

The land is the bona fide property of the family and so the trustee cannot give it away clandestinely in the detriment of the entire family or clan.

### **5.5.3 By sale**

Land sale and purchase is sacrilegious amongst the Gurensi. But if, for some circumstance, a land owner is unable to settle his loan in the bank, meet the demand of his wife's bride price to purchase foodstuffs to feed his family etc., he may sell part of his land to another man who would need land to cultivate. The buyer acquires a title to the land and he and his descendants or heirs will always retain that title as long as his or their possession of it is continuous. Anything - metallic ore, trees and so on - found on or under it will always remain the property of the new owner since ownership of things on and under the land belongs to the owner of the land.

### **5.5.4 By pledge/contractual agreement**

This is a practice where the owner of land may allow another person to cultivate his land through pledge or contractual agreement. In this case the land owner may deliver land to a land seeker as a form of security or guarantee for the repayment of a debt or discharge of existing obligation. If the land owner fails completely to repay the debt, the land seeker is entitled to own the land he possesses as his bona fide property. The land may be passed onto his family after his death.

This rarely happens because the sons of the original owner may exercise their right of re-claiming what is their property. And the land seeker is obliged to give back the land because he did not legally acquire the title to the land. Nonetheless, the reclaiming of land from the land seeker can only be defeated if he or his descendants come to redeem the pledge or contract. If the man dies while he has no wife and children, it is the duty of his living kinsmen to repay the debt and claim the land.

## **5.6 Rules and Limitations Regarding Inheritance to Land**

When the head of a family dies and leaves behind a wife and children, it will not be necessary to distribute his land. The land will pass to his family as a whole since it is only one unit. If there is an elder son amongst them he will hold the land and other properties of the deceased as his property and as a trustee for the family. But if there are several wives and children, the land is distributed among the units of his family so as to avoid future conflicts. It is worthwhile to note that a Gurensi does not make a will for distribution of land amongst the sons of his family before he even expects his death. This is derived from religious aspects and the communal ownership of land because joint or communal ownership by a family does not only consist of the contributions of the living members but it also consists of part of the property inherited from those members of the family who have died. The African conception of family may be expressed as consisting of large number of people, many of whom are dead, a few of whom are living and countless numbers of whom are yet to be born. There is also no provision made in the distribution of land among the sons of a deceased in fixed fractions as in the case of Islamic law where a wife gets some fixed part of his property, and the sons, daughters and other relatives each take away a certain proportion of his property. Therefore, the issue of fixed fractions in cases of succession to land is unknown to the Gurensi because of the conception that the property of the family in principle must remain under communal ownership.<sup>20</sup>

When land is distributed amongst the units of a deceased family which may consist of a wife, sons and daughters will continue to live on their part of the land. Each son who marries leaves the family home and builds a house for himself and his wife on the family land. If ultimately all his sons and daughters are married, each son has the right to build on the family land and crop on it. Problems are arising nowadays in urban communities (such as Bolgatanga) where a man with a number of wives and children owns one

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<sup>20</sup> K.A. Busia. *The challenge of Africa* 1962 Oxford University Press, cited by Dr. Francis Deng in (1965) SLJR p. 535.

small piece of land and all of them live in it because of the scarcity of land or due to the fact that a man may not be able to afford a plot to build a house for every son he has.

## **5.7 Exclusion of Women from Inheriting Land**

### **5.7.1 Daughters**

In traditional Gurensi law, daughters remain as members of the family as long as they remain unmarried. As soon as they are married, they become members of different families. Until they are married they enjoy all the necessary benefits of the family property but they cannot inherit any part of the land of the deceased as they are potentially regarded as members of other families. To allow them to inherit part of the estate, especially land, would mean that they are entitled to take this property to their new families. This would be against the general principle that the property of the deceased must remain within the family.

### **5.7.2 Divorced wife or wives**

Exclusion of the divorced wife or wives from inheriting land is the same as the exclusion of daughters. It is, of course, obvious that a divorced wife or wives cease(s) to be a member of the family or her divorced husband and so she cannot be entitled to inherit from the land of the deceased husband. To be allowed to inherit would conflict with the principle of keeping the estate within the family of the deceased. Where she remains a wife at the time of his death, she is entitled to inherit. But if she later decides to divorce the deceased, she will have to give up the part of the land which she has already obtained since she is leaving the family. She cannot inherit anything even if the deceased is her son.

## **5.8 Consequences of the Land Tenure**

From our previous discussions it is observed that the Gurensi land tenure has certain limitations or restrictions on the head of family or trustee. One of these restrictions on the part of the successor or trustee is the fact that he has no absolute power to dispose of the whole or a substantial part of the family land to persons outside the family. After all the land is not his alone, it is a family land. Although he might - through his own efforts - have brought more land into the family, other members have also made their contributions.

The family land does not (as mentioned earlier) only belong to the living members, but it also consists of part of the property inherited from those members of the family who have died. Hence the family land is not only the land of the living ones (including the trustee himself) but the ownership of it includes the dead.

It should be noted, however, that even though there is a limitation of the head of the family bequeathing land to non-relative, it does not completely deprive him of his right or power to dispose of some part of the land in the discharge of outstanding social obligations and debts. These are the obligations which are imposed upon the family land and whether he dies before discharging them or not the living members will thereafter be bound to discharge them.

The idea of having brothers as alternative successors to a deceased land presupposes the continuity of the oneness of the original family. Although the original family to which they belong (i.e. parents and deceased brothers) has grown larger and has fragmented into separate units, yet it is still closely tied by

the strength of family with its new components and still remain one although the ties may have become a little weaker.

### **5.9 Judicial Process in Land Matters**

We know from earlier discussions that *tiŋa-yele* (land matter) and *ziim-yele* (blood matter) are often the responsibility of a *tindaana*. We know that he is the religious authority and the source of rights to cultivate land and to fish in ponds and dams. He is also the kinsman of everyone under his authority.

In traditional Gurensi society conflicts with respect to land and boundaries have to be resolved by the *tindaana* because his decision is often respected as law since he is thought to be the representative of the *tingane* on earth and his decisions are regarded as having a divine force behind him. He is somewhat a solicitor who always works for a settlement out of court and he does what he can to bring together people involved in land dispute. However, since the occupation of the British here in 1900 there has been a little change in these functions and duties of the *tindaana* in relation to land. The traditional method of seeking redress in land matters (between brothers) is to approach the eldest of one's lineage who would pronounce on the case with the support of his age group. Probably that elder was the only person who was alive at that time and so should be in a position to know details about the land. In more serious land cases the *tindaana* is approached for arbitration because his decisions are regarded as having a divine force. However, the *tindaana* does not give judgment on his own but always sits with a group of elders. In this case, the *tindaana* and his group are frequently successful in effecting reconciliation between the two disputing parties. But where the *tindaana* fails to reach a settlement as each of the disputants insists on his right of claim of title to the land he may resort to the use of an oath. The alleged witnesses and chiefs who allegedly tried the case are all dead. The *tindaana* usually swears the oath before witnesses and the disputants on the area in dispute. The concept of the oath is very important in any consideration of judicial processes in the Gurensi area such as cheating, theft, suspected adultery and so forth. This is often done to obtain a speedy judgment from the land spirits (*tinkugere/tingane*). The swearing of the oath is often preceded by killing a fowl (by cutting open its throat) and throwing it down on the land in dispute saying "These two people are fighting over this piece of land. It is you who can give a prompt judgment. By this the one who tries to cheat by making a false claim will be struck down by the divine spirits."

It should be remarked that the role of western education in the destruction of the traditional family system cannot be overlooked. In the former days, land disputes in traditional Gurensi society were minimal because of the fear of the gods even though there is evidence that the gods still operate to some extent as sanctions during the contemporary increase in land cases. By careful observations there has been a marked increase in the number of suits brought before chiefs, assemblymen and courts in connection with land. So that arbitration in land by chiefs, assemblymen (i.e. Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) during the erstwhile PNDC Regime) and the orthodox courts have helped to weaken or undermine the functions of the traditional religious leader (i.e. the *tindaana*).

# Chapter 6 Rites and Ceremonies Connected with Land

## 6.1 Introduction

The occasion for Gurensi sacrifice may be divided into two distinct categories, i.e. those that fall within the cosmic cycle (i.e. those marked by the seasonal period of production) and those that fall within the human life cycle (i.e. the processes of socialization from conception to the grave).

In the first category, sacrifice is performed during the following periods:

1. When planting and harvesting crops. There are two ceremonies connected with the latter – the Earth shrine festival known as tingana and the general thanksgiving festival referred to as ‘Ndan koya’ (meaning: ‘I just farmed the previous year’). The former festival is widespread only amongst the Nannams in Nangodi and the Talensi in Winkogo. In this festival each compound owner will offer the new year crop to the gods followed by feasting of other meat and ‘pito’ (damolega).

Those within the human life cycle are as follows:

1. when one is about to marry
2. when a woman has a protracted and difficult labour
3. when naming a child
4. during funeral rites
5. when a girl is to undergo circumcision operation
6. when one is to be initiated into the profession of soothsayers, sextons, weavers, blacksmiths and brass casters.

These are the various occasions when the Gurensi seek to address their ancestors and gods in prayers, offerings and sacrifice with the aim of securing favours and for long life. In all of these cases, the Tindaana will consult the soothsayer for the cause of the misfortune or before undertaking any sacrifice or celebrations in the community.

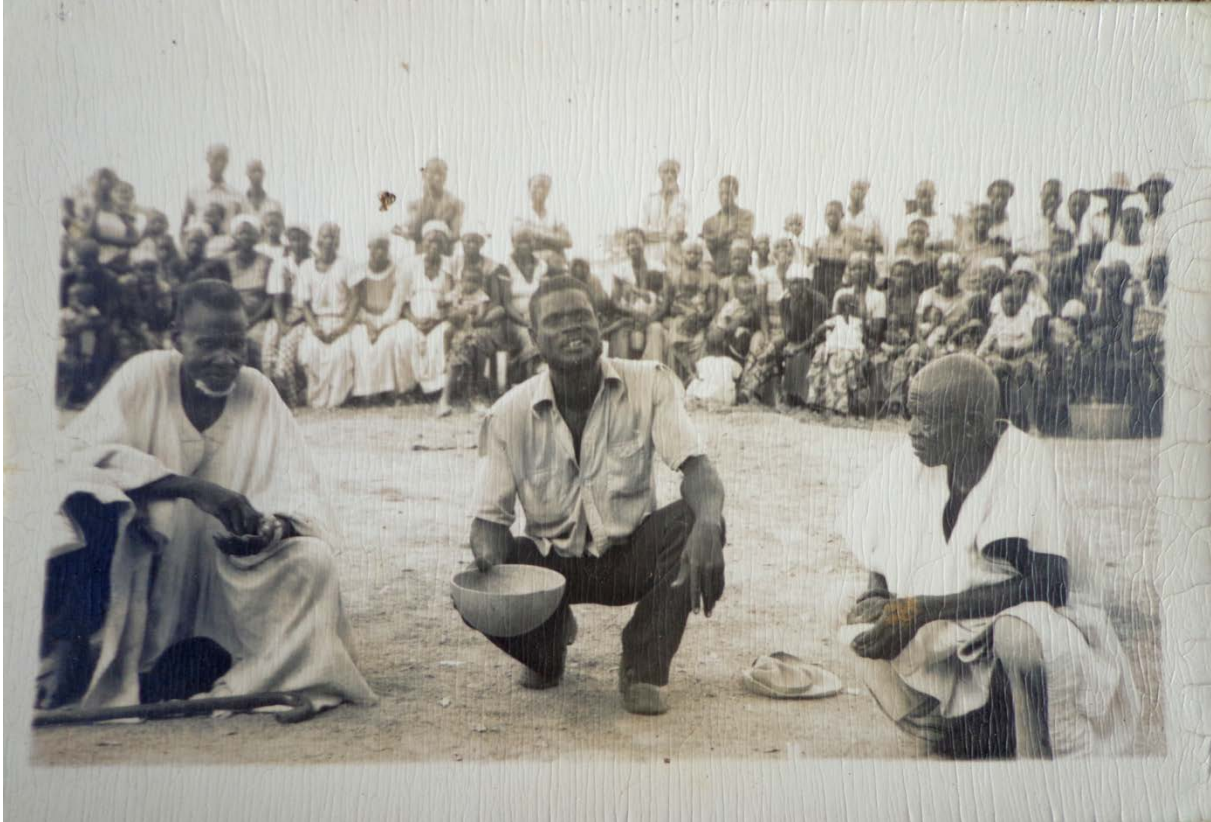
We would discuss the rites that fall within the cosmic cycle under the following headings:

- i. Rites before sowing
- ii. Rites before eating the first fruits
- iii. Rites after harvest
- iv. Rain rites (when there is severe drought)
- v. When misfortunes occur in the community.

## 6.2 Rites Before Sowing

Usually at the onset of rain the people of the Bolgatanga district perform libations to the sacred groves (tingana) or tinkugere (land spirits). To begin with, the tindaana will consult the soothsayer in order to know if the time is ripe for them to sow the seeds of millet and pumpkins. The soothsayer (bakologo-daana) would prescribe some sacrifice or libation to avert any drought. The elders of the tindaana’s clan would take guinea-corn or millet (i.e. early millet) with them in calabashes. They will gather at the community tinkugere or tingane where the tindaana performs the libation by pouring it on the stone believed to be the god. This is to ask the land spirit for a good and successful sowing season.





**Figure 10** A tindaana pouring libation for a new harvest of the year. Photo taken by Author.

### **6.2.1 Rites before Eating the First Fruits**

This rite connected with land takes place just before the crops are harvested. Usually the soothsayer is once again approached by the tindaana who would again prescribe some sacrifice to the tingane or tinkugere. In this sacrifice pito (local beer/damolega) is brewed from newly cut millet or guinea-corn by the tindaana or the head of the house (yidaana) as the case may be. It is then poured as libation to the tingane. While pouring the libation the Tindaana chants as follows: “We have come to beg you for rain and the people have sent these presents to you.” This is usually done to prevent anyone else from harvesting or tasting the crops before the land spirits because it is believed that if they are denied of their hierarchical position in society and do not taste the new crop first, they will threaten the next year’s harvest.

### **6.2.2 Rites after Harvest (i.e. Thanksgiving Sacrifice)**

At the beginning of the dry season (usually the sapolego-gmarega i.e. between November and January) and after the harvest, the people perform sacrifice to the Tingane or Tinkugere and the family gods (which include the sɔɔ bagere, mā bagere, yine bagere, etc.). This is because their plea for rain is granted and they have had good yields. The ceremony connected with this is Ndan koya (i.e. thanksgiving sacrifice) which is often considered as a festival of traditional religionists even though Christians and Moslems join to celebrate it. When it comes to performing Ndan koya, the spiritual leader (the tindaana) will consult the soothsayer who would prescribe some sacrifice to the land spirits. Pito is brewed from the guinea-corn or early millet (naarega-daam) for the ceremony. The tindaana first sends the message to the elders of his clan about the date of the ceremony. Each household owner (yidaana) will also manufacture their own pito for the ceremony. On the day fixed for the ceremony, the elders or their representatives would take fowls, guinea-corn or early millet flour with them in calabashes. They will all gather at the community tingane or

tinkugere and sit on the ground. The tindaana receives the items and proceed as follows. He will take water from a calabash (bagere-wula) stirred with the flour taken from each of the clan elders. He then squats before the tingane or tinkugere and pours on a stone believed to contain the spirit of the whole community. Some of these stones which are usually surrounded by a cluster of trees may appear cone or flat chapped. The pouring of the libation is proceeded by the killing of the fowls and animals. He will cut their throats and pour the blood onto the stone. While cutting the throats of the fowls the tindaana chants or prays to the tingane as follows: “You have given us food according to our wish; now we come to give you a present of animals, birds, pito and guinea- corn water (zom-koom).” The usual format when chanting to the Tingane is “Toe la fo zom pae yinne, la fo belem.....” (literally translated as “take this up to God and beg .....”) This simply implies that the tingane or tinkugere should intervene and beg the supreme God, the Almighty on behalf of the people for fertility, prosperity.....).

Usually after the sacrifice the pito is drunk in celebration. It is only after the tindaana has completed the sacrifice that every family who would like to celebrate the Ndan koya then continues it. It should be noted that unlike the rites before sowing it is imperative that pito must be brewed because of the reason that millet is plentiful at this period (sapolego-gmarega) – there is surplus for brewing pito. Pito is not brewed in the supplication ceremony because the people are generally short of food and there is little surplus for the brewing of pito.

### **6.3 Rain Rites (When There Is Severe Drought)**

In case of a severe drought rain rites are performed at the tingane. Usually, if there is severe drought within the sowing season or there is a delayed rain, the elders will go to the tindaana and ask for explanation. The tindaana (the spiritual leader) will approach the soothsayer for the cause of the drought or delayed rain.

The soothsayer may attribute it to the following causes:

1. Disobedience of clan laws regarding resource use such as sale of land, felling of sacred groves, fishing out of season, appropriating any stray or lost animal found on land without giving them up to the tindaana, etc.
2. Failure to honour customs and rituals such as the failure to cleanse the area where suicide has been committed or sex in the bush.
3. Birth of deformed children, fairies, and misdeeds (such as murder). The soothsayer on approach will prescribe some sacrifice or the appropriate atonement made to avert the misfortune. Upon this the tindaana will inform the elders of the community the outcome of his consultation. He will then fix a date for the sacrifice.

The elders and sectional headmen or kanbannaduuma would each take some flour (ground by a woman or wife of the landlord) with them in calabashes. They would all gather at the tingane and sit on the ground. The tindaana will take flour from each of the clan elders and throw it onto the tingane or tinkugere. This is to tell the tingane that there is no water to mix with the flour and give her. Hence the raw flour (zom puuguro).

### **6.4 When Misfortunes Occur in the Community**

Besides the rain and harvest rites, the traditional Gurensi also approach the Tingane during epidemics of all sorts which occur in the community. For instance, if there is seen to be disorder on the land or there is an outbreak of some disease, invasion by locust, deaths in the community, conflicts among sections of the town, etc., the tindaana is the first point of contact and he is consulted for explanation of the misfortunes.

The tindaana would, in turn, consult the soothsayer who would prescribe some sacrifice to avert any further disaster. The soothsayer may prescribe black cows or white cows, sheep, goats or birds (guinea fowls and

chickens) depending on the circumstances or the demand of the Tingane or Tinkugere. Usually the tindaana informs the elders of community about the date of the rituals. On the ceremony day every elder or his representative would take his birds and animal and flour (contained in calabashes). They will all meet at the Tingane or Tinkugere and sit on the ground (as usual). The tindaana will gather all the gifts brought by the elders and begin the sacrifice as follows: first, he will take water from a calabash stirred with and pour it on a stone believed to contain the spirit of the community ancestor. While pouring he prays as follows (the usual format) ‘Toe la fo zom paa yine la fo belem.....’ (meaning: Take this up to God and beg.....). The birds are killed by cutting their throats and their blood poured on the stone. It is then thrown down to suffer in agony. If a bird dies while lying on its back it is a sign that the spirits have accepted the sacrifice. They will all clap their hands and praise God and the Tingane. But if it lies on its face or side it shows rejection of the offer. The feathers of the birds are torn and stuck on the congealed blood. The last sacrifice is that of the animal (cow, sheep or goat). The tindaana kills it by cutting its throat. The blood is caught in an earthen ware basin and the rest made to stream over the feathers and blood of the preceding victims upon the shrine stone. Finally, a fire is made a few yards away from the Tingane or Tinkugere and the fowls and animals are taken there. They are cut into pieces and distributed among the people assembled. The tindaana receives one front leg, and a back leg (geere), the head (zuo) and skin (gane). The remainder of the animal is divided among those in attendance. The smaller parts of the animal are roasted on the fire (but never boiled) and eaten at the tingane. Some pieces from the liver (solɔŋɔ), intestine (yɔɔrɔ) back and front legs, etc. of the animal and birds are taken and placed on the stone. This is the share of the Tingane or Tinkugere.

It is interesting to note that blood plays a very essential role in sacrifice and efficacy of reconciliation for the tindaana because it is believed to have the effect of purifying and reconciling men with the earth. This is in line with the Christian belief that the blood of Jesus expiates every sin.<sup>21</sup> The tindaana (spiritual leader) expiates the sins of his community people by the frequent sacrifices he makes with the birds and animals.

Usually in cases of building a new house or commissioning a new building (laeseko) the tindaana plays a role. Before the house is put up, the tindaana is invited to make a symbolic scratch on the ground preceded by clearing the site for the building. In commissioning the new building the tindaana is again called upon to bless the building and the inmates of the house.

Also, he is often invited to perform rites connected with blood spill in a fight, adultery, sex in the bush, etc. to remove the abomination. The rite connected with adultery, sex in the bush and bloodspill is spoken of as “Tiŋa saalengo” (meaning: smoothing the land). The only exceptions in this case is bloodletting during female circumcision, facial marking, bleeding from the nose (even in fight), menstrual flow, etc. These do not require the intervention of the tindaana. In view of his social and religious role in the community (especially in land and murder rites), R.S. Rattray summarizes the role of the Tindaana in the following way: “a matter which is no concern of the *Ten’dana* is said to be ‘neither a blood matter nor a land matter.’<sup>22</sup> In fact, Teŋa-yele (land matter) and ziim-yele (blood matter) are the duties of the tindaana.

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<sup>21</sup> See 1st letter of John 1:7.

<sup>22</sup> Rattray, *The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932, p. 258.

## **PART III LAND BOUNDARY AND CHIEFTAINCY CONFLICTS AND WARS AMONGST THE FRAFRAS**



**Figure 11** Gurensi (Frafra) warrior. Photo taken by author in 1980 in Gowrie.

# Chapter 7

## 7.1 Introduction: State of the Country

Before the British occupation of the Northern Territories in 1896 the Gurensi, Tallensi, Nabdams and Boosi, known collectively as Frafras, were described as hostile people. They were truly hostile towards each other. Normal social intercourse as goes on today between them never existed because in those days it was very difficult for people of one village, e.g. Vea, to cross to a neighbouring village, such as Gowrie which is situated just a few kilometres away. The Frafras in those days earned themselves the reputation of being wild drunkards and incorrigible looters. They were so addicted to *pito* (local beer) that they could even go to the extent of pawning their daughters to get hold of the drink. Those villages that wished for war would begin shooting with their bow and poison arrows upon seeing a stranger in their community. Suffice it to say that on the first coming of the white man to the Frafra area there was the tendency of the people to shoot him with their bow and poison arrows if he dared to get closer to them in their communities.<sup>23</sup>

Following George Ekem Ferguson's encounter with the Frafras during his visit to the North in 1892, he described them as follows "The inhabitants are a barbarous tribe who live mostly in family communities and resist intercourse even among their own selves with showers of arrows"<sup>24</sup>. Ferguson's report on the conduct and attitude of the Frafras towards each other compares favourably with Captain D. Mackworth (another British Colonial Officer) report following his encounter with the Frafras in May 1898. The report states: "The Frafras are under Gambaga but they are very lawless people, wear no clothes, are armed with poisoned arrows and spears and are constantly blocking the road for traders."<sup>25</sup>. These people were living in what can be described as fragmented communities, politically independent because each community had its own clan head, known as *Yizukeema*. This meant that they did not pay allegiance to any other chief apart from their elders.

It must be said that in those days a greater part of the conflicts and wars that were fought in the Frafra area were solved with the recourse of the use of poisoned arrows, manufactured from some poisonous plants called *strophanthus* and locally called *yabga*<sup>26</sup>. A sample of the poisoned arrows was sent to Neatly in Britain for testing and proved positive, i.e. the arrow head contained poisonous ingredients (See Appendix 1, Report on Native arrows, by Maj. D. Semple, the then Acting Professor of Pathology at the University of Neatly). This was the state of the Frafra country in the precolonial and during British colonial period. Songs have been composed of these wars which can be heard commonly in praise singing. Some are told as tales and some have been handed down from generation to generation as legends.<sup>27</sup> How these wars came to be known by us is summarized in Col. C.H. Armitage (then Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories): "The old men in the clans used to sit round bonfires in the evenings. Here they sat and chatted, exchanged the news and discussed unimportant matters like wars which they themselves actively

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<sup>23</sup> NAG 56/1/429

<sup>24</sup> 1894 Report by George E. Ferguson

<sup>25</sup> PRO CO 879/52, encl. no. 366, Report on Mamprusi

<sup>26</sup> ADM 56/1/38, n. 54/112/05 of 6<sup>th</sup> June 1906

<sup>27</sup> Some of these tales were collected from Atule Agmata from Bongo Anafobisi (the oldest living male member of that clan, died in 2016), Atanga Abagoosi of Bongo-Kuyelengo, Asandoo from Bongo-Wegurugu and Ayele-yamga of Gowrie. The said informants were witnesses to the wars and gave vivid account of them.

took part. The young men who often sat among them learnt about the wars and in turn passed the story to their sons.”<sup>28</sup>

## 7.2 How I came by This Information

Fieldwork was carried out by me in 1989 and so the methods I developed in obtaining the information were by oral interviews with the old men and women who knew something about the wars or heard from their parents about it or took part in the wars. I also scanned through several diaries of colonial administrators in the National Archives offices (in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale). Court records on land disputes were also extensively consulted in the Bolgatanga High Court as well as the National Archives. A study of the Gurense wars revealed many and varied causes. As said before the major causes were land and boundary disputes. The objective set out here is to share information with the reader about the conflicts and wars, which occurred in the Frafra country during British colonial rule. In this discussion we would consider the causes and effects of the wars, especially how and when the wars began, the casualties and those who arbitrated or resolved the matters, and how offenders were punished through punitive expeditions undertaken by the British. Those who were found guilty by the traditional and White Man’s courts or commissions of enquiry were punished. During my interviews, the local people were able to mention some tall list of wars that were fought in the Frafra country during their time. For convenience of our discussion these wars are put into two categories:

1. Wars that were fought between villages before the coming of the white man
2. Those that were fought during the colonial rule

Those that were fought before colonial rule were:

1. The Yareba and Booya war about 1840
2. The Nabimolisi and Nabisabilisi in Bongo-Balungo
3. Apin-Dongo – Katenga war between Zuarungu and Bolga Soe (saaba)
4. The Kantimolisi and Zuarungsi in Zuarungu

Those that were fought during the colonial rule were:

1. Bongo and Dua in November 1907
2. Logri and Nangodi in 1910
3. Biung and Winduri (in Taleland) in 1913
4. Bongo and Lungu in April 1916
5. Kadare and Goo in April 1920

Because of lack of time and space I can only discuss the most brutal wars, which were fought between villages during the British colonial rule. These are the Lungu and Bongo, Goo and Kadare, and Winduri and Biung. These wars are well known and documented. The oral history that I obtained from the old men did not, however, contradict the written history or what has been documented, but indeed collaborated them.

It would be of interest to enumerate the land boundary and chieftaincy disputes that occurred in the Frafra country during the colonial period, between 1900 to 1956. The well-known land and boundary disputes that occurred in the area as mentioned included the following:

1. The land and boundary dispute between Bongo and Nangodi in August 1915.
2. The land and boundary dispute between Dusi and Sekoti in 1916.
3. The land and boundary dispute between Logri and Sekoti in 1916.<sup>29</sup>
4. The land dispute between Nangodi and Dusoblego on 19/8/16.

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<sup>28</sup> Report of the 11<sup>th</sup> December 1916, no. 1069/96/1914 in ADM 56/1/213

<sup>29</sup> See NAG ADM 68/5/1, pp.169, 176.

5. The land and boundary dispute between Yorogo and Gowrie in 1917. Dispute was settled by Capt. S.D.Nash on 2/6/17.
6. The land and boundary dispute between Zaare and Nyarega on the 14/2/17. Dispute was settled by Capt. Louis Castellain.
7. The land and boundary dispute between Gowrie and Zaare on the 14 February 1918.<sup>30</sup>
8. The land and boundary dispute between Gowrie and Yorogo on the 22 December 1920.<sup>31</sup>
9. The land and boundary dispute between Gorogo and Winkogo in 1926.
10. The land and boundary dispute between Gamborongo and Sumbrungu on 30 June 1928.
11. The land and boundary dispute between Feo and Boko on 17 September 1929.
12. The land and boundary dispute between Tarongo and Kanga on 27 September 1929.
13. The land and boundary dispute between Feo Tindaana and Boko Tindaana in September 1929.
14. Bongo-Nangodi boundary dispute on 23/8/30.
15. The land and boundary dispute between Nangodi and Zuarungu in 1930.
16. The land and chieftaincy dispute between Bolga and Bongo at Nyarega in 1926.<sup>32</sup>

Those conflicts that were related to chieftaincy were the Zaare chieftaincy dispute in 1911, Zuarungu chieftaincy in 1915, Sumbrungu chieftaincy in 1923, Kanga and Tarongo in 1925, Arabeh chieftaincy dispute (election of Abusanga) in September 1929, Vea chieftaincy dispute in 21<sup>st</sup> March 1916 (Vea and Tansieko)<sup>33</sup>, Sambologo and Nayorogo in 1929 and 1933, Namoo and Feo settled by H.A. Blair, and Bongo and Sambologo on Ayoropia in 1929 settled by H.A. Blair. Besides these conflicts, there were disputes over territorial claims or allegiance.

### 7.3 What Are Land and Boundary Disputes?

When the usage of land and its resources is contested by two individuals in a town or community the dispute is a land dispute. If there is any dispute over the whole town or community or over the reserved lands for full communal usage on ethnic basis, this is a boundary dispute. A.A.Y. Kyerematen in his *Inter-state Boundary Litigation in Ashanti* defined land dispute as a “controversy over title to land or its appurtenants, that is, land as exploited primarily for economic purposes.”<sup>34</sup> A boundary dispute, according to Kyerematen, is a dispute between chiefdoms over territorial boundaries or territorial rights. He added that those involved in land dispute may be chiefs or private persons.

### 7.4 Significance of Land (Economic, Social and Religious)

Rattray has underscored the value of land which I quote from his use of Twi language: *Tumi nyina owo asase so* (land is the essence of all powers, which explains that authority rests on land)<sup>35</sup>. Land in its economic sense is the provider of livelihood – it provides the crops we grow and eat, the minerals and forest we obtain from it, and firewood for building, grass for roofing, herbs (leaves, roots) for medicinal purposes, and fruits (serving for nutrition). By implication, the land (as the Mother Earth) is second to God. It contains the sacred sites or trees of the communities. People die and are buried in the land. Land serves as the name of their dead parents (fathers and ancestors), gods and spirits. While underground they serve as the link between the living and the God Almighty, and they protect the living from evil influences of their enemies. Land is the home of their ancestors or gods, and they take vested interest in the preservation of the land in its entire form. Destruction to the vegetation cover, taking out soil from land,

<sup>30</sup> NAG ADM 68/5/1, p.29.

<sup>31</sup> NAG ADM 68/5/1, pp.171, 173, 185.

<sup>32</sup> NAG ADM 68/5/4, p. 141.

<sup>33</sup> NAG ADM 68/5/4, p. 30.

<sup>34</sup> Kyerematen, A. A. Y. 1971. *Inter-state Boundary Litigation in Ashanti*. Leiden: Afrika- Studiecentrum.

<sup>35</sup> Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Cosntitution*. Oxford University Press, 1929, p. 343.

and cutting down the trees means cutting down the sacred sites or destroying their livelihood. The ancestors who live in the Earth would do all they can to protect their property (that is the land). For this reason, selling land is believed to be sacrilegious. People resist those who remove the top soil, cut down their sacred groves or trees (which serve as their holy places) and such actions can result into war. In the words of F.C. Scott (one time Inspector General of the Gold Coast Police) in his report of 12<sup>th</sup> October 1895, “there is a superstitious fear on the part of the representatives of a family that if in his time any landed property of the family is sold or any other means it ceases to belong to the family, his spirit after death would be perpetually troubled by those of his predecessors for having permitted the land of his ancestors to go into the possession of others.”<sup>36</sup> So that destruction of land by another and felling of trees was one of the underlying causes of land disputes in the communities.

## **7.5 The Underlying Causes of Land and Boundary Disputes**

A few of the causes of land and boundary disputes in the Bolgatanga and Bongo Districts may be enumerated as follows:

1. Claims of title arising from the original occupation of land.
2. Where permission to settle on a neighbour’s land develops into an adverse claim of title of land.
3. A community exercising exclusive rights over its fishing areas or pastures.
4. Felling trees in the sacred areas without permission from owners of land on which the grove or tree stands.
5. Gathering of fruits (dawadawa), barks, roots, etc. without permission in the vicinity of a homestead where the trees are considered the property of the home or cultivator.
6. When a group of persons settled in one chief’s land but are harvesting locust beans (dawadawa) on another chief’s territory.
7. Alienation of land by chiefs.
8. Unfair judgments in land cases by a traditional ruler or the government court.
9. Where a river is made a boundary and each village or clan has lands on either side of the river.
10. Breaking up of the older usages in regard to land.
11. Fishing out of season or refusing to obey laws regarding fishing in some sacred sites.
12. Digging metallic ore (gold, bauxite, etc.) without permission from the owners of land on which the ore is found.
13. The failure of two parties in a land matter to fix a deadline for the discharge of a debt in a land sale.
14. The bad practice whereby land owners give or sell one piece of land to two or three people.

Other causes of land disputes were identified but they are minor such as attempts made by an individual to encroach into a neighbour’s farmland by removing or farming on the landmarks. In the next chapter, we will venture to discuss each one of these causes (not in the above order) with examples to illustrate such cases. We would also make a sketchy outline of some land and boundary disputes which happened during British colonial rule.

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<sup>36</sup> Encl. in Gold Coast no. 412.



# Chapter 8

## 8.1 Causes of Land and Boundary Disputes

Below is an outline of causes of land and boundary disputes:

1. Where permission to settle on a neighbour's land develops into an adverse claim of title to land.
2. A community exercising exclusive rights over its fishing or pasture areas.
3. Claim of title arising from the original occupation of land.
4. Fishing out of season (i.e. refusing to obey laws regarding fishing in sacred waters).
5. Alienation of land by chiefs.
6. Felling trees in the sacred groves without permission from owners of land on which the grove stands.
7. Gathering of fruits, barks and roots near a homestead where the trees are considered the property of the owner or cultivator.
8. Claiming title over a piece of land which one's ancestors never owned.
9. When a group of persons settled in one chief's land and harvest dawadawa on another chief's territory.
10. Breaking up of the older usages in relation to land.
11. Wrong and unfair judgment on the part of a court.

## 8.2 Where Permission to Settle on a Neighbour's Land Develops into an Adverse Claim of Title to Land

A tindaana or chief or headman may allow an individual or family or a few families from a different town to live on its land by permission, implied or expressed. It may happen that the members of these families increase or they are joined by many other members of their community. They may attempt to turn the permission into an adverse claim of title for their community. Or a large-scale migration of members of a different ethnic group into the land of the other for settlement may cause alarm. This large-scale migration may create fear in the minds of the land owners that these immigrants are adopting tacit methods of trying to appropriate their town or village. In each of these cases, the land owners, out of fear may withdraw their permission and resort to the exercise of their reserved rights of exclusion. If the newcomers, backed by their community, resist their rejection and exert their own claim of title this again is likely to be the cause of an inter-clan war or a land dispute. This example may be illustrated by the following cases (which relate to disputes over claims of title to land). This was a dispute between Ayikabisi and Gungaranabisi in Ve'a in 1916. According to sources, the dispute was over an area in Ve'a now known as Tansieko. It happened that in March 1916, Ayika (headman of the Azoa family) in Kulpeliga in Ve'a left his home because there was no space for building. He could live in Tansieko by permission of the Ve'a-Naba Belekoma; but when he had long settled comfortably he was joined by some of his relatives and friends from Kulpeliga and Yorogo thereby making the area predominantly Yorogo people (Yareba). Their social services such as taxes or 'lampo' (in Gurene) were paid to the chief of Yorogo (Yorogo-Naba). However, this large-scale influx of the Yorogo people became the cause of continual conflicts between the Ayikabisi and the Gungaranabisi. All what we must understand here, according to Gurensi land law, is that usage of land can be enjoyed by strangers, but under no circumstances can their claim of title be tolerated.

## 8.3 A Community Exercising Exclusive Rights over Its Fishing or Pasture Areas

From our previous knowledge, the ownership of a given territory is vested in the whole community. There are certain lands, the bu'uo and 'goo' which are reserved for community usage. This community usage is

usually extended to other community members, i.e. on a reciprocal basis, members of one community may, by express or implied permission, enter and enjoy the benefits of the land of another community. But a community may sometimes exercise their right to exclude strangers from the use of their pastures if the cattle of those strangers are infected with disease; or the strangers may be excluded to prevent the exhaustion of the pastures.

An example is provided by the war which was fought between the people of Soe (in Bolga) and the Zuaresi (people of Zuarungu) in the mid-eighteenth century. The two combating parties had their own version as to their claims of title to the pasture of land. This war was as a result of scarcity of grass in grazing lands caused by drought which also brought about scarcity of water. The efforts of the Soe people (Saaba) to exclude the Zuaresi cattle from grazing in their pastures resulted in a dispute. For many years both communities continued to use each other's territory in common. But later when claims of the title over lands in common usage began to be exerted by the Saaba a real battle was fought between them. The Zuaresi claimed that they chased away the Saaba. The Saaba also claim so. This war was the *apin-dongo-katanga war*.

#### **8.4 Claim of Title Arising from the Original Occupation of Land**

A dispute may arise between different sections of a town, if each side claims that it has the right of ownership over the land because its ancestors were the first to occupy it. The claim of title usually calls for the tracing of the history of the land to establish whose ancestors were the first occupants of the land in dispute. The protracted dispute between the Zuarungu tindaana Asakezulba Anamolega and Beorana (Tongo) Sapak in 1995, the Agangrebisi and Tindonsobiligo tindaana, Ayidaanabisi and Adamabisi in (Yikene) in 1991, Winkogo and Kalbeo, Kalbeo and Tindonsobiligo tindaana, etc. all involved a claim of title to land.<sup>37</sup> In the case of the Zuarungu tindaana and Beorana, the former claimed that during their migration from the west their ancestor was the first to discover the area in the present Beo land. He gave lands to some later settlers who were the Tose and Yeenbisi. He then sent for his sister's son, Tempeliga and gave him the Beo land which was then a forest. Hence the Zuarungu tindaana's claim of title to the Beo land. The Beo-Rana also had his own version as to his claim of title to the Beo land. According to the Beo-Rana, when their ancestor first arrived in the area from the east there was no human settlement. He was the first to occupy the land there. He even gave lands to the ancestors of Kumbosego, Dulugu, and Yarigabisi. As there were no natural witnesses to trace the history of the occupation of the land the court found it difficult to decide which village had the title over the disputed land.

In another example, such as the Agangrebisi and Tindonsobiligo tindaana, the former claimed that Agangre (their ancestor) with his followers had made a long journey wandering up to the present land of Kumbangre in Bolgatanga in search of their mates alleged to have gone there years before. On the invitation of Agangre, Aduure (ancestor of the Tindonsobiligo people) came to the area of Kumbangre. Agangre gave him part of his territory to farm. The court ruled against the Tindonsobiligo people because they were unable to substantiate their claim of title to land in the area of Kumbangre – the SSNIT Affordable Houses.

The Ayidaanabisi and Adamabisi claim of title to the land in Yikene in 1991 was on the grounds that the former said that their first settlers led by Ayidaana were the first to occupy the area. It is by such

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<sup>37</sup> Some of the competing versions of these claims were provided by Zuarungu Tindaana Asakezuleba Anamolega and Beo-Rana Sapak (in 1995) for the Zuarungu and Beo case; Awuure, Akurugu Michael, Awobigo Yakubu and Abula (all from Awuure's family) and Tindaana Ayamga (now deceased) from Tindonsobiligo for the Tindonsobiligo and Awuurebisi case; and Abugum and other elders for the Adamabisi and Ayidaanabisi case.

occupation that they acquired the title which they - as the descendants of their ancestors - inherited. They claimed that Adama and his followers received the land as a gift and so that they wanted to break the gift of title. The claim of title to the land in dispute by the Adamabisi was on the grounds that their ancestor came from Sumbrungu and settled at the present area of Bolgatanga Technical school, BOLTEC. On arrival in Yikene it was a forest 'goo' - no human settlement. Their ancestor created the vɔto (farm lands) in dispute. This was also possible because unlike the Ayidanabisi there were old men in the Adamabisi who were able to trace the history of the occupation of their ancestor on the disputed land. The High Court in Bolgatanga at last intervened and made peace between the disputants in 1998. This at first proved difficult because each side claimed that its ancestors were the first to enter and occupy the disputed areas in Yikene.

In the case of the Winkogo and Kalbeo people, the former claimed that their ancestor was the first to discover the land around Kumbangre on the Bolgatanga-Tamale road. But the then minister of Mines and Energy in the erstwhile NDC, Mr. Simon Anyoa Abingya by virtue of his position claimed the area for Kalbeo (where he came from) and released it for the building of a fuel and gas depot. There was also the case of the Zaare-Ayorebisi and the Dulusi clan on 10 May 2002.

### **8.5 Fishing Out of Season (i.e. Refusing to Obey Laws Regarding Fishing in Sacred Waters)**

In this case, sometimes the owners of a river, dam or pond may control the fishing rights in their waters till certain ceremonial rites are performed or fishing may be suspended up to a certain convenient period. If these restrictions imposed by the land owners are infringed by non-owners, this may result in a physical confrontation or war. An illustration of this point is a battle between town A and Town B (anonym). The river belongs to a certain family from A's section. It is the members of this family who decide when fishing in the river must be allowed usually after they have conducted ceremonial rites. The B people were very impatient. They did not want to wait for the completion of the rites. One day the B people in large numbers decided to march to the river before the A had lifted the restriction. A fight was the result. Several members of the B were killed by the A section people and the attempted violation of the imposed restriction on fishing rights in the river was stopped.

### **8.6 Alienation of Land by Chiefs**

In some parts of the Gurensi area, especially in the urban towns, chiefs exert greater control over land than the *tindaanduuma* (the custodians of the earth). They have almost usurped the functions of the *tindaanduuma*. The chiefs are the recipients of royalties paid on land used by Ghana's government. The question of distribution or allocation of land and the collection of royalties on lands in Bolgatanga by the Bolga-Naba Abilba III has been the bone of contention between him and the Tindonsobiligo Tindaana, Tindonmoligo Tindaana and Soe Tindaana. It appears that the question of distribution and allocation seems to be misunderstood. The chief of Bolgatanga appeared to imagine that the power to give out land was still the same as during the colonial rule. The matter of the Bolga-Naba and his Tindaama is still unresolved by the Bolgatanga High Court. This began in 1990.

### **8.7 Breaking up of the Older Usages in Relation to Land**

A violation of the following taboos connected with land is a potential source of land disputes in some parts of the Frafra land:

1. If someone harvests the locust beans (dawadawa) on an uncultivated or bush land without the express permission of the tindaana who is the custodian of those trees. The tindaana owns all the dawadawa trees, which are not situated on an individual farm.

2. If someone appropriates any lost article or livestock (cattle, goats, and metals) and refuses to give them to the tindaana for the appropriate offerings to be done on the tingane. In this case, it is believed that any stray or lost animal or a metal found on land are the properties of the tingane. So that when such things are found on land, the finder has to send them to the tindaana who goes with the clan elders to sacrifice them to the tingane.

These are rarely sources of land litigation because it is believed whoever violates these rules risks himself of being killed by the spirits of the land.

## **8.8 Wrong and Unfair Judgement on the Part of Courts**

A better illustration of this source of land dispute is as follows:

Mr. A who owns some land transfers it to his widow B as a gift. The widow then passed the same land to her sons who farm on it. Following the death of A and B, the sons of the former decided to exercise their right of re-claiming what is their father's property from B's offspring. The widow's (B) sons are obliged to give back the land because their mother did not legally acquire the title to the land. Unfortunately, B's sons contested the authenticity of A's son's claim and refused to return the land to them (A's sons). A's sons went to the chief's court and sued the widow's sons to return the land, which had passed through gift to their mother. At the chief's court the sons of the widow (B) still challenged A's sons claim and contended that the original owner (A) on his death bed willed that the land (in dispute) be transferred to their mother. It was held by the chief's court that since the sons of A wanted to revoke the gift, the title to the land be reverted to the family of the original owner (A). The chief added that the evidence given by B's sons to back their claim – the testamentary succession or making a will for land is totally unknown to native law. The families of B refused to abide by the chief's court ruling and took the matter up with the Bolgatanga High Court. Here the court dismissed A's sons claim and upheld that of B. While giving judgment the magistrate said that by (native) custom a declaration by a (native) on his deathbed as to his property is always considered a sacred thing. The heir is bound to carry out the dying wishes and it is not a mere matter of feeling. In the opinion of the court, the right of title to the land by B's family was in the circumstances a valid one and a sufficient compliance with the custom. Also based on alien law (the intestate succession law) and contrary to (native) law, the court held that a widow is entitled to retain in her own right property earned by her after her husband's death. The court was aware that this is in conflict with native custom but when native custom is repugnant to justice and equity it must give way, he added. This conflicting and unfair judgment on the part of the government court, based on alien law, was later to create a serious land dispute as each refused to comply with the rulings.

## **8.9 The Effects of Land and Boundary Disputes**

Undoubtedly, and as we'll read in our next discussions, land and boundary disputes brings/ brought in their wake loss of lives, animals and properties, poverty, disunity, strife, inertia and rancor. In fact, many houses were or often burnt and pulled down, crops and foodstuffs were/are destroyed, animals were/are driven off and people were or are often murdered with impunity and others maimed. Substantial amounts of money (in British pound sterling) or local currency goes into the recruitment of soldiers and police to keep peace, maintain law and order. And some money is used for setting up committees to investigate the causes of the wars for the appropriate and ameliorative measures to be taken. Generally, administration was/is rendered exceptionally difficult.

The effects of inter-clan wars are summarized in the theory of Professor William M.C. Douglas:

The replacement of individual by collective pugnacity is most clearly illustrated by barbarous peoples living in small strongly organized communities. "Within such communities individual combat and expressions of personal anger may be almost completely suppressed while the pugnacious instinct finds itself in perfect

warfare between communities whose relations remain subject to no law. As a rule no material benefit is gained and often none is sought in these tribal wars. All are kept in constant fear of attack, whole villages are often terminated and the population is in this way kept down very far below the limit on which any pressure on the means of subsistence could rise. This perpetual warfare like the squabbles of roomful of quarrelsome children seem to be almost wholly and directly due to the uncomplicated operation of the instinct of pugnacity.”<sup>38</sup>

### **8.10 The Land and Boundary Dispute between Bongo and Nangodi in 1915**

In 1915, a serious dispute occurred between the chief of Bongo and Nangodi as to the ownership of Dusoblego town. It was quite clear from oral tradition and history that the town of Dusoblego was a Nannam location but owing to the fact that plenty of Nangodi chief’s people in Dusoblego had diverted their allegiance to BonNaba the latter claimed jurisdiction over the entire village.<sup>39</sup> This claim by BonNaba was therefore resisted by Nangodi-Naba which ended up at the District Commissioner’s court for a settlement.

At 545 am, the then DC, Capt. T.W. Breckenridge, accompanied by his clerk and court interpreter, were in Beo on 19 August 1915 to hold an inquiry into the Bongo-Nangodi land dispute at Dusoblego. The aim was to solve the problem. During the enquiry it came out that BonNaba’s claim over Dusoblego was frivolous as he had also admitted before the DC that Dusoblego had never been part of his location. At an assembly of the chiefs and people of Nangodi and Bongo, the DC ruled that those people who had withdrawn from Nangodi section of Dusoblego to live on Bongo land would forfeit their farm lands and crops unless they returned to live on Nangodi land. He further warned the *kanbonaduuma* (chief’s representatives) of Bongo and Dusoblego to desist from inciting their people against the chief of Nangodi. In his report of the inquiry into the land dispute, the DC noted with satisfaction the following “With reference to the dispute between the chiefs of Nangodi and Bongo as to whom the village of Dosoblego is under I have the honour to inform you that Bongo gives way to Nangodi’s claim and acknowledges that the village is in that chief’s territory”<sup>40</sup>.

### **8.11 The Land and Boundary Dispute between Sekoti and Logri in 1916**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1916, the commissioner of Zuarungu went to investigate some land and boundary dispute between Sekoti and Logri. From Capt. Castellain’s (the then DC) investigations it was discovered that some years prior to this, some Logri people left /abandoned their old homes to live in Sekoti and thereafter made their farms. They settled on the east side of Sekoti near the Rest house. Even though they were living on Sekoti land, they refused to pay allegiance to Sekotinaba. At a meeting with the Logri and Sekoti chiefs and people, the DC ordered the former to pay allegiance to the latter so long as they were living on his land. And that if they did not want to obey Sekoti Naba, then they should move out of Sekoti and settle on their own villages in Logri.

### **8.12 Land and Boundary Disputes between Zuarungu and Her Neighbours**

Between 1919 and 1923, a number of land and boundary disputes occurred between Zuarungu and her neighbouring towns. For instance, on the 23 Dec. 1919, Capt. S.D. Nash, the then DC of Zuarungu settled a dispute between Zuarungu and Tongo over the land at Bari. The District Commissioner (DC) advised all those who came in from Bari to settle in Zuarungu to return to their old homes in Tongo, unless they

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<sup>38</sup> NAG-ACCRA ADM 56/1/230, par.6

<sup>39</sup> These oral sources include the Chief of Kongo and the chief of Nangodi Naba Azumah Asaga, Bon-Naba Sapeeliga (Aberinga) and Atiikela of Beo both now deceased.

<sup>40</sup> NAG. Accra ADM. 56/1/136/No. 39/2/18/1912

obeyed the orders of the Zuarungu chief. In 1922, the then DC, Mr. Cut field had to settle a land dispute between Nangodi and Zuarungu. On the 4 Jan. 1923, the DC with the assistance of the chiefs and people of Nangodi and Zuarungu, demarcated the boundary for Zuarungu and Nangodi using the Asonge river as the boundary line. Unfortunately, during the process of the demarcation, Zuarungu lost a few compounds to PeLungu (under Nangodi), and they rather gained many compounds in the Beo area. At the meeting with the people of both towns, the DC resolved that all those compounds which stood on the boundary between the Asonge river and the Mossi area could choose which one of the chiefs they wanted to follow (i.e. either Zuarungu Naba or Nangodi Naba and whichever town they chose to go to). Another dispute was settled in 1932 between Nangodi and Zuarungu involving the lands in Moshi, Dubila, Asonge and Beo.

### **8.13 The Land Dispute between Winkogo and Gorugo in 1926-1934**

Between 1926-1934, there were frequent land and boundary disputes between Winkogo and Gorugo (both under Tongo). For instance, on the 5 March 1926, a fight broke out in Winkogo over the ownership of some dawadawa trees which stood on Gorugo land. At a meeting of the chiefs and people of Winkogo and Gorogo, the DC ruled that Winkogo Naba had no jurisdiction over the Gorogo people but rather Winkogo could only take half of the dawadawa trees on his land that was farmed by those people from Gorogo. In another case in Oct. 1934, some people from Namoo in Gorogo had moved to live in Winkogo but refused to obey the orders of the chief. The decision given by the DC was that all those who moved in from Namoo together with their headman, Jatto, were to obey the orders of Winkogo Naba or remove their buildings from that land. The people of Namoo accepted the DC's decision and moved out to build in their old homes. About 31 landlords withdrew from Winkogo, some of whom came as far as to Bolgatanga and built their compounds.

## Chapter 9 Inter-Village Wars in the Frafra Area

### 9.1 The War between Bongo and Dua in 1906

A very serious war broke out in Bongo between the Boosi (in Bongo) and the inhabitants of Dua in 1906. This was in connection with a sacred grove which both clans worshipped. This grove, the author was told, was the Apusariga zonwefo. According to the story, the Boosi were said to have claimed a tract of forest land behind the Apusariga hills (also known as Azodoo) within which was the Apusariga-zonwefo sacred grove. According to my informants, some people from Bongo went to cut the branches of the sacred grove for beams without seeking permission from the people of Dua.<sup>41</sup> The Dua people, who had not been informed before the cutting, declared war on the Boosi. From the available sources, there were many people who came out from the two towns to start the war. There were about 500-600 people who were at the scene.<sup>42</sup> Informants (eye-witnesses) narrated that it would have resulted in a brutal and bloody war had it not been the timely intervention of the white man. This Whiteman according to Archival material was one Capt. A.M. Fleury who was then the District Commissioner (DC) of Navrongo (comprising then of the Kasena, Nankana and Frafras). According to the story, even though Capt. A.M. Fleury was on time to prevent any clashes the combatants had before his arrival fired two arrows. But no one was injured.



**Figure 12** It was the cutting of poles from the Apusariga Earthgod that led to the war between Bongo and Dua in 1906.

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<sup>41</sup> Here the narrations of Agmata Atule (Bongo Anafobisi) and Abotineriba Ayambire from Dua corroborate with Archival sources.

<sup>42</sup> NAG-Accra ADM 56/1/429 No. n/307/07.

## 9.2 The War between Biung and Winduri (in Tongo) in 1913

Prior to the war between the British and Talensi in 1911 there were no chiefs for Biung and Winduri (under Tongo). The only person whose position was that of a chief was the tindaana. Abinbine who was then the tindaana of Biung exercised considerable authority over the lands now covered by Dulugu, Yarigabisi and Kumbosego. Like a chief, tindaana Binbine was development oriented. He used to mobilize his people for the maintenance and construction of roads and rest houses. In appreciation of his loyalty to the government, the chief of Nalerigu and Paramount Chief of the Mamprusi Traditional Area, with the concurrence of the British officer in Zuarungu, ceded Winduri to Binbine to rule. Abinbine was therefore recognized as the legal chief of both Biung and Winduri. According to the story, during the peak of the British-Talensi war in 1911, one man called Yinango escaped from Winduri to live in Biung. When Yinango settled in Biung, the chief of Kurugu (styled Kuna) who was then the principal installer of Biung chiefs customarily enskinned Yinango as the successor to Assayeri of Biung. According to the story, Kunaba in his haste to enskin a chief for Biung did not follow the normal procedure of enskinment. That resulted in the creation of two chiefs, i.e. Binbine by the Nayiri and DC and the latter by Kunaba. By the powers conferred on him by the DC and the chief of Nalerigu, Abinbine had to control Yinango, and his people, the land and all its resources. But Yinango resented it. At one time when Yinango and his people attempted harvesting the dawadawa trees in Biung, Binbine's sons led by Kogu crossed to Biung from Winduri on the 20 April 1913 and prevented them from doing so.



**Figure 13** The harvesting of the dawadawa tree was the cause of the war between Biung and Winduri in 1913.



This later developed into a quarrel and finally a serious fight between the family of Binbine and those of Yinango. During the fight one of Binbine's men, Zuguweni from Winduri and Sah from Biung shot each other with bows and poison arrows; both men died instantly. The news of the death of Zuguweni was communicated to his family who mobilized themselves, crossed to Biung and caused a great deal of destruction. The supporters of Binbine knocked down the compound of Yinango. The houses of three of his followers - Bwembere, Yerambee and Saah- were also pulled down. Besides knocking down their compounds they also burnt their foodstuffs and carried away their animals. Two people died in the fight, two were wounded and three others sustained serious injuries. Some of the soldiers who were stationed in Zuarungu were diverted to Biung to keep peace and to maintain law and order. Those who were implicated in the war were arrested and detained in the prison cells in Zuarungu pending investigations and trial. On the 14 May 1913 a Committee of Enquiry was set up to investigate the circumstances that led to the war and the death of Zuguweni and Saah. The Committee comprised of the then medical officer of the Zuarungu station, the then chief of Wungu-Na Wunanga, the then chief of Kurugu, Na Wulseba and constable Seidu Zamberema. The rest of the committee members were Wintogsogo, Abinbine and Lau. The committee had their sittings at Winduri (under Tongo). After a thorough investigation, Abinbine and his people were found to be responsible for the war in Biung. Binbine and his people were to provide free labour at the Zuarungu station as their punishment. In addition, all those implicated were fined £1 each which was to be paid into the coffers of the Zuarungu District Treasury. Binbine on his part was warned against his exercise of authority over the people of Biung and those in the south of the Volta River. The chief of Kurugu was also reprimanded for being the brain behind the war. In his sanction to Kuna, the then PCNEP, Capt. E.O. Warden, cautioned the DC of Zuarungu: "If he (Kunaba) ever attempted making or nominating any other headmen without due authority he would be deported back to his own town."<sup>43</sup> The PCNEP further added "before recommending for confirmation any new chief brought before you by Kunaba have all the chiefs who have say in the matter brought before you and also ascertain if the man have sufficiently large following."<sup>44</sup>

The then CCNTS, Capt. Irvine who was aware of the misuse of traditional power by some paramount chiefs wrote:

The question of paramountcy seems to have been generally misunderstood. The head chiefs appeared to imagine it meant they could do exactly as they did before the British occupation with regards to the appointment of headmen, etc. Even the chief of Mamprusi was under the same delusion as he appointed two or three men as chiefs in Kanjarga.<sup>45</sup>

### **9.3 The Luinsi Rebellion against Bongo Chief (BonNaba Salibga) in 1917**

Barely a year after a war was fought between the Luinsi (from Lungu) and Boosi (in Bongo) another fight occurred between the people of Lungu and Bongo on the 9 August 1916. The cause was attempts by the latter chief to force the former men for enlistment into the Gold Coast regiment. According to the story, when war broke out between Britain and Germany, the colonial government appealed to all the chiefs in the Northern Territories to endeavor sending some men from their towns and villages for enlistment into the Gold Coast Regiment. When the chief of Bongo, BonNaba Salibga, by his position as the paramount chief of the Bongo Traditional Area had the message, he dispatched his strongmen to Lungu to catch the young men there for enlistment and they refused. During the scuffle six people from both sides sustained injuries. When the fight broke out a messenger was dispatched from Bongo to Zuarungu to inform Capt. S.D. Nash (the then DC of Zuarungu) about the fight in Lungu. Capt. S.D. Nash, in turn, dispatched a few men from the Gold Coast constabulary to Lungu to help quell the fight and, if possible, to arrest the

<sup>43</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/165/No. 315/6/1912, para. 6 of 25/6/13.

<sup>44</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/165 No. 251/6/1912.

<sup>45</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/165 No. 251/6/1912.

offenders. Following the DC's enquiry into the Bongo-Lungu fight he noted the following in his report of the 21/8/17: "The riot was altogether due to the chief Bongo's loyal efforts to catch Lungu boys at dawn as recruits."<sup>46</sup> At an assembly of the people of Bongo and Lungu the DC requested BonNaba to desist from forcing people for recruitment into the Gold Coast Regiment. And that it was the responsibility of the DC to monitor the recruitment of soldiers. However, the DC could not find his way clear to prosecute the offenders in the war and only appealed to Capt. Louis Castellain to ignore the matter and let sleeping dogs lie. The DC found the two sides blameless when he wrote "the chief of Bongo was trying to do his best to get recruits. At the same time, it was only the prompting of human nature that urged the Lungu people to resist being surrounded and caught at dawn."<sup>47</sup>

## 9.4 Bongo - Lungu War



**Figure 14** The beginning of the fight between Atobire and Abagoose families in Lungu.

The most brutal and bloody war which is still remembered in the Bongo Area is the clash between the Boogooosi of kuyelego (in Bongo) and the Lunabisi (in Lungu). This war is commonly heard in oral traditions handed down from generation to generation.<sup>48</sup> The war was started by the family of Akanbonga. One of the developments which led to the war was the so-called Lungu land dispute. This disputed land was some area dividing Bongo from Balungo<sup>49</sup>. The dispute started when Abagoose of Kuyelego (in Bongo) crossed over to Lungu and claimed a portion of a Lungu man, Apuliyam's land. According to the narration, the ancestor of Abagoose was born in Kuyelego but migrated to live in Lungu. Here he was given land to build and to farm by the Lunaba Atobire (chief of Lungu). He was later made headman over the area he settled. By his position as headman, Abagoose had access to acquiring more lands in the area. Finally, he asserted his claim over those lands he acquired as his bona fide property and he and

his offspring farmed on them for many years before they moved back and left them uncultivated. According to the story, during one early morning on the 20 April 1916 following a previous night's rainfall, the people of Lungu decided to sow their crops at the same time. It was customary for all the Lungu people so that they could take advantage of the rains and as a protection from birds and insects. According to one of the sons of Akanbonga, Atanga (1986) to take advantage of the situation, his father Abagoose, accompanied by his family members, crossed over to Lungu and set out with his stick to sow his crops. Unfortunately, he was prevented from planting by the chief of Lungu, Atobire and his son Apaliyam. But in the latter's attempt to do so, a fight ensued resulting in the death of one Luna Atobire's sons Paliam/Apaliyam<sup>50</sup>. During the fight Atobire's family members rallied a group of armed men from the village to assist in the fight against the Abagoose people. In the scuffle, one of the Lungu people who was armed with a club and a knife stabbed a Bongo man in the chest with his knife and wounded many

<sup>46</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/165 No. 136/18/1917.

<sup>47</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/165 No. 136/18/1917

<sup>48</sup> Ape-elebe Ndale from Bongo-Kuyelebisi, Asika from Bongo Nayire (this man was imprisoned alongside Bon-Naba Salibiga in 1943 for man- slaughter), Atanga Abagoose (son of the originator of the Bongo war in 1916). Information was collected from these people in 1983-86.

<sup>49</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/193, Zuarungu District Native Affairs, incident at Bongo (12/2/14-3/1/19).

<sup>50</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/165, p. 66

with his club resulting in many having cuts and skull fractures. According to the story, one of Abago-ose's men realizing the seriousness of the fight ran to BonNaba (chief of Bongo) to secure his assistance in stopping the fight. The fight lasted for two hours before BonNaba (then Salibga) arrival. On his arrival at the scene (and riding a horse) he used all his efforts to separate the fighters but without success. Failing in his endeavour, BonNaba Salibga rode on horseback to report the war situation to the DC then stationed in Zuarungu. This is clear in the provincial commissioner's letter No. 165/19/1913 of 25 April 1916 to the chief commissioner, NTS which stated:

Sir,  
 I have the honour to inform you that a runner arrived this morning from District Commissioner – Navrongo-Zuarungu reporting rioting at Bongo in Frafra between tribes in which I regret to learn corporal Timbila Kangarga of the NTC was killed and constable Nazoa Grunshi wounded (but doing well) while assisting to quell it. Dr. Donelly who was visiting Navarro is with the commissioner at Bongo and I have re-inforced the latter with a sergeant and 12 men.

According to the report, when the District Commissioner (DC) received the report he immediately dispatched two constables to Lungu to help quell the fight and maintain law and order. These were constable Timbila Kanjarga and Nazua Frafra. They were assisted by Corporal Alhandu. The two constables who came on horse backs arrived in Lungu at noon and pleaded with the combatants to stop the fight. And like the BonNaba, they failed in controlling the fight. At the same time the Lungu rioters attacked BonNaba and the police constables with their arrows. The BonNaba Salibga had one arrow shot at his ankle or heel<sup>51</sup>. The two constables - corporal Timbila Kanjarga and constables Nazoa Grunshi - were shot with arrows. Constable Nazoa had several arrows thrown at him besides the confiscation of his horse and cap. Timbila Kanjarga was struck by two arrows on the body which caused his death later at Bongo. News of the fighting began to spread and at about 5 pm, the DC, Alfred Louis Castellain, was well informed of the situation by BonNaba's messengers Anaba and Akumolega.



**Figure 15** Constable Nazoa being shot with an arrow.



**Figure 16** Lungu attacker.

<sup>51</sup> NAG ADM 56/1/165, p.7.



**Figure 17** Louis Castellain (in the middle) in 1922, then DC of Zuarungu-Navrongo.

During this time all the neighbouring towns of Bongo had all rushed from their homes in support of Lungu people. Three sections from Namoo, two from Sambologo and one from Soe joined Lungu against Bongo. The above coupled with the support of other neighbouring towns and the Lungu rioters plundered and destroyed the Bogorogo and Zaasi sections of Bongo. In fact, the ring leaders led the rioters to burn compounds and to murder the Boosi with impunity. Several houses (about fifty) were razed to the ground. Thirty-one of the Bongo people were killed in the attack (see Appendix 2A). When the fighting got worse the British officials in Tamale dispatched some well-disciplined and experienced soldiers from Navrongo to Bongo for quelling the fight and maintaining peace. They included sergeant Mama Chakose, a Lance corporal and 10 Northern Territories Constabulary men carrying 100 rounds of ammunition<sup>52</sup>. This batch of the Gold Coast Regiment arrived in Zuarungu from Navrongo on the 22 April 1916 at 430 a.m. They were accompanied by Dr. James Donnelly. The soldiers moved from Zuarungu to Bongo on the 23 April 1916 and attacked the Lungu rioters. The Luunsi also made an overwhelming attack and discharged their poison arrows on the soldiers and determined to destroy Bongo. When the rioters seemed to conquer the soldiers, a re-enforcement was requested from Tamale by Alfred Louis Castellain to help cope with the situation. Upon the request a contingent of 46 NCO and men including sergeant Egala Grunshi (21 of whom were mounted) were dispatched to Zuarungu by the then Acting Provincial Commissioner of the North East Province (NEP) captain Henry Thornton Camden Wheeler. These people arrived in Bongo on the 27 June 1916 and proceeded to the rebel towns and attacked them. They carried with them 120 rounds of ammunition, one maximum gun with 2000 rounds. The entire constabulary force under the command of Alfred Louis Castellain succeeded in dislodging the Lungu rioters at the cost of a few of their men. The DC Louis Castellain accompanied by the medical officer Dr. James Donnelly patrolled the rebel towns and found the villages completely deserted. His efforts to restore the confidence of the people by asking them

<sup>52</sup> NAG ADM 56/1/165, p.146, Native Affairs and Riots.

to come out of their hideouts proved futile. By the end of June, the area seemed settled and so the DC Alfred Louis Castellain who was satisfied with the peaceful nature of the neighbouring towns returned to Navrongo. Meanwhile, earlier, the then Acting PCNEP captain H.T.C. Wheeler disenskinned the chief of Namoo Namorana Aganaba alleged to have incited his people against Bongo. While approving the disenskinning of Namoo chief the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories (CCNTS) in a letter of the 22 June 1916<sup>53</sup> stated: "I approve of the destoolment of the chief of Namorgu and of the appointment of a new chief in his place on probation."<sup>54</sup>

According to sources, the rioters who were determined to defeat the force laid ambush and succeeded in killing one constable Salifu Frafra and wounding Sergeant Mama Chakosi. The former had one arrow shot in the knee. In addition, the rioters succeeded in seizing their guns, each of which contained 70 rounds ammunition. The Force in turn killed forty-three of the rebels (see appendix 2B). The CCNTS praised the bravery of constable Salifu Frafra for the role he played in saving the life of one of his comrades. The contents read: "He and constable Yakubu Grumah behaved in a most praiseworthy manner in sticking to the wounded comrade as long as possible"<sup>55</sup>. On the morning of the 8 July, 1916 when the constabulary force followed to arrest the ring leaders the rebels once again attacked them. There was another encounter on the 10 July 1916 between the people of Asebere and 60 of the NTC (see appendix 3). The constabulary force camped in the Bongo Rest house using the town as the base for their operations.



**Figure 18** Constabulary Force that was mobilized to quell the fight in Bongo in 1916.

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<sup>53</sup> No 486/96/1914

<sup>54</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/165, pp.76-77

<sup>55</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/165, p. 157, Native Affairs and Riots

This latter operation was under the command of Capt. Alfred Louis Castellain and supported by Dr. Donnelly (then medical officer of Gambaga), and Sgt. Major Egala Grunshi. The NTC carried with them one maxim gun.

They set out as follows: “All the mounted men were at the flank but a few at the front and rear. The mounted patrol in the flank were about 300 yds. to 400 yds. from Capt. Castellain and his group. Then the whole of the mounted party formed a large moving square in the centre of which was placed the main body of men, the O.C (officer commanding), Dr. Donnelly, etc. The individual horse men forming this square were not close together, on the contrary, they were far apart. This was practically the type of formation all the time with, of course, the exception of the time of firing from the maxim and by some of the members of the main body. When the soldiers defeated the rebels on the 10 July 1916 they followed up to Namoo, Balungo, Boko, Feo, Lungu, Nayorogo and so forth and burnt down their houses and destroyed their crops.”<sup>56</sup> During the encounter some of the leaders of the rebel group namely Agigne of Namoo, Anyanaba and Anyeraga of Feo, Akidima and Ayetebo of Ayopia, Apai alias Gorana and Alatanga (of Soe), Abugum alias Boko-Naba, Akara of Lungu and Lunaba Atobire escaped to the French Territory of Burkina Faso. Under the terms of Art. i and iii of the Anglo-French extradition Treaty of 8 April 1878<sup>57</sup>, the French officers at Leo were detailed to arrest the rioters who had fled to their territory, (appendix 4). A letter was dispatched to the French Residents at Leo on 12 May 1916 (letter No. 200/19/913) by the (NEP). Based on this, a total of eight ringleaders were arrested by the French officials during their operation and returned to Tamale. Two of them died while they were awaiting trial. One of the ring-leaders LuNaba Atobire was later arrested by the chief of Balungo from his hide-out in some rocks at Balungo on the 16 September 1916 (appendix 5). Another ring-leader, Agigne of Namoo was arrested in his house at 3 am during a military operation led by Capt. Wheeler, his guide and an interpreter on the 31 May 1916. The eight ring-leaders including Abago-ose, Aduko and Aleeba (from Lungu) were all tried at the Chief Commissioner’s Court (CCC) at Tamale. They were all charged on counts ranging from arson to murder. In the first sitting held at the chief commissioner’s court at Tamale on the 23 August 1916 presided over by the then Hon. C. H. Armitage, Anyeraga of Feo was charged on two counts. Count 1 stated “In that he at Bongo on or about the 20 April, 1916 with others led by him did intentionally and unlawfully cause certain dwelling house sand compounds belonging to the natives of Bongo to be set on fire contrary to sect. 253 CCC.” Count 2 stated “That he at Bongo on or above the 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1916 did directly took part in a riot.” In the same court held on the 24 August 1916, Akabore (the then headman of the Donne area of Balungo), Akidima and Ayetebo of Ayopia were all charged on two counts: “arson contrary to section 253 CCC and rioting with weapons contrary to section 337 CCC.”

In addition to the said charges, Akabore was charged for murder contrary to section 222 of section 47 (1) (2) (4) CCC. The particular of the offence of murder read as follows: “That he at Bongo in or about the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1916 did intentionally because the natives of Bongo by instigating his followers of the Doni section of BaLungu to shoot and kill them with arrows contrary to section 222 CCC”. Furthermore, at the same court in Tamale on the 27 August 1916, Agigne/Ajignidi (SIC) was charged on three counts: arson, rioting and abetment of murder. Count 1 of the charges preferred on Agigne read as follows: “In that he at Bongo on or about the 20 April, 1916 with others led by him did intentionally and unlawfully cause

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<sup>56</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/213 His Excellency minutes about disturbance in Bongo.

<sup>57</sup> Article 1 of the Anglo-French Extradition Treaty stated: “The contracting parties engage to deliver up to each other those persons who are being proceeded against or who have been convicted of a crime committed in the territory of the one party and who shall be found with the territory of the other party under the circumstances and conditions stated in the present treaty armed with one offensive instrument to wit a bow and arrows contrary to sect. 337 CCC”.

certain dwelling houses and compounds belonging to the natives of Bongo to be set on fire contrary to section 253 ccc. Art. iii stated “The crimes for which the extradition is to be granted are the following:

- i. Manslaughter
- ii. Abduction
- iii. Kidnapping and false imprisonment
- iv. Arson
- v. Wounding or inflicting grievous bodily harm.

Count 3 of Agigne’s offence read: “That he at Bongo on or about the 20 April, 1916 did directly abetted certain natives of Namoo/Namogo (SIC) not in custody to murder certain Bongo natives two of whom were called Azori and Ayamdago contrary to sec. 222 of sec. 47 (1) (2) (4)<sup>58</sup>. Unfortunately, Agigne and two of the other ring-leaders Anyeriga and Akabore and Ayetebo were all found guilty of two or three of the counts and were sentenced to death by hanging on Feb. 16, 1917. Another culprit, Atubga was sentenced to death by execution on the 24 November 1916. Besides the ring leaders, those who were also implicated in the war against Bongo, namely Aleeba, Aduko and Abago-ose, were each given six months imprisonment with hard labour (IHL)<sup>59</sup>. They were all imprisoned in Gambaga in the Northern Region.

The then PCNEP Capt. Thomas William Breckenridge wrote in his report of the 24/11/16 No. 1069/96/1914 in ADM 56/1/213 as follows: “I found it necessary to prosecute Abangawseor Abago-ose because it was his attempt to assert ownership over some land that had for buy ceased to be his property that caused the bloodshed and misery in Bongo”. On the 8 November 1916, the then chief commissioner of the Northern Territories C.H. Armitage who was accompanied by the PCNEP Capt. T.W. Breckenridge and the then Nayiri, Na Mahama, arrived in Zuarungu from Tamale. His aim was to tour the area and discuss with the people the harmful effects of wars such as was the case in Bongo. He was also to hold enquiry into the cause of the Bongo disturbance and, if possible, settle the case. On the 22 November 1916 the chief commissioner and his entourage met an assembly of the chiefs and people of Bongo to settle the case. It was adduced from oral submissions that the chief of Namoo, Namonaba Aganaba who was alleged to have been the hub of the conspiracy to murder certain natives of Bongo was found innocent. And so, he was exonerated from all blame. The CCNTS, C.H. Armitage made the following commentary about Namoo-Naba in his Report which is of particular interest: “The Ex-chief of Namogo appears to have done his best to prevent his people from fighting, apparently his only fault being that of not reporting Agigne/Ajignidi (SIC) return to his compound. His failure to do as if he knew of Ajignidi return was probably due to his fear of a dangerous man who had just succeeded in alienating the allegiance of his subject”<sup>60</sup>.

The CCNTS re-instated Aganaba as the constitutional chief of Namoo having relegated the position of Averi (Aveli) to the background. The chief of Bongo, Balungo and Sambologo who all risked their lives in their attempts to stop the rioters were on the same day praised by the chief commissioner and were held in high esteem as examples to other chiefs to emulate. Having made the enquiry into the Bongo disturbance and having being satisfied with oral submissions from witnesses, chiefs and people of the Bolgatanga and Bongo areas the PCNEP ruled out that hence forth neither the family of Lunaba Atobire nor those of Abago-ose should assert ownership over the disputed land. The two parties were well informed that the river Yarigatanga (now the Veia Dam) which ran through the farm was to be the dividing line between Bongo and Lungu. No one was therefore permitted under the circumstances to farm on it. Abago-ose (the originator of the war) was told that his claim to the Lungu land lapsed from the time his father withdrew

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<sup>58</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/216.

<sup>59</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/213, His Excellency Minutes about Disturbance in Bongo.

<sup>60</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/165, p. 89, paragraph 4.

from Lungu to resettle on Bongo land. While commenting on the evidence given by Abagoose, the PCNEP in his report of the 24 Nov. 1916 (No. 5/29/1912) to the CCNTS wrote as follows:

Sir,

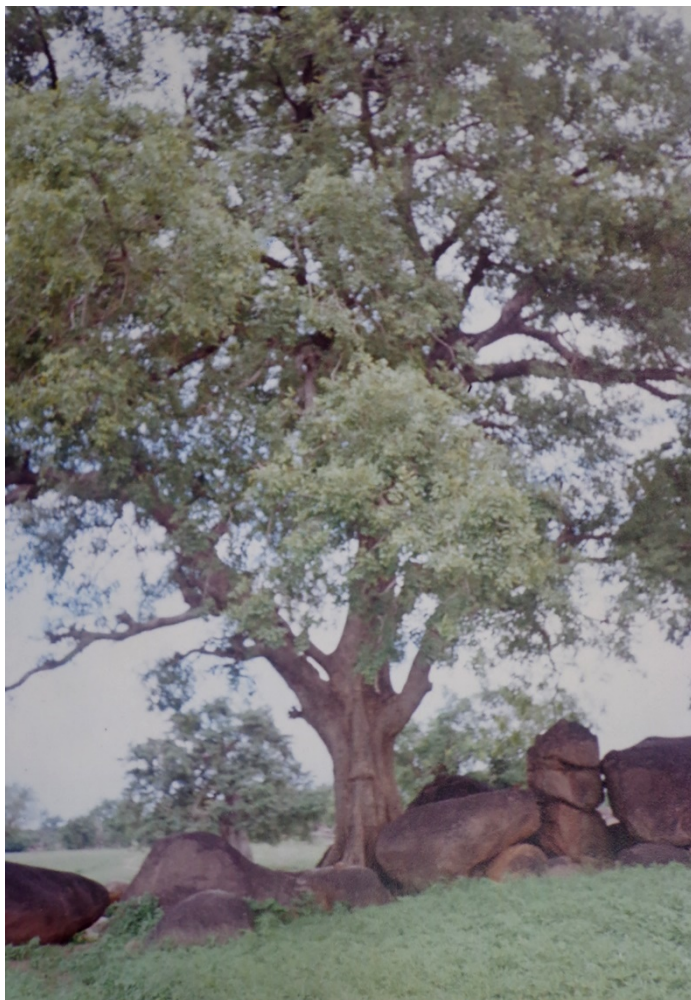
I have the honour to forward here with the statement taken with regard to the ownership of the farm at Lungu; which was the cause of the recent outbreak in the Bongo District.

Bo Gausi (SIC), himself was a most tantalizing and unsatisfactory witness. He contradicted himself time and again and would not, if he could help it give a direct answer to a question.

At times it took from 10 to 15 minutes to get an answer to the simplest direct question. In the end, I got enough to be able to piece together something fairly convincing.

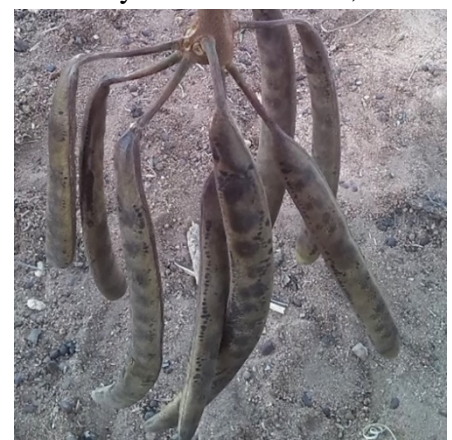
The evidence of the man Apaliam was very straight forward. He is very simple person who really did not care who owned the land so long as he was allowed to grow enough food for his own use. I place a great deal of reliance on the evidence I got from him”<sup>61</sup>.

## 9.5 The Goo and Kadare War in 1920



**Figure 19** Harvesting the fruits of the dawadawa tree (locust bean) was the cause of the Kadare-Goo war in 1920.

This was the second case of a brutal and bloody war well known in the former Frafra District Council Area. This war, like the Bongo and Lungu inter-clan war, claimed several lives and property. And like any war in the district, the Goo-Kadare war was solved with recourse to the use of poisoned arrows. The bone of contention in the Goo and Kadare war was the ownership of dawadawa trees which stood on a land occupied by rocks on the boundary between Goo and Kadare. The quarrel first began with some two old men, Agureme of Kadare and Azubire of Goo quarrelling over the harvesting of dawadawa beans (locust beans) from the trees that stood on the boundary of the two towns. According to oral tradition and confirmed by archival sources, in the early morning of the 12 April 1920, Azubire who was accompanied by his son and two wives went to Kadare to harvest the dawadawa trees which stood on Agureme’s farm.<sup>62</sup> But he



**Figure 20** The beans of the dawadawa tree.

<sup>61</sup> NAG ADM 56/1/91.

<sup>62</sup> An account of the story was provided by Ayipaala from Goo working with Ghana Highways Authority (now deceased) and the Tindaana of Kadare.



was met with resistance from Agureme and the family. When Azubire insisted on harvesting the beans, there resulted a struggle and eventually a fight broke out. There were war cries which attracted many people to the scene. The war actually started at 7 am and ended late in the evening the same day. Many people were withdrawn from Kadare, Goo, Gamborogo, Balungo and Zorko to the scene<sup>63</sup>. The people rushed to the scene with stones while some armed themselves with bows and arrows. Plenty of people were in fact withdrawn to the scene following the war cries. The then chief of Kadare-Naba Adombire on hearing the war cries immediately mounted on his horse and rode in among the crowd in an attempt to separate the combatants. But he was unsuccessful. Kadare-Naba Adombire having failed to settle the dispute dispatched his messenger to Bongo to inform BonNaba Salibga about the war. The report got to BonNaba at 9:00 am who in turn reported to the DC at Zuarungu, through his errand at 3 p.m. The then Ag. DC of Zuarungu, Mr. W.E. Gilbert also promptly dispatched a Non-commissioned officer and two other constables to Zoko to help stop the fight and, if possible, arrest the offenders. But when the police got to the scene the fight had stopped and the people had left for their villages. Nonetheless, a few people including Agureme, Amoah, Asa-anbibga-Dongo and Azubire Asa-anbibga (the originators of the fight) and their families were arrested and taken to Zuarungu (the then headquarters of British Administration of the Frafra District). In all, about eight people, including the chief of Kadare, Naba Adombire, were arrested on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1920. The then PCNEP, captain Alfred Louis Castellain requested Mr. W.E. Gilbert (Acting DC) to hold an inquiry into the events that led to the fighting in Zoko and into the real ownership of the disputed land and the dawadawa trees. A preliminary investigation into the war began on the 14 April 1920 by Mr. W.E. Gilbert. The then Ag. PCNEP Louis Castellain who was accompanied by Mr. W.E. Gilbert and other administrative staff followed up to Zoko on the 15 April 1920 where they held talks with the inhabitants of Goo and Kadare. The visit was also aimed at assessing the damage caused in the area. Many people were present at the investigations. From the enquiry it was well established that both Azubire and Agureme had no valid claim to the land as well as the dawadawa trees that stood on the land. It was also discovered that the trouble about the dawadawa trees began as far back as 1895/96 or much earlier. According to the commissioner's investigation, the land which was disputed belonged to some man in Goo who entrusted it to a Bongo man. After a short but intensive enquiry the then Ag. PCNEP captain Louis Castellain and the DC followed to address the gathering. The Ag. PCNEP warned that the Government under the circumstances would no longer entertain aggressiveness and disobedience and that the offenders will attract prison sentences, if such people were identified. Regarding the conduct of the people of Kadare, Goo, Balungo and Gamborogo, the PCNEP fined each village 5000 arrows. The PC wrote the following which is of interest: "They were fined in arrows as I understand these are easily collected than money from the people."<sup>64</sup> Out of the 5000 arrows fine the chief of Kadare was only able to procure 1,600 arrows which he handed over to the DC at Zuarungu on the 9 May 1920.

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<sup>63</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 68/5/1, pp.377-378

<sup>64</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/280 paragraph 12 (case No 29/1918)



**Figure 21** This type of arrows was used as a means to solve their controversies.

All those who were arrested in connection with the war, namely Agureme Azubire, Amoah (father of Agureme) and so forth, were committed to trial at the Chief Commissioner’s Court in Tamale. They were tried under sections 336 and 337 and 47 No.12 of the criminal code. On the 8 June 1920, the four men including Agureme and Azubire were arranged before the Chief Commissioner’s Court (CCC) at Tamale and charged on two counts. At the Chief Commissioner’s Court presided over by His Honourable Captain C.H. Armitage CMG DSO CCNTS the offences were enumerated as follows:

Count 1: “For that they on the 13 April 1920 at Goo did take part in a riot contrary to sec. 336 of 12/92”.

Count 2: “For that they at the same time and place did incite Akanbonne and others unknown to take part in a riot being armed with dangerous instruments to wit bows and arrows contrary to sec. 337 and 47 No. 12/92”. At the Chief Commissioner’s Court both Agureme (son of Amoah) and Asa-anbibga Azubire were found guilty of the two counts and were sentenced to a total of three years of imprisonment, each with hard labour. Each was to serve one year for the offence in count 1 and two years for count 2.

Unfortunately, both men died in prison. Since there was not enough evidence to convict Amoah and Alakbashie (SIC), the court acquitted and discharged them. Nonetheless, they were bound over to appear before court if they were called upon to do so. In his report to the CCNTS, the PCNEP explained “I committed the old men instead of dealing with them myself as I understand it is the old men in this district who are generally responsible for stirring up the young men to fight and though they are old perhaps a heavier sentence than 1 I could give will have a beneficiary effect.”<sup>65</sup> There was a total of 50 people who were wounded, 3 people died in the clash between Goo and Kadare.<sup>66</sup> The number of casualties was as follows:

1.	Kadare	29 wounded	1 killed
2.	Goo	13 wounded	----
3.	Gamborogo	3 wounded	1 killed
4.	Balungo	3 wounded	1 killed
5.	Zoko	2 wounded	1 killed
Total		50 wounded	3 killed

<sup>65</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/230 paragraph 11 (No.6/1920)

<sup>66</sup> NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/230 Paragraph 6. (case No. 29/1918)

## **PART IV GENEALOGIES AND HISTORIES OF THE TINDAANDUUMA IN BOLGATANGA AND BONGO**

In all the villages and towns in the Gurensi land, a tradition is kept on the origin of the first settlers. These traditions assert the claim of a single descent line to sole right to land and / or chieftaincy. The main functions of these pioneer settlers was and still is essentially ritual because they perform sacrifices and administer oaths to the powerful shrines, Earth-Gods and land spirits in the villages. Succession to this office with some few exceptions was and still is restricted to the offspring of the pioneer settlers.<sup>67</sup> It is the aim of part IV of this book to trace the history of tindaanaship in some of the Gurensi towns and villages. We will discuss here the families and lineages who perform the rites connected with land and the important Earth-Gods and ancestral trees. We will account for the tindaanas of the various towns in their order of succession from the first creation of the towns to the present (twenty first century). A cursory account is given on the ascension rites associated with each town's tindaana (as these rites vary from locality to locality).

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<sup>67</sup> NAG ADM 68/5/2, Daily Report of the 28th Oct. 1913.

# Chapter 10 Origin, Migrations and History of the Bolga People

## 10.1 Founders and Foundation of Bolga Town

Bolga town is inhabited by two social groups. They are the Tindaambisi (pioneer settlers' children) and Nabisi (chief's children/offspring). Both of these social groups trace their origin to Yua. The only difference is that one of the groups came from Yua (in the Kasena-Nankana District) and the other group came from Yua (in the French country of Burkina Faso). Research has, however, shown that those who claim their origin from Yua (in the Kasena-Nankana area) just stayed in the place for two or three generations, having left the following towns in the Yatenga Province of Burkina Faso: Gourcy, Oula and Xiebele (also spelt Chibelle) near Ouhihouya. It would be wrong for people to assume that the origin of the Bolga people lies in Yua only. Nonetheless, it would interest the reader to note that those groups that came from Yua in both the Kasena-Nankana area and the French country of Burkina Faso dominate Bolga town today. For instance, the Atulbabisi (Apɔɔrebisi, Anafobisi, Awarebisi, and Akunlibebisi in Tanzui), Zorbisi, Sokabisi, Dagmeo, Dapore-Tindongo, Tindonsobiligo, Tindonmoligo, Pologo, Bukere and Pobaga are migrants from Yua. The Tindaambisi (comprising of Tindonmoligo, Tindonsobiligo and Dapore-Tindongo) are believed to have migrated from Yua in the French country of Burkina Faso. The date of their migrations cannot be determined from their genealogies, which goes back to eighteen to twenty generations back. That means that the Tindaambisi in Bolga may have been living in their new homes about 450-500 years ago. The founding father of the autochthonous clans (tindaama) was Atandagere and popularly called Abolga. He was believed to have arrived in the area with his family and some few companions from Yua (in the French country of Burkina Faso). According to oral history, a fight ensued among Abolga and his brothers in Yua over who was to succeed their father's skin.<sup>68</sup> As a result of the family squirmishes, Abolga/Atandagere withdrew from Yua with his family and a few followers such as Asorebaseya and Agutinga to build in the area of Amirigu (in Yikene).<sup>69</sup> According to the story, Abolga married two wives. One of them gave birth to Asamsoo and Anafo. The other wife gave birth to Azagsibaga and Adaaba. It is related that Adaaba (alias Tindanbia) and Azagsibaga (alias Tindonmoligo) were of one mother while Asamsoo and Tindonsobiligo (Anafo) were of the same mother. However, according to sources, Tindonmoligo (Red) and Tindonsobiligo (Black) were twin brothers<sup>70</sup> and the former was senior. There is controversy among the families of Abolga as to which of his sons was senior and who was junior. And it is even doubtful whether Tindonsobiligo (Anafo) and Tindonmoligo (Azagsibaga) were truly twins.<sup>71</sup> It is even believed by other descendants of Abolga that Tindonmoligo (Red) was a female.<sup>72</sup> And therefore, her descendants are sister's sons (pɔka kɔɔma). In view of these

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<sup>68</sup> Personal interview with Tindaan Wa'am of Tindonmoligo, Tindaan Yamga of Tindonsobiligo and Tindaan Yu'ure of Dapore-Tindongo on 8th April, 1980. The last was not a Tindaana then.

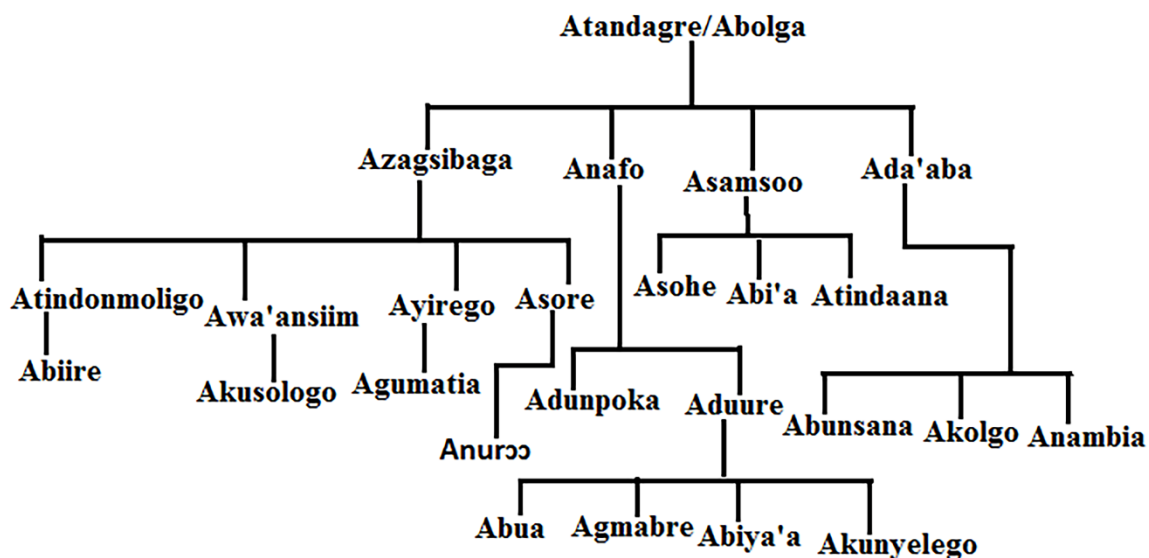
<sup>69</sup> NAG-A-A 68/5/5 p.4.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> My informants mentioned in note 61 disputed archival source NAG.A.ADM 68/5/5, p.4, which stated that Tindonmoligo and Tindonsobiligo were twins. Their version was further confirmed by the sons and grandsons of the two Tindaanas in a review with them in May 2015 at Lands Secretariat, Bolga. Present were Ayɔka Akologo and Atia Ayamga (Tindonsobiligo).

<sup>72</sup> Admission by the families of Tindonmoligo (Atingawanya Yankee and Awa'amzeim Akusologo) and those of Dapore-Tindongo (Akulpeeligo Abanga and Emmanuel Apooore) and that of Ayamga Atia (Tindonsobiligo). According to these informants, Tindonmoligo's mother (daughter of Azagesibaga) married at Tongo. As a result of famine and hunger she returned to stay with her brothers Anafo, founder of Tindonsobiligo, and Asamsoo, founder of Dapore-tindongo. She later mated with a lover and gave birth to Amolega who became the Tindaana of Tindonmoligo. Hence the claim that Tindonmoligo was a female.

controversies, one needs to probe into the relationship of Abolga's sons and daughters to each other much further. Abolga lived and died in Amirigu and was buried there. He was survived by five or so sons who were later to become the founders of Tindonmoligo, Tindonsobilgo, Dapore-Tindongo and Soe, which form the four patrilines of Abolga's descendants within the territorial boundary of Bolga. Yikene - the original home of Abolga - is undoubtedly the oldest settlement in the region of Bolgatanga. On the question of who is the most senior tindaana of Abolga's descendants, the majority would say the Tindonmoligo tindaana. Currently the god of Abolga (founder of Bolga) which was originally kept under some rock in Amirigu is in the care of the Tindonmoligo tindaana. The god symbolises the perpetuity, identity and common ancestry of the tindaama. The early genealogy of Abolga is shown in the figure below:



**Figure 22** The early genealogy of Abolga's descendants.

According to oral tradition, some generations after Abolga and his companions had lived in Amirigu, a group of Moosi led by Anabila arrived in Yikene (Amirigu) to join Abolga. Anabila came with Asa-amgongo, Asoka, etc. and this group is said to have arrived in Yikene/Amirigu from Aliya-Tanga near Ouhigouya (the capital town of the Moosi state of Yatenga) through Yua. It was Abolga who gave Anabila and his companions some land at Amirigu to build and to farm. Abolga made Anabila chief and he remained himself the tindaana of the community. Anabila was therefore the founder of the Nabissi clan in Bolga today. The dispersion of the descendants of the founders of the two major social groups in Bolga – the Tindaama and Nabisi clans - from their old homes in Yikene would receive attention in due course. The people of Bolga town, however, assert that there is remote connection among them, and especially the pioneer settlers (Tindaambisi) and the royal clan (Nabisi). This relationship is borne out of the fact that they all believed themselves to have migrated from Yua (in both the Kasena-Nankana) and Burkina Faso and lived together in Yikene. The connection between the two main social groups (Tindaama and Nabisi) in the Bolga town is sometimes denied but it appears to be obvious. The relationship between these two groups would be much appreciated if we trace their origins and history. There are two major exogamous totemistic clans that inhabit Bolga town. These are the Tindaambisi and the Nabisi clans. A distinction is made between these two groups: only the Tindaambisi provide the Earth-god priest (tindaana) and the Nabisi provide the chief (naba). A tindaana is always needed in the major rituals of the community such as

land, harvest, and murder rites. The Nabisi (literally: chiefs' offspring/children), unlike the tindaanabisi, have exclusive rights to possess nam (chieftaincy). That means they have the power to rule or govern the people.

What we must understand is that in the traditional Gurensi society a chief can only exercise the function of a tindaana if he was ritually initiated into the office. A distinction is made between the tindaana and naba with the expression “Naba suo la a neriba, tindaana suo la a tiṅa” (literally spoken as “the chief is for the people, the tindaana is for the land”).<sup>73</sup>



**Figure 23** Tindonmoligo Tindaana Ayeta Ayinbire Atuuna (enskined on 17th November 2015).

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<sup>73</sup> NAG-A-A 56/1/179 par.60

## 10.2 Facts about Bolgatanga

Bolgatanga lies in the heart of the savannah land of the Upper East Region of Ghana. It came under British rule in 1900. Bolgatanga is the most strategically located town in the whole of the Frafra District of the Upper East Region of Ghana. It is the most important Frafra town. Bolgatanga is located between the 10°47' N and 00°51' W latitude and longitude respectively. It is located at about 700 meters above mean sea level. It is the capital of the Frafra as well as the capital of the Upper East Region. It replaced Zuarungu as the capital of the then Upper Region (now Upper East) in the late 1960s (precisely 1969). The people who live in Bolgatanga call themselves Gurensi. They speak Gurenɛ, vaguely called “Farafara.” The Gurensi form the majority of people in the Bolga town, if not the whole of the Frafra District Council Area. The 1921 population census of the Bolga town was 9808 (4720 females, 5088 males). The population of the Bolga town in 1948 was 3645 (1591 males and 2054 females). There were 253 houses in Bolga town during the 1948 census taking. The 1960 population census of the Bolga town was 5515 with 1557 houses. The 1970 census recorded 18896 people.<sup>74</sup> Volker Riehl’s estimate of the 1984 population census of the Bolga town was 31500.<sup>75</sup>

The founding of the Bolga town dates from about the mid-sixteenth or seventeenth century. The people who live in the Bolga town are just a collection of clans and lineages from the Kasena-Nankana area and the French country of Burkina Faso. Some of these people came from the Yua in the Kasena-Nankana area. Other came from the Yua in the French country of Burkina Faso. There were others who came from Aliya-Tanga in Burkina Faso and some came in from Lago (spelt Lɛɛŋɔ)/Oula near Ouhigouya (capital town of the Moosi state of Yatenga).

There are two or more schools of thought on how Bolgatanga derived her name. According to the first school of thought, on the first coming of the White men to this part of the country they met some women sitting at the Ayia-Tanga and enquired about the place to which they replied “Boleŋa – Tanga.” Boleŋa – Tanga was corrupted to Bolgatanga.<sup>76</sup>

This may be understood in this way: what is called today as Bolgatanga was originally called Ayia-Tanga. This is the area where the most influential Earthgod or shrine of the Dapore-Tindaama, the Ayia stands. This is in the nature of an ebony tree standing in between rocks (ta’ansi (plural)/tanga (singular)). Ayia-Tanga was a resting place for women who used to shuttle between Dapore-Tindongo and Kumbangren and Tindonsobiligo (on the main Bolga-Tamale trunk road) to collect soft soil (in Gurenɛ “bole”). The area where bole is collected is boleŋa. And so boleŋa-tanga – rocks on which women carrying soft/top soil take their rest or sit to share information.

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<sup>74</sup> See 1970 Population Census of Ghana, vol. 1. The Gazetteer Census office, Accra December 1973, Table 1, p. xx.

<sup>75</sup> See Riehl 1989, p. 24.

<sup>76</sup> The first school of thought was led by Ben Anyelom, Ayu’ure Adingo (later Tindaana of Dapore-Tindongo) and Abumbii-Kolgo.



**Figure 24** The Ayia-Tanga, the sacred earth-god of the Dapore-Tindaama.

According to the second school of thought, Bolgatanga is a derivation of Abolga under rock.<sup>77</sup> In the area of Amirigu (in Yikene) there was a special rock dedicated to the spirit of the historical founder of the town, Abolga. So that under the rock was the god of Abolga: Abolga-Tanga (i.e. Abolga's rock/ Abolga under a rock). Yikene could be described as the original Bolega-Tanga because it was here the god of Abolga was hidden under rocks. The area now erroneously called Bolgatanga was originally Ayia-Tanga.

### **10.3 Development of the Ayia market**

Before the advent of colonial rule in Northern Ghana in 1900 there was a market in Bolga called Ayia, which was and still is located on some rocks in the area of Atulbabisi and Dapore-Tindongo. The rock on which the Ayia market stands is Ayia-Tanga. Today people refer to Ayia market as Bolga market. The Ayia market was a place where the people of Bolga and surrounding communities (Yikene, Soe, Gambibigo, Tanzui, Bukere etc.) would meet to entertain themselves and the public with the nyɔɔ dance and other cultural activities. It was the place where local beer (pito) was sold and bought. Tobacco, kolanuts, birds and animals, which were a necessary ingredient for traditional marriage transactions, were sold and bought in the Ayia market. It was a place where cereals, meat, salt and other European goods were sold. It was at the Ayia market that men and women met and exchanged love gifts and proposed marriage to each other. The Ayia market was and is still located at the junction of three main trade routes. It was passed through by traders and caravans coming from the French country of Burkina Faso through Bongo in the north, through Navrongo from the west and from Togo through Bawku on the east. At the

<sup>77</sup> According to archival sources NAG.A.ADM 68/5/5, p. 4, Bolgatanga had its name from "Abolega under rock." This was confirmed by the second school of thought, including Awunga-Kolgo of Yikene and Tindaan Anunwa'am of Tindonmoligo in 1980. The latter was the first Tindaana to have removed the Abolega gods from the rocks in Yikene in 1978.



market, traders and caravans from these countries would buy their food and pito and obtain carrier services from the people living around – Dapore-Tindongo, Tindonsobiligo, and Tindonmoligo. Like other community chiefs, Ayia market had its own chief who was appointed by the paramount chief. The growth of the Ayia market (now popularly called Bolga market) started during the period of the North-South trade in the mid-17th century. This was the period some caravans from Kupela (in the Moosi State) made their journey southwards to Salaga and Kintampo markets through Ayia. According to my informants, these Moosi traders (who undoubtedly were Yarese) would come with cattle, horses, donkeys, goats, sheep, ivory, dyed cotton and woven materials, leather goods and shea butter, passing through Ayia to Techiman, Wenchi and Kintampo markets, where they were exchanged for kolanuts. During this period, the Moosi and Hausa traders would take down as many donkeys as was necessary for carrying their kolanuts and other overseas goods such as guns, powder, cloths and sandals. It was estimated that about 2000-3000 cattle and 10000 sheep often passed through Bolga to the Southern market.<sup>78</sup> During the same period overseas goods such as guns, powder, cloths, sandals, etc. were obtained from Asante traders and head-loaded to some of the major inland markets, including Ayia, passing through some well-defined routes to Burkina Faso. During the rainy season when the roads and footpaths became muddy and therefore impassable by the hoof animals, the Moosi/Yarese and Hausa traders would organize convoys with their captives (known as Talese) to carry the goods on their heads. These Moosi traders were always at the mercy of highway robbers. The chiefs whose villages they passed through were notoriously wicked towards them. And besides taxing them, the local people would attack and rob them of their kola and other essential goods. In those days, molestation, arm robbery, and looting of traders were characteristic features of the Frafras. Only big caravans accompanied by a fairly large number of armed men could travel with any degree of safety. Ferguson’s report from the 9 December 1892 lends credence to the molestation and harassment of traders by the local people. The report noted as follows: “Between Dagomba and Mossi there is a belt of inhospitable barbarous tribe through which caravans often have to fight their way.”<sup>79</sup> The following two reports support Ferguson’s claim that armed robbery, looting and extortion were characteristic of the people of the Frafra District Council Area. Capt. D. Macksworth’s enclosed report on Mamprusi during his visit to the Frafra country in May 1898 read: “The Frafras are under Gambaga but they are a very lawless people, wear no clothes, are armed with poisoned arrows and spears and are constantly blocking the road for traders.”<sup>80</sup> Maxwell’s enclosed letter to Chamberlain on 5 February 1897 (PRO/CO 96/289) and Stewart’s letter to Colonial Sec., Accra (CS), dated Gambaga 29 Dec 1896, identified Naba Adongo of Bolga and Akatayologo of Yikene as the known culprits in the said activities:

In those days banditry provided an avenue for the accumulation of political power by local “strong men” even in the most highly decentralized of barbarous tribes. One such figure was the chief of Bolga, a Nankani settlement 8 miles NW of the Tongo Hills, who was reported in 1896 to have established himself on the main road to Wagadugu...[and] collected all the criminals and refugees from the surrounding countries in order to pillage passing caravans.

According to my informant Awonga-Kologo (Yikene), the Zoobisi area was the rallying point for Naba Adongo, Akatayologo and their accomplices. The names Akantu’ume and Akatayologo are names that remind people of the bad old days in Bolga. Akantume was a resting place for traders traveling down to the South through Zoobisi. Traders on arrival there will say “N kan tu’u binni,” an expression which seeks to say that “I won’t off load there.” Hence, the present-day names Akantu’ume Junior Secondary School and Akantu’ume Hospital (Bolgatanga Regional Hospital). According to the old men, when peace was restored in Bolga following the British arrival one of the strong allies of Adongo in Yikene begot a child whom he named Akatayologo (meaning “he is free to scatter”). His descendants are known as the

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<sup>78</sup> Horace Miner 1965, p. 65.

<sup>79</sup> See NAG ADM 12/5/164.

<sup>80</sup> PRO/CO 879/52 No. 366 of 30 May 1898.

Akatayologobisi in Yikene. According to the old men and women, when the traders were given protection by Abolga, Anabila, Akatoyologo, etc. some of the Moosi traders decided to build temporary camps beside them at Amiriga. Some of the traders who came from the South of the country traveling North to Burkina Faso and vice versa would lodge with their fellow countrymen and proceed the next day. In the course of time, these temporary camps were built so close that when looked from away appeared as one single big house. The cluster of temporary camps became known as Yikatɛ/Yikene and the area of Amirigu and its environs is still known as Yikene. With the expansion of trade in the mid-1800s some of the Bela/Beliba (by the natives) traders from Timbuctoo, the Hausas (from Kano) and the Tem (also called by the natives as Kotokoli) from Benin, traveling all the way from their respective countries, decided then to build permanent quarters with Abolga's permission. Some built around the Ayia market, others built at Dapore-Tindongo, Bukere, and some at Pobaga and at crossroads. After two or three generations several different ethnic communities - the Hausa, Moosi, Kotokoli, Zabarema, etc. - who were mostly in the cattle business built their permanent houses. Each of these ethnic groups built their type of building styles. There were then the Mande (Zabarema), Dagomba and the Hausa building styles in Bolgatanga. The building styles of the Mande and Dagomba were described by Johnson in SAL -/8/1 as follows:

The Mande and Dagomba types of compounds consisted of round conical huts, according to the size of the family and its possessions, and are built together and separated from the rest by a wall or fence. These compounds are enclosed. The entrance is usually a large hut quite empty with two openings one going on the court and the other to the street. The arrangement of huts in the compound is often haphazard without much attention to regularity or beauty. The Hausa building style is a large and rectangular room roofed with straw/grass. The natives refer to these rectangular rooms as "atakwame." The building style of the indigenous people (the Frafra) is the round mud compound.

All these building styles still exist in Bolga. The Hausa, Moosi and Kotokoli houses can be located around the Bolga District Police Station which extends as far as to the Bolgatanga Post Office, Dagmeo, and Tindonmoligo. These communities of mixed "tribes"/ethnic groups became known as Zongos. It is not uncommon to hear such names like Hausa Zongo, Moosi Zongo, Sarbon Zongo, and Kotokoli Zongo in Bolga. So that Zongo applies to a section of the town where Muslim traders live or stranger quarters.

#### **10.4 Emergence of Ayia as a Town**

From the mid-18th century to the fourth decade of the 20th century Ayia was a cluster of little huts.<sup>81</sup> Ayia is now an urban market but functionally it is an international one because the market draws people from all corners of Ghana, as well as from countries like Burkina Faso, Togo and Mali. While the North-South connections are all first-class roads, the second class and feeder roads link Ayia with the rest of the communities in the District. All vehicles traveling between the North and South must pass through Ayia. The first motor vehicle passed to Ouagadougou from the Coast through Bolga/Ayia in 1914. The extension of the motor-road from Tamale to Navrongo in March 1931 passed through Ayia. The shifting of the kola trade from Walewale in the Northern Region to Bolga in 1938/39 made Ayia the most important kolanut trading market in the country North of Asante. This resulted in increase in population of traders from Asante, Nigeria, Mali, Dagomba, Moosi, Mamprusi, Gas and Ewes in the area. The emergence of Ayia as an urban market and a town has been due to the following factors:

- trade;
- location;
- influence of colonial rule;
- large population, and rapid infrastructure, to mention a few.

Ayia market is known all over the country because of its leather products, pottery, basketry, blacksmithing and traditional smocks (fugu). In terms of colonial influence, on the first coming of the White man to this

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<sup>81</sup> NAG-A-A 68/5/5 p.5

part of the country many of the people either ran away or shot them with their bows and arrows. On arrival in Ayia (Bolga), they met Adongo as a chief who submitted himself to British rule. He was proclaimed a chief of Bolga and the surrounding towns, making him the best ally of the British. Ayia/Bolga was chosen as the headquarters of the Frafras and the Upper Region in the 1960s, not only because of its strategic/central position but also because the chief of Bolga wielded more powers than the other chiefs of the district. When the British launched their attack on the Frafras in January 1899 under the command of Capt. W.C. Giffard, a military camp was opened in the town. On 25 February 1899 Bolga was used as the base for their military operations in the Frafra Country. Between 1893 and 1897 there was an influx of foreigners from several different countries to Ayia. The influx was as a result of imposition of taxes and forced labour for the military and mines by the French Colonial Government in the sub-Saharan countries. This was the period when many Moosi left their country in Ouagadougou for Ayia. When the White Fathers missionaries and brothers first arrived in the Frafra country to start their mission work they chose Bolga/Ayia as the most suitable location for a mission station. They occupied Ayia on the 5 February 1925. Bolgatanga now performs numerous educational functions and has many educational institutions – technical, polytechnic, nursing training, and midwifery vocational. It has a Regional Hospital and diverse religious denominations – Roman Catholics, Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican and other smaller Protestant churches, Moslems, etc. There are three main non-functional manufacturing industries located between 3 and 31 kilometres away from Ayia/Bolga. They are the meat factory located at Dulugu about 3 km away; the rice mill at Kumbosego, which is also 3 km away; and the tomato factory in Pwalugu (31 km away). The nearest industry to Ayia therefore is the rice mill (which is very redundant). This area now serves as the timber market for the region. Keith Hart in his summary of the factors that have led to the growth of Bolga/Ayia as a town states that Bolgatanga is “a town of some 10000 people, a marketing centre at one of the West African main crossroads, the capital since 1961 of Ghana's Upper Region... a factory and a thriving public works industry.”<sup>82</sup>

### **10.5 Governance amongst the Earliest Zongo Communities in Bolga Town**

The first Moosi (Yarese, Nakomce, Yadese), Hausas and Kotokoli traders who built in the area of Ayia, Moshi-Zongo in Zuarungu, Pobaga, Tindongo (Dapore, Tindonsobiligo and Tindonmoligo), Bukere, etc. acted as security or spies for their countrymen by providing them information about flash points of armed robbery and native hostilities. They also:

- acted as interpreters for buyers and sellers who did not understand the local language;
- provided lodging for those traders who came from the far countries in the North, especially the Moshiland, Hausaland, North Africa and Timbuctoo and could not get accommodation;
- acted as middlemen in the sale of their cattle and European goods;
- acted as go-between foreign traders and the tindaanas (pioneer settlers) so that they could protect them from native hostilities.

The stranger communities (Zongos) in Bolgatanga were autonomous. Each of them had its own headman referred to as Maigida (a Hausa term for father/landlord). The first stranger community in Bolga was the Moosi Zongo whose leader/maigida was a Yarese. He was chosen as the maigida based on his wealth, Islamic education and his length of residence in Ayia/Bolga. Before the influx of the Moosi, Kotokoli, Zabarema, Hausa in Ayia, the settlers (strangers) in the area had one common political overlord and judicial system. They did not speak a common language and neither did they observe the same religious beliefs and practices. According to the old men, all the stranger settlers in Bolga were ruled by the headman of the Moosi community. Awudu Moosi was the leader of the Moosi Zongo then and he was a Yarese. The settlement of disputes among all the Zongo communities was the prerogative of Awudu.

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<sup>82</sup> Keith Hart, “Migration and tribal identity among the Frafras of Ghana” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 6 (1971), p. 23.

Awudu Moshi, apart from being an eminent Muslim Cleric, was someone who had knowledge in making charm and magic. In the course of immigration, when the other ethnic groups or stranger settlers became sufficiently large, they appointed their own headmen. And so, like the Moosi, the Kotokoli, Hausa, Grumah and Zabarema communities had their own maigidas/landlords/chiefs who judged cases and arbitrated in disputes among their own people. The appointment of Maigidas for different Zongo communities was a symbolic expression of the idea that these ethnic groups lived in the area. It was a replica of the traditional political institution of their home countries. When all the various ethnic communities had appointed their own chiefs, the Moshi-Naba Awudu ceased acting as the paramount chief of Bolga's stranger communities. The political institution of the autochthonous groups (the Gurensi/Frafras) in Bolga was the tindaana (loosely called "landowner"). He was responsible for performing sacrifices to the gods (Earth) whenever there was drought, famine, diseases and death. For his functions, see chapter 1.

In those days, there was a distinction between the tindaana and the Moshi-Naba. Yet, whenever a member from the autochthonous community had a dispute which was regarded a more serious case, he would take it to the most senior male member of the clan (Atulbabisi). These cases were purely disputes over land, marriage payments, divorce cases and debts owed. Land cases were referred to the tindaana for arbitration. And so, while the Gurensi (the indigenous group) had the Yizukeema (clan elder) as the headman, the stranger communities had Awudu as their real chief. On the arrival of the White man, the latter met Awudu Moshi as chief and recognized him as such. This was the political situation in Bolgatanga until in the late 1800 when Apase-nyelom (son of Atulba) was installed chief of the yoŋo dancers at Zoko-Kanga (in the Bongo District). The proclamation of Adongo (son of Apase-nyelom) by Capt. Donald Stewart marked the integration of the stranger communities (Moosi, Kotokoli, Hausa) into the Gurensi society. It was from this period on that the Moosi chiefs in Bolga became ritually installed by the reigning Bolga-Naba, which has continued up to date. Now during important ceremonies in Bolga the head of the Moosi community would present Bolga-Naba with gifts in the form of animals, birds and alcoholic drinks.

# Chapter 11 Dispersion of the Tindaambisi (Abolga Sons)

In this chapter we will discuss the dispersion of Abolga's sons from their original home site in Yikene to their present localities. According to oral tradition, following the death of Abolga at his settled home at Amirigu in Yikene, his sons began to split up and later created their own clans which up-to-date bear their names. The sections or clans that have been founded by the sons and grandsons of Abolga will receive attention in due course. We will begin with *Azagsibaga* (one of the sons of Abolga).

## 11.1 Migration of Azagsibaga and Offspring

Tindonmoligo is a name derived from one of its founders, Atindonmoliga. According to the old men, Azagsibaga used to live with his father Abolga/Atandagere in the area of Yikene. Azagsibaga was believed to be the eldest son of Abolga. From Yikene, Azagsibaga and his brothers, who were in search of land for farming, came as far as to what is called today as Zorbisi and built beside some Earthgod known as Azelego. Azagsibaga and his brothers remained together at Azelego for one or two generations. These brothers, as earlier mentioned, were Anafo, Asamsoo, Adaaba, and Anabila. At his new settled home, Azagsibaga gave birth to a number of children. He married two wives. The senior gave birth to Atindonmoliga whose son was Abire. Another son was Awa'amsiim who begot Akusologo. Asore was another son who begot Ata'nga. Azagsibaga's second wife gave birth to Ayirego who begot Agumatia, who in turn begot Anonengo. After one or two generations, his sons began to scatter either due to family quarrels or in search of land to farm. Some of the sons of Azagsibaga, his brother's sons and his married and unmarried sister's sons remained in the home of Azagsibaga. Other migrants came to live with the family of Azagsibaga. It is believed that migrants from Sherugo, known as Nawuumbisi from Bukere and Dagmeo, live amongst the offspring of Azagsibaga. There are also the Ayikabisi, Ayarumbisi, Akunlibebisi, Agarebisi and Ayiregobisi who reside in the area of Tindonmoligo. The said clan members are believed to have some remote connection with Azagsibaga. All the descendants of Azagsibaga and migrants such as those mentioned have founded the section known today as Tindonmoligo. The population of Tindonmoligo in 1948 was 923 (males 424, females 499). There were 166 houses in Tindonmoligo during the same period.

## 11.2 Tindonmologo Tindaanduuma

According to oral history, following the death of Abolga (the historical founder of Bolgatanga), his most senior son, Atindonmoliga became the new tindaana.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, he inherited the god of Abolga which symbolized the perpetuity, identity and common ancestry of the entire maximal lineage in Bolgatanga. As mentioned earlier, the seniority of Azagsibaga as the most senior of Abolga's descendants is contested by the other three sons of Abolga, i.e. Asamsoo, Anafo, and Adaaba. The following were the succeeding Tindaanduuma of Bolga Tindonmoligo after Abolga some 300 to 400 years ago:

1. Atindaan Moliga.
2. Atindaan-poka.
3. Tindaan Kusolego Agumatia.
4. Tindaan Ayirego.
5. Tindaana Abinaba.
6. Tindaan – Zika.

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<sup>83</sup> The narration of the migration of Azagsibaga and the order of succession of Tindonmoligo tindaanduuma was provided by Tindaan-Wa'am and Akunlebe.

7. Tindaan – Sumbangeya.
8. Tindaan Bire (Asumalbire).
9. Tindaan - Nonwaan (1957 – 5 Jan. 1978). He was enthroned under the name *Serum bun yarum and Tindaanduuma kukɔ*. Before he ascended to the throne, tindaana Anonwaam was living in Zebila in the Bawku-west. He was the first of the Tindonmoligo tindaana to transfer the ancestral god Abolga to his house in Tindonmoligo. Abolga was originally kept under some rocks at Amirigu in the area of Yikene. When Tindaan-Nonwaan became very old he nominated his son Anarebala to represent him in all religious duties. He did so for several years - up to 1985. It was during that period that Dapore-Tindongo had two separate tindaanas, i.e. Tindaan-Banga and Tindaan-Yu'ure. All those tindaanas who came before Tindaan- AKunlibe were installed by Tindongsobligo tindaana.
10. Tindaan - Akunlibe/Zire (Oct. 1985 – 9 May 1986). After his death, his son Anonbila Akulibe acted for him from 1986 to 1997, before a new tindaana was elected.
11. Tindaan – Asa'andenna/waam (1997 – 2004). Before he was elected as the successor of Akunlibe he was living in Winkogo. Atule Ayeremoah, his son, was the acting tindaana of Tindonmoligo from 2005 to August 2014. Final funeral rites of the late Tindaana Asa'andenna were performed between Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug.- 5<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2014.
12. Tindaan - Ayeita Ayimbire Atuna (November 17<sup>th</sup> 2015).

The following tindaanas - Akunlibe, Asa'andenna and Ayeta Ayimbire - were installed by the Dapore-Tindongo tindaana, particularly Ayu'ure Adingo's family, without the involvement of Abanga's family.

### **11.3 Migration of Anafo and Offsprings**

Anafo was believed to be one of the sons of Abolga. He was believed to be a direct brother of Asamsɔɔ i.e. of the same mother with him. Anafo used to live in Yikene with his brothers and sisters. He was a good hunter. Owing to frequent disagreements with his brothers, Anafo separated and migrated as far as to Tampaula in the Mamprusi area and built his compound there. According to some informants, there were frequent slave raids in this area. As a result, Anafo withdrew and came as far as to what is now Ganne in Navrongo. The activities of the Zabarema slave raiders and the wars in the northwest of Ghana forced him to return to his original home site at Yikene/Zoobisi. Here he stayed for another generation. Aduure and Adunpoka were born here. Abiya-ah, Agmabere, Abua and Akunyelego, the sons of Aduure, were no doubt born here. Abua was his eldest son. From Yikene, Aduure (son of Anafo) was advancing in the direction of the south-east with his wife and children when he met some earlier settlers in the area now occupied by Kumbangre (Fuel and Gas Depot) as well as the SSNIT affordable houses. The people Aduure met at Kumbangre were Agangre, Awuurego and Abula. The three men were obviously the pioneer settlers in the area. It is, however, not known which of the three men – Agangre, Abula and Awuure (shortened from Awuurego) - arrived in the area first. Awuure and Abula came in the direction of Pogmoligo-Sirigu (in the Kassena-Nankana District) to live in Kumbangre. They were settled in the area in about 1860. Aduure arrived in the area some generations after Awuure's and Abula's arrival.

It was from Kumbangre that Abula migrated to build in the area of Sherugo (under Bolga) while Awuure and Agangre stayed back at their original site at Kumbangre. The offspring of Agangre and Awuure who live in the area of Tindonsobiligo call themselves Agangrebisi/Azanabisi and Awuurebisi respectively. But these two men share a common boundary at Kumbangre. According to the old men, Aduure was given land to build on and to farm by Awuurego. He built his house in the area of Abolko. This was and still is the most powerful and influential earth-god of Anafo's descendants. Aduure was believed to be a fetish man because he possessed some rain making god (saa-bagere). According to the old men, at the

very period Aduure had settled at Abolko there had been no rain in the town for two months. As a fetish man, he performed wonders with his rain making god (saa-bagere) and brought rain to fall in the area. The people were surprised at his magic act and for that particular year they reaped in abundance. The people at Kumbangre (Agangrebisi and Awuuregobisi) became convinced that Aduure had caused the rain to fall. By virtue of his position as a fetish man/magician, Agangre, Abula and Awuure entrusted land rites in the area of Kumbangre to Aduure. So that after harvest every year the heads of the various settlements at Kumbangre would give him a portion of the produce of their farms for the necessary rites. From that period, if a stranger came and wanted a piece of land to farm, he would go to Aduure for it. But he could not exercise absolute authority over the allocation of land at Kumbangre without permission from the pioneer settlers (tiñabisi), notably Agangre and Awuurego, who are the kusondaanas. Aduure in this case was a mere trustee. This lends credence to Chief Justice Rayner who wrote:

Land belongs to the community, the village or the family, never to the individual. All members of the community, village or the family have equal rights to the land but in every case the chief or headman of the community or village or head of the family has charge of the land and in loose mode of speech is sometimes called owner. He is to some extent in the position of a trustee and as such holds the land for the use of the community or family. He has control of it and any member who wants a piece of it to cultivate or build a house upon goes to him for it.<sup>84</sup>

This was the relationship between the pioneer settlers (Agangre, Awuurego and Abula) and Aduure in the area. Even though Aduure did not have jurisdiction over his neighbours' farmlands, he was entitled to anything found on it. These included metals, beads and even strange animals whose owners could not be traced. He was also entitled to the meat of any animal which was shot at and which escaped and died later in the area.

Another privilege was that the skins and heads of animals killed during funeral rites in the area were given to him. Aduure somehow enjoyed the privileges of a real tindaana even though he never went through the traditional methods of initiation into it. It is therefore wrong for anyone to conclude that Anafo was the pioneer settler (tiñabia) of the area around Kumbangre. The descendants of Aduure in a loose mode of speech are referred to as tindaanbisi. They act as trustees of the lands in Kalbeo and it is they who worship the Akalbeo earth-god in Kalbeo.

The descendants of Aduure have founded the clan known as Aduurebisi in Tindonsobiligo. Some of the offspring of Anafo still inhabit Yikene. They forbid the dove. The population census of Tindonsobiligo in 1948 was 1000 which was made up of 449 males and 551 females. There were 125 compounds in Tindonsobiligo during the 1948 census.

#### **11.4 Tindaanaship in Tindonsobiligo**

From our previous knowledge, Aduure (the son of Anafo) was the first to create tindaanaship in Tindonsobligo. He was therefore the first tindaana of the area. But according to the old men, tindaanaship in Tindongsobligo was created by Apitanga. Since the death of Anafo (founder) and Aduure (first creator of tindaanaship), the following has been the succession of tindaanduma of the area:

1. Tindaan- Duure Anafo.
2. Tindaan – Apitanga, installed by Tindongmolgo tindaana.
3. Tindaana- Agelemune.
4. Tindaan –Atoore.
5. Tindaana –Amonya.

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<sup>84</sup> Rayner C.J., Report on Land Tenure in West Africa, 1898.

6. Tindaan – Atongo Atafongo, installed by Tindongmolgo tindaana.
7. Tindaana –Agiema Atoriya.
8. Tindaan –Agmabaere, installed by Tindongmolgo tindaana.
9. Tindaan- Agbae-baene, installed by Tindongmolgo tindaana.
10. Tindaan- Samparinga Aboo, installed by Tindongmolgo tindaana.
11. Tindaan – Ayaamga Atebra (died in 1986), installed by Tindongmolgo tindaana.
12. Tindaan – Goŋo Abosome (14 Sept. 2000 - Oct. 2010). Acting Tindaana Akubayela (grandson of Tindaan Gongo at the time of publication of this book).

## 11.5 Migration of Asamsɔɔ and Offsprings

According to oral tradition, after the death of Abolga his son Asamsɔɔ remained with his brother at Yikene/Zoobisi area for one or two generations. From Yikene, Asamsɔɔ and his family travelled to the east of Tindonsobiligo and Tindonmoligo, where he found a suitable place and built his compound. The area Asamsɔɔ built was later called Dapore-Tindongo, a name which suggests “east of Tindongo.” Asamsɔɔ, the founder of Dapore-Tindongo married two wives, who gave birth to a number of children. Asamsɔɔ’s sons were Asohe (the most senior), Atindaana, Abiea, Awala, Akambungu, and Asaale. Asohe and Atindaana were sons of Asamsɔɔ’s junior wife. Abiea (the youngest son) was the son of his junior wife. Abiea begot Adombire, Abengre, Ayarega, Amaleboba and Ababire. These, in turn, had children. Atindaana’s sons were Atosuum, Azongo, Adongbagna, Aka-eere, Agamolega. These, in turn, begot some number of sons (see family tree on page 106). Abiea and Atindaana and their descendants have founded some lineages in the area of Dapore-Tindongo. These are called Abieabisi and Atindaanabisi respectively. All the male descendants of Asohe in Dapore-Tindongo refer to their lineage as Asore-Kundamnebisi. They are also known by Asoorebisi. Some of the offspring of Asamsɔɔ migrated to live in Yipala. Some of Asamsɔɔ’s sister’s children live in Dapore-Tindongo. The latter is the Tindonseo clan. The descendants of Asamsɔɔ who live in Dapore-Tindongo are of Kasena-Nankana origin because their ancestor Abolga came from Nangruma near Yua in the Kasena-Nankana District. The population census of the Dapore-Tindongo in 1948 was 510 (males 220, females 290). In the same year (1948) there were 62 houses.

## 11.6 Tindaanaship in Dapore-Tindongo

“Dapore” in Gurune means “back of, behind or East,” but in this context Dapore is a Moosi term used for palace servants of the Mogho-Naba who were believed to be descendants of captives. Asamsɔɔ (the founder of Dapore-Tindongo) was the originator of tindaanaship in his clan. This was also by virtue of his position as the head of the family and the fact that he exercised jurisdiction over all the Earthgods (tingana) in Dapore-Tindongo. He was responsible for the rites connected with the Earthgods in his area: Akupelego, Ayia, Atamkuregan, etc. He was also responsible for harvesting the locust bean (dawadawa) and shea fruits in the territorial boundary of Dapore-Tindongo.

Bolgatanga tradition has it that Asamsɔɔ possessed supernatural knowledge and, as such, he was regarded with great veneration. His common wear was a string cap (miisi zuvaka). He also used to be identified with a skin bag which contained the substance for his fetish. He had medicine of different kinds, which he used for both offensive and defensive purposes. It protected him against obnoxious spirits and witchcraft. Asamsɔɔ possessed two types of fetishes. One was in the nature of a pot (duko) and another was in the form of a horn (dongo). The former contained several roots and leaves some of which were mystic in character. The fetish which was in the nature of a pot was called “Baya-yoore” (meaning *sexton’s pot*). It was from this juju pot that many men were initiated into the mystery of sextons or grave-diggers. The “dongo” contained several charms and substances that were capable of causing the death of fairies (kinkito) and especially children believed to bring misfortune to their parents.



The natives refer to the Dongo-god/fetish as “kinkirego-dongo/kinkir-dongo” (fairies’ horn) and correctly still kinkirego-bagere. In fact, this kinkir-dongo was used by Asamsoo to determine whether a child was a fairy and advised couples who may seek to kill their devil children (kinkito)/kinkirego (sing.). According to custom, after Asamsoo’s death, his fetishes descended on to his most senior son, Asohe. Both the “baya-yoore” and kinkir-dongo were passed on to Asohe. According to the old men, one day Abiea (one of the brothers of Asohe and Atindaana) was sitting in his house when the hut in which he was leaning on caught fire and burnt him.<sup>85</sup> The burns later caused his death. Contrary to native custom, instead of Asohe (the most senior son) inheriting the property of Asamsoo, including land, it was rather bequeathed to his junior wife’s son, Atindaana. During this period the office of tindaanaship and the art of medicine were sharply distinguished in Dapore-Tindongo. Asohe’s family maintained their position as possessor of the baya-yoore and the kinkir-dongo. Atindaana maintained his position as the trustee of the land in Dapore-Tindongo. He was in a loose expression referred to as “tindaana.”

### 11.7 Dapore-Tindongo Tindanduuma

According to the old men, Asamsoo was the first occupant of the area but not the originator of Dapore-Tindongo tindaanaship. It was his son Atindana who created tindaanaship in Dapore-Tindongo.<sup>86</sup> Abiea was the next successor to Asa’amsoo. But he died a mysterious death so he did not occupy the position of a tindaana. As mentioned earlier,

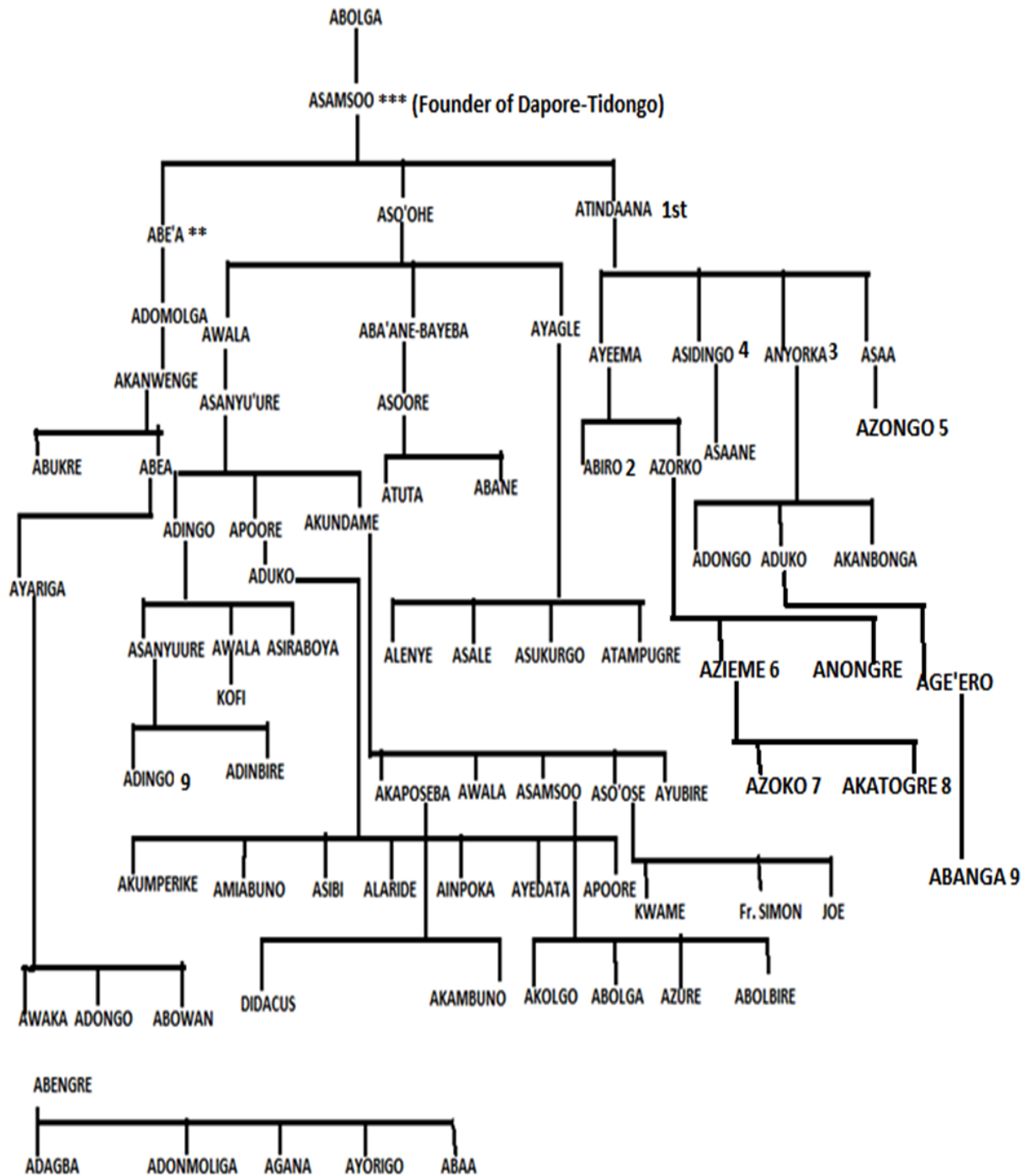


1. Tindaana – Atindaana (was installed through direct transfer of authority from father to son and therefore was the first of the tindaanas of Dapore-Tindongo). The order of succession of Dapore-Tindongo tindaanaship after Atindana was the following:
2. Tindaana – Biro, installed by Abambire (Soe-Daana).
3. Tindaana Ayoka.
4. Asidengo, installed by Atia.
5. Azongo, installed by Abaa-Dongo.
6. Azieme, installed by Akantaam.
7. Tindaana – Zorkor, installed by Ayeleyine. In collaboration with the then Bolga-naba Azanam, he gave land to the first Roman Catholic missionaries who arrived in the town in Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> 1925.
8. Tindaan – Barega/Akatogre, installed by Akpasenaba.
9. Tindaan – Banga Ageero, installed by Agongo (shown on Figure 25 and the cover image of the book). All these installing elders were believed to have come from Asanabisi. Tindaan Banga was forcefully removed from the skin in 1976 and was replaced by Tindaan-Yuere. According to some of the elders of Dapore-Tindongo, Tindaan – Banga’s assumption to the tindaanaship of Bolga was not customary because he was installed by the Asaanabisi soothsayer without the authority and supervision of the Tindonmoligo and Soe tindanduuma. Tindan-Banga died in 1994.
10. Tindaan – Yuere Adingo (Yusepa) was installed in 1976 by Tindonmoligo Tindaana and Tindonsobiligo Tindaana, a practice that was contrary to native

<sup>85</sup> Petition submitted to the Peace Council of Bolga by the Atindaana’s family led by Akulpeeligo Abanga and Emmanuel Apoore and others not named.

<sup>86</sup> The information included in the succession list of tindaanas was obtained from Emmanuel Apoore, Akulpeeligo and others for the Tindaana’s family (Atindaanabisi), Ben Anyelum, Kwame and Ayagele for Asohe’s family, Atingawanya Yankee and Awa’asem for Tindonmoligo, and Ayamga Atia for Tindonsobiligo.

custom. He died on 18 Feb. 1992 and was buried on 6 March 1992. Since the death of the two tindaanas of Dapore-Tindongo – Tindaan Yuure and Tindaan Banga – there has not been any substantive tindaana installed for the section (2020). At the time of publication of this book the conflict between the Atindaanabisi and Aso’osebisi (Akundaminebisi) remained unresolved.



**Figure 26** Genealogical family tree of Asa’amsɔɔ descendants and Tindaanas in their order of succession (Note those marked with asterisk are counted among the tindaanas of Dapore-Tindongo).

## 11.8 Conflict over Dapore-Tindongo Tindaanaship

In Dapore-Tindongo there is controversy over the tindaanaship. This has remained the bone of contention between the Asohe's offspring and that of Atindaana's family. According to the story, during the time of Tindaan-Banga, the offspring of Asohe put in resistance against the installation of Abanga as tindaana. They said that his installation was illegal and contrary to Dapore-Tindongo's custom. The conflict between the two sub-clans reached its highest expression in 1976. During this period the family of Asohe (i.e. the Asore-Kundamnebisi) led by Sgt. Rtd. Apohre Aduko and Micheal Atongo marched to the compound of Tindaan-Banga with some police officers and forced him to abdicate and to surrender all the regalia pertaining to the Dapore-Tindongo tindaanaship. Even though he never resisted, he was beaten and the regalia forcefully taken away from him. The tindaan-kuga, which contain the spirit of the Dapore-Tindongo community were conveyed to Asohe's family. It was alleged that Tindaan-Banga's installation was illegal owing to the fact that he did so in connivance with the Asanabisi tindaana.<sup>87</sup> He also did so without the authority and supervision of Tindonmoligo and Soe tindaanduuma. Having collected the tindaan-kuga and the regalia from Tindaan-Banga, the people of Dapore-Tindongo proceeded to install a new tindaana for the community. Contrary to native custom and the practices of installation of a Bolga tindaana, the Tindonmoligo and Tindonsobiligo tindaanduuma and some elders of Dapore-Tindongo, i.e. Ayuere's family, met and installed Ayuere Adingo through soothsaying. Ayuere Adingo became the new tindaana of Dapore-Tindongo usurping the position of Abanga. It is sad to learn that a serious fight nearly resulted between the two tindaama clans on the 10 April 1990 if it had not been the presence of the erstwhile PNDC Chairman, Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings. This was during the commissioning of the National Grid (VRA) in Bolgatanga. The dethroned Tindaan-Banga died in 1994. The usurper, Tindaan-Ayuere Adingo, the recognized Tindaana of Dapore-Tindongo ruled from 1976 to 1992. He died two years earlier than Tindaan-Banga.

Despite the situation in Bolgatanga, there is a growing tendency for the Tindaama clans (Tindonmoligo, Tindonsobiligo, Soe and Dapore-Tindongo), excluding the Atindaanabisi, to form an association – the Tindaama association. The aim of this association is two-fold:

- To come together and fight for benefits from the Government.
- To confront or restrain chiefs from selling out lands in their areas of jurisdiction.

## 11.9 Taboos and Beliefs of the Dapore-Tindongo Tindana

A summary of taboos and beliefs connected with the Dapore-Tindongo tindaana are as follows:

- He is forbidden to possess juju (evil medicine).
- He is forbidden to wear the fez (red cap). This is because his ancestor was never initiated into the mystery of chieftaincy, which requires him to wear the red cap.
- He must not wear jewelry or metal rings on the fingers.

## 11.10 History of the Tindaama Clan in Soe

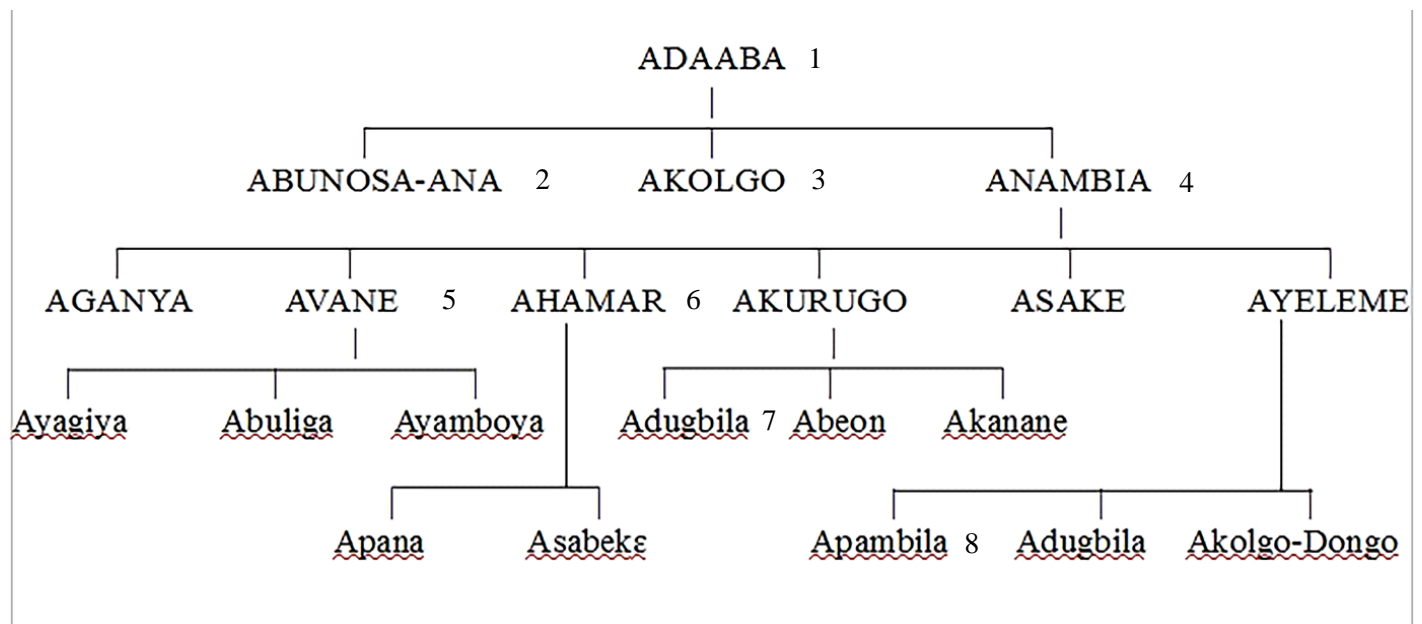
The earliest known ancestor of the Tindaama clan in Soe (under Bolga) was Adaaba, also called Tindaanbia because he was the youngest of Abolga's children.<sup>88</sup> He was believed to be one of the sons of Abolga/Atandagere, the traditional and historical founder of Bolga town. As earlier mentioned, Tindanbia/Adaaba's brothers were Azabsibaga/Tindonmoligo, Anafo and Asamsɔɔ who are the founders of Tindonmoligo, Tindonsobiligo and Dapore-Tindongo respectively. Even though the tindaama are now

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<sup>87</sup> The competing versions of the story were provided by Emmanuel Apoore, Akulpeeligo Abanga, Ben Anyelum, Ayamga Atia, Atingawanya Yankee and Ayagele.

<sup>88</sup> This history was narrated by Tindaana Nyaaba and his elders.

divided into 4 patrilineal clans – Tindonmoligo, Tindonsobiligo, Dapore-Tindongo and Tindanbia (Soe), each is still within the territorial boundary of Bolga. Yua remains their original hometown.<sup>89</sup> Adaaba used to live in Yikene with his father and brothers and sisters.<sup>90</sup> Owing to a desire to expand his farming Adaaba broke off from the main family in Yikene and travelled eastwards to Zoobisi, where he lived for one or two generations before finally withdrawing to live at Kugadoone (stony and rocky area). This area is presently called Tindaandoone (i.e. the fact that the tindaana lives here). There were no people living in Kugadoone/Tindaandoone at the time of Adaaba’s arrival. He was therefore the first occupant of the area. He was indeed the first to discover and occupy the land in Soe, around Akulepeleko. The tindaama of Kugadoone forbid the crocodile, python snake, leopard and squirrel. Adaaba’s sons were Abunosana, Akologo and Anambia (in their order of age). Anambia begot five sons and a daughter. They were Avane, Ahamar, Akurugo, Asake, Ayeleme (in order of age). Aganya was the only female. Avane’s sons were Ayagiya, Abuliga and Ayamboya. Ahamar’s sons were Apana and Asabekε. Akurugo begot Adugbila, Abeon and Akanane. Ayeleme begot Apambila, Adugbila and Akolgo-Dongo. The descendants of Adaaba (son of Abolga) and the order of tindaamas is represented in a genealogical family tree as follows:



**Figure 27** Family tree of Bolga-Soe Tindaanduuma.

<sup>89</sup> NAG-ADM 68/5/5, pp. 4-5.

<sup>90</sup> Brothers and sisters in this discussion include step-brothers and step-sisters.

### 11.11 List of Bolga Soe Tindaanduuma



**Figure 28**

Tindaana Nyaaba Anafo.

The tindaanas of Soe since the founding of the town by Adaaba (in their order of succession) are as follows:

- Tindaana Adaaba Abolega
- Tindaana Abunosa-ana Adaaba
- Tindaana Akologo Adaaba
- Tindaana Anambia Adaaba
- Tindaana Avane Anambia
- Tindaana Ahamar Anambia
- Tindaana Adugbila Akurugo (kinkansika lebege boom)
- Tindaana Apambila Ayelime
- Tindaana Azeriya Atuah
- Tindaana Nyaaba Anafo (died 21 Dec 2013, final funeral rites 13 Dec 2015).

At the time of review in 2020, there was no substantive tindaana for Soe.

### 11.12 Procedure of Nomination, Selection and Installation of a Bolga Tindaana

A tindaana is elected by traditional methods, a practice which has persisted since prehistoric days to the present. There are, however, few local variations. Under Bolgatanga custom, those entitled to be made tindaanduuma of the tindaama clans are Adaaba, Azagsibaga, Asamsɔɔ and Anafo because their forefather Abolga established the tindaanaship in Bolga town. The procedure is that when death occurs in any of the tindaama areas, the elders of the tindaama will meet and choose one of the tindaana's sons or his brother to fill the vacancy. He takes charge of the tindaana's affairs until such time that the funeral of the deceased is performed. The tindaanaship is not hereditary. His selection is so mixed up with sorcery that it is difficult to clearly understand how the tindaanaship passes from one generation to the next. But the little I learnt from a few knowledgeable men is that whenever there is vacancy on the tindaanaship, the elders of the tindaama family will invite a soothsayer to an open space or the house of the deceased tindaana. The arrangement of the installation is in the following manner:

- If a Dapore-Tindongo Tindaana is to be installed, it is the Asa'anabisi elders who supply the soothsayer/diviner and do the consultation.
- If it is a Tindonsobiligo Tindaana who is to be installed, it is the Tindonmoligo Tindaana who supplies the soothsayer and does the consultation.
- If a Tindonmoligo Tindaana is to be installed, it is the Tindonsobiligo Tindaana who supplies the soothsayer and does the consultation.
- If a Soe Tindaana is to be installed, it is the Dapore-Tindongo Tindaana who supplies the soothsayer/diviner while the Tindonsobiligo Tindaana does the consultation.

Inevitably, the choice of a successor by the soothsayer must fall on one of the offspring of the deceased tindaana. It could be his brother, nephew or daughter's son. Neither the elders nor the general public have the right under custom to reject the choice of the soothsayer as directed by the soothsaying. The new tindaana is presented by the elders of the installation authority to the public.

The new tindaana then provides some animals, which are slaughtered by the elders to pacify the gods and seek blessings and protection for the tindaana – elect. The skins of the animals slaughtered are presented

to the tindaana – elect by the elders to serve as his seat. He is also robed in a miisi-zuvoka. It is worth noting that tindaanaship in Bolgatanga, and the Frafras in general, is never obtained by wealth or bribery. No one can become a tindaana by virtue of his status, influence or personality. Tindaanaship is such that even if the community grows large and split into small units, it is circulated amongst the different family units who are genealogically related whether within or without the territorial boundary of the town. A new procedure of selection of a Bolga tindaana among the four Tindaanaship clans, though contrary to the old methods, is summarised in 11.14.

### 11.13 Sacred Articles of Bolga Tindaana

The power and influence of the tindaana over his people is held in the sacred articles he possesses. These are believed to have a mystical connection with the Earth (mother). Upon installation, a tindaana in Bolgatanga is robed in the following sacred articles:<sup>91</sup>

- A tankologo (some tanned skin made from a goat, sheep or antelope and worn over the shoulders; these skins are usually two - one is worn over the shoulders and kept in place by a fore and hind leg sewn together and the other is worn around the waist covering the genital area).
- A talaņa (some tanned skin bag manufactured from a goat skin).
- A miisi zuvoka (some cap made from the strings of ropes usually dyed blue-black).
- A walking stick (or tindaandoore, cut from the stem of an okru plant or from some special trees).
- A lebere (a triangle cloth worn on the waist covering the genitals).
- A bundle of tails of various animals.
- A calabash and a knife (*sua*).

In most cases, it is only the Dapore-Tindongo Tindaana who wears the lebere. The next section gives a summary of the procedures followed in the selection of a Bolga tindaana.

### 11.14 Summary of Procedures of Nomination and Selection of a Tindaana in Bolga

	<b>Name of Area</b>	<b>Installation Authority</b>	<b>Duty</b>
1	Dapore-Tindongo	a) Soe Tindaana b) Tindonmoligo Tindaana	<i>Invitation of soothsayer</i> <i>Consultation of soothsayer</i>
2	Tindonsobiligo	a) Tindonmoligo Tindaana b) Soe Tindaana	<i>Invitation of soothsayer</i> <i>Consultation of soothsayer</i>
3	Tindonmoligo	a) Tindonsobiligo Tindaana b) Dapore-Tindongo Tindaana	<i>Invitation of soothsayer</i> <i>Consultation of soothsayer</i>
4	Soe Tindaana	a) Dapore-Tindongo Tindaana b) Tindonsobiligo Tindaana	<i>Invitation of soothsayer</i> <i>Consultation of soothsayer</i>

### 11.15 Religious Beliefs and Practices

The life of the Gurensi is encircled with religious beliefs and practices. They have many clearly defined customs in relation to worship which were and are still strictly followed. The Gurensi have a belief in a supreme being called Nayine, which can be interpreted as the creator of sky/chief God (naba ayine). In addition, the Gurensi honour their ancestors (yaabaduuma) which are believed to reside in inanimate objects. The belief is that the ancestors are capable of intervening with Nayine on their behalf in seeking for help. There is also another belief that the good ancestors are capable of successfully fighting against

<sup>91</sup> See R.S. Rattray 1932, vol. II, pp. 255-256. J.M. Hunter 1968, p. 409.

the evils of their enemies when invoked. Much of the worship they undertake is intended to please or avert any bad intentions of the good ancestral or obnoxious spirits. According to the old men, in those days when a family moved members looked for one particular tree which they created as a god. Under this chosen tree their artefacts, pots, necklaces, bangles, weapons of war etc. were stored. Prayers and sacrifices were performed by the family under this same tree. The result was that every new generation got to know the religious importance or uses of the tree. And so, no one dared disturb these places by cutting down the trees or setting fire on them. Such a tree was and still is given the name “tingane” (literally: surpassing all trees or Earth skin). Besides the tingane (sing) and tingana (pl.), the Gurensi also have family gods which they worship. They are the father god (so’o bagere), mother god (mā bagere), sky/sun God (wine) and guiding spirit (sigire). These family gods are handled by the head of the nuclear family who is called yidaana. The worship to these gods could be daily. Usually, whenever the yidaana performs sacrifices on any of the family gods, he puts a little of whatever they eat or drink on the stones, on which the spirits are believed to reside. For instance, if it is local beer (damolega), a little of it is poured on the gods. And if sacrifice is made, some of the blood of the animals is poured on the gods and little bits of the meat are then placed on the gods. There is the belief that the spirits of the departed members of the family want the food to eat and the beer to drink. They become unhappy if they are deprived of their entitlement on these occasions. Religious worship amongst the Gurensi is on three levels – the family, lineage and community or village levels.

### **11.16 Sacred Sites/Earthgods in Bolgatanga**

All the various sections that compose Bolgatanga have a number of sacred places (*tingana*), which the community members at certain specific periods or in any eventuality would assemble and make special offerings to under the guidance of that section’s tindaana or priest. Suitable offerings are often made to their *tingana* aimed at securing their favours and protection. There are about ten of these sacred places in Bolgatanga. Some of them are collections of trees or heaps of stones at the base of selected trees believed to be either the ancestor or the spirit of the land. Some are in the form of rivers and ponds. Those Earthgods (*tingana*) and streams which are famous in Bolgatanga are the Azelelego, Akuka, Ayia, Abolko, Akulpelego, Azupɔsiga, Abieavɔse, Akugsabila, Anyayua, Ayongo, Atowoo, Apobaga, Adoah, Apiribune and Akundeem. The Earthgods and sacred places, which are in the care of the Tindonmoligo tindaana are Abolga, Azelelego and Akuka. It is the Dapore-Tindongo tindaana who administers the rites connected with Akulpelego, Ayia, Atowoo, Azupɔsega, Akugsabila and Abieavɔse. The Tindonsobiligo tindaana officiates at ceremonies connected with Abolko, Anyayua and Ayongo. Apobaga is worshipped by the people of Pobaga while the Sabilisi and Ayidaanabisi (in Yikene) jointly, and with Tindonmoligo people, worship the Akuka, Ayia, Abolga and Azelelego. The most famous Earthgod of the Bukere people is Apiribune. The outstanding characteristics of the Bolgatanga Earthgods are that:

- They are believed to have the power of giving rain;
- Making someone rich;
- Making someone have children and plenty of wives.

There is, therefore, a belief that if anyone transgresses the rules of the Earthgods by wilfully setting fire to them, they will cause drought and famine to occur.

### **11.17 Ancestor Gods (Yaabaduuma) and Their Custodians**

Unlike the Earthgods, some of the ancestor gods are often represented by Neolithic implements, anvils of blacksmiths (known to have fallen from heaven), some in the nature of violins, pipes, guns, or bangles, to mention the few. The spirits of the ancestors are believed to take abode in these objects. Like the sacred groves, sacrifices are performed on the said objects during drought, famine and outbreak of epidemic diseases and for those desiring to marry. Like the tingana, a man wanting a wife or child can approach his

ancestral god for help. He consults the spirit and occasionally gives it presents of fowls, animals and local beer (damolega).

It is worth noting that even though there has been dispersion of Abolga's and Anabila's children resulting in their political autonomies, they still make sacrifices together to the gods of their first founders. For instance, the ancestral god of Abolga which was originally hidden under some rocks in Amirigu is worshipped greatly by all the four patrilines of the tindaama, including those of Anabila's sons in Dagmeo. The god of Abolga is circulated only amongst the family of Tindonmoligo Tindaana who is believed to be the most senior of all Abolga's descendants. Abeka (the founding father of the Atulbabisi) is in the custody of the eldest living male member of the Abeka's descendants. At the time of research in 1986, the god of Abeka was in the care of Ana-Andongo-Loko/Asumbaseme. The cult of Adongo (one of the founders of the Bolga skin and son of Apase-nyelom) was with Adabase while Atulba (founder of the Atulbabisi) and Atia was with Atenaba (a descendant of Atia who is now deceased) and the cult of Akumbusego was with teacher Abubire (most senior son of Akumbusego's descendants).

The great god of Apoka, the ancestress of the Ayampalumbisi, Akariyanebisi and Akumakebisi is in the custody of the oldest living male member of Akumake's family. The ancestor gods (yaabaduuma) of Ayeleyuka and Azagsiyane were with Aduko Adongo (the oldest living male member of Adinwebro's family). The great god of Adongo (ancestor of the Zoobisi people) was with Avoole of Abankorebisi.

### **11.18 Lineage Compositions and Population**

Bolga town is built of about 10 sections. They are Tindonmoligo, Tindonsobiligo, Dapore-Tindongo, Zorbisi, Sokabisi, Tanzui, Atulbabisi, Boosiyee, Dagmeo, Pologo, Pobaga, Bukere, and Nawongo. Many of the said sections derived their names from a less remote ancestor. A collection of some of these sections may trace descent from a common ancestor. For instance, Tindonmoligo, Dapore-Tindongo, Tindonsobiligo, Tindonse trace descent to one common ancestor, Abolga. The sections such as Aporebisi, Anafobisi, Akunlibebisi, Atulbabisi, Zorbisi trace descent to one common ancestor, Anabila.

1. The Tindonmoligo section in Bolga is inhabited by the following families – Ayikabisi, Ayarumbisi, Agarebabisi, Ayiregobisi and Akunlibebisi.
2. Tindonsobiligo is inhabited by the descendants of Abua (Abuabisi), Agmabere (Agmarebisi), Abiya'a (Abiya'a-bisi), Agangre (Agangrebisi) and Akunyelego (Akunyelegobisi).
3. Dapore-Tindongo is occupied by the following descent groups – Abieabisi, Atindaanabisi, Tindonse, Asoore-kundamnebisi.
4. Zorbisi section is occupied by the following groups: Ayeleyukabisi, Awolebabisi, Abankorogo, Asorebisi and Ake'erabisi. Two main sub-clans have developed from the Abankorogo. They are the Akugrebisi and Agaayabisi.
5. The Atulbabisi section of Bolga comprises of seven major sub-clans. They are the Apase-nyelombisi, Agberebisi, Agawurebisi, Agandaabisi, Akumbusego, Atiabisi, Adogma-Baabisi.
6. The Tanzui section is composed of a mixture of several lineages. These are the Aporebisi, Abadoobisi, Awarebisi, Akunlibebisi/Yamabisi, Gmaagabisi, Nafu-Banebisi, Nawongo. The Aporebisi in Tanzui is built out of the Ayelewinebisi, Ananbangabisi, Abojobisi, Adongobisi, Adukobisi and Adogmabisi.
7. Boosiyee (literally interpreted as 'people of Bongo's (Boosi) houses'). The section is inhabited by Boosi from Bon-Bogorogo (Bagreba). Some of the Tindaama and Nabisi clans live in Boosiyee.
8. Pologo (which means a 'new place') is a section under Bolga. It comprises the Akunlibebisi, Adogma-Baabisi, Akabobrebisi, Boosi and the Alagrebisi/Lagebisi.



9. Pobaga. The Pobaga Section in Bolga is occupied by the descendants of Ayika (Ayikabisi) and Azure (Azurebisi).
10. Bukere. One of the major sections of Bolga is inhabited by the Apokabisi-Akumakebisi, Akariyannebisi.

# Chapter 12 Tindaanaship in Bongo

## 12.1 Introduction

In Bongo there is a tindaana and a chief, who is paramount over a number of divisional chiefs and subchiefs. The town follows the chief. The tindaana takes charge of all matters concerning the use of land, i.e. the allocation and sacrifice before farming and after harvesting. In the latter case, he invokes the god Abongo by sending a dish prepared from new millet to the god.

Much of the land occupied by the Boosi was obtained by conquest because the Busansi were the earliest settlers in the area.

Originally, the tindaana of Bongo was of considerable importance because his rule and influence extended to about 15-18 km<sup>2</sup> of the district. The boundaries of the Bongo tindaana covered towns such as Gou, Tarongo, Gorugo, Yorogo, and Dua, to mention a few.

In those days, dead game, stray or lost livestock and any article and artefact of great value that was found in these towns were transferred to the care of the Bongo tindaana.

Some of the very old men of the said towns and villages did admit that they were responsible to the Bongo tindaana. It is not uncommon to see in Tarongo and Gowrie replicas of the Awubugo earth god and of Abongo respectively. This is a demonstration of the tindaana's control over these areas. However, Goo, Gorugo, Tarongo, Gowrie and Dua now have their own tindaanduma who are no longer subject to the tindaana of Bongo as in the old days.

## 12.2 History of Bongo

The town is believed to have been founded by the Busansi from Tenkurugu in Burkina Faso in about 1640. The Nankana and Nankarressies (coined for the Gurensi by their neighbours in Navrongo) came later and settled by the Busansi. According to the oral traditions of the Gurensi, during their stay in the area they used to war continuously with the Busansi.

According to sources, one Mamprusi hunter who was called Awubugo left Nalerigu in about 1660 and came as far as Zorko and settled. He later travelled to Bongo and lived close to the Busansi in the Anafobisi area (Awubugo-Sampariga). Like the Nankarressies/Gurensi, there were frequent petty skirmishes between Awubugo and the Busansi. As a result, the then King of Nalerigu (Na Atabia 1688-1741) sent a military party to Bongo at Awubugo's request so that they could fight the Busansi. Seized with fear, the Busansi fled and abandoned Bongo to the Mamprusi warriors. Some of the Busansi stayed along the country's border in Goo, Namoo, Balungo, Boko, Bongo, Arabe, Gowrie, Yorogo and Sambologo. But they were still pursued by the Mamprusi led by Awubugo and driven back to their home town in Tenkurugu, now the capital town of the Busansi. The Mamprusi asserted ownership of the Busansi settlements in Bongo and its environs. The descendants of Awubugo are widespread: some are in Zoko-Tarongo, Bongo town and Bogorogo.

According to the story, in spite of the Mamprusi presence in the area, the Gurensi still maintained their autonomy.<sup>92</sup> The Mamprusi power over them was very minimal. The Gurensi were traditional religionists. The earliest Mamprusi who lived beside the Gurensi did not interfere with the religion of the latter. What they did was that they adopted in common with the indigenous Nankarressies/ Gurensi the belief in the worship of the earth gods.

Awubugo was proclaimed the tindaana of the immigrant Mamprusi in Bongo by virtue of his position as the eldest of the group. He was then regarded as the link between the living and the ancestors, performing libation and sacrifice to the tinkugere Abongo. Up to date the high office of a Bongo tindaana is still vested in the families of Awubugo who refer to themselves as Awubugo-Lagumtababisi. The area inhabited by the Awubugo's descendants is Kuam as the Tindaama. The Tindaama section of Bongo is comprised of two major families: the Azorebisi and Bunga-Kunzeembisi.

It is the Azorebisi who hold custody of the tinkugere, i.e. the Bongo earth god. And in the event of misfortune they are approached for the answer. This clan is responsible for performing the ascension rites of a newly enskinned Bon-Naba. It is a custom among the Boosi that a newly enskinned Bon-Naba arriving in Bongo from Nalerigu must present himself to the tindaana for the first stage of his ascension rites to be performed. In addition to the tindaanaship functions, the Awubugo-Lagumtababisi possess some minor chieftainship known as Bunga-nam (literally 'donkey chieftaincy'). This chieftainship is strictly contested by the families of the Awubugo-Lagumtababisi. The head of the clan is referred to by the title 'Bunga-Naba' or 'Bunga-daana.'



**Figure 29** Tindaana Akurugu.

Apart from the Bunga-nam, the Awubugubisi or Tindaama clan are forbidden to contest for the Bongo chieftaincy. Succession to the office of tindaanaship in Bongo has since the creation of the town been restricted to the families of Awubugo-Lagumtababisi. The contest is usually restricted only to the Azorebisi. Like any tindaana of the Gurensiland, the tindaana of Bongo is distinguished from the ordinary person by the nature of his dress (i.e. sacred articles) which are enumerated on pp. 33-35. These are the proscribed dress (except in a few cases) of almost all the tindaanas in the Gurensi area.

### **12.3 Tindaanduuma of Bongo**

Following the death of Tindaan Wubugo, his office was passed onto his most senior son. And like his father, his successor performed the religious rites connected with the tinkugere, Abongo and the chieftaincy stone (nam-kugere).

The following have been the succeeding tindaanas of Bongo since the creation of the town in about 1700:

1. Tindaana Awubugo (creator of the tindaanaship in Bongo by virtue of being the first settler)
2. Tindaana Akokorogo (died 1905) (descendant of 1)

<sup>92</sup> This version of the story was narrated in an interview with the Tindaana of Bongo on 04 October 2012.

3. Tindaana Sagewula (same family as 2)
4. Tindaana Moro
5. Tindaana Yalegediuro
6. Tindaana Yamga
7. Tindaana Asaa (died in 1983)
8. Tindaana Ababire (died in 1986)
9. Tindaana Abila (brother to 8) (installed 1990-2004)
10. Tindaana Akurugu (2007 – 2018)

## **12.4 Mode of Succession**

Whenever there is a vacancy on the tindaanaship, the chief of the town goes soothsaying to find out the appropriate successor to the tindaana. The choice of a new tindaana has to fall on one of the descendants of the pioneer tindaana, Awubugo. Tindaanaship here is patrilineal (from father to son). This is not automatic in certain cases. The fact is that the office can go to a younger son in preference to an elder son if only he is considered suitable by the gods. It could even pass onto the deceased brother and even nephews.

The elders have no right under Bongo custom to reject the choice of the soothsayer as directed by the soothsaying. One cannot become a tindaana when one is not selected by the gods and the ancestors of Bongo. The new tindaana is usually presented to the general public by the chief of Bongo. By this it is believed that the chief of Bongo is responsible for selecting a tindaana of Bongo.

## **12.5 Religious Beliefs**

Every aspect of the Bongo Tindaana is affected by s religious belief. Some of these beliefs include: 1. He must not wear the red cap of the chief; 2. People must not wear shoes or sandals when approaching the tindaana's house. The tindaanas in Bongo associate themselves with an animal or reptile, which they connect with the historical circumstances of their first settler or founding father. The Awubugu-Lagumtababisi (Tindaama) in Bongo observe sacredness for the crocodile. This reptile must not be harmed, killed or eaten. The reason is that days after their ancestor was buried a crocodile came forth, which they claimed to be their great grandfather who had come in that form to visit them. The Tindaama swear oaths of the crocodile in court or in argument when the veracity of a statement made is doubt.

## **12.6 Sacred Sites**

A large number of the Boosi practice African Traditional Religion. They worship some environmental features such as rivers, ponds, rocks, hills, mountains and trees. They also honour their ancestors (yaabaduuma). They believe that the souls of their ancestors enter the land features and make known their needs or wishes. The people of Bongo (Boosi) worship the following tingana and tinkuuga, which are found scattered in all the sections of town.

1. Abongo tingane
2. Abirego tingane
3. Aburibeo
4. Akuzore
5. Akuta tingane
6. Amasere
7. Anigne
8. Apio-Geeya

9. Apusariga
10. Asamitune
11. Asigekuluga
12. Asoore tingane
13. Atampiisi
14. Atandigre
15. Atanezoa
16. Atonbisigo
17. Atunabu
18. Avumvubiga
19. Awagaba
20. Aweleberi
21. Awobogo
22. Ayagzia
23. Ayegnoma
24. Ayorigo
25. Ayiim
26. Aziima
27. Kebule
28. Salibga
29. Wiri

## 12.7 The Roles and Responsibilities of a Bongo Tindaana

The roles and responsibilities of the Bongo tindaana that are discussed here are applicable to any legally installed tindaana in the Frafra country. Based on our earlier discussion, the institutions of the tindaanaship and chieftaincy operate side by side in Bongo with the former having historic priority over the latter. The two offices are, in fact, sharply distinguished. There is one common saying which gives testimony to the differentiation of roles between the tindaana and naba (chief). This is spoken as the tindaana is for the land and the chief is for the people.<sup>93</sup> It is therefore very rare to find in Bongo a doubling of roles – that is a situation where the tindaana is found performing his own functions and those of the chief, and vice versa. This differentiation of roles is strictly observed by the Awubugu-Lagumtababisi and the Asigekulegabisi (who are the Nabisi).

1. In the old days, as well as now, the tindaambisi are responsible for performing rituals and sacrifices connected with land and the tinkugere is believed to contain the spirits of the founders of Bongo.
2. The tindaana is responsible for settling land disputes in concert with the heads of clans that matter. The latter would help the individual or combatants to reach a settlement.
3. He makes a symbolic scratch on the ground before a new house is built.
4. He is consulted whenever a situation arises for a new grave to be dug.
5. He is the peace-maker when war breaks out among clans.
6. He is responsible for fixing the day for new crops to be sown.
7. He is often approached for answers when a disaster or misfortune of any sort occurs in the town.
8. He grants land (not individual plots but land meant for the entire community) to would-be settlers or strangers.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>93</sup> NAG ADM 56/1/170, par. 60; Volker Richl 1988, p. 32.

<sup>94</sup> A.W. Cardinall 1921, p. 25.

# Chapter 13 Tindaanaship in Zuarungu, Beo, Winkogo and Gambibgo

## 13.1 History of the Zuairensi

History shows that originally Zuarungu was owned by a family, or at the most, two or three families who were probably related to each other and always of the same section.

The story of the Zuarungu settlement is as follows:

One Animoa, hunting from Wɔɔŋɔ in the Naga area of the Kasena-Nankana district came as far as some rock in the west of Nabuo and seeing that the land looked fertile proceeded to investigate until he arrived at the present area of Zono and waterholes. After settling in Zono, he proceeded to mark out his domain which he did by marking trees. This piece of land which he took includes the present villages of Beo, Kumbosego, Dulugu, Yarigabisi, Apowongo (in Dua) along the Azuposega river to a point beyond Asonge and then back down the Volta river. The people of Zuarungu assert that this land belongs to the tindaana of Zuarungu so that the tindaana, who lived in Zono, had jurisdiction over the land and all the resources such as dawadawa, shea, baobab, etc. in the aforementioned areas, i.e. Beo (under Tongo), Dulugu, Yarigabisi, Kumbosego, Kantia, Zono and Daborin. The administration of the rites connected with the important earth gods that dwell in these areas was the sole function of the Zono tindaana or Zuarungu tindaana. Animoa, the pioneer settler in Zono and for that matter Zuarungu, bequeathed part of his land area to his sons, daughter's sons, migrants and so forth.

According to the story, a migrant group (known as the Ye'enbisi and To'se) on their first arrival in Zuarungu from Nungu (in Burkina Faso) were given land to build by the Zuarungu tindaana. Besides this group, a migrant Mamprusi hunter Buing/Beo from Nalerigu was given land to build and to farm by the Zuarungu tindaana. History has it that this Mamprusi hunter later married one of the daughters of the Zuarungu tindaana Adinkɛɛya. His first son was Tɛɛmpɛliga, who became the first chief and tindaana of Beo (under Tongo). According to the old men, during a drought period hunger pervaded Tongo and forced people to leave their homes. At a time when the family relationship was very strong, tindaana Adinkɛɛya, having seen the plight and suffering of his daughter's son decided to allocate him a portion of his land area so that he was responsible for the harvesting of the dawadawa beans and shea nuts. This was then the area covered by Beo, Kumbosego, Yarigabisi and Dulugo. The earth gods in these areas were put in the care of the daughter's son Tɛɛmpɛliga. Whenever any individual or group of people wanted to petition the gods in these areas would approach him with gifts of millet, chickens, animals, local beer (damolega), tobacco and kola nuts. Besides, he had the claim to the skins, heads and major parts of animals killed during community sacrifices, funeral rites and murder rites. Also, any strange animal whose owner could not be traced was handed over to Tɛɛmpɛliga as the property of the earth god. These were gifts that were given for the benefits conferred by the land. These were neither taxes nor levies imposed on the people by the tindaana. This was later to become the deciding factor for the Beo tindaana's control over lands in Dulugo, Kumbosego, Yarigabisi and Beo town today.

The first tindaana of Beo or Beorana was Tɛɛmpɛliga. His descendants still control the lands in the said areas. They are also responsible for the collection of the dawadawa beans and shea nuts in the area. Furthermore, the Beorana is responsible for cutting the sod before a compound or any new building is put up in these areas. According to informants, owing to the size and extent of the area under his jurisdiction, the Beorana decided to delegate some of his functions to the A-urugubisi (i.e. Aburume-Winebisi) in

Dulugu. The family of Aburume-Wine is put in charge of the lands in Dulugu. They are also responsible for any religious rites connected with the land such as sowing and harvesting rites. They are often approached when a new grave is to be dug in Dulugo. The Abureme-Winebisi are invariably called tindaama.

Even though this is the version of the Zuarungu tindaana, the Beo tindaana would not admit that the former ever gave lands in the area of Dulugu, Kumbosego, Beo town and Yarigabisi to their ancestor. According to the Beo people, when their great grandfather first arrived in Beo from the Northeast there was no human habitation and he occupied the area and created some earth gods that dwell on it. The Beo people originally came from Tongo. In the beginning the people used to follow Kurugu through Zuarungu.

Besides the Beo tindaana, there is also the Benkuute tindaana who is believed to have obtained the land he controls now from the Zuarungu tindaana. Even though there are contradictions in the relationship between the Zuarungu tindaana and the Benkuute tindaana, the story is essentially the same. According to the old men, the remote ancestor of the Benkuute people was a cousin to the Zuarungu tindaana. There was plenty of land in Zuarungu and the tindaana decided to bequeath part of it to his daughter's son in Kumbosego. The area apportioned to the daughter's son included the lands covered by Katanga, Kunkoa and part of Asonge. The Benkuute tindaana, as he was known, had jurisdiction over the collection of dawadawa beans in these areas. He was and is still responsible for performing rituals in breach of land, murder and adultery taboos.

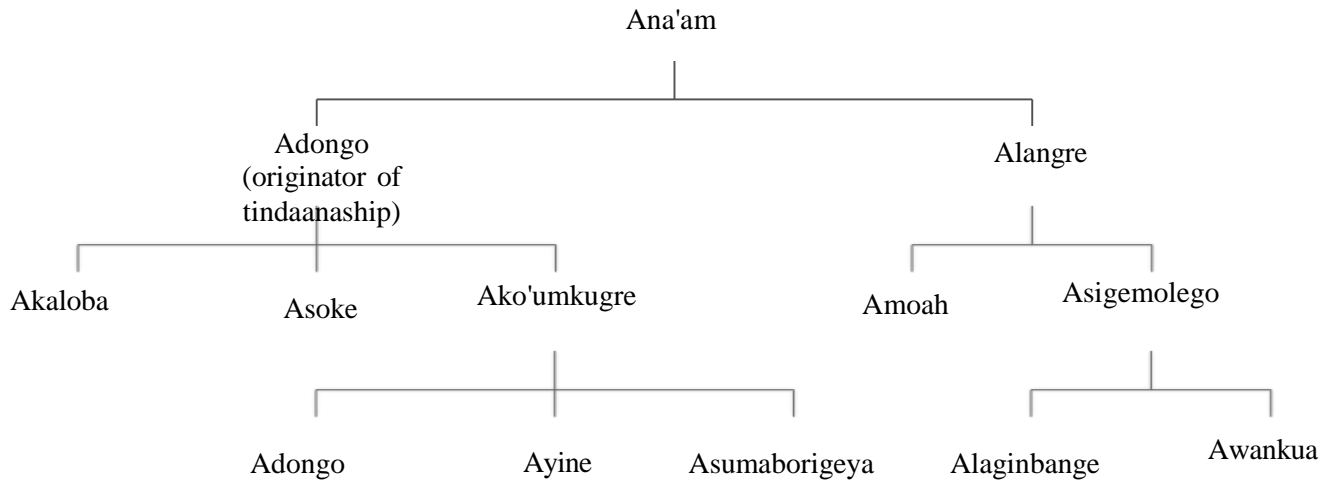
Another school of thought has it that the Beorana gave lands to the Benkuute tindaana to build and to farm. It is also believed that when a Benkuute tindaana dies, his successor is appointed by the Beorana.

Succession to the Benkuute tindaanaship is through the female line. History has it that originally succession to the Benkuute tindaanaship was traced through the male line. But after some generations the family of the originator of the tindaanaship became extinct. Since the gods could not go unworshipped, the nearest kinsmen of the tindaana decided to invite a son of the late tindaana's sister at Kumbosego (but some say Yarigabisi) to live in Benkuute and perform the necessary sacrifices to them. Later the gods selected Atindanpoka (a sister of the dead tindaana and married in Dachio) as the successor. She became the first woman to become a tindaana. After the succession had passed onto two males, the tindaanaship returned to a woman who was married at Zuarungu-Kunkoa. This latter woman decided to entrust the tindaanaship to her son, Awankua, who was invariably called a tindaana.

The occupants of the Benkuute tindaanaship, since the creation of the town, are as follows:

1. Tindaana Adongo (creator of the tindaanaship in Benkuute)
2. Tindaana Asigemolego
3. Tindaana Atindanpoka (woman)
4. Tindaana Agmere
5. Tindaana Aduko. He was not a tindaana by right of inheritance. Aduko was an upstart who came to the throne by force. He died after a short reign.
6. Tindaana Awankua
7. Tindaana Alagum-Bangre (current 2001).

## 13.2 Genealogy of Benkuute Tindaanduuma



**Figure 30** Current priest to the sky god of the ancestor Adongo (i.e. Adongo-yine).

## 13.3 Zuarungu Tindaanduuma (in order of succession)

Since the creation of Zuarungu, the following people have become tindaanas:

1. Tindaana Zena Animoa (creator of tindaanaship of Zuarungu by virtue of being the first occupants of the area)
2. Tindaana-Zena-Duko
3. Tindaan Bagna
4. Tindaan Biizole
5. Tindaan AKugre
6. Tindaana ADuko
7. Tindaan Atindana-kolgo
8. Tindaana Agana
9. Tindaan Akologo
10. Tindaana Akunkorige
11. Tindaana Asugre Niimolgo
12. Tindaana Asakezulba Akologo (installed in 1989 and died 25th April, 2004 and final funeral rites 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2007)
13. Tindaana Nyaaba Animoah.

## 13.4 Kpale Tindaanaship

The story of how the Kpale people came to be tindaama was secured from the elders of Zuarungu. According to the story, the remote ancestor of the Kpale people (in Nangodi) was a cousin to the Benkuute tindaana. The latter bequeathed the land around Asonge to the former.

Legend has it that the ancestor of the Kpale people was a hunter who shot and wounded a bush cow in the Nangodi forest. The bush cow escaped and came as far as Asonge forest and died. The hunter trailed the



animal as far as Asonge and skinned it. Some years later something mysterious began to happen to the hunter. He encountered several misfortunes and sleepless nights. The Bakologo-daana or Baga (fortune-teller) was consulted and found out what was the cause of his distress. The 'baga' discovered that the bush cow he killed had become an emanated ancestor and had taken residence in the Asonge forest (especially the spot where it died). Following the 'baga's' prescription, the hunter dedicated a shrine to his ancestor. The spot was later to become a great ritual centre for the Kpale hunter and his family. During distress and deaths in the family the Kpale man will travel to Asonge and petition the shrine. Sometime later, the Kpale hunter pleaded with the owner of the land – then Benkuute tindaana – to allocate to him that portion of the land where the shrine stood. This was done. From that date the Kpale tindaana became the owner of that land which was apportioned to him. Invariably, he was the tindaana of the area. Hence Kpale tindaana.

### **13.5. Procedure of Nomination and Selection of a Tindaana in Zuarungu**

There is no distinction between the custodianship of land and chieftainship amongst the Zuarungu and Beo people because both offices are restricted to the same clans in the two clans. This is to say that the holders of the tindaanaship also contest for the chieftaincy.

Benkuute has a distinct tindaanaship. The owners of tindaanaship do not contest for the chieftaincy.

The procedure for selection and installation of a tindaana in Zuarungu, Beo and Benkuute has little local variations. The procedure for selection amongst the Zuarungu tindaanaship is that after the death of a tindaana the senior son is made to occupy the *tindono* temporarily for three years after which date the funeral rites are performed and a new tindaana is selected. The new tindaana is usually selected by the fortune-teller (*bakologo-daana/baga*) at an open consultation at the late tindaana's house. A new tindaana is selected exclusively from the families of those who are genealogically connected with the late tindaana. Tindono can fall on any of the late tindaana's sons, brothers, nephews, and so on. The new tindaana-elect then provides a cow which is slaughtered by the elders of the clan. Thereafter the tindaana-elect is presented with the skin of the cow to serve as his seat. Besides, the elders robe him with the *tankolojo* (tanned goat's skin) and other regalia.

### **13.6 Regalia**

The regalia of the Zuarungu and Benkuute tindaanduuma include the following: *tankolojo*, sua, wane, lebere, talaṅa and miisi-zuvoka.

### **13.7 Tongo-Beo Tindaanduuma**

The chiefs of Tongo-Beo are as well Tindaanduuma, a practice that is not common with the Gurensi of Bongo and Bolgatanga. Since the creation of Beo-Tongo about five hundred years ago, the following have occupied the office of both tindaana and naba (chief):

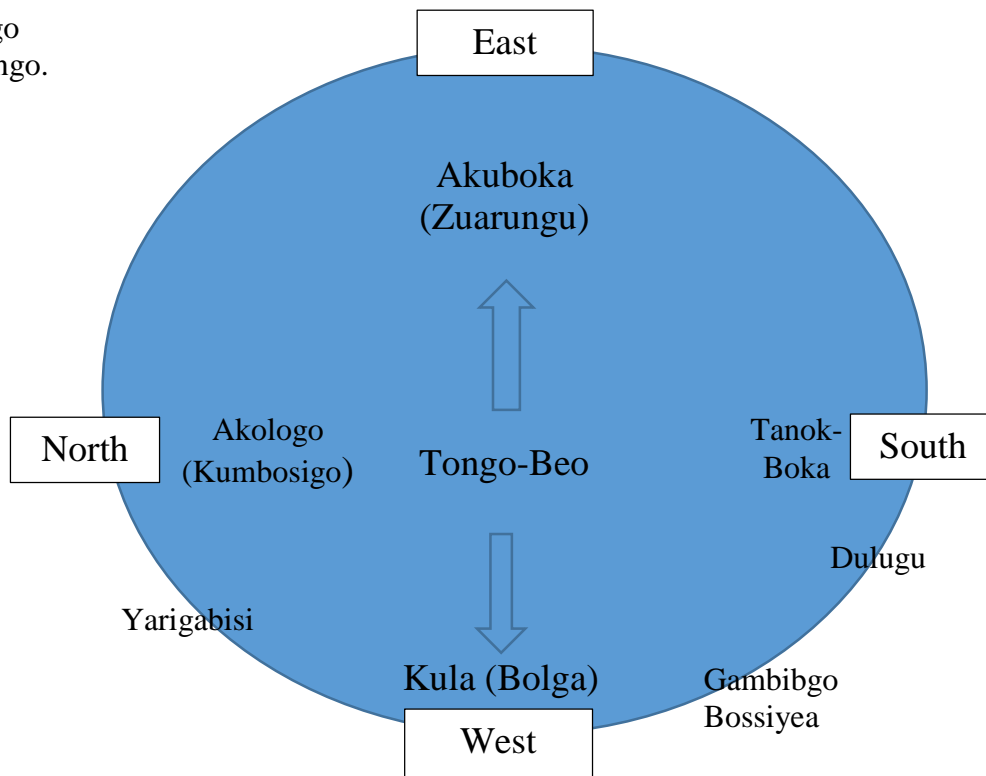
1. Tindaan/Naba Tern-Peliga
2. Tindaan/Naba Aperiḡiya
3. Tindaan/Naba Sogmenga
4. Tindaan/Naba Walambisi
5. Tindaan/Naba Asigire
6. Tindaan/Naba Awonternga
7. Tindaan/Naba Wanyolngo
8. Tindaan/Naba Naduko

9. Tindaan/Naba Natia
10. Tindaan/Naba Lebong
11. Tindaan/Naba Azibuno
12. Tindaan/Naba Atimbila
13. Tindaan/Naba Anamoah
14. Naba Sapaka Azongnaba.

### 13.8 Beo-Rana's Jurisdiction

The areas covered by Beo-Rana or Tindaana include the following:

1. Gambibgo
2. Yarigabisi
3. Bossiyea
4. Kuka
5. Dulugu
6. Kombosego
7. Moshi-Zongo.



**Figure 31** Lands which fall under Tongo-Beo-Rana.

### 13.9 Conflict of Interest in Beo Lands

There seems to be a serious dispute between the Zuarungu tindaana and the Beo-Rana over lands under the Beo-Rana. In a letter of 14 February 1995 to the Beo-Rana from the Zuarungu tindaana, the latter demanded that those lands the Beo-Rana claims to be within his jurisdiction were acquired as a result of a marriage relationship and were ceded by his great grandparents to settlers from Tongo. In a reply to Zuarungu Tindaana Asakezulba Anamolega, the Beo-Rana Sapaka in a letter of 6 July 1995 made it clear that his claim was frivolous and could not be entertained. The Zuarungu tindaana in the dispute claimed

jurisdiction over Zono, Sakote, Zuarungu central, Daboren, Nyorkoko, Kantia, Kangoo, Gono Beo, Torsin, Duhugu, Nyarigabisi, Gambibgo, Koka, Boosi-yea, Pologu, Kunbosego, etc.

## **13.10 Tindaanaship in Winkogo** <sup>95</sup>

### **13.10.1 History**

The earliest known ancestor of the Winkogo people was a man called Abunpuosego (a descendant of a Mamprusi stock) who is believed to have come to Winkogo from the region of Tongo and to others Mamprugu in the North east. According to my informants, on Abunpuosego's arrival in Winkogo, there was no human settlement and so he created some earth gods in the area and worshipped them. Under the circumstances the descendants of Abunpuosego hold both priestly and royal functions. This means that both tindaanaship and chiefship are held in this clan. Even though the two offices may be divided between two lineages in Winkogo, nevertheless, they all descended from Abunpuosego.

### **13.10.2 Winkogo Tindaanduuma** <sup>96</sup>

The following have been the tindaama of Winkogo since the creation of the town:

1. Tindaana Anvenyo
2. Tindaana Adono
3. Tindaana Amolega
4. Tindaana Agambire
5. Tindaana Aganadono
6. Tindaana Adegere
7. Tindaana Ajema (from Akungoebisi)
8. Tindaana Adono Agangeba (from Akungoebisi)
9. Tindaana Ajema Akasenaba (from Akungoebisi)
10. Tindaana Atuure (from Abokerebisi)
11. Tindaana Atia Akasenaba (from Akungoebisi).

Tindaanaship in Winkogo circulates amongst the families of Akungoe (Akungoebisi) and Abokere (Abokerebisi).

### **13.10.3 Regalia**

The regalia specific to Winkogo Tindaana includes:

1. The tankologo (tanned skin made from a goat and worn over the shoulders)
2. The talanga (a tanned skin bag manufactured from the skin of a goat)
3. A knife
4. Miisi zuvoka (a cap made from the strings of robes)
5. A lebere (a triangle)
6. Tindaandoore (a walking stick)
7. A calabash (wula)

These are sacred articles of the tindaana because they are believed to have a mystical connection with the earth spirit.

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<sup>95</sup> Information gathered from a group of elders sitting together led by Paul Anaehinaba in 1993.

<sup>96</sup> See R.S Rattray 1932, vol. 2, p. 257.

## 13.11 Tindaanaship in Gambibgo

### 13.11.1 Introduction

Gambibgo has both a chief and tindaana. There are also headmen for the sections. Gambibgo was divided into four sections, according to the 1931 census Report. The distribution of the sections with their headmen, compounds and people were as follows:

Sections	Headman	Compounds	Population
Azoabisi	Ayamga	87	830
Atongobisi	Akaribo	66	533
Asantengabisi	Asakeya	84	654
Azongobisi	Abendena	39	259

Gambibgo therefore had a population of 2,2 67, according to 1931 census. There were 270 compounds.

### 13.11.2 History

According to the tradition of the Gambibgo people, their ancestors came from Lago or Chibelle in Burkina Faso to Gambibgo through Yuam. The ancestors of the Gambibsi were Asa'antinga, Azongo, Atongo and Azoa. According to my informants, Asa'antinga on arrival in Gambibgo quickly established himself as the tindaana (custodian of the earth) over both the newly arrived clans (Agongobisi) and the earlier ones in town and those from Pobaga. Asa'antinga was a powerful hunter who, unfortunately, spent his time hunting. As a result, he entrusted the administration of the earth rites to Azongo so that he could concentrate on his business of hunting. Azongo was later to become the tindaana of Gambibgo. After his death, his son inherited him and this practice has continued in the town up to date.<sup>97</sup>

The son of Asa'antinga became the founder of modern chieftaincy in Gambibgo. He became the first Gambibgo-Naba. To differentiate the two clans in Gambibgo the Azongobisi are the Tindaama and the Asa'antingabisi are the Nabisi (the chief's children). It is the Azongobisi who hold custody of the Tinkuugre (land spirit), which is believed to contain the spirit of the entire Gambibgo people.

### 13.11.3 Tindaanduuma of Gambibgo

Since the creation of the tindaanaship in Gambibgo, the following have been the Tindaanduuma (from the Azongobisi):

1. Tindaana Azongo
2. Tindaana Apale
3. Tindaana Nereko
4. Tindaana Nimolgo (Konperige) or Somare died about 1960/61
5. Tindaana Kontia
6. Tindaana Kpale
7. Tindaan Avaaya or Nduuma (current)

It is interesting to learn that even though the Azongobisi are the tindaama, the royal clan (the Asa'antingabisi) in 1990 made determined efforts to reclaim the tindaanaship from the Azongobisi. The

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<sup>97</sup> NAG ADM 68/5/5, p 160.

reason for their action is that it was their forefathers who created the tindaanaship. The Asa'antingabisi, therefore, succeeded in installing a member of the clan, Adeene Amabisi as the tindaana of Gambibgo. Gambibgo now seems to have two Tindaanas.

# Chapter 14

## 14.1 Tindaanaship in Boko

The earliest settlers in Boko are the Amirabisi. It remains uncertain where these people came from. Nonetheless, there are two schools of thought regarding the migrations of the Amirabisi.<sup>98</sup> According to the first school of thought, the ancestor of these people might have followed the first chief of Bongo, Naba Asigekulega, during his expedition to Bongo from Nalerigu in the beginning of the eighteenth century. According to Boko oral tradition, owing to a desire for land they broke off from the main body in Bongo and lived in Namoo. Another school of thought has it that the people in Boko descended from Azubonjo, the traditional founder of Namoo. Their founding father was Aziboko (son of Adayere). According to the old men, when their number increased they moved to build in the Kansoo area of Sambologo. These people are said not to have direct relationship with the descendants of Asigekulega. After a few generations, the Amirabisi withdrew from the area of Kansoo to live in the present area of Kumbiligo in Boko. And here they proclaimed themselves as the tindaama of the area.

It is said that the earliest settlers in Feo were also the Abokobisi/Amirabisi. Unlike in Feo, where tindaanaship and chieftaincy are sharply divided, both are held in one family in Boko. This means that both royalty and tindaanaship is vested in the Amira's family (Amirabisi) or Abokobisi. A member from this family is often invited to purify the land whenever it is defiled by blood and adultery. Additionally, members of this family are responsible for all matters concerning the use of the land – its allocation and the worship of sacred places (tingama) in Feo.

## 14.2 Tindaanaship in Feo

Feo has both a chief and a tindaana. There are also headmen for the sections. The population of Feo, as shown on page 334 of the Gold Coast census of population for 1948 published by the Crown Colony in 1950, was 3244 (in 1931) and 4216 (in 1948). There were also 627 compounds with a total of 2352 rooms. His gave an average of 6.7 persons to a house. Feo had a population of 3963 and 5123, according to the 1984 and 1994 censuses respectively.

There are two principal tindaanaship areas in Feo. These are the Asuwabisi and the Atamolegabisi. It is believed that the Asuwabisi were given land to settle by the Boko tindaana and the clan Amirabisi. The Amirabisi (the tindaanaship of Boko) live in the Kumbelimbisis area.

The earliest settlers in Feo were the Tabisi and the Suwabisi. Both came in from the direction of Nalerigu. They are therefore believed to be the Mamprusi descendants. According to Feo oral tradition, the first group, the Tabisi after leaving the North East came and settled first at Adeo-Kinkanga, close to what is now Yon-Pusiga in the area of Boko. From Ade-kinkanga, the group moved later to settle at the present area of the Feo primary school. The second group, Asuwabisi after withdrawing from the North, travelled to what is presently the site of Naba-Delega and built their houses. They now inhabit the area of Boko. They call themselves Tindaamas. There is another group which arrived in Feo after the Tabisi and Asuwabisi. This group we are told came under the leadership of Agaane-Tanoko. The people of Feo and Boko are closely related. They have it in their oral traditions that they came from the North East and after a series of migrations came and settled at their present localities (i.e. Feo and Boko). Therefore, in the

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<sup>98</sup> Some of this information was obtained from Akulga Anaba, a native of Boko's chief's Palace and married to the chief of Gowrie Zankanga.

second decade of the twentieth century (1979), both Feo and Boko were lumped as one administrative town that was controlled from Namoo. The split of the town into Feo and Boko came after the enskinment of one of the Feo chiefs, Apusoore at Nan-Tanga. On their first arrival in Feo, they settled in the area of Aweese. Some one or two generations later, they withdrew to live at Naba-Delega. This area stretches from Feo to Boko but covers a larger part of the latter. It is related that Alangubra begot Apusoo and Asalibga. These have founded some kindred groups in Feo known as Apusoorebisi and Asalibgabisi. It should be mentioned in passing that they are the originators of chieftaincy in Feo and they form the royal estate in the town. Owing to lack of space and land, some of the Asalibgabisi, Tindaama, Nabisi have withdrawn from Feo to live in Anarega in Burkina Faso. It is worthwhile to note that all the groups which came to live in Feo originally obtained the land for their building from the Boku tindaana from Amiirabisi who lived in the Kumbelinbisi section of the town (these are the Amiirabisi).

#### **14.2.1 History of the Atamolegabisi Tindaanaship**

Feo oral tradition has it that one of the sisters of Asalibga (son of Alangubra) married to some man at Soe. This woman's name was not immediately known. But it is believed that she gave birth to a son whose name was Asanebasah. In those days owing to long period drought and poor crop yield, there was a scarcity of food. As a result, the woman withdrew from Soe with her little child to live in her parental home in Feo. While in Feo, her brothers gave land to build and to farm. Here Asanebasah begot Akumogse. Asanebasah and his family and mother lived in the area of Ashebere.

According to the family pedigree, Akumogse son was Anɔɔɔ and Abangesuma. Anɔɔɔ's son was Atamolega whose son was also called Anɔɔɔ. Abangesuma's sons were Aganga daana and Akɔse. Agangadaana's son was Ananga. The families of Anɔɔɔ and Abangesuma have now increased in Feo and they refer to themselves as Anɔɔɔ-Aamolegabisi and in short Atamoleg. These people forbid the crocodile and they swear by it in court when the veracity of a statement is in doubt. These Atamolegabisi, like the Abokobisi in Feo, are often called upon to purify the land in their area of jurisdiction, whenever it is defiled by blood through fight and adultery (having intercourse with a married woman). Similarly, they are also responsible for all matters concern the use of the land – its location, the worship of the land stones (Tinkuuga) and some of the Earthgods in Feo.

#### **14.2.2 Tindaanduuma of Feo**

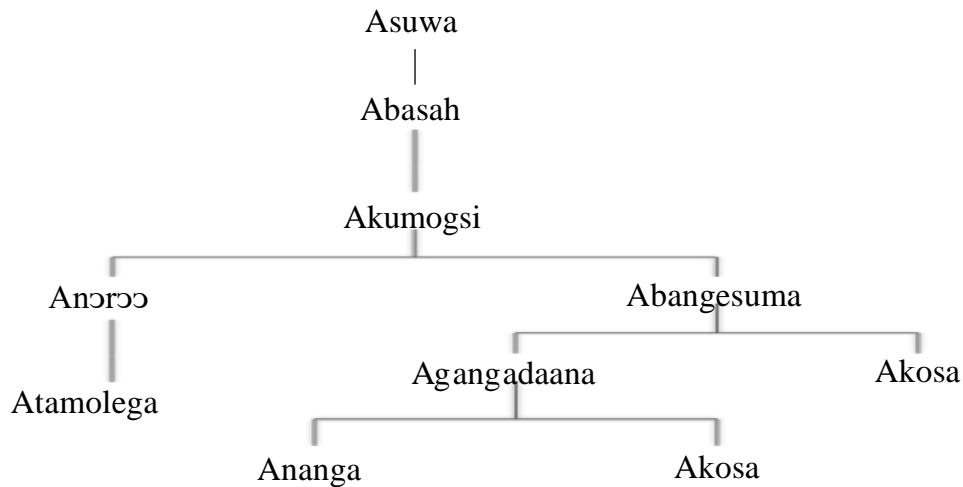
The tindaanas of Feo from the Akumogbisi or Atamolegabisi clan since the creation of the tindaanaship in the area are as follows:

1. Tindaana Atamolega-Kuure
2. Tindaana Atubga – Podongo
3. Tindaana Akugre – Kansoo
4. Tindaana Akuure Abanam
5. Tindaana Atia Abobira
6. Tindaana Atampia Apodongo
7. Tindaana Adiga Abua
8. Tindaana Nduko Akansoo.

#### **14.2.3 Mode of Succession**

The procedure in connection with the tindaanaship is that when a tindaana dies, it is the next senior male member of the clan who succeeds as the new tindaana. Of a holder, it is the next senior male member of the clan who becomes the new tindaana. Tindaanaship here is not determined by soothsaying. In this case,

it is not openly contested by the two main gates, the Akumogsi and Asuwa/Abokobisi.



**Figure 32** Genealogy of Asuwa’s descendants.

#### 14.2.4 Sections and Demography

The major sections that compose Feo town are the following:

1. **Nabisi** (comprising the Bagbisi and Ategnabisi). The population for this section in 1948 was 1035 (males 477, females 558). There were 147 compounds with 465 rooms. This gave 7.0 persons to a house.
2. **Asalibgabisi**. This section gave a population of 962 (males 437 females 525). There were 114 houses and 422 rooms. The average number of persons to a house was 8.4.
3. **AkumOgbisi**. They recorded a population of 924 (males 449, females 475) and 152 houses. There was a total of 473 rooms and 6.1 persons to a house.
4. **Asiimabisi**. The 1948 census gave a population of 551 (males 261, females 290). There were 90 houses with a total of 325 rooms giving 6.1 persons to a house.
5. **Ayelbia**. (Comprising the Azuurebisi and the Atamon-Sapiibabisi). This gave a population of 744 (comprising 336 males and 408 females). There were 124 houses and a total of 367 rooms. This gave about 6.0 persons to a house.

#### 14.2.5 Sacred Places in Feo

The following sacred places exist in Feo:

1. Abangabuno
2. Akutoo
3. Asebere



4. Awengo
5. Awiise
6. Atoyoko
7. Abungatanga
8. Naba Delega.

### 14.3 Tindaanaship in Namoo

According to Namoo oral tradition, one of Seketare's daughters married to one Agiah in Burkina Faso and gave birth to a number of children. Unfortunately, her husband failed to honour her marriage contract by not paying the bride price. As a result, the woman's father collected her and her children back with the hope that the husband will come and settle the bride price. This was not forthcoming. In the end, the woman took a lover from Na-abisi section of Namoo and had additional offspring with him. While she was with her parents, Seketara entrusted the office of tindaanaship to the daughter's son. He was to be in charge of performing libations and sacrifices to the Earth gods and deities that dwelt in the area. Any time something happened in the village, and the cause was unknown, it was this sister's son who consulted the Gods. In view of the fact that his religious functions were almost that of a Tindaana, the inhabitants referred to him as tindaana having relegated that of Seketara to the background. According to the story, the man from Na-abisi who took Seketara as a concubine decided to move the woman and her sons to his house. They lived in Na-abisi for a long period. Some of her sons married and begot children at their new home. During this time their relationship with Seketarabisi had faded and that of their new home had grown. As such, people who did not know their relationship with Seketarebisi rather called them by the clan of the man they were staying with, Na-abisi. Even up to date people mistake the Tindaanas for the Na-abisi.

#### 14.3.1 Procedure of Selection

In the event of the death of a Namoo tindaana, depending on the resources of his family, his funeral rites are performed to allow a new tindaana to be installed. Usually, it is the Seketarebisi (the real custodians of the tindaanaship) who would meet at the diseased tindaana's house at Na'abisi and perform the necessary rituals on the new tindaana. Without them, there can be no installation of a new tindaana in Namoo.

Tindaanaship here is not by soothsaying as it is common in most tindaanaships. It is simply passed onto the next senior male member of the holder. In the selection of a new tindaana, a cow is killed and its skin given to the tindaana elect or the successor of his seat. He is also robed in the following articles:

1. A calabash (wane)
2. Takolojo (tanned goat's skins)
3. A walking stick
4. A lebere

These articles serve as symbols of his office. It is forbidden for the Namoo tindaana to wear the miisi-zuvoka.

#### 14.3.2 Sacred Places

The people of Namoo worship certain trees. These are given the general name tingana (*plural*), tingane (*singular*). Namoo has about five or more of these tingana. They include the following:

1. Aduguba
2. Akansoo
3. Akumsungo

4. Anamoo
5. Ayose
6. Avɔkɔ
7. Awunkam-mo
8. Azeem, etc.

### 14.3.3 Sections in Namoo

In Natanga the following sections are known to exist:

1. Nanbisi
2. Akologo
3. Amokobisi
4. Akumpase
5. Doneh
6. Awanden.

According to the 1948 population census Report and Table published by the Crown Agents in 1950, p. 333, Namoo recorded 1,777 people (males 867, females 910).

## 14.4 Tindaanaship in Sumbrungu

### 14.4.1 Introduction

The name of the town has been spelt in many different ways – Sumbruno, Sumburugo, and Sumbrungu – but I will adopt the latter spelling. The boundaries of Sumbrungu on the east are demarcated by Yikene and Zaare, west by Kandiga and Doba, south by Sherugo and north by Gamborigo and Zoko. Sumbrungu is located midway between Navrongo and Bolgatanga, the capital of the Upper East Region of Ghana. It is located on a major truck road.

Sumbrungu is divided into about five villages each of which has its own sub-chief and its own clearly defined territory. These villages are still rivals in certain situations.

Sumbrungu has a chief and a tindaana. There are also headmen for the sections. The town had a population of 6650, according to the 1931 census. There were 668 houses, many of which were the round or circular type. A summary of the population and compounds in each section in 1931 is as follows:

<i>Sections</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Compounds</i>
Amogrebisi	2255	218
Azorebisi	1504	138
Kulbia	1574	145
Kulogo	1114	108
Agusi	323	658

### 14.4.2 History of the Sumbrunsi

According to the oral traditions of the Sumbrungu people, a group of Mossi traders arrived in the town from Ouagadougou (also spelt Wagadugu), the capital of the Mossi under the leadership of Avoesego. There were other later arrivals who came under the leadership of Alaara, Atangba and A-ule. The last group came directly from Yua (in the Kasena-Nankana district).

Kulogo was said to have been founded by Amogre's nephew.<sup>99</sup> Agusi is made up of arrivals from Zoko (under Bongo). The descendants of Avoesego, Alaara and Atangba call themselves the Konyassi, Zantoosi and Lansogorosis respectively. The U-leba who are by far the largest in Sumbrungu are the Amogrebisi and Azorebisi. Their founding father was some man called Asumbura or Amogre. He came from Yua (in Navrongo). The Kulbia people came from Kologo (under Navrongo). Azorebisi was originally composed of Moshi slaves bought by Amogre.<sup>100</sup> In Sumbrungu today the tindaanaship is shared amongst three main clans: the Amogrebisi, Azorebisi and Kulbia.

For instance, the area covered by the central part of Sumbrungu, including the land bounded on the northeast by Azorebisi, north by Gamborogo and Zoko, northwest by Kandiga (in the Navrongo district)



**Figure 33** A sketch map of Sumbrungu.

and south by Sherugo falls under the jurisdiction of the Amogrebisi tindaana. The sections under the control of the Amogrebisi tindaana are Atoobisi, Abengrebisi, Akonebisi, Aduabisi, Zobega, Akan Zusebisi and Tampuuro. The tindaana in charge of this section plays the role of performing libations and sacrifices to the Earth Gods and ancestral trees (Yaaba-tiisi) in the area. There can never be any important religious performance in connection with the shrines without his knowledge. During occasions of death, famine, etc. the Amogrebisi area tindaana is visited for explanation of the reasons for the misfortunes. He also plays the role of allocating to strangers who would want to live in the area of Sumbrungu.<sup>101</sup>

#### 14.4.3 Amogrebisi Tindaanduuma

Since the creation of Sumbrungu, the following persons have been tindaanduuma of the Amogrebisi area:

1. Tindaana Akambode
2. Tindaana Aporom (died in 1934)
3. Tindaana Asa'andaa
4. Tindaana Akaduure
5. Tindaana Ayedina Akasaare

#### 14.4.4 Extent of the Azorebisi Tindaana

The area bounded on the east by Bolgatanga, northeast by Bolgatanga and Bongo-Nyariga, north by Vea, northwest by Gamborogo, and southwest by Amogrebisi is under the jurisdiction of the Azorebisi tindaana. The Azorebisi area comprises the following: Numabisi, Aniabisi, Konyasi and a portion of the area in the Bolga-Nyariga section. The Azorebisi under Akuntae obtained the land from the Amogrebisi tindaana.

<sup>99</sup> NAG-Accra ADM 68/5/5.

<sup>100</sup> NAG-Accra ADM 68/5/5, p. 144.

<sup>101</sup> NAG-Accra ADM 68/5/4, p. 106.

In the Azorebisi area, Avoesegobisi, Amanabisi and Akonebisi are responsible to the tindaana in this area. The area covered by the Numa, Zantooi and Konyasi is under the control of another tindaana. Two tindaanduuma exist in the area of Azorebisi. During the time of research in 1986, Ayamdoo and Abunga were the tindaanduuma of the former and latter areas.

#### **14.4.5. Azorebisi Tindaanduuma**

The following have been the tindaanduuma of Azorebisi area since the creation of town:

1. Tindaana Anoma
2. Tindaana Aboo
3. Tindaana Abire
4. Tindaana Akurugu
5. Tindaana Akuntae (was tindaana during the reign of Naba Azaba)
6. Tindaana Abaseya
7. Tindaana Akan'enge
8. Tindaana Akuba
9. Tindaana Ayamdoo
10. Tindaana Atindaanbire

#### **14.4.6 Extent of Kulbia**

The land covered by Amogrebisi on the northeast, Kandiga and Doba on the west, Kolugo (under Navrongo) on the southwest and Sherugo on the south is under the control of the Kulbia tindaana. The area of Kulbia includes Weboogo/Aweebabisi.

### **14.5 Tindaanaship in Sherugu**

The founding father of the Kumbilisi, the ruling clan in Sherugu today was a man called Asera. According to Sherugu oral tradition, before Asera's arrival in Sherugu from Pogmolgo-Sirigu (in the Kasena-Nankana district), there were already settlers there known as the Wakia and Baglisi. It was these people who gave land to Asera to build on and to farm. The Wakia clan is now extinct and only a few of the Baglisi still live in Sherugu in the section of Bulugu. Naturally the Wakia and Baglisi were the tindaanas of Sherugu. They had the exclusive right to mark out sites for new compounds to be built in the town and also settle land and boundary issues in the area. Their permission was required if there was a new grave to be dug.

#### **14.5.1 Mode of Succession to Tindaanaship**

Unlike the towns in the Gurense area, tindono in Sherugu rotates amongst the families composing the originator of the first tindaana. This can be matrilineal or patrilineal. This means that sons, grandsons and daughters who are related to the originators of the tindaanaship can contest should any vacant skin exist. However, in Sherugu today it is the Ayikabisi who provide the tindaanas for the town. The first tindaana of Sherugu was Akapare (who came from the Kunkua section of Sherugu). His successor was Ayanebuno (from the Nayiri section). And after Ayanebuno came Alogrebuno who came from the Baglisi clan (the originators of the tindaanaship). A summary of the tindaana of Sherugu are as follows:

1. Tindaana Akapari
2. Tindaana Ayanebuno
3. Tindaana Alorebuno

All these came from Kunkua, Nayiri and Baglisi sections of Sherugu.

### 14.5.2 Sections of Sherugu

Sherugu is made up of the following sections:

- The Kumbiligo section, which comprises: Kunkoa, Kayasi, Agorebisi, Tenganebisi, Buu-logo, Sapio and Nayire. The Nayire section is divided into Apeisagebobisi (the Yalbisi, also called Adingeyelumbisi or Akunogabisi or Ati-Itafobisi)/Kosombisi.
- Dorungo, which comprises the Abuḡabisi and Agɔbegabisi.
- Punponḡu is inhabited by the Abaniabisi made up of Ayeobisi, Azuurebisi and Ake-eḡobisi/Ke-enbisi and the Kumpeerisi (Akumperigo).
- Basengo.
- Kalbeo and Nyorkukɔ. These two areas were founded by two brothers who came from Pogmolḡo-Sirigu. The senior brother Abula founded the Nyorkuko, the junior brother Awureko founded Kalbeo. Abula begot about four sons. Akunesko, Akaa, Alawugen and Anambire. Alawugen's sons were Avole and Abaka. These founded the Avolibisi and Akundoor sections. Awureko gave birth to Alebre, the most senior son, Awobḡo and Azuno. Alebre's son was Alɔko and to him were born Ake-em, Aguom and Atugra. The Alɔkobisi and Zinga form the Awurebisi.

### 14.5.3 Earth gods in Sherugu

1. Akabange
2. Akandaa-boko
3. Apirega
4. Nanziera
5. Abaseḡo
6. Adorongɔ
7. Apunpungo
8. Ayorkukɔ

At the time of research in 1986, it was tindaana Aloorebono who was sacrificing to the following:

1. Ayika. The major Ayika and the minor Ayika were with Awunkuure in the Tenganbisi.
2. A-anyela (shortened to Ayela) located in the Kunkua section.
3. Apotuko (which is a collection of rocks in the forest of Sherugu) is located near river Atiyaba.

### 14.5.4 Totems

All the people of Sherugu who migrated from Sirigu in the Kasena-Nankana East district forbid the honeybill (Dulugo) and squirrel (Sia).

### 14.6 Tindaanaship in Nyarega

The people of Nyarega who live in both Bolga and Bongo areas are offshoots of Anoko and A-urugu in Zaare. According to the legends of the people, the son of A-urugu, who was Nyarega-daana, crossed over the rivers Adindenga and Yarigatanga to live in the present day location named Nyarega. Another son, who was called Awurega probably owing to family quarrels, fled from Zaare to Nyarega to avoid being involved in the trouble. A-urugu's family later increased and spread over the whole of Nyarega. They call themselves A-urugubisi and Aleenebisi. The A-urugubisi in Nyarega still hold firmly to the Zaare skin and also the tindaanaship which was bequeathed to them by the first founders Anoko and A-urugu. All religious and semi-religious matters in Nyarega are the sole prerogative and duty of Adita's family.

### 14.6.1 Nyarega Tindaanduuma

1. Tindaana Ndita
2. Tindaana Agmeera
3. Tindaana Asaana
4. Tindaana Akrirega
5. Tindaana Ayaaba
6. Tindaana Ayarega.

## 14.7 Tindaanaship in Vea<sup>74</sup>

### 14.7.1 History

Veā (also spelt Via) now consist of two major groups: the original settlers group, which constitute the Ve-sereba and the migrant group, which constitute the Yareba (descendant of Adima-sua). The former includes the Akuntobgobisi/Zangɔɔsi, Adindɔɔrɔbisi/Gungaraanabisi and Alupalgabisi. The Yareba clans are the Anafobisi. In Veā, the Ve-sereba has a historic priority over the Ve-Yareba; the latter forming the minority. The religious head/Tindaana of Veā is often chosen from the Alupalagabisi, one of the Ve-sereba clans. It is only this clan who can select and mark out sites for burial and farming. They also cut the sod for a new traditional home to begin. It is the only clan which is often approached for the settlement of land disputes and defilement in blood. A popular legend has it that one of the daughters of the passed Bon-Naba, Atombisigo who was Ayene married at Sirigu in the Kasena-Nankana district and begot Alupalaga. Alupalaga was popularly called Kanpia-Lupalaga. Alupalaga, after a series of migrations from Sirigu to Sherugo (Bolga), finally built his house at Akampia-tua in the area of Atanzore in Kuepeliga. Alupalaga begot Adabere whose sons were Akobuga, Ate-engo and Abaga. Akobuga's sons were Ayeriga, Azaane, Afagnma and Akanane. Abaga (brother of Akobuga) begot Apogentebire, Awolege and Amonge. Atego (another brother of Akobuga) begot Asalema and Akanzonge.

The descendants of Alupalaga referred to themselves as Akobuga-Daberebisi, the tendency being to forget the eldest ancestor Alupalaga and substitute a less remote ancestor Adabere. In Via, people call them by a proverbial name Asinsinni-Yelburaabisi. It is the Akobuga –Daberebisi who hold custody of the most important Earth-god of the town Avema from where Veā derived her name. What we must understand here is that tindaanaship in Veā is based on discovery and occupation. They also recognize the fact that the Zangɔɔsi /Akuntobgobisi were the first to discover and occupy the land in Veā. Other informants asserted that on the first arrival of the Zangɔɔsi they met some earlier group, the Booya occupying the place. The second group to arrive in Veā after the Zangɔɔsi were the Gungaranabisi. The founding father of the Gungaranabisi was Apogsole. The Gunngaranabisi is the section of Veā located on the west of Veā town and sharing a common border with Tarongo. The ancestor of Gungaranabisi came to Veā from Sirigu (in the Kasena-Nankana district). He came to his new home with Ayi-ire. Apogsole begot Abane who, in turn, begot Adingbuuro and a female whose name was Amoah. Adingbuuro's son was Ana'are. He also had a daughter whose name was Apoka. The descendants of Adingbuuro living in Veā call themselves Adingbuurobisi and others refers to them as Abanebisi. According to the story, the sister of Adingbuuro who was Amoah married to some man in Tarongo. This man was called Ananbanga. Amoah gave birth to Adongo. Ananbanga died when his son Adongo was still small. And for some reasons his window returned to her paternal home with her young child to Veā. The descendants of Adongo (son of Ananbanga) in Veā call themselves by the name of their ancestor in Zoko, Ananbangabisi. The ancestor of Adingbuurobisi (who was Apogsule) died and was buried in Gunga. Tradition has it that the brother of Apogsule, who was called Ayi-ire, migrated from Gunga to settle in Tarongo but after a while he returned to live in his old home in Veā Gunga. He is the founder of a clan in Veā known as Ayi-irebisi. One of the

daughters of Adinbuuro, Apoka stayed back home and took a lover who mated with her and she conceived and gave birth to a male son, Akaditi. The offspring of Apoka in Via call themselves Apokabisi. These together with Ananbangabisi and Ayiirebisi, Adindɔɔɔɔbisi form the major clan in Via called Gungaranabisi.

According to oral tradition, Anɛɛɛ who is a relative of Alupalaga (first tindaana of Via) married at Yorogo to some man called Atoobɔka and gave birth to Abiro. Following an unhappy marriage and harsh treatment from her husband parents, Anɛɛɛ returned to stay with her parents in Vea. It was in Vea Abiro grew up and also married and begot a number of children. The descendants of Abiro living in Vea refer to themselves as Abiirebisi. What we must understand is that though they live in Vea, they still maintain their distinctiveness from those of Alupalagabisi because they have chosen to observe the totem of their ancestor Atoobɔka, which is the fowl. They swear by it in court when they want to affirm their innocence.

The migrant group in Vea are the Yareba and so their neighbours called them Ve-Yareba to distinguish them from the original occupants of Vea - the Ve-Sereba.

The Ve-Yareba are the descendants of Anafo, one of the sons of Adima-sua. Anafo who was originally living in Kunkua in Yorogo withdrew to live beside the Amirabisi, the Zangɔɔsi and the Alupalagabisi in Kulpeliga. Anafo's sons were Azoa, Abeero alias Adima-sua and Adadingo. Azoa's son was Ananga (a female) Agɔɔma, Avoore and Atinka'alum. Azoa lived and died in Kulpeliga. Anafo also died and was buried at Kulpeliga. Some big baobab tree is believed to be the spirit of Anafo known as Anafo -Tua which stands in Kulpeliga. The descendants of Ananga (Anangabisi), Agɔɔma (Agɔɔmabisi), Avoore (Avoorebisi) and Atinka'alum (Atinka'alunbisi) have formed the main clan Azoabisi. The Azoabisi, Akugkinebisi, Abeerobisi, Adima-suabisi, Adadingo (Awuregabisi) form the major Yareba clan (Anafobisi). It was at Kulpeliga that the sons of Azoa begun to spread and some came as far as to the present area of Tansieko and built their houses having obtained land from the Alupalagabisi. The following subclans of the Anafobisi inhabit the Tansieko area of Vea even though many of them still occupy their old home in Kulpeliga: Agɔɔmabisi, Atinka'alunbisi, Anangabisi, and Awurigabisi.

The Awurigabisi is another Yareba clan in Vea but the majority of these people have crossed over the Yariga-Tanga River to live in Gowrie. Some of them - during migration from Kulpeliga - travelled to Gowrie and built their houses. Members from the Awurigabisi descended from Adadingo, son of Anafo. He came to Gowrie with Abagnaba. Adadinngo's sons were Awurega, Adugbire (died childless), Amuribagɔɔ, Aduko and Alebgelaa.<sup>102</sup>

The descendants of Adadingo who lived in Via-Tansieko and Gowrie refer to their sub-clan as Awurigabisi, the tendency here being to forget the oldest ancestor Adadingo and take the name of the nearest ancestor, Awuriga. Hence the name Awurigabisi.

In the event of the death of a very old man or woman in the Awurigabisi in Vea, the corpse is carried to Gowrie for burial. In the old days during times of distress and drought, all those who have descended in the male and female line of Anafo will meet in Kulpeliga and perform sacrifice to the ancestor tree (Yaaba-Tia) Anafo. All those who traced their descendants from Adima-sua forbid the fowl. They do not also intermarry. If they do, they feel themselves more enlightened.

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<sup>102</sup>Genealogy traced by Akɔɔma-Yamga in May 1985.

Another group in Ve'a closely related to Anafo's descendants are the Atotebisi (i.e. the founder being Atote). The Atotebisi are the offshoot of the Abeleobisi in Gowrie.

#### 14.7.2 Ve'a Tindaanduuma



**Figure 34** Tindaana Apiiya.

1. Tindaana Alupalaga (creator of tindaanaship in Ve'a)
2. Tindaana Adabere (son of 1)
3. Tindaana Akobga (son of 2)
4. Tindaana Ate-ego (alias Aduure acting) (brother to 3)
5. Tindaana Aguruma
6. Tindaana Abaga (brother to 3 and 4)
7. Tindaana Afaguma (son of 3)
8. Tindaana Apogontebire died in 1969 (son of 6). After his death Amonge acted as a tindaana.
9. Tindaana Agangnaba (son of 8 1970-1975)
10. Tindaana Ami-iteba (installed in 1983, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2004, nephew to 8). After his death, the son of Apogontebire, known as Nyaaba, acted as tindaana.
11. Tindaana Apiiya Akunyana (installed 13<sup>th</sup> August 2012).





Figure 35 Genealogy of Ve'a Tindaanduma.

## 14.8 Tindaanaship in Gowrie

### 14.8.1 Introduction

The boundary of Gowrie on the east is with Yorogo, west with Ve'a and Yarigatanga river, south with Yorogo and north with Bongo. Gowrie had a population of 3240 and 4187, according to the 1984 and 1994 censuses.<sup>103</sup> The town is divided into six sections, each of which has its own headman and Kanbonnaba (chiefs' representatives). The following were the Headmen and Kanbonnaduuma of the sections of Gowrie in the early 1930s:

Section	Headman	Kanbonnaba
Tengre	Atubuga	Awine
Kasingo	Ayeleboe Ageyuure	Amenganuo
Agongobisi	Adabona	Apuure
Daboti or Atotebisi	Ayelewine	Ayamga
Nayire	Abore	Aengya
Kunkoa	Atinga	Akaribo

<sup>103</sup> 1996-2000 Medium term development plan, Bongo district, NAG ADM 68/5/4.

Gowrie has both a chief and a tindaana but their functions are not sharply distinguished because the real tindaama do not play any meaningful role in the tindaanaship. Unlike the other tindaanas, the Gowrie tindaana does not have control over the distribution of land in town. He is a tindaana in name. The chief performs the major functions of a tindaana. The reason for this anomaly is told in the proceeding discussion.

#### **14.8.2 History of the Yareba**

The people of Gowrie who otherwise call themselves Yareba came to assert ownership of the town (tindaanaship) by conquest. The pioneer settlers (tinganbisi) believed to be the Booduuma were vanquished by the Yareba following a war in connection with murder of the latter's woman. The Yareba have been living in their country about seventeen to eighteen generations back. Even though the Yareba expelled the Booduuma from their own territory, they never became tindaama themselves because they never worshipped those Earth gods, which the Booduuma created in the town. According to the old men, after sometime the Yareba called back the Booduuma to their old home in Gowrie between 1840 and 1850. Those who returned joined the Yareba in a new spirit of co-operation and fought wars on behalf of the Yareba with the same fervor that they had fought against them on behalf of their own clan. Some of the Booduuma who returned to Gowrie were giving back part of their territories to their masters. They were responsible for religious rites connected with the Earth gods, especially Asiyaka, Azantulema and many others in the area. But the responsibility of land allocation to strangers to build on or farm was vested in their masters, the Yareba. Invariably, the Yareba are known by outsiders as tindaana, even though they hold the office of "Nam" (chieftaincy). The reasons why the Yareba instead of the Booduuma are invariably called tindaana was narrated to me as follows:

The Yareba who live in Gowrie possess a god or shrine, which they called Abongo. The shrine traced its origin to Bongo. It was brought down from Bongo by Asundane (one of the sisters of the past chiefs of Bongo) and given to her first son, Atia (later Abanwoko) who became the first chief of Gowrie. The Abongo shrine is believed to have powers of granting rainfall, making people rich and women to have children. During crisis situations, such as deaths in the community, strange diseases and drought, representatives from each section of Gowrie would meet with food stuffs, birds and animals to offer to the shrine. In those days and as at now metals, stray animals, etc. whose owners could not be traced were /are taken by the finder to the patron of Abongo (who is the chief of the town) as being the property of the shrine. According to the rulers of the shrine, the chief (who is the custodian of the shrine) must not have direct contact with it. That is, he cannot approach it directly and perform sacrifices or pour libation on it. He must do it through a sister's or daughter's son. And this rule has been observed by succession chiefs from the time of Naba Abanwoko to date. Whenever there is plenty of harvest the people residing in the community - whatever their origin and descent affiliations with the chief - would provide some animals, birds and foodstuffs and some quantities of pito as offering to the shrine. The Abongo shrine later appeared to have had a higher authority and dignity than that of the Booduuma Earth gods. It was and still believed that the Abongo holds the spirit of the entire community. It is the result of its importance in the town and the fact of its location at the chief's house that insiders and outsiders misconstrued the chief's functions as both tindaana and chief. The Boo (shorten from Booduuma) are the real tindaanas of Gowrie. Amongst the Boo people, tindaanaship is held by the Alakma's family.

### **14.8.3 Gowrie Earthgod Priests to Abongo<sup>104</sup>**

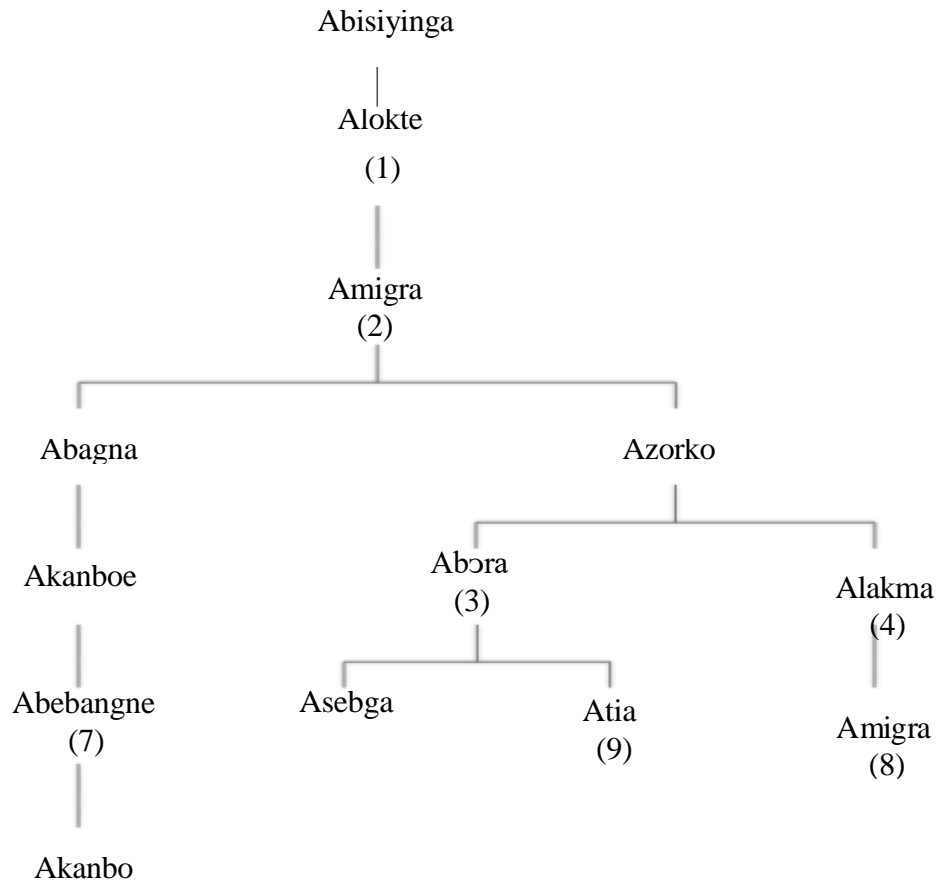
1. Ayuereme
2. Agiiya Apæda'a
3. Agana
4. Achiise
5. Akanwaam
6. Apam Zoya
7. Amoah Abasiya.

### **14.8.4 Gowrie Bɔɔ-Tindaanduuma**

1. Tindaana Alokte
2. Tindaana Amigra (son of 1)
3. Tindaana Abɔra
4. Tindaana Alakma (brother to 3)
5. Tindaana Amolega
6. Tindaan-Sampua
7. Tindaana Abebangne (nephew to 3 and 4)
8. Tindaana Amigra (son of 4)
9. Tindaana Atia (died 26 April, 1999, son of 3)
10. Tindaana Atandagere (now diseased).

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<sup>104</sup> Information gathered from the following persons during my field interview in 1986: Ayele Younga, Abugum-Ananna, Amesa Agare (Yorogo), Adatogna Ageese, Akobga Ananbanga, Amiisi Nyaaba and Apaaba Abanwoko.



**Figure 36** Genealogy of Bɔɔ in Gowrie Tindaanduuma.

## 14.9 Tindaanaship in Zaare

### 14.9.1 History

The original settler in Zaare was Miira popularly called Kulpeliga-Miira, a descendant of Anoko and A-urugu, hence the clans names Anokobisi and A-urugubisi. These are descendants of a Mampusi stock from the Northern region. In fact, these people in any case do not themselves control the land and earth gods in Zaare. Instead, a sister's son is often invited to perform the appropriate sacrifice to the earth gods in Zaare. This sister's son is believed to be the son of A-urugu's sister married at Zo-obisi. These are the family of Ake-era (Ake-erabisi in Zo-obisi). During occasions of deaths in the community, drought, famine, defilement through murder or adultery, A-urugu's sister's son at Zo-obisi was responsible for performing the necessary rituals. But it should be noted that though the Ake-erabisi in Zo-obisi control the earth gods in Zaare, they have no exclusive rights over the land whatsoever. The following descendants of Ake-era have ever occupied the office of tindaanaship in Zaare as well as the most influential earth gods in Zaare. This does not mean that the Ake-erabisi serve in the capacity of a real tindaana in Zaare. The tindaanaship in Zaare was first held in the family of Aleenebisi before it was passed to Ake-erabisi in Zo-obisi. The first creator of Zaare Tindaanaship was Aleene. It could not be traced who succeeded Aleene before it passed to the Ake-erabisi. The people of Zaare met on the 24<sup>th</sup> of Dec. 2016 and elected Akubire Azaare as the new tindaana of Zaare under the skin name Tindaana Pelega Maltinga.



**Figure 37** Akubire Azaare, the Tindaana of Zaare at the time of publication of this book.

#### 14.9.2 Zaare Earth-God Priests<sup>105</sup>

1. Akongre (Zoobisi)
2. Abiuro
3. Agmaare
4. Anabia
5. Ayamga. Ayamga died in 1986. During the time of Ayamga there occurred a serious dispute between the families of Ayɔɔre (Ayɔɔrebisi and Ake-erabisi) over the ownership of Zaare tindaanaship. In 1988, following the death of Ayamga Zaare tindaanaship was claimed by the descendants of Ayoore (Ayoorebisi). It was passed on to Ayoore. Since 1988-2012 there was no tindaana in Zaare until a substantive tindaana was elected by the family of A-urugu, Anoko and Aleene. Currently tindaanaship is with the Aleenebisi in Zaare.
6. Ayora (Ayorebisi).

#### 14.10 Tindaanaship in Dua

In Dua both religious and political functions are sharply distinguished between the Tarama, Nayire and Yikene. Dua has three distinct tindaanas, one major and two subordinate tindaanas. These are the Adu, the major Tindaana of Dua, Abega Tindaana, i.e. the Asunsuabisi/Ayu'urebisi, and the Ayɔɔɔ Tindaana

<sup>105</sup> Information obtained from the following persons during my field interview on 25/2/1990: Apa'alazaaya (Avoombisi), Adaare Aolua (Anokobisi), Atɛkeɛɛla (Sokare Naba) (Abanebisi), Agyia-naba (Akusibisi) and Alika-Dongo (Abandoobisi).

(Aliimabisi). The Taramas are the supreme tindaanas (custodian of the Earth). But they do not have exclusive right over the land whatsoever. Both the Nayire and Yikene sub-clans form the Nabisi (lit. children of the chief). The Tarama play the role of religious sacrifices and there can never be any important religious performance in connection with the principal earth gods or communal sacrifices in the town without their knowledge. They sacrifice to Adua, the most important Earthgod for the Dua people. The Earthgod Adua is located in Tarongo (also called Yidongo near Tindaana Adugbila's house). During occasions of deaths, drought, and famine in the community representatives in each sections of Dua, i.e. the Nayire, Yikene, the Tarama, will meet to sacrifice to Adua. The Taramas are often visited for explanation of the reasons for the misfortunes in the community. They also play a role of allocating land to strangers who would like to settle or farm in the village. Amongst the Dua people, succession to the tindaanship is patrilineal and the practice is that after the death of a tindaana the eldest son or failing this, the most senior male member of the clan - whether a brother or a son of the deceased - is made to act until a substantive tindaana is selected through soothsaying. The first tindaana of Dua was Tindaan-Dua. After Tindaan Dua came the following:

#### **14.10.1 Dua Tindaanduuma**

1. Tindaana Aziyelega
2. Tindaana Akoto
3. Tindaana Aberinga
4. Tindaana Aberinga – Bagna
5. Tindaana Azuure
6. Tindaana Adua
7. Tindaana Ayamga
8. Tindaana Azu'um
9. Tindaana Ayambire (died in 1991)
10. Tindaana Adubila (1994-current).

The subordinate tindaama in Dua are the Ayu'urebisi, and this clan worship the Apusariga Earthgod in Bongo. They also sacrifice to Azaka. The Earthgod priests to Azaka have been the following:

1. Abiriko
2. Ajene
3. Ayu'ure
4. Agongo
5. Ana'asi
6. Amogre
7. Akoloyu'ua
8. Azu'ura
9. Atampugre (died in 1996)
10. Azangeo Ayamga (1998-).

The other subordinate Tindaama clan is the Ayu'no tindaana who form the Aliimabisi. This clan worship Ayu'no. The priests to Ayu'no are as follows:

1. Awile
2. Awile Aliima
3. Ayunpenga-Wile
4. Alinne
5. Abu-utige

6. Akaribogre
7. Anitia
8. Asapu'ulungo
9. Awile-Yamga (died in October 1997)
10. Asandoh (Amərə) (1999-).

One of the major Earthgods in Dua, i.e. the Abe'εga, is located north of Yikene at Asunsua. The priest to Abe'εga resides in Zuarun-Mosi. The priest to Abe'εga was Agi'ile and he was succeeded by Azangeo.

## **14.11 Tindaanaship in Lungu<sup>106</sup>**

### **14.11.1 History**

Lungu was originally part of Balungu but was split into two towns in the early 40s following a chieftaincy dispute in 1946. Each of the towns has its own chief and tindaana. According to tradition of the Lungu people, Azuure-Munga or Amunga was the first to settle in the area of Lungu. He is the historical founder of Amungabisi in Lungu. During the days of Amunga, he exercised unlimited rights over the land in Lungu. He functioned more or less as a religious leader than a secular ruler (i.e. a chief). He was often called upon to perform sacrifices to the important Earth Gods in the town. During droughts, frequent deaths in the community and so on he was often approached for the answer. He also played the role of allocating land to strangers who would want to settle or farm in the village. After the death of Amunga, both religious and secular functions were sharply distributed between his family members. And that was between his offspring of Ayendeo and the Na'asi. It is the former who now function as tindaana in Lungu while the latter, the Na'asi perform chieftaincy or secular functions. It is however not strictly forbidden for the descendants of Ayendeo (who called themselves Ayendeobisi) to have anything to do with chieftaincy in Lungu.

### **14.11.2 Lungu Tindaanduuma**

1. Tindaana Amunga
2. Tindaana Ayendeo
3. Tindaana Agarega
4. Tindaana Akawone Akologo
5. Tindaana Ayeninne
6. Tindaana Atinga Ayeninne
7. Tindaana Ayeninbila Atinga.

## **14.12 Tindaanaship in Balungo**

### **14.12.1 History**

In Balungo, tindaanaship and chiefship (Na'am) are sharply divided. It is strictly forbidden to the tindaama to contest for the Balungo chieftaincy and vice versa.

Tindaanaship is restricted to the Wekambulebisi by virtue of the fact that they are the first occupants of the area. Chieftaincy, on the other hand, is held by the Akusiabisia and Awuabisi. The first creator of Balungo tindaanaship was Ayoga whose successor was Akabo. Succession to the Balungo tindaanaship is

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<sup>106</sup> Information was secured in 1986 from Ayamga Aduko, Anubire Ayamga, Agandaa-yamga, Akansise and Samuel Awuni Bukari.

with the descendants of Akabo. The two main gates that contest the tindaanaship of Balungo are the Aløkerebisi and Alagmabisi. The Alagmabisi occupy the Donne area. It is these two families in Balungo who are often approached during violation of murder, drought, and land and boundary issues in the town. They are also responsible for selecting and marking out sites for burials to be performed. They cut the sod before any traditional home is built. According to my informants, Balungo Tindaana had considerable influence and importance because his area of operation covered areas now occupied by Lungu, Amanga, Namoo and as far as to Gurugo.<sup>107</sup> It was the tindaana of Balungo who bequeathed lands to the first occupants of the said towns and appointed tindaanas for them. What is unique about the Balungo tindaana is that he performs sacrifices on bare ground. This means he does so by cutting the bird or animal and pouring its blood in a hole. This is strictly forbidden to any other tindaana in the district. The reason for this was not immediately known. The usual practice of all tindaama during sacrifice is to cut the throat and pour the blood on an object which in most cases is a stone. Between the two tindaanaship gates, Aløkerebisi and Alagmabisi the former is more superior to the latter. The Donne tindaana therefore is responsible to the Alokerebisi tindaana.

#### **14.12.2 Balungu Tindaanduuma**

1. Tindaana Ayɔga (creator of tindaanaship in Balungo)
2. Tindaana Akabo (cousin to 1)
3. Tindaana Aløkɾe (son of 2)
4. Tindaana Apaaba (son of 3)
5. Tindaana Nyɔba (Akayoba)
6. Tindaana Awoleba (nephew to 5)
7. Tindaana Asua (nephew to 3)
8. Tindaana Awafo (great grandson of 5) current Tindaana of Balungo enskinned in 1973.

According to my informants, after the death of Ayɔga (originator of the Balungo Tindaanaship) his office was passed on to his son or cousin Akabo.

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<sup>107</sup> Interview with Tindaana Awafo, 10/12/2012.



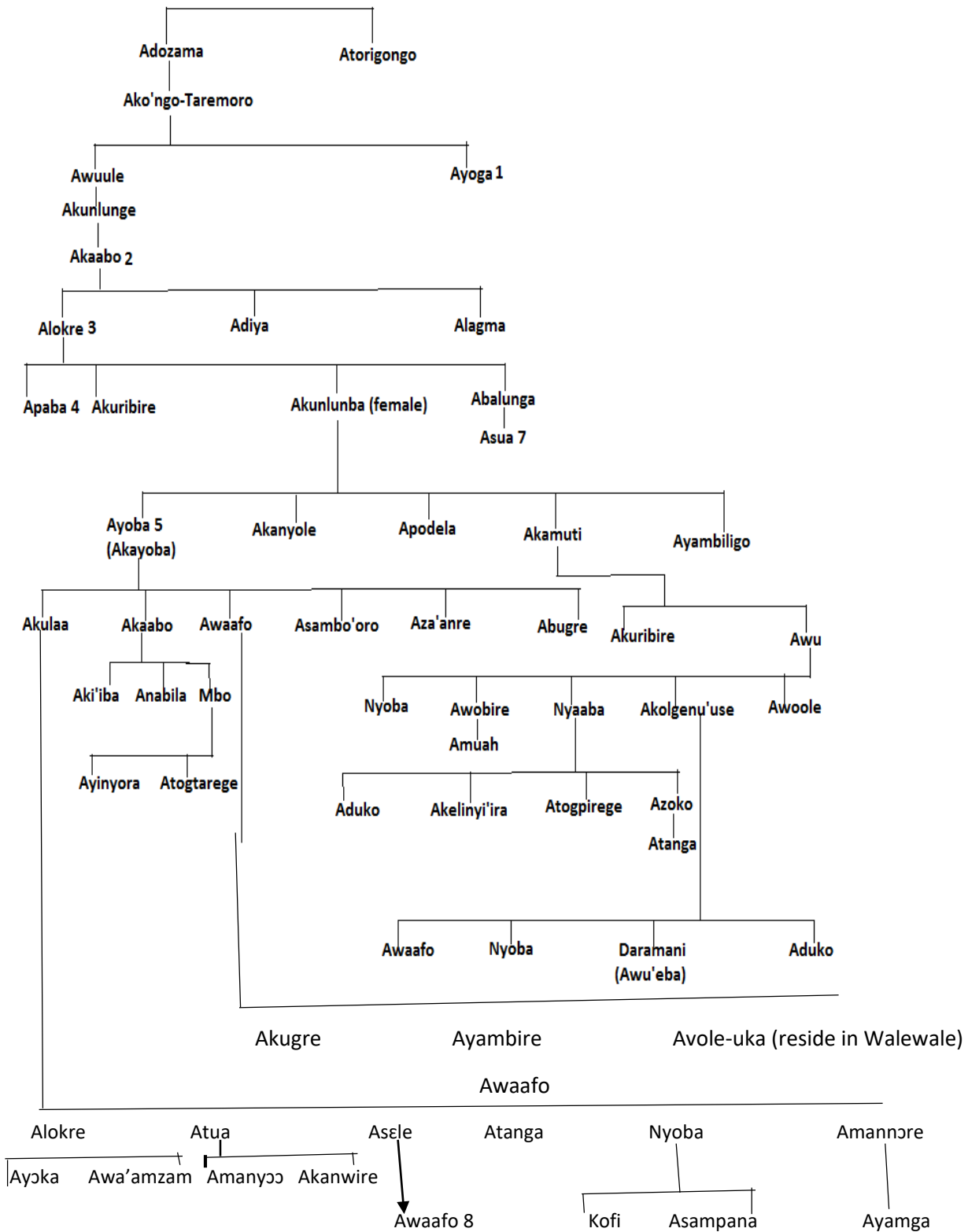


**Figure 38** Tindaan Waafu (1973 to present).

**14.12.3 Donne Section:**

1. Tindaana Alagma
2. Tindaana Alokre
3. Tindaana Atamsiiba (Azika)
4. Tindaana Agobga
5. Tindaana Ataaba (Ayootaaba)
6. Tindaana Atansiiba (son of Ataaba)
7. Tindaana Akugre (son of Atansiiba)

The genealogical family tree of Tindaanaship of Balungo dating from the creation of the town is shown below.



**Figure 39** Genealogical family tree of Tindanaship of Balungo.

#### **14.12.4 Mode of Succession**

Tindaanaship in Balungo is patrilineal. The practice is that after the death of a tindaana his eldest son is the one who succeeds him as a care-taker until a substantive tindaana is elected. The care taker who could be the deceased's first son, brother or uncle will be in continuous occupation of the office for not less than three years after which date the funeral custom is performed. The procedure amongst the Balungo tindaama is that, three years after the actual death and the funeral rites are performed, the eldest of the tindaana's clan invites a soothsayer to the deceased tindaana's house to identify the appropriate successor to the deceased. The acting tindaana per se might not be selected. On the date fixed for the selection, everyone will converge at an open space in the late tindaana's house. Those entitled to the tindaanaship of Balungo are the descendants of Alokere and Alagma. To begin with the consultation, (which may be a long and enduring one) with the soothsayer, the consulter and the soothsayer sit in the peripheral. After a long process, the soothsayer finally makes his selection. The person selected could be the late tindaana's son, nephew, cousin or an uncle who must hail from the clan. An unborn child could be identified as the next tindaana because tindaanaship is not by voting/ election. The result of the soothsaying is final. The eldest and not even the chiefs can nullify the selection. The tindaana-elect is presented by the installing authority to the elders and general public by way of introduction. Thereafter he is sent to his house and put on probation for three years after which date he is recognized as the legal tindaana. In subsequent ceremonies, the new tindaana provides a cow which is killed to pacify the gods and to seek blessings and protection of the tindaana and the community as a whole. The skin is dried and presented to him as his seat. This is preceded by shaving of his head. Mr. So and So 'nbobe tindɔnnɔ.' A Gurene expression which seeks to explain that Mr. So and So is robed a tindaana. A tindaana elect holds office for life.

#### **14.12.5 Regalia/ Sacred Articles**

A Balungo tindaana upon his installation is robed with skins of either a goat or sheep. He receives a calabash, knife, a tanned skin bag, a stick and tails. These serves as the insignia of his office.

### **14.13 Tindaanaship in Zorko-Tarongo**

Amongst the sections in Tarongo it is the Abangamengabisi who hold custody of their ancestor cult, Awubugu. They form the tindaana's clan or the tindaanbisi.

Tindaanaship rotates amongst the oldest living male member of Abangamenga's descendants. Awubugu is a known sacred site in Zoko located at the Abangamengabisi area of Tarongo. This is situated very close to the Zoko Social Centre St. Theresa.

#### **14.13.1 Zorko-Tarongo Tindaanduuma**

Since the establishment of Tarongo in the mid seventh century the following have occupied the office of tindaanship of Tarongo:

1. Tindaana Abangemenga
2. Tindaana Akurugo
3. Tindaana Amoah
4. Tindaana Abane
5. Tindaana Akaribo
6. Tindaana Kanta-a
7. Tindaana Pon-bolga
8. Tindaana Asa-inyire
9. Tindaana Layeta (2001-2004)

10. Tindaana Apana (acting tindaana from 2004 till present).



**Figure 40** Acting Tindaana Apana.

# Appendix 1 Report On Arrow Head Poison And Seeds Received, Frafra District, Mamprusi, Africa<sup>108</sup>

## First

Two arrow heads were received. They were found to be evenly coated over the point and barbs with a black paste of the consistency of resin.

Some of this was scrapped off with a clean knife, titrated in water and allowed to stand for 24 hours. It was then filtered and diluted to 1-40 with distilled water.

A series of experiments were then made to determine the lethal dose and mode of action when injected subcutaneously into guinea-pigs. It was found that a quantity equivalent to .00187 grains was lethal to a guinea pig in from 1 ½ - 2 hours and .0093 grains in 7 minutes.

## Symptoms

Gradually increasing embarrassment of respiration and paralysis of the general muscular system, the animal falls on its side and is unable to rise. The breathing becomes more and more irregular and labored. Occasional tremors are noticed but nothing approaching general or local convulsions. Death occurs from failure of the respiration and in all cases the heart continued to beat for 4 to 5 minutes after breathing had completely stopped. No other abnormality was detected.

## Second

A few seeds were sent which were said to supply the chief ingredients of the above arrow poison. These seeds were brown, dry and flattered shaped thus



About 1cm in length and 2cm broad. A measured quantity of the seeds was dried, crushed in a mortar and digested in proof spirit for 24 hours.



Figure 41 Two arrowheads sent for testing.

<sup>108</sup> NAG ADM 1/1/128, enclosure 484/98.

An amount equivalent to .033 grains of seed when injected into a guinea-pig caused death in three quarters of an hour with precisely the same symptoms and post-mortem appearances as in the case of the arrow poison itself.

### **Third**

A black powder reputed to be an antidote to this arrow poison was also received (from Dagomba). It was finely ground and resembled wood charcoal.

A solution of this was made and varying quantities injected immediately after giving two lethal doses to guinea-pigs.

It was found that it did not modify the symptoms nor avert or postpone death in anyway.

Sgd. D. Semple, M.D. Major RAMC

Ag. Prof. of Pathology

Army Medical School

Pathological Laboratory, Netley.

5 Dec. 1898

## Appendix 2a The Bongo men killed in the attack by the Lungu and the neighboring towns

1. Ibere (as spelled in context)/Akumbilige Abere
2. Azure Salibga
3. Abodia
4. Akiliyamaga/Akiliga-Yamga from Awanbilabisi
5. Atubuga Aza'aba from Kuyelego
6. Anyaba/Akoresi Nyaba from Kuyelego
7. Mba
8. Akobole/Akanbule (Kuyelego)
9. Atia Aza'aba
10. Apiama/Apeema (Kuyelego)
11. Ayaro
12. Ayerimya/Guna-Yariga
13. Awinimie (from Salibgabisi)
14. Azudaa/Atubga-Duko from Bunbangsi
15. Atubere
16. Azangooma (from Anafobisi)
17. Agoudor (from Atampisi)
18. Akeyire (from Zaasi)
19. Azabre/Apee (from Alungabisi in Kuyelego)
20. Ndi
21. Atua Agarege (Kuyelego)
22. Abora (from Akinkambisi)
23. Atinga
24. Ayamga Agare (from Awanebisi)
25. Abagare-Yamga
26. Agua
27. Asandor Salibga
28. Agore (from Tampisi)
29. Apiso-Tia (Zaasi)
30. Akalanka (from Gorogo)
31. Abankorogo (from Anafobisi)
32. Azæera (from Atampisi)
33. Akozure (Kuyelengo)
34. Abaa (Kuyelengo)
35. Atia Ada'ame (from Kuyelengo)
36. Ayorogo – Gobega (from Awanebisi)

## **Appendix 2b The rebels who were killed by the constabulary force in the Bongo war (according to towns and villages)**

Sambologo	1. Azogore-kurugu 2. Atentibiri 3. Apontia 4. Apia 5. Abele-kurugu
Namoo Yorogo Namoo Tanga	6. Ayamapia/Ayamga Tia 7. Akarabu/Akaribo 8. Azamdi/Azaama (Bokobisi) 9. Azama kugri (Bokobisi) 10. Akrobele/Akuribire
Boku	11. Atole/Atore 12. Nso 13. Apere/Ateere
Ayoropia	14. Atua 15. Akontombe/Akontilibange
Feo	16. Adembele 17. Akarama 18. Arongo/Adongo
Adabe (properly called Adogebe)	19. Akugure

These names were gathered from the National Archives, Accra ADM 56/1/165, pp.72-75. They are written as they appear in the Archives records. The correct names have been added.



## **Appendix 3 NTC Report of the encounter with the people of Feo and Ayopia/Ayoropia**

10 June 1916. An encounter between the people of Fwegu (Feo) and vicinity and a Detachment of 4 constables under sergeant Mama Chakosi.

Hearing that Ayanaba of Fwegu had returned to his compound, Sgt. Mama Chakosi and 5 constables left Bongo in the very early hours of the morning and arrived at Fwegu whilst it was still dark, and just before dawn surrounded Ayanaba's compound.

Their presence was soon detected, and the people started shouting; the sergeant called to them to desist but they refused. Then suddenly about 40 men with bows and arrows rushed out of Ayanaba's compound and commenced firing at the constabulary.

These returned the fire and killed 3 men. They then mounted and rode off towards Bongo. The people of Bongo followed them shouting and as they were passing through Yoropia section of Sambologo they rode into an ambush; they dismounted and fired and the sergeant received an arrow wound in the left knee and constable Salifu Frafra's horse broke away. The party then mounted and rode on, constable Salifu running between the sergeant and another constable but he got tired, and they tried to get him on a horse, behind one of the guides, but he could not manage it and then he got an arrow wound in the back.

The sergeant and constable Yakubu Grumah stayed with him but were being so hard pressed by superior numbers that they were forced to leave him, and only just got away themselves in time.

Apparently, the people then surrounded the unfortunate constable and shot at him at close range, for when the body was brought in later on that day 10 arrows were sticking in it and there was also a spear wound.

Several people were shot in this second encounter. The Ayoropia people seized constable Salifu's carbine and equipment including about 70 rounds ammunition which has not yet been received.

I am afraid that until some very drastic steps are taken the trouble will spread as I hear that the Arabe people are only waiting to see what happens and also that the Fwegu and Boku people are trying to induce some of the people over the border to come and join in – my informants however state that they have refused to do so.

I am at present only able to muster 20 men including the 10 Bawku men. There being 10 left at Navarro, 4 at Zouragu and 4 on specie escort to Tamale. The millet being up too makes maneuvering difficult.

(source NAG. Accra ADM 56/1/165, p. 89)

# Appendix 4a Warrants issued for the arrest of the ring-leaders in connection with the Bongo and Lungu war

No. Z 105/18/1912

District Commissioner's Office

Navarro – Zouaragu

7<sup>th</sup> May, 1916

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that warrants have been issued for the arrest of the following persons connected with the recent Bongo trouble, namely: Lungunaba and Akara of Longo section of BeLungu; Abugu (alias Bokunaba) of Boku section of Namogu; Ajigndi of Namogu; Ayanaba and Aiyeraga of Fwegu Akidima and AyEtiba of Yoropia section of Sambologu; Apia (alias Gorana), and Latanga of Sawgni.

They are charged with rioting with weapons and arson.

I am unable to charge any of them with murder as no one knows who fired the arrow that killed the corporal, or in fact any of the others who were killed or died of wounds.

All these persons are reported to be in French Territory and I would ask that the French Authorities be requested to assist in their capture, when extradition warrants can then be obtained. Every effort should be made to bring the offenders to justice, as an example to others who think they can transgress and then cross the border and laugh at us.

I have the honour to be

Sir

Your obedient servant,

Louis Castellain

District Commissioner

The Ag. Provincial

Commissioner

North Eastern Province

Gambaga

# Appendix 4b Appeal made to the French Government by the British officials to arrest ring-leaders in the Bongo-Lungu war

North Eastern Province, N.T  
Case No. 200/19/1913

Gambaga  
Headquarters, North Eastern  
Province, Northern Territories,  
Gold Coast  
12<sup>th</sup> May 1916

Sir,

I should be much obliged, if you could arrange the capture of the following men for me if possible and have them handed over to the commissioner Navarro on the frontier in the neighborhood of Mayoro or Pagma.

They are wanted for serious rioting.

The names are:

Atubili (or Lungnab) Chief of Lungo  
Akara of Longo section of BeLungu  
Abugu (or Bokunaba) of Boku section of Namogu  
Ajigndi of Namogu  
Ayanaba and Aiyeragu of Fwegu  
Akidima and Ayetiba of Yoropia section of Sambologu  
Apia (or Gorana) and Latanga of Sawgni

Please write direct to the commissioner Navarro about them.

These men all live in the neighborhood of Bongo, which as you know is to the North of the Station of Zouaragu, and the men have probably fled to the nearest French villages over the frontier.

Extradition warrants can be sent to you later.

With my most distinguished consideration.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant

M.L. Administrator, Ag. Provincial Commissioner

North Eastern Province

N.T.

# References

## A. NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF GHANA RECORDS

### I. ACCRA ARCHIVES

Ref No.	Covering Date	Particulars
ADM 411	Gold Coast Ordinance (Constitution)	
ADM 412	Provincial and DC Courts	
ADM 5/1/39	1931 – 32	Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Gold Coast
ADM 5/1/41	1933 – 34	Annual Report of the Gold Coast
ADM 5/1/44	1936 – 37	Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Gold Coast
ADM 5/1/45	1937 – 38	Annual Report of the Gold Coast
ADM 5/1/47	1946	Annual report of the Gold Coast
ADM 5/3/103	1956	Report of the Inquiry into the Proposal to set up three District councils in place of the Mamprusi District Council PWC Dennis
ADM 5/2/124	1949	A report of a Committee of the Territorial council of the Northern Territories appointed to make recommendations concerning local Government in the Northern Territories.
ADM 5/3/137	1900	Report by the Select Committee on local Government.
ADM 5/3/25		Report of the Special Commission of Anthropology R.S Rattray.
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ADM 8/1/17 ADM 8/1/3	1898	The Gold Coast Civil Service List
ADM 8/1/11	1907	Gold Coast Civil Service List
ADM 8/1/6	1913	The Gold Coast Civil Service List
ADM 8/1/39 ADM 8/4/4	1928 – 29	Gold Coast Civil Service List
ADM 8/4/9	1934 – 35	Gold Coast Chiefs List
ADM 8/4/15	1941	Gold Coast Chiefs List
ADM 8/4/24	1922	Gold Coast Civil Service List shown the Civil Establishment, names and designations of the civil servants of Gov't.
ADM 11/1/260	1910	Presents to chiefs for services rendered
ADM 11/1/424	1912	Election and Deposition of chiefs
ADM 11/1/1722	1894 -1903	Register of Land Boundaries
ADM 11/1/1723	1892 -1903	Register of Land Disputes
ADM 11/2/14	1904 -1948	Register of Head Chiefs and chiefs whose election and installation the Governor has confirmed.
ADM 11/2/15	1904 – 1929	Register of Head chiefs and chiefs whose deposition the Governor has confirmed.

ADM 12/5/164	1892 – 1894	Gold Coast schedule of secret dispatches received from the Secretary of State. Papers in Fergusons Mission to the Northern Territories
ADM 20/13		Notes on the Political Aspects of local Government both in relation to the composition of Native Authorities and their place in the political machinery of the Territories (File No. 5615)
ADM 21/1/3		Disturbances riots
ADM 21/4		Chiefs Mamprusi native affairs (file No. 3861)
ADM 21/1/678		The Abuse of the Oath System by Native rulers
ADM 21/1/3	1931 – 38	Memorandum by Sir Donald Cameron on principles of Native Administration and their application (834/20 SF.3)
ADM 21/6 (6302)		Native administration, Finance Committee NTS SF. 7
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	(6583)	A digest of current Affairs and literature on African local government.
ADM 21/9 (File No. 3000 SF. 4)		Essay by A. F. Kerr entitled Frafra Constitutional Development.
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ADM 21/1/10		Customs
ADM 21/1/11		Languages
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CSO 24/1/1	1930	Annual General Report (File No. 7/34)
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ADM 56/1/2		
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ADM 56/1/37		Medical and Sanitary Report.
ADM 56/1/38	(21/8/05 – 14/7/06)	Proposed Establishment of a Post in Frafra Area.
ADM56/1/55	(14/1/07 – 30/12/09)	Medallions for Native Chiefs
ADM 56/1/58	(17/9/07 – 26/9/12)	Route to and from Gambaga and halting places to be followed by officers.
ADM 56/159	(31/12/07 – 10/8/16)	Company of the Gold Coast Regiment stationed in NTs.
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ADM 56/1/207	(15/5/15 – 20/7/16)	Tongo Hills Affairs Fetish
ADM 56/1/208		Rinderpest, Cattle disease
ADM 56/1/213	(Conf. No. 4 – 1916)	His Excellency Minutes about Disturbance in Bongo
ADM 56/1/216	(30/9/16 – 2/10/17)	Political prisoners
ADM 56/1/218	(7/1/17 – 14/3/17)	Diaries for 1917. Navarro – Zuarungu District.
ADM 56/1/219	(18/6/17 – 1/1/18)	Gold Coast Regiment Recruitment
ADM 56/1/227	(16/7/15 – 2/7/24)	Native Customs
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ADM 56/1/231		Cattle disease
ADM 56/1/235	(15/3/19 – 18/4/29)	Medallions for Native Chiefs
ADM 56/1/236	(30/12/18 – 30/10/28)	Tour of Inspection CCNT.
ADM 56/1/237	(17/12/21 – 4/2/28)	Tour of Inspection of His Excellency
ADM 56/1/241	(1921)	Census Taking
ADM 56/1/243	(10/6/19 – 11/12/27)	Lists of Chiefs – NT.
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ADM 56/1/269	(22/12/18 – 12/1/21)	Administration N.P.
ADM 56/1/270	(17/1/22 – 10/2/23)	Informal Diary Navarro – Zuarungu
ADM 56/1/273		Native Industries (No. 138/27/1921)

ADM 56/1/174	(8/4/12 – 26/6/28)	Political Re-organization
ADM 56/1/278		Migrations of Natives from one district to another
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ADM 56/1/294	(8/6/27 – 22/12/30)	Handing over Reports – Zuarungu
ADM 56/1/298	(No. 62/1920)	Catholic Mission
ADM 56/1/303	(14/1/21 -30/10/31)	Medallion for Chiefs
ADM 56/1/306		Wells and Water supply
ADM 56/1/311	(2/2/1922 – 13/12/46)	Itinerancies and Rest Houses
ADM 56/1/314	(31/1/24 – 1/4/25)	Dairies NT
ADM 56/1/315		Gold Coast Government Railway Extensions
ADM 56/1/319	(18/1/22 – 18/2/24)	Diaries NTS
ADM 56/1/339	(Conf. 78/1922)	Graves and Grave – Stones
ADM 56/1/358	(Jan – Dec. 1924)	Confidential Diaries – Tamale
ADM 56/1361	(case No. 10/1924)	Prisons NTS.
ADM 56/1/363	(25/3/24 – 17/1/29)	Handing over Reports NTS
ADM 56/1/369	(17/5/24 – 16/7/26)	Informal Diaries N.P.
ADM 56/1/374	(10/11/24 – 28/1/47)	Reports on the Activities of the NTs
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ADM 56/1/430	(4/5/08 – 6/8/08)	Monthly Report NE district
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ADM 56/4/2	(16/12/06 – 2/12/14)	Criminal Record Book
<b>II. GAMBAGA DISTRICT RECORDS, ADM 60</b>		
ADM 60/4/1	(4/9/12 – 27/8/18)	Criminal Record Book (CRB)
ADM 60/4/2	(6/2/33 – 6/12/45)	Civil Record Book
ADM 60/4/5	(29/7/29 -15/11/33)	(Travelling) Criminal Record Book

ADM 60/4/6	8/8/36 – 31/1/38)	Criminal Record Book (Zuarungu)
ADM 60/4/17	(28/10/36 – 5/1/45)	Civil Record Book (Gambaga district)
<b>III. NAVRONGO DISTRICT, ADM 63/4, 63/5</b>		
ADM 63/4/3	(2/1/22 – 14/9/22)	Criminal Record Book (Navrongo)
ADM 63/4/4	20/9/27 – 9/8/32	Criminal Record Book
ADM 63/4/6	(2/9/1932 – 15/10/37)	Criminal Record Book
ADM 63/4/5	(12/8/32 – 4/1/36)	Criminal Record Book
ADM 63/4/5	(30 MARCH 1912 – 19 Aug 1918 (CRB)	
ADM 63/5/1	(26/10/08 – 8/7/52)	DRB
ADM 63/5/2	(26/10/09 – 21/4/18)	DRB
ADM 63/4/6	(26 Feb. 1972 – 15/9/29)	Criminal Record Book (Tamale)
ADM 65/5/1	(23/10/13 – 29/18/16)	Informal Official Diary (Tamale)
<b>IV. ZUARUNGU DISTRICT, ADM 68</b>		
ADM 68/4/1	(12/7/49 – 10/10/52)	Informal Diary. DCO (Zuarungu)
ADM 68/4/3	(4/5/26 – 20/1/28)	CRB
ADM 68/4/4	(7/11/36 – 17/6/40)	CRB
ADM 68/4/5	(21/6/40 – 24/2/44)	Civil Record Book (Zuarungu)
ADM 68/4/6	(1940 – 1944)	Criminal Record Book (DCO Zuarungu)
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ADM 68/5/4	26/2/22 – 16/9/29)	DRB
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