

Gonja is one of the lucky tribes to have its history recorded by Muslims who came with them to this part of the world. According to Arabic manuscript, the Gonjas who were originally Mandingo or Mandinka migrated from the country of Mande, that is, the Malli Empire, about thirty years before the first records of the Gonja history were written in the Hejran year 1,000, that is, about 1580 AD.

It is admitted that the oldest surviving document written in ~~an~~ African language in Ghana is the Isnad of al-Haji Muhamed from about 1736, a Gonja History written ⁱⁿ Arabic with its first item referring to 1585, though of course, there are earlier European texts.

In the reconstruction of history where written records are absent, legend and folk tradition can be pieced together to form something of the historical picture of recent centuries. In Gonja we have the traditional drummers who recite verses which gives the history of the people, most especially the exploits of the founder of the Gonja Empire.

The exploits of distinguished leaders or Kings and of individual families, as given by the drummers, are in many cases the repetition of some well-worn saga, adding to it events in recent history, which contains a modicum of historical fact. The trouble with oral tradition is that it lacks chronology.

The old idea that tropical Africa can have no history in the conventional sense because it has no written documents is simply not true and therefore must be disabused. If tropical Africa lacks a continuous methodical record of public events and the study of growth of nations, it does not lack a whole train of events connected with the past Empires and states, their prominent Kings or savreigns and other things.

As I have stated earlier, the Gonjas are Mandingos or Mandinka who migrated from Mande (the Malli Empire). From their war song Sin bo ya, we are able to say that they came from Sin a state to be found in Senegal. They were also in Sierra Leone. They moved on to the Songhay Empire and were at Jenne, Gao (which town was known as Kwankau), Fio and Segu.

At some time between 1550 and 1575 the great Askia Dawud of Songhay found that the supplies of gold from the southern country were getting smaller. The main reason was that Akan gold producers had begun selling some of their production to Portuguese and other European traders along the seaboard.

Askia Dawud accordingly despatched a force of Mandinka armed cavalry to see what could be done. Dawud's armoured horsemen, the bulldozing tanks of these times, rode south from the neighbourhood of Jenne until they reached the Black Volta bend of modern Ghana. The drum verses tells of wars the Gonjas fought at Sewfi, Birim, (a town near a river), Jape (which possibly is Japekrom) and Longoro. The Gonja's discovered that cavalry could not operate in the dense forest where the Akan lived and smelted Gold.

The Gonjas stayed at Beawu (known in history^{books} as Begho) and Ndziau. In the Banda area the tradition of the passage of the Gonjas is very much alive. The Gonjas are said to have settled at the village of Beawu and Ndziau, which is also known as the village (Krom) of the horse - Chief ⁱⁿ (Brong Ponkowura).

The Techiman tradition as recorded by Meyerowitz (1952-53) states that Nana Berampon Katakryira, whose reign is said to have lasted from 1564 to 1595, sacrifice himself by starvation at the time of the invasion by the Mande under ^{Lata} Jakpa. In a later version (1958-15) she speaks of a Mande invasion of Bono Manso at the beginning of this reign, which proceeded Jakpa's conquest of Western Gonja. This date is consisted with that given in an Arabic manuscript for the reign of Lamba (Naba's) who was the first King of the Gonja in this part of Africa.

In an Arabic manuscript which was written by Imam Imoru, son of Imoru and Al-Hajj Mahama, son of Mustapha and Mahama son of Audulahi, the story of which ends in 1760, it is stated:-

"..... in remembrance of the people of old, and of the father of the Malam Mahama Labayiru, son of Ismaila, who came with his son to the town of Ghofo; he came to the chief of Gonja who was at war in Kafiashi (Kapuyase) where Lata migrated to.

He was received with honour but on their way back to their town, God have mercy on his soul, he died at Sanfi and the news of his death was brought to his friend Naba's. (This was in the period 1564/5-1593/4.)

And they said, "Your friend, the Mallam Ismaila, is dead; so the chief sent much money to his brother at ^Gafe to offer prayers and to give alms.

They offered prayers and the people of the country of the Blacks saw this and did likewise, each one making prayers and giving alms as he was able.

Then they took his son, who was also a Malam, Mohamed Labayiru, and he went in amity to the chief, his father's friend. But he did not find him alive; instead he found his son the Manwura sitting in the place of the chief Naba's. He found him at Kolo, and that day, a Friday, he found him fighting fiercely." (This was the period 1593/4-1612/3).

The Gonja leaders who arrived in Bono Manso in order of seniority were Lamba (Naba's), Wam, Lata or Lanta, Lemu, Jaffa, Manfa, Manwura and Jakpa. (Lamba began his reign in about 1564/5).

The Techiman and Nkoranza people fought the Gonjas during the reign of Wam, the second leader, and he (Wam) was killed. Lata or Lanta the 3rd leader having driven the enemies away, left the area and crossed the Black Volta River and settled at Kapuyase where he died. Lanta became ^{But} Manwura, that is the Chief of Burre in 1634/5, before his death.

Lemu, the 4th leader took command of some of the Gonja army and fought the following countries which lie north-west of Bonduku which he subdued: Palaga, Kong, Jimini, Awuas, Kongolu, Kwayini and Samata. Marching on Gbona he was pacified with a house and cattle. Lemu died at Gbona and Jaffa, the 5th leader, succeeded him and came to Bole ^{where} Manfa,

the 6th leader died.

Jaffa then marched towards the east and conquered the Kparba countries of Kpanshegu, Jantong, Kpalebe and Kikpande.

Manwura, the 7th leader, at the head of a group also crossed the Black Volta River and settled at a place called Manwule which became his capital. The capital town was later removed to Gbipe (Buipe) *when Manwule was said to have sunk and all its people vanished.*

Lanta, whose title was Dii Ngoro Jakpa, when Bur-wura (Chief of Burre) abdicated in favour of his son Sumaila Ndwura Jakpa in 1675. It was Ndwura Jakpa who actually founded the Gonja Empire. He began his conquests by moving west towards Buipe which he by-passed and marched to western Gonja. At this time there was open conflict between the Manwura's group and the Lanta group. After conquering Bole he moved north to conquer Wa and the territories east of Wa. He then moved south and came to Damongo. From there he moved east and conquered Kusawgu. All the places Ndwura Jakpa conquered were Dagomba lands.

From ^{Kusawgu} there he came to Kafaba and then to Salaga and ^{built} made his headquarters at Kpembe. The Kpembe area was Nanumba land which was inhabited by Konkonbas. *(Ndwura Jakpa)*

After some time he ^{went} continued his conquest east and ~~west~~ as far as the Zugu boundary where his followers mutinied and he had to return to Kpembe to settle and administer the kingdom which he founded.

Ndwura Jakpa left the Owin and Nzima people ^{whom} he took away with him as war prisoners and mercenaries ^{in the Gonja wars in the south} in the east, and these people are the Chokosis we find today. We have learnt from the drum narration that the Gonjas fought wars at Sewfi.

After the death of Wam, the second Gonja leader, Lata or Lanta (the third leader in order of seniority) should have been Supreme Commander of the Gonja Expeditionary Forces but he was opposed and that was what brought about the break up of the Gonja into three camps, one headed by Lata, one by Lemu, the 4th leader, and the third by Manwura, the 7th leader. Manwura succeeded to the Paramouncy after Lemu and moved with his group (in which was included Jaffa and Manfa the 5th and 6th leaders in order of seniority) fighting wars north-west of Bonduku.

After Lanta's abdication as leader of the Lata Ngbanya group in favour of his son Ndwura Jakpa, one Sulemana also succeeded to the leadership of the Manwura group. Ndwura Jakpa fought and defeated ^{Sulemana} him and he went into exile and headed for Ashanti.

He settled at Atebubu and became subject to the Mamponghene and an ally of the King of Ashanti. He also took the title of Jakpa and some historians know him as "Kabong Jakpa," i.e. "the Ashanti Jakpa." It was this Jakpa who passed near Prang on his way during his exile and when his attention was drawn to the little village he remarked "Kpalang bu muso", that is "take no notice of them." From this remark, the town got its name Kpalang by which the people ^(Brongs of Prang) call it. *to this day they call Prang "Kpalang"*

In 1697 Ndwura Jakpa heard of an Ashanti invasion and met them at ^{in the Kwalaw area} Tarkpa where he was mortally wounded. He died at Shiriminchu and the body was carried to Gbipe (Buipe) where it was buried.

From 1697/8 to 1709 there was no recognised king for the Gonjas, due to the constant wars between the Gonjas and the Ashantis and the Techiman people. For this reason the ^{different} divisions of Gonja became semi-independent and the kingdom was held together as a loose federal State. In 1709 Abbas became the recognised leader of the Lata Ngbanya, (Lata's Gonjas) but he was killed at Fula in a war he was fighting. Abbas died on the 1,000th day of his installation, *although he was King-elect for many years.*

It was Ndewura Jakpa who brought the Nchibulungs, who were war captives and mercenaries from the west and settled them in their present homes. They were put under Gonja Chiefs. The Singbingwura was in charge of the Chinke, Chachai and Banda groups whilst the Kilibuwura was given charge of the Songhai group. The Songhai group is made up of Lonto, Kpajai and Tamkulonku. The name Songai was no doubt given the area in commemoration of the Gonja association with the Songhay Empire. The Kilibuwura is an important chief in the Kpembe hierarchy who becomes the Regent on the death of the Kpembewura.

The Kilibuwura was stationed at the town of Kuli in command of an armed cavalry of 300 horsemen. His duty was to prevent traders from crossing the river to go into Ashanti to either sell their merchandise or buy cola cheaply there. All persons were to come to Salaga to trade. This was how the Salaga market was established and the Gonjas succeeded in doing in Salaga what they failed in achieving at Beawu or Begho in the Bono - Manso where they were to prevent the Akans selling Gold to Europeans on the sea coast.

Before a person is installed Kilibuwura he must first of all be installed Songai-wura, ^{that} is, Chief of Songhay.

The founding fathers of the Gonja Kingdom as we know it in this part of the country ^{are} therefore, Manwura, ~~and~~ Sumaila Ndewura Jakpa, and Fati Murukpe (Mahama Labayiru). Tradition claims that Manwura travelled and fought in boats whilst Ndewura Jakpa and his father, ^{Lanta} Dii Ngora Jakpa, rode horses and fought on land. It is difficult to say how Manwura came by boats to this part of the country if one traces the route by which the Gonjas came.

The deduction one will have to make is that Manwura and his ancestors were ^{of a different clan as} confirmed by the Gbipecwura (Buipecwura) who is a descendant of Manwura and the Yagbongwura, ~~(Yabwura)~~ ^(The Lata Ngbanya) who is the descendant of Ndewura Jakpa, ~~meeting~~ ^{between Lanta Jakpa and Ndewura} face to face. It is the dispute over the seniority which has been carried forward ^{to this day} and enforced by taboo. The question is "if they met which of the two is to take off his hat and pay obedience to the other?" In the Gonja Kuntungkure drum verse composed to commemorate the conquest of the Bole Division, which has become the official title of the Bolewura, mention is made of the Gonja's

"Departure from the "firing-bridge"

"Departure from the "sailing-bridge"

*Kishile gbongbong to-sa.
Kishile gbongbong shit-sa.*

The firing and sailing bridge will be no other than the Songhay navy.

By a taboo which forbids

After the conquest of Mankuma which followed that of Bole the first chieftess appointed by Ndewura Jakpa was called Jafo Sonni, and the ~~Jafo~~ ^{Jafo} Ndewura Jakpa used in winning victory on the battle field was called Ali - Che meaning "Ali's" charm".

Before the Gonjas entered this part of the country both Manwura and Lata Jakpa solicited the help of Malam Mohamed Labayiru (Mahamadu the albino) or Fati Murikpe, whose decendants are the Sakpare Mallams now attached to the Divisional Chiefs, ^{separately} to make prayers for them to establish a kingdom of their own. ^{Separate} treaties were made with each of the two leaders, ^{agreement} to keep the ~~contract~~ and they swore on the Koran to keep the agreement which was binding on them and their decendants.

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR LANGUAGES

When the Gonjas invaded what was formally known as the Gonja Kingdom, and now referred to as the Gonja Traditional Area, they found the country inhabited by numerous tribes, each speaking a slightly different language or dialect. These people became the subjects of the Gonjas by virtue of conquest, and they were given the collective name of N'NYAMASE - ^{Lata} N'NYANG MAN ASE meaning "People of the Fox's State." The leader of the Gonja Invading Force was referred to as the "great fox" in the Kuntungkure drum verse "In Praise of God" in the stanza:

Nyang gbong be ekpa

Meaning:

"The adventures of the Great Fox."

The capital of the Gonja Kingdom was ~~called~~ ^{called} Nyang ga.

meaning "the Fox had struct." A war camp at which the Founder of the Gonja Kingdom, Ndewura Sumaila Jakpa, stayed and directed operations against the Dagombas was called, and is still known as Nyang Wur'-pe meaning "Home of the King Fox." At Nyangwurpe Ndewura Jakpa left most of his war trophies in charge of some mallams and ^{it is a taboo for a} Gonja prince ~~allowed~~ to see them ^{and this taboo is observed up to this day}. The place is in the charge of the Kusawguwura, who offers annual sacrifices to these trophies which include stools taken from the Akans. ~~The singular for N'nyamase is Kanyamase~~

The Gonja rule was benevolent and the Nyamase were allowed to continue with the worship of their land gods, shrines and fetishes and were still responsible for taking care of the land. The Gonjas adopted the boundaries of the various "land gods" to suit their administration and chiefs were appointed over a number of "land god" areas and these groupings became the Divisions and sub-divisions of Gonja, ^{traditional administration}. The land of course became the property of the Gonja Chiefs by virtue of conquest.

The Nyamase also were allowed to retain their Priests Kings, now reduced to the status of Fetish Priests and Village Headmen (Agbarwurana and Nde ba Binimu) ^{because they are the people} who know the dicties and ceremonial of the land cult which the invading strangers could not know. The Nyamase also continued to speak their own languages, ^{as these could not be easily change by the Gonjas}

The different languages and the places in which they are spoken are:

Language	Spoken in
	I. Those of the Grunshi Group are:
Vagla	Sawla, Jentilipe, Grupe, Nakwabi, Tuna, Soma, Jang, Mbolobi, Dabori, Dagbigu, Choribang, Bole and Jilinkong.
Chorba	Seripe and Senyon.
Mo	Fimbu, Bamboi, Jugboi and Carpenta-krom.
Tampluma	Bugai, Konkori, Sala, Esa'likau, Bunwele, Mankargu, Lukuli, Tampluma-Yagbong, Zantani, Goreba, Jinkrom, Nalori, Basampa, Nabengu, Dinkeripe, and Donkompe.
	II. Those of the Moshi group are:
Ndempo	Kolonso, Boakipe, Jembito, and Abonipe.
Safalba	Mandari, Gbenfu, and Tangpe.
Nomi	Yipala, Ponger, Kulmasa, Nahari Kichin and Sangyari.
Batigi	Kunfugsi.
Mmara	Larbanga, Nabori and Dokurpe.
Angaa-speaking	Murugu, Busunu, Chatali.
Chakalia	Langatire, Yarizori, Kadengi, Kpalinbo, (Kubeng) Jinfurno, Bawina, and Anyanto.
	III. Those of the Senufo group are:
Pantera	Tinga and Wasipe (in Bole Division)
	<u>EASTERN GONJA</u>
Nawuri	Alfai area.
Nchinbalung	Lonto, Kpajai, Tamkulonku, Ekumdipe, Bankamba, Chakori, Jimbupe (Sabon Jida), Kabeso, Kachenke, Kojobonipe, Kumuniso, Krukruba, Nanjuro, Tirai, and Wiaye.
Dagomba	Damongo, Kusawgu area, Saggou, Busa(now in Wa area, and Zeng-pe (near Nyanga).
Mparba	(was spoken in) Kakpande, Jonton and Kpansheu areas (but Dagomba has replaced it and Kparba itself is indistinct).
Mpara	Kusawgu, Tuluwe, ^{Lebir, Mankpang} Dibit and on the banks of the White Volta. The language is now dead.
Ntrapo	Kanyase and Wangase-Turu areas.
Gonja	is confined to the ruling estate.

DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS AND CUSTOMARY LAW

The Gonja family is a large unit than its European counterpart and consequently the family head is a man of considerable position. When the head of the family dies, his brothers may succeed in order of seniority before the men of the next generation become eligible.

Brothers here includes cousins and the men of the next generation means the sons and nephews. These ^{sons and nephews} take their rank in order of seniority of their birth and not from the seniority of their parents.

The head of a family has power over ^{all} the members of his family whatever their age and he is normally the only person who will be given guardianship of a child. *An uncle who is younger in age may become the head of the family.*

Polygamy is practised in Gonja, though modern economic conditions make it unusual for a man to have more than two wives and this may in time compel a state of monogamy. The marriage contract was easily made for, in the past, the woman's consent was not necessary to the match.

A girl could be given to a man by either the head of family or by her father. A girls' suitor must however win her parents' consent, which he does by presenting them with kola (which expression includes monetary gifts) foodstuff, logs for kindling fire and zana-mats for the mother-in-law, which was used as a door shutter to shut the door of her room. The present of kola is made on the man's behalf by the head of ^{his} family. ^{220 cowries, or 12/- i.e.,} The dowry was £1.20 and 100 kola nuts preceded by pito when the parents agree to the marriage, and the man is so informed, through the head of his family.

In most cases a man marries the daughter of his mother's brother or that of his father's sister in order to keep the family ties strong. This is called k'kurwe-kill (family marriage). There is however, no bar to a person marrying outside the family. In cases of family marriages it is one of the parents who gives the girl to a relative and if the girl refuses she may be ostracised from the family.

What makes a marriage legal is the payment of the 100 kola and ^{220 cowries or 12/-} (£1.20) to the woman's parents. If this is not paid any children born by the woman with a man naturally belongs to the putative father but he can not claim them legally. According to custom such children belong to the mother and her parents, and not the man who is regarded as the woman's concubine. The woman on whose head the kola is not paid can leave the man with whom she had cohabited and marry another man, and the first man can not complain and cannot have any claim in the case of adultery. However, after separation the man is allowed to pay the customary kola ^{the children can become legitimate. He can then} so that ~~he can~~ claim the children as his legitimate children who can then be entitled to inherit him.

family by virtue of being the brother of their father and the Gonja saying is that *Ela gong so ni beaie nya ibi* meaning because of an elder brother the junior (brother) has got a child, we, ~~people~~ who call him father. (It is a bar - some).

A girl is recognised as marriageable as soon as she had her first menses but boys do not usually marry until they are about twenty years of age.

Marriages may be contracted to within the degree of first cousin but it must always be a father's sister's daughter and a brother's son. A woman cannot marry a father's brother's son, neither can a man marry his mother's sister's daughter.

There is no formal marriage ceremony before a girl or a woman goes to her husband's house. On the appointed night the girl's friends are instructed to catch her when they are at play and they carry her to the husband's house. The bride is then hulled out should she suspect anything. *The girl waits when she realizes that she is being taken to her husband's house.*

The friends will keep her company in the bridegroom's house for about a week before they return to their own homes. A grown woman is led to the husband's house by relatives who return to their homes the same night. In each case the head of the woman's family will ask his representative to hand the girl or woman ^{over} to the husband's head of family with a request that if the marriage is not successful, the head of the ^{husband's} family should return the wife to him. *This ensures proper care of the woman who calls all her husband's brothers her husbands.*

A man must give a cloth to the bride if he finds her a virgin. This is called tumba-waaja. The parents of the girl must be informed immediately if she is found to be a virgin or an adult woman. It is always a disgrace to the woman's family if she should have sexual intercourse with another man before her marriage. *Pre-marital sexual intercourse were shun upon.*

A bridegroom would ask his friends to play or dance for him on the night of his marriage. The drumming and dancing in honour of the newly wed couple can go on for many nights.

If a man has more than one wife, the one he married first is the head wife and others take precedence in order of the time of their marriage. The position of head wife carries with it little authority, *but great respect.*

Each wife with her children occupies one room in the husband's compound if he can afford it. A new wife, if she is a girl, may stay in the room of a senior wife until the husband is able to provide her with her own room in about a year's time, *or when she begins to have children.*

Adultery may be compensated for by money paid to the outraged husband. Adultery by a man with his father's brother's, or close relative's wife is a taboo and is regarded as an offence not only against the living but also against the spirits of the dead members of the family. In the old days the offender was ostracised from his family. *visit one when sick, or sacrifice with one the same medicine or ^{juju} or* A person cannot inherit the property of a person with whom he has had sexual intercourse with the same woman. In the same way a woman cannot inherit the property of a woman with whom she had had sexual intercourse with the same man. It is also a taboo to eat any food prepared at the funeral of a rival. It is believed that one would die if one eats the food prepared at a rival's funeral.

With certain related families adultery is compensated for by taking the offender's mat, cloth and 'p.i.b. These are given to the boys of the aggrieved man.

The taboo is therefore a rule enforcing moral standards.

In cases of a divorce the consent of a Divisional Chief, before whom the suit is brought, must be obtained. A woman who wishes to divorce her husband without reasonable cause may be asked to refund to the husband all expenses made by him on her behalf *before the marriage was contracted.*

A husband has legal claim to an illegitimate child born by his wife, but such a child will not inherit ^{him} ~~the mother's husband~~. A mother and her parents do not regard any child as illegitimate and such a child is fully accepted into the mother's family. The saying is that "a woman has no illegitimate child since the child lay in her womb."

There is no adoption of children in Gonja. Any person without a child can take the child of a relative and bring it up and the child is told of their family relationship.

THE NEW BORN BABY

The Founding Fathers of Gonja brought Moslem Priests with them and for this reason most of Gonja custom and festivals are influenced by Islam.

When a new child is born the father goes to the Sakpare Imam, descendants of Fati Murukpe, to ask for a name for it. Two or three names are given. The father will break two or three small sticks, each a little longer than the other, and each stick represents a name, distinguishable by its length. He holds these in his hand, ~~showing them equal, on the outside and finding the differences in lengths in his palm~~. He ^{then} presents the sticks to the mother of the child who draws one, and the child is given the name which the name the stick represents.

In Eastern Gonja the naming of a child takes place on the first ~~evening~~ Saturday after the birth of the child provided it is not less than seven days after the birth of the child. In Western Gonja the child is named on the seventh day, that is, on the day of the week on which the child was born.

The child is shaved on the ^{day of its naming} day to remove the hair of the spirit with which he came into the world. Each child is said to be one of the ancestors who has returned to earth. On that naming day if the child is a boy he is circumcised and given tribal marks.

The operation of circumcision is done by the barber who shaved the hair and gave the tribal marks. A girl was allowed to go to her parents' home to deliver her first child, and the naming is done in the mother's parents' home by the father of the child through the head of his family. ^{the wife} ~~she~~ will return to the husband after a year - when the child is able to walk. All subsequent children are delivered in the husband's house.

DEATHS

Before the coming of the British with their cemeteries and sanitary rules all Gonjas, except the Paramount and Divisional Chiefs, who had special burial places, used to bury their dead outside the walls of their compounds and mark the grave with a stone. Heads of families and very old women were usually buried inside the compound and some of them were buried in their rooms.

hiding the differences in length - in his closed palm and showing them to be of equal size on the outside or visible section.
At the first Saturday is less than seven days then the naming day is postponed to the second Saturday.

Bodies are burried ~~and~~ wrapped in white cloths, and in the case of a chief the body is wrapped in a white gown. A corpse is burried lying on its right side with the face facing east with the head to the south. ^{Infants} ~~Children who were still very young~~ were burried in the bathing place ~~and infants are burried~~ wrapped in cotton wool. Graves of elderly persons are dug to a dept of about five to six feet and a niche is made on the west side of the grave where the corpse is laid. Branches of Kapoli tree is cut in pieces and these are placed at right angles to the niche. After this the grave is filled up with swish. The swish does not touch the corpse. Burial takes place a few hours after death. The Paramount and Divisional Chiefs are burried in the night.

Funerals are performed three times in the case of adults and twice only in the case of a deceased whose father or mother is still alive.

The first funeral is performed three days after death provided the day falls on a good day. ^{Customarily} Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays are not good days for funeral performances.

The second funeral is performed on the seventh day after death and the third and or last funeral, which must be performed on a Thursday, is performed on the twelfth day after death.

On the ^{fortieth} day after death the grave is leveled ^{and} mourning comes to an end and close relatives can then return to their homes after that. ^{and} ~~No special clothes are worn at funerals but women~~ ^{wear raffia strings (edows) around the neck} make marks with white clay (fula) over their bodies during the funeral performance.

INHERITANCE

When a man dies he is inherited ^{by the} eldest of his surviving brothers who becomes ^{the} head of the family.....

On the eve of a funeral performance ^{on} Awuba dance is staged and in the case of men a Kpana dance would precede the awuba dance. The awuba dance should be not less than twice and this dance is performed only at the funeral of adults. With the funeral of young men only a Kpana dance is played.

On the morning of the funeral food is prepared and distributed to prominent persons and the Sakpape moslems are called in to offer prayers at which food, (knole) masa, gumba ^{kola} and money are provided. These are placed before the moslems and they carry away the food, masa, gumba and kola and share the money among themselves after they had said prayers.

Sheep is slaughtered for the preparation of the food in the case of ordinary persons and cows are slaughtered in the case of chiefs, including women chiefs (bawurche), and prominent non-chiefs.

In the ~~case~~ case of infants, with no brothers or sisters after them, only gumba and milk is used in the funeral which is performed very simply. An infant who was not named before its death has no funeral and no funeral is performed for a person who committed suicide.

(axar raffia-fibers (eds) round their necks and

(the is treated as an abortion,

INHERITANCE.

When a man dies he is inherited by the eldest of his ~~surviving~~ ^{brothers} who becomes the head of the family surplus food from the farm was sold and the money realised was given to the head of family ~~who keeps it.~~ ^{for saving}

If the adult members of the family have individual farms, the work on the farm of the head of family must be completed before the members go to work on the other farms in rotation, finishing that of the next senior brother or cousin in seniority before moving to the next. An uncle who is junior in age takes precedence over ^{sons and} nephews, that is, his brothers children *even if they are older in age over him.*

The reason for this was that the family lived a communal life and the farm of the head of the family, with any property acquired from the proceeds of the sale of surplus food, was for common use, because every one contributed to the making of the farm and the acquisition of the wealth and or property within the family. It was for this reason that property ^{held in trust and} was inherited by the next senior member of the family who was trustee for the whole family.

If a young man wanted a wife it was the head of the family who must seek a wife for him bearing all the expenses involved. This in effect means using the labour contribution made by the young man to the accumulation of the family wealth for his benefit.

In the same way, if a member of the family incurred a debt it was the head of the family who must pay the debt because he keeps the money which had accumulated from the sale of the family farm produce ^{of which the debtor was a contributor.} If there is no cash in the family every member of the family will contribute to settle the debt.

In modern times the tendency is for every member of the family to work on his own, and people have become individualistic. As a result children who work on their father's farm, and who help the father to acquire his wealth, inherit the father when he dies *denying his next senior brother the right to inherit.*

However the members can work on their own after closing from the work on the head of farm in their spare time. This is called

The person who inherits one, becomes the trustee of the deceaseds' children and he must cater for their needs.

Modern civilization and individualistic tendencies amongst the community is changing the customary law of inheritance and this change is supported by public opinion.

Laws and rules are made to suit prevailing conditions and each generation modifies the customary laws and rules of the tribe to suit the times

SKIN PROPERTY

In the event of the death of an important chief, property belonging to the skin, in contrast to his personal property, is taken care of by the traditional custodians. There are passed on to a successor, but the chief's personal property is inherited by the members of his family.

Property in Land belongs to the Paramount or Divisional Chiefs through the Village Elders who are the Land Priests (Kasawulwurana) and who were the Priestly Kings before the Gonja conquests.

Any encroachment on the land rights is punishable by the Chief though a liberal views is taken by the traditional authorities.

In contrast to rights over land a person may have rights to trees. Of course a man has the usufructuary rights of his farm. A slave in the old days had these rights though upon his death his master inherited his property including his farm produce. The slaves children were also regarded as property and were inherited by the slaves master. A slave could buy his freedom by buying another slave for his master.

When a person ^{abandon} leaves a piece of plot on which he made a farm for two years any person can ^{enter on the land and} make his farm on the plot of ~~land~~ which automatically reverted to the community, the Chief being only a trustee for the community. If any person chooses a piece of land for a farm, before the chief who intends to farm on that same piece of land, the chief has to leave it for the person who ~~was~~ ^{was} first in choosing it. Land is not leased to strangers but ~~but~~ they are required to give small amounts of their farm produce to the chief.

CONTRACTS.

Since the people were all illiterates contracts were verbal and were made before witnesses. Enforcement could be had on application to the Chief and in the same way as debts could be recovered through the Chief's court.

TRADE.

All articles save wives and children could be bought and sold but children could be pledged as security for debt, etc. When the debt is settled the child pledged can return to the family. Usury was not practised.

In such a case his property is inherited by his children when he dies.

TRADE.

All articles save wives and children could be bought and sold but children could be pledged as security for debt, etc. When the debt is settled the child pledged can return to the family. Ursury was not practised.

CRIMINAL OFFENCES.

The offences which the Gonjas traditionally recognise as criminal are the following:--

Murder

Witchcraft

Theft

Gambling

Defilment of infants

Adultery with a Chief's wife

Having sexual intercause with a woman in the bush or farm

Arson

Intercourse with an animal.

Attempts to commit these crimes were regarded as meriting punishment in the same way as the commital of the crime itself.

For murder, theft and adultery with a Divisional Chief's wife, the punishment was death, when found guilty, and the executioners carried out the sentence. In the other cases the offender was ordered to pay compensation for damage to the aggrieved party, just as in cases of seduction and adultery a money payment was made to the husband of the despoiled woman.

Serious cases of witchcraft was punished by beheading and in some cases the offender was expelled and banished from the area of the Divisional Chief's jurisdiction in which the offence was committed.

Intercourse with an animal was regarded as the act of a lunatic and the offender was treated accordingly.

The head of a family was responsible for paying any fines imposed on a person or any compensation which the offender was ordered to pay to an aggrieved person. Usually, on a person receiving the compensation awarded him he gave this to the chief who shared the amount with his elders and sub-chiefs present at the hearing of the case. *The aggrieved person was content when he found that the offender had been punished.*

Enforcement of payment of fines or compensation was ~~usually done in the form of the head of the family of~~ goats, the members of the family always contributed to pay a fine imposed on an offender, or any compensation award against the offender, if the head of the family has not got ready money to pay.

RELIGION

The Gonjas were pagans when they set out from Mande (Malli) in their adventure and their leaders were converted to Islam by an Arab, Mallam Mahama Labayiru, who came to be generally known as Fati (Fatigi) Murukpe, whose help was solicited by the Gonja King to make prayers for him unto Allah so that he could be victorious in his wars, in the year A.D. 1595/6 when, by the prayers of the mallam they ^{Gonjas} miraculously routed an enemy on the battle field at a place called Kawlaw. This is one of the reasons why the Gonjas did not disturb the "Earth Gods," and the Fetish Priests who made sacrifices to them, when they conquered their country.

The Gonja pagans also believe in a supreme God whom they know as Ebore and in making sacrifices to their shrines and fetishes they will first call on Ebore (God) to accept their offering.

As time went on Islam won more converts among the Gonjas but they still worshiped the host of spirits (which are subordinate to (Ebore) and who have their habitations in woods and stones and who inflict sickness on any person who may trespass upon their preserves without first performing the proper ceremonies.

The Gonjas revere ancestral spirits and believe in dead bodies or ghosts. They talk to the spirits through the medium of deviners or soothsayers and if calamity befalls any person he consults a deviner to find the cause of his affliction.

The effect of the Gonja occupation is everywhere obvious in the facial characteristics of the people, many of them showing little or no trace of negro features, as well as in their custom; The wave of Islam which swept along the Sudan

did not change the beliefs of the inhabitants of Gonja, for one finds everywhere a common religion emerging. Whatever institutions or innovations that the Gonjas brought it is certain that they were built upon the foundation of the agrarian life of the peoples who readily adopted observances and ceremonies for approaching the Deity who controlled the forces of Nature of which they stood in awe, and on which their livelihood depended. Thus one finds throughout Gonja one common religion emerging after the many vicissitudes, namely the belief in the "Earth God," the giver of all gifts, and the ancestral spirits. The people believe in a supreme Being, as ~~stax~~ stated above, called in Gonja Ebore, who is very far removed from and beyond their daily concerns. The Earth God is the nearest approach in their minds to the Great Creator. Side by side with these beliefs one finds a widespread fetish worship or animism, which is allied to the Nature Worship of primitive peoples. Just as they believe that a tree is inhabited by a living spirit, it is not difficult for them to believe that a piece of wood or inanimate object can become the abode of a spirit, and that such an object has the power to avert evil. Fear of the unknown and the consequent need for a specific against all ills has enabled the belief in the amulet and fetish to gain a hold over them.

ANCESTRAL SPIRITS.

The ancestral spirits to whom sacrifices are made, are the important elders of a family, who thus continue to rule the lives of their descendants in the area in which they lived. The Enimu (Village Elder), Kawur'-nyin (Head of family) or Kasawulwura (Land Priest), as he reached old age, would before his death instruct his successor in how to perform the necessary rites to approach the Earth God, and so the knowledge would be handed down. If after his death some new circumstances, e.g. draught or famine, arose about which the successor had not been instructed, he would then go to consult the spirits of his predecessors as to what the community had done wrong or failed to do, and ~~methods of~~ ~~approaching the spirit~~ obtain the necessary guidance. Primitive people have various methods of approaching the spirits of the dead. On his death he would pass to the world of spirits. In this way the ancestral spirits, which play so important a part in the lives of the people, would accumulate, as also the knowledge they possessed, and so they become the advisers of the community.