

# **THE OSUDOKU STATE**

## **GOVERNMENT SOCIOLOGIST REPORT**

(SETP. 30, 1938)

PART 1.

INTRODUCTION.

Scope of this report

This report is a condensed collection of information likely to be needed by administrators and is produced pending a fuller account of the Adangme people.

In view of the tangled condition of land affairs in Ouidoku these are given most attention in this report. All available documents and records from 1877 onwards have been studied and their relevant matter incorporated in the digest.

Geographical and Economic background.

The land is an almost perfectly flat grass-covered plain, parched in the dry season, a bog in the wet. The flatness is broken by several impressively abrupt "mountains" - a thousand feet or more high with perpendicular crags. These hills are rich in minerals - gold, silver, platinum, chromium, manganese etc., but none of them have so far been worked.

The Northern boundary of the plain is the Volta, bordered by numerous creeks of all sizes and some big lake - like lagoons. The water rises annually in September - at a season not coincident with the local rainfall but with Northern Territories rainfall - and floods the riverside farms, and filling the creeks with water and fish, and sometimes washing away villages. The right to fish in the creeks is greatly coveted and income is made by letting the fishing to strangers.

The state had three main types of people - the riverside fishers, the plains farmers and stock-rearers, and the absentees. The latter, a proportion hard to estimate but probably nearly half the total population are cocoa-farmers and sea-fishermen spend most of their time away, returning home for funerals and the annual religious festival. The plains farmers have a difficult life, their land being seldom neither water-logged nor scorched. Cassava will hardly grow at all but the people grow millet and consequently are bigger, harder, and more energetic than the eaters of cassava and yam.

Cultural background.

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But for the cocoa farmers and their contact with the outside world Osudoku would be much as it was centuries ago. Osudoku town itself is 8 miles from a lorry road; in moderately wet weather it is reached only by wading through waist deep water and kneedeep mud and in very wet weather it is completely cut off. There is no school in the whole state and no Christians except at Duffor and Asuchauri which have tiny Methodist communities. It is doubtful if there are half-a-dozen literates in the whole state except the tribunal registrars who are strangers.

There is nowhere what Europeans would regard as a "town". The houses are built out of local materials by their owners, women make their own crockery and most people could supply all their own vital necessities and live without any outside contacts. Osudoku town, however, takes more pride in neat buildings and cleanliness than many Gold Coast towns who have greater advantages. Asuchauri tries hard to be sophisticated and has achieved some fine sheets. Kasunya is very dilapidated.

Osudoku town itself is almost empty for the greater part of the year but at the time of the big festival is crammed with thousands of people. It is in fact primarily a social and religious centre, not an economic or industrial centre.

Socially and politically Osudoku is almost a museum specimen surviving from the past and the people are singularly unfitted to cope with the impact of ordinances, lawyers, moneylenders, etc. They themselves say "mantse business is all new to" us and one must concede some justice in their bitter complaint, -- "The Europeans drove us down from our hill with machine guns and have spoilt our old life but they do not come and see use and help us". The patiently tutorial and highly personal attention which Northern Territory commissioners have leisure to give their people is probably the kind the Osudokus would be able to profit by. They are primitive people,

and ...../



and the standardised, impersonal attention which is all the overburdened Gold-Coast officers are able to give is only a bewilderment to them. Their spasmodic struggles to make themselves as other Gold Coast people are ineffective because unorganised and unguided. For instance, a few years ago every male member of the state including absenteers contributed £1 and every woman 10/- to construct a lorry-road to Akuse and put an end to isolation. Some thousands of pounds were collected. But there was no organisation: they began by buying lorries and iron wheelbarrows and by the time two out of the necessary dozen cement bridges were built the money was gone, none knew where, and the work stopped. Furthermore they had chosen the worst possible swampy route simply because the old footpath has passed that way, whilst there was a comparatively dry route elsewhere needing no bridges.

In their legal affairs they have been singularly ill-advised and ill served. They have been encouraged to engage in quite hopeless cases on the one hand and on the other they have lost good cases through calling none of the witnesses able to give relevant evidence. The discrepancy between their account of their cases and the documentary records shows that they have often no idea of what they are doing.

They are unfortunate in their mantse, who is very sick physically and incompetent to the verge of imbecility. He sleeps all day and neither can nor will do any business. They treat him with great patience but would never dream of destooling him since destoolment is no part of their custom. They admit that he is a drag on progress and have toyed with the idea of appointing a regent to act for him: with encouragement they might carry it out.

## Part II.

### HISTORY



PART II.

HISTORY AND CONSTITUTION.

The situation in Osudoku today presents several unique features and to understand these it is necessary to know something of the history and constitution of Osudoku.

The first people on the land were Adangme-speaking immigrants who must have been well established by the end of the sixteenth century. They occupied a number of villages on the area know as Yongwash- (enclosed in red on the sketch map.) Most of these sites are unoccupied today, but can be recognised by their old kitchen-middens with an abundance of pottery fragments; grindstones, remains of shellfish, etc., Chief of these was Tettikpo, a mile or two from the present-day Kasunya. The Chief of Kasunya still visits the Tettikpo site annually to perform ceremonies there.

Social organisation was very primitive. There were no chiefs. The leaders were the heads of the Extended-families and these heads were also the priests of the family gods. There was no military organisation.

The two priests who led the entire party of immigrants into the district were Tettino Yobo, the priest of Ozei-Bosumatre and the priest of Nadu. The deity Ozei-Bosumatre immediately "married" both the deity of the Kasu lagoon, (a "female lagoon") and the goddess Afiyei an aboriginal deity of whose earlier worshippers no other trace remains. Ozei and Kasu "became one" under the Ozei priest and lagoon worship become predominant in the joint rites.

After an interval, apparently of several generations, a quarrel (of which there are several versions) arose at Tettino. The various versions have one common feature - viz. that there were two rivals for leadership, Dasino (or Dasi) and Yobo.

Dasino's people became the Gbese people under the leadership of the priest Nadu. Yobo's people became the Kasunya people under the priest of Ozei-and-Kasu.

The two peoples appear to have remained "on one land" for several generations. No-one in those days was "land-conscious" and though the people were divided the land was not. The Gbese people and their headquarters at Gbese-Kpono-Yakwashi at the foot of Yo Nwa, (the Big Hill)

After a quarrelsome interval the Gbese people under their leader, Ogbei, the priest of Nadu, decided to leave the district. So they crossed the Volta and went Eastwards to "Tetetutu". The Kasunya people never left the district.

Ogbei died in Tetetutu and was succeeded by Mate Aka (or Mate Ika). After his death the Gbese people were ordered by their god Nadu to return. On both the outward and the return journey the travellers camped at a place called Hnatsi on the Togolago Plain. On the outward journey Ogbei consorted with a woman of that place and on the return journey his son Mate Aka found a grown-up half-brother there. This young man, whose name was Dokutse Peteye, together with a group of his mother's people, joined Mate Aka's party and came with them to their old district.

On arriving, Dokutse Peteye and his followers broke off from Mate Aka's party and settled at Anedica. They were the first settlers on what are now known as the Akuse Lands, (green in the sketch-map )

The main body under Mate Ika, being afraid of inland raiders settled on the Osu Hill or Osuyu, three miles from the Great Hill and lived on the top of it hidden in its wooded fastnesses. Osuyu remained their headquarters till 1882 when the Government ordered both Osuyu and the neighbouring Krobo hill to be evacuated. The Gbese people who settled on Osuyu received various refugee strangers of whom we shall speak again later. The whole group on hill dwellers with the Gbese nucleus will hereinafter be called the Osu people.

While on their hill the Osu people, like all Gold Coast people of those days, hunted over adjacent land and became thereby the owners of it. The testimony of neighbours (Shai, Yilo-Krobo, Aprade, etc.,) supports the Osu statement

that ...../

that their territory included the Krobo Hill which was then uninhabited. Dokutse Kpeteye, now independent, has settled on "the Akuse lands" and those lands were his. Kasunya was still on its old site and owned all the riverside lands and creeks from Lomen Stream on the West to Gbagbawhe on the East. Osu has never disputed Kasunya's riverside ownership.

The Gbese and Kasunya never renewed their ancient feud and though the two peoples never united again under one government till 1928 there was always a close association between the two peoples. The Kasunya were mostly fishermen, the Osu, farmers. The title by which the Kasunya chief was best known Zigba wonor (Earth priest). He was responsible for all the ceremonial designed to ensure both the fertility of the earth and the seasonal rise of the Volta which fills all the creeks with water and fish. The annual ceremonial included the drowning of a young virgin girl in the Mumoyi lagoon and the victim was provided by the Kasunya people. For this reason the Kasunyas themselves never fished in Mumoyi and do not to this day. The Osus were allowed to fish in it and still are. In return for fishing the Osus paid an annual tribute of flour, rum, calico, sheep and a part of the fishing proceeds. Incidentally it should give Europeans an idea of the stage of "advancement" of the Osudoku "state" today, to know that there is hardly a member of it who does not bitterly attribute the present day lack of prosperity to the fact that the drowning ceremony is no longer performed.

The position of the town of Asuchauri calls for special notice. When the hill top settlement was first made it was thought wise to establish a kind of lookout settlement on the Volta to give warning of enemies approaching from the river. Representatives of several Osu quarters were accordingly sent to compose such a garrison at Asuchauri. It was - and is - an Osu town on Kasunya land. It ran-and still runs- a ferry there and the proceeds are handed to Kasunya. But Kasunya has

never ...../



never had any jurisdiction over Asuchauri people and it is to Osu that they annually return for their big festival. Natriku (or Latriku) was a similar garrison village of Osudoku people on the river but was on Dokutse Poteye's land.

The land which the Osus owned, i.e., over which their hunters hunted, included the Hill of the Owls or Krobo Hill which was uncoupled on their arrival. Later some Denchera refugees came and "asked for somewhere to stay", and were given leave to occupy the Krobo Hill. They became known as the Yilo Krobos, and have never disputed the land-ownership of the Osus. Later still another party of Adangme immigrants arrived via Ada and came and asked Osu for a hill top site. Osu said there was no more room on Osuyu but if Yilo liked to find a place for them on Krobo they might go there. They did, making their own town, Manya, alongside Yilo and became known as the Manya Krobos. Though they have since become very numerous, progressive and well advertised there is no doubt that they are the latest comers and are the owners of very little land.

The Osus on their hill found that monkeys made farming very difficult so they made their farms on the plain near what is now Zanidor. A stretch of land there was parcelled out as Weku Zigba (family land) between the various extended-families or quarters; with the exception of these small patches of Weku Zigba on Zanidor Plain any Osu man could make a farming or hunting camp anywhere on Osu land. Many of them did, and their vamps grew into considerable villages, the founders of the villages and their heirs becoming heads of the villages. But every villager returned - and still does - to the central town for burial and funeral customs, for the annual festival and until 1928 for all "cases" except the pettiest.

#### Social structure and growth of Osu

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Social structure and growth of Osu.

When the Gbese people under Mate Aka the Nadu priest returned from Tetetutu and settled on the Osu hill they consisted of two sub-sections: Gbese Kpono and Gbese Dom. The Nadu priests were chosen from these two sections in alternation. Further Gbese sub-quarters were formed as the people - who seem to have been very prolific-multiplied.

Soon after the Gbese were established on the hill parties of strangers appeared seeking refuge. They were gladly received because greater number meant greater strength. Two of these parties combined to make on the hill-top a second town called Lanor with its own organisation. The remaining seven parties of strangers were attached to the Gbese town as new "quarters".

The two Lanor parties came from Ladoku and Angula with their own priests and made two "quarters", Ia and Nor respectively in their new town.

The seven new "quarters" attached to the Gbese town were:-

Tsengme, consisting of people from Jasikan				
Manya ,	"	"	"	Kranch district
Klikpa ,	"	"	"	Akwamu
Sewem ,	"	"	"	Shai
Dorsi ,	"	"	"	Ashanti
Owhem ,	"	"	"	Some place uncertain
Buam ,	"	"	"	Akwapim

These people brought their own gods and continued to worship them but acknowledged Nadu as senior and joined in his festival.

About 1690 a part of the Lanor people under the Bake priest left and settled near Accra forming the nucleus of Christiansborg. The quarrel which sent them away was later healed and though they never returned they kept in touch with their old town and supplied gunpowder in times of war.

Osu Stools.

Two or three generations before the battle of Katamanso, warfare threatened the whole countryside and Osu decided to set up a military organisation and to add warfare magic to the agricultural ....

agricultural rites round which their whole social organisation had and centered. This war-magic involved a stool.

Now a stool among the Ga and Adangme people is a very different institution from the stool of the Akan and Ashanti peoples. To the Ga and Adangme a stool is essentially a war-medicine made to be carried to war to bring victory by its supernatural influence. It is not a monarch's throne and the man who sits on it is not a ruler. He is a passive living mascot to bring victory in war. At his enstoolment ceremony he is "medicined" by being placed three times, naked, on the stool; its magical influence passes into him making him invincible and supernaturally brave in battle. His followers are supposed to gain from him a kind of "induced charge" and to become themselves supernaturally brave and invincible: when he is "medicined" they are vicariously medicined.

The manufacture of a stool involves blood to make the "medicine" strong. For this reason most of the Ga and Adangme high-priest, the rulers, were debarred from sitting on the stool, for their gods held human blood among their major taboos. Furthermore, high priests might not leave their homes. The Osus therefore invited the Animle family, who formed the newly founded Dorsi quarters of Osu, to take charge of the new stool and its magic and to provide one of their number to be enstooled. Also, being Ashantis, the Animle family had had some previous experience of warfare and its organisation.

The Animle family remains the stool family today, but Mantse is by no means the ruler, and were it not for European influence he would undoubtedly have lapsed into insignificance again as did the Banahene of Ningo in like situation. Today the people say, "If we had known that Europeans would think that a mantse was a ruler and give support only to him, we would never have chosen a stranger".

Europeans who imagine that the identity of priest with ruler in many of the Ga and Adangme towns is a mere piece of antiquary's lore of no practical significance today are vastly mistaken. In some towns it is a vital fact which cannot be



set aside without bringing about the kind of outburst that occurred in Ningo in 1917 -- which outburst was the direct result of a Government suggestion that the posts of chief and priest should be held by two separate persons.

At the same time that Osu created a mantse it also created a mankralo. A mankralo is a kind of deputy-mantse and his stool, like the mantse's was taken to battle.

The first mankralo of Osu was Wonor Krampa, the priest of Mani, a Gbese deity. Mani was less important than Nadu and his priest could go to war. However, after the death of Wonor Krampa the posts of mankralo and priest were separated and held by two separate persons.

It was Mankralo Amankwa Otibu who caused the trouble culminating in the 1914 inquiry. This was an inquiry by Mr. Harper into the pretensions of Amankwa Otibu who was claiming seniority to Mantse Animle. Otibu was a greedy, arrogant literate, deservedly unpopular, so the witnesses said little to help his claims or to help Mr. Harper, who had been in Ashanti and had Ashanti ideas about chiefs and stools, to understand the situation and there was far more justice in Otibu's claim than Mr. Harper concluded.

Mr. Harper did, however, find out that the claim was based on the association of Gbese with "the Nadu fetish", but was ignorant of the position occupied by the "fetish" in governmental organisation.

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x The Ga and Adangme tribal religion has no fetishes and at the present day no human sacrifice (it never had more than a very little) in ethics, the attributes of its deities and the dignity of its essential rites it is not inferior to Christianity and in approving it Europeans would be doing far less violence to decency than in approving Akan stools with their persistently bloody royal funerals.

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x I do not wish to suggest that Government should cease to recognise Mantse Animle as "Paramount Chief" but merely that they should recognise and assist him to recognise - that he is the representative of a governing - body of elders and not a monarch. So long as the Chief recognises that he is only a go-between linking a body of traditional rulers to the Government, it does not greatly matter whom the government recognises.

When Osu first set up a stool Lanor and Asuchauri also made stools. Asuchauri contained representatives of nearly all the Osu quarters and like Osu it put the stool in the charge of a Dorsi man with the title of Mantse. In Lanor the high priest (priest of Langwo) deputed his son to go to war for him with a new war stool and the title of Asafoatse (captain). His successors on the stool retained the title asafoatse till 1928 when the title of Divisional Chief was conferred.

The Osu mantse's and mankralo's stools, the Asuchauri stool and the Lanor stool were the only Chiefs' stools of the Osu people till 1928 when several captains of quarters in the Osu town, who had also founded colonial villages outside, were designated divisional chiefs and were given tribunals. The mankralo and the Asuchauri chief, whose stools were considerably senior to the captains' stools, were not recommended for tribunals. This appears to have been due to various petty spites and was unfair and unwise. Asuchauri's position is particularly galling to them, for they were put under the jurisdiction of Kasunya who they regard as a foreigner. They freely admit that they are on Kasunya's land and have been for centuries but they are Osu people, attend Osu festivals and palavers and have all their social and traditional attachments to Osu.

#### Constitution and growth of Kasunya.

After the Gbese people had cut themselves off from the Tettikpo the latter moved their headquarters a mile or so from Tettikpo to Kasunya on the edge of the Kasu lake.

Their constitution appears to have undergone little or no change since then. At one period they became very wealthy through allowing strangers to fish and pay fishing tolls. This wealth was used to buy slaves. The descendants of these slaves were all absorbed - socially - into the original

families ...../

families and though they were very numerous they left no mark on the social structure of the town as did the strangers who augmented the Osu numbers.

There are three "quarters" or extended-families, viz. Akakposuwem. Mangotewem and Otutotowem. The priest-chief is chosen from Akakposuwem and Otutotowem alternately. The Labia or Deputy-priest comes always from Mangotewem. When a Labia dies the Priest-chief enstalls his successor, when a priest-chief dies the Labia enstalls the successor.

Each of the three quarters has a secular head or asafotse (captain): These three are of equal rank. The creation of these captains seems to have been Kasunya's sole concession to militarism, but on the cessation of warfare they lost all military associations and became simply the senior elders of the quarters.

It was always expected of every Kasu priest that he would become blind before he had been priest very long. "Their god always blinded them". Whether by coincidence or whether by fear-induced hysteria, most of them did become blind. The predecessor of the present priest was blind. Naturally it was difficult to persuade any one to accept the post and often a slave was forced to take it. Therefore it is not possible to obtain a genealogical table of past priests. The present priest-chief has circumvented the danger of becoming blind by omitting to perform the complete rites which would make him a full priest; in the eyes of his deity he is but "acting" priest. He is interested in tribunals, taxation, law-suits and the modern side of chieftainship introduced by the Government and there is little doubt that he will become more and more a secular chief and the Labia will undertake more and more of his priestly duties. By a natural evolution priest and chief will become, in practise, two persons, and finally will become so also in name. Such a process has taken place, unforced, in other places (e.g. Teshie and Sempi) but where it has not

yet ...../



yet taken place (e.g. Ningō and Temna) to try to force it or to ignore the priestly obligations of the chief always makes trouble.

Kasunya's Ewe neighbours.

The Ewes have no land on the West bank of the Volta, but they have been allowed to fish there and some of them, notably the Duffors, Vlos and Bators, have at times make trouble when the question of paying dues arose. Kasunya's Eastern boundary is with Ada, but on both sides of this boundary numerous Ewes are living and fishing. In particular, the town of Aveiyime is an entirely Ewe town but stands on Kasunya land, just as Asuchaire is an Osudoku town on Kasunya land.

The Duffor War.

In 1880 occurred what is known as the Duffor war. The Duffor and Vlo people were Ewe living on the far side of the Volta and though they had no land or villages on the Kasunya side they often came over in canoes for a day's fishing, gave an agreed fraction of their catch to the Kasunyas and returned in the evening. But in 1880 they became troublesome and started raiding and Kasunya creeks without paying, robbing fish-traps, molesting the Kasunyas and in general being a menace. The Kasunyas were not fighters so they invited the Osus, who had by this time learnt something of warfare, to come and help. The Osus did so and the Duffors were driven to their own side of the river. In return for this help Kasunya gave all the fishing creeks to Osu excepting only the big lagoon, Kasu, on which Kasunya stands, and four other creeks. Lagoonside and riverside land, which, unlike the thin, dry soil of the plain is fertile and much coveted for farming, was included in this gift.

These newly-gained lands and creeks were very carefully apportioned out between the Osu people. Each quarter had certain creeks and parcels of land which again were carefully subdivided between the sub-quarters. In a few cases individuals who had distinguished themselves by great bravery

in the war were given creeks for the sole use of themselves and their heirs. The Christiansborg Osus were also given a creek. Some of the quarters were given farm lands not adjacent to their own creeks. But complicated though this division was every man knows his own creek and there has been singularly little confusion.

Some of the heads of Quarters made villages on their river-side land. Any member of such a quarter might go and live there and fish and farm without asking leave provided no individual interfered with a farm another had cleared and planted. Anyone wishing to make a farm on the land of a quarter other than his own had to ask permission of the head of that quarter. If he finished in another quarter's creek he paid a seasonal toll.

#### Evacuation of Osu Hill.

In 1892 the Government ordered both the Krobos and the Osus to evacuate their hill sites and live on the plain. The Osus came back to a "doku" or "deserted" site which had been one of their villages much earlier, and called it Osudoku by which name it is known today. Larnor came to a site about half a mile from Osudoku. No alteration in organisation took place: the different quarters even retained in their new town the same geographical orientation with respect to one another as they had had on the hill site.

The evacuation order is said to have been in consequence of rumours of human sacrifices in connection with religious rites, and Government forbade any further worship of "the Nadu Fetish". It is now impossible to find out what foundation there was for these rumours. Krobo and Osudoku dislike one another and each still delights in fantastic fabrications to the other's discredit. It is quite certain that if Nadu ever engaged in bloodshed then Nadu was unique among Ga and Adangme deities. Most Lagoon worship used to involve an annual drowning and a live human being was sometimes buried under a new tabernacle, but human blood was among the major taboos of all

the principle Ga and Adangme deities. Furthermore the same Nadu was and is worshipped in both Kpone and Christiansborg and the innocuousness of his rites has never there been questioned.

The interesting point about the prohibition of the Nadu worship is that it was quite futile. Nadu is not a fetish, he is a dzemawong. There is no visible or tangible emblem of his existence that can be destroyed. He is no more destructible than is the deity of the Christians. "You cannot kill a dzemawong. He is like the wind. You can pray to him but you cannot see or touch him. You can burn down his house but you cannot hurt him."

What the people did was simply to drop Nadu's first name -- his full name was Nadu-Wabrao (Nadu the Almighty)-- and call him Wabrao, as Christians might say the Most High or The Lord instead of saying God.

His Worship remains unchanged. Wabrao is still the most vital thing in Osudoku. But for him and his annual festival Osudoku town would disappear - indeed the people explicitly say so - for most of them earn their living elsewhere. The Wabrao priest hears more "cases" in a week than the Mantse's tribunal does in a year. The mantse himself comes like a "small boy" when the priest sends for him and enters the yard on bare feet, bowing, and what the priest advises he accepts. This is not "fear of the Fetish", it is simply respect for a senior.

Incidentally it should be mentioned that when the priest tries a case the guilty party has to pay the injured party customary pacification, but no fines or fees are paid into court. The priest and his elders receive only a pot of fresh palmwine. It would be difficult to over-estimate the priest's influence as a source of law and order.

#### The new Osudoku constitution

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The new Osudoku constitution.

In 1928 Mantse Dowuona of Christainsborg and some of his elders were invited to come and examine Osudoku difficulties and make suggestions. The suggestions concerning land I am treating elsewhere in this report. Other suggestions were made concerning the constitution and were approved by the Government.

A State Council was formed and the status of paramount chief was given to Mantse Animlo. Kasunya was included in the Osudoku state.

The status of Divisional chief was given to the Kasunya priest, the Asafoatse of Lanor, and the captains of some of the Osudoku quarters. New "divisional headquarters" were created in the villages of these captains. Though some of these villages are tiny primitive camps which a European, if he had seen them, would have hesitated to make into divisional headquarters, the measure, by increasing the self-respect of the captains and of the state itself gave satisfaction and was on the whole wise.

Two measurers however call for criticism.

First, the Mankralo, whose stool is ancient and ought to be honoured before captains' stools, was not given divisional status. The reasons for the omission need not be recounted here but it may be said that the state now unanimously regrets its decision regarding the mankralo and now wish to give him Divisional status. He is one of the very few Osudoku literates, is an able man universally respected and he is willing to give the state the intelligent help it badly needs.

The other unwise decision of the Christiansborg arbitration was concerning Asuchaui, whose ancient stool I have already mentioned. Asuchaui was severely set down by receiving no recognition for its long-established customary tribunal.

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Instead, its chief was made a sub-chief under Kasunya.

Asuchauri consists of Osudoku people who participate in all Osudoku festivals and affairs and regard Kasunya as a foreigner.

They freely admit that they are no Kasunya's land (for that matter Osudoku itself is probably on Kasunya's land)

but they have no social and political ties to Kasunya.

Furthermore their town is far more "progressive" than Kasunya and their flat refusal to accept their new status is intelligible.

x The Mankralo should not be confused with the chief of Volivo. The latter is, on his mother's side, a nephew of the late mankralo and for some years before his death did all business for him and assumed that he would someday succeed him. However, to his persistent resentment, he was not appointed, but he still goes about informing strangers that he is Osudoku mankralo.

CURRENT LAND DISPUTES

Land disputes are especially prone to occur in this neighbourhood because one of the characteristics of the neighbourhood is that there is little correlation between occupation of land and ownership. For centuries people have made villages on other people's land not by right but by permission and in the course of time they often forgot the conditions of their coming. For instance the Dormelan villages are all Osudokus on Dokutse Peteye's land, Aveime is a Battor town on Kasunya land, Asuchari is an Osu town on Kasunya land. The "capital town" of Osudoku itself is probably on Kasunya land. There colonial people have always remained under the jurisdiction of their own people and to enforce the principle of territorial jurisdiction should be an almost impossible task. Battors and other Ewes on Kasunya fishing grounds have often made trouble in the past about land ownership but at the moment there are no Ewe disputes in progress.

The tangled land affairs of the Osudoku state may best be considered under three heads:-

- (a) The Youngwashi lands (red in the sketch-map)
- (b) The Zanidor (or Lolovo) lands 'yellow in the Sketch-map)
- (c) The Akuse lands (Green in the sketch-map)

A) The Yungwashi Lands

Even the initial situation with regard to the Yngwashi lands is controversial. This initial situation had best be described before considering recent complications.

As we have seen in reviewing the early history, both Kasunya and Gbese, under their respective priests, were on the land together in very early times. Several questions arise.

Firstly were they under one landlord or two?

It is unaimously agreed that the land "was one land," there were no boundaries within it and "whoever owned it owned it all. Also there appears to have been but one ceremonial centre, namely the great hollow salotso tree at Tottikpo down which both Dasino and Yobo are said to have descended from heaven...../

heaven. One priest performed the ceremonial for the tree though both were associated with it.

Secondly, if they were under one landlord, which of the two priests was the landlord?

The priest who performed the ceremonial for the tree was the Kasunya priest.

It was Kasunya's deity, (Ozei Bosumatre) and not Gbese's (Nadu) who "married" both the lagoon deity and the goddess afiyei. Both of these latter were aboriginal deities. The circumstances were not unusual and in other districts it was invariably the senior of the immigrant Ga or Adangme deities who "married" the principal surviving aboriginal deities, i.e. amalgamated his cult with theirs.

Also, lagoon priesthood was invariably associated with land-ownership and taking over lagoon worship implied taking over landownership.

Also the Kasunya priest was and is designated "Earth Priest".

Certain creeks and riverside lands were given by Kasunya to Osudoku in 1880. This implies that they were Kasunya's to give, and if "whoever owned the land owned it all" then Kasunya was owner.

• From these facts it would appear that Kasunya was landowner. Somewhat vitiating this conclusion is the anomalous fact that it is the Nadu priest of Gbese who now performs the rainfall and fertility ceremony at the foot of the Great Hill. The performance of such ceremony usually implies landownership.

Again, even supposing that the Gbese had been joint landowners with the Kasunyas in early times, how would their position have been affected by their leaving the district completely and on their return, settling in a new place well outside the old boundary?

Also, how has the identity of the Gbese, as a people, been changed by their subsequent union with strangers one of whom is the chief in whose name they conduct their lawsuits?



We have therefore the three possibilities:-

- (a) That the Yungwashi lands belong to Kasunya.
- (b) " " " " " " Kasunya and Gbese jointly.
- (c) " " " " " " Kasunya and Osudoku jointly.

Such is the initial controversial situation. Recent complication of the Yungwashi situation are as follows.

In 1922 Mantse Animle of Osudoku was in debt and his property was put up to auction under a writ of Fi Fa. It was announced that Yungwashi lands would be included in the sale. The Chief of Kasunya published an Opposition Notice announcing that the lands were <sup>not</sup> the property of the debtor but his own and that anyone who bought them did so at his own risk.

The sale took place. Like many Gold Coast auctions it was an astonishing transaction. A herd of over 300 cows, worth about £1,500, several creeks with profitable fishing, houses and the Yungwashi lands brought in altogether about £60.

The Yungwashi lands made £43.

The Yungwashi land were bought by one T.K. Otibu, now Chief of Volin<sup>o</sup>, unsuccessful candidate for the paramountship of Osudoku and unsuccessful candidate for the headship of the house of Dekutse Peteye (owners of the Akuse lands") of Krobo.

There is little doubt that the Osudokus did not understand that the Yungwashi lands were up for sale but imagined that only houses and other private property were being auctioned. When it was known that the Yungwashi lands had been sold Osudoku brought an action claiming that the sale should be set aside because of irregularity in its conduct, and though the judge commented on the inadequacy of the amount realised, irregularity could not be proved.

Otibu thus came to possess a certificate of purchase of the Yungwashi lands and informed the Osudoku mantse that he would require of him a rent of £10 a month since the town of Osudoku mantse and his people six months notice to quit. This was

ignored .....

ignored.

In 1926 Otibu himself was short of money so he mortgaged the Yungwashi lands for £300 to one Tagoe of Labadi.

A further complication arose through the discovery that Mantse Animle of Osudoku and his linguist had already (in 1921 before the auction sale) secretly mortgaged, to one Ahiwumi of James town for £300 at 50% pa., the whole of "Osudoku Land" outlined in blue in the sketch map). This included not only the Yungwashi lands but the "Zanidor Lands" and the disputed "Akuse lands".

Thus the Yungwashi situation is that in 1921 Mantse Animle secretly mortgaged the land (which was probably not his but Fasunya's) to Ahiwumi.

1921 The land was advertised as up for auction as Animle's property and Fasunya published an opposition notice that buyers would buy at their own risk as the land was not Animle's to sell.  
The land was sold by auction as Animle's property to T.K. Otibu who now holds the bill of sale.

1926 Otibu mortgaged the land to Tagoe of Labadi.

1933 Tagoe's heir claimed £450 from Otibu under his promissory note.

By 1928 the rent payable to Otibu by Mantse Animle in respect of the Yungwashi lands had accumulated to £670. Mantse Dowuona of Christiansborg and some of his elders were invited to come and attempt to "set peace". They recommended that

1. The purchase money plus 50% interest be refunded to purchasers to regain the lands and creeks sold.
2. T.K. Otibu should relinquish the Yungwashi lands and the accumulated rent.
3. T.K. Otibu should be given a mandate to negotiate with Ahiwumi with a view to cancelling mortgages.
4. T.K. Otibu should go into state accounts and report on the exact financial position of the state.
5. The defraying of debts should be shared between the paramount and divisional chiefs

The committee also censured the linguist and paramount chief for secretly mortgaging lands, the linguist was deprived of his office and the chief reminded that the lands were not the property of the paramount stool.

Though ...../

Though the recommendations of the Christiansborg committee were regarded at the time as highly satisfactory they do not appear, for the most part, to have been carried out.

✓ T.K. Otibu still holds the certificate of purchase of the lands and declares that an agreement made "for love" is not legally binding. Several purchasers appear to have refused the proffered refund, and those who signed willingness have not, so far as I can discover, received their money.

To what extent T.K. Otibu carried out the task of going into accounts and negotiations with Akiwumi only he himself knows. The exact condition of Osudoku finances is unknown and only a professional auditor could find it out.

T.K. Otibu possesses a European assayer's report on the minerals of the Great Hill and is thought to be negotiating privately with a mining company. Further law-suits involving Kasunya, Mantse Aninle, T.K. Otubu Akiwumi and Tage seem inevitable.

b. The Zandor (or Lolovo) lands.

These lands were undoubtedly farmed by the Osa almost as soon as they established themselves on the hill and parcels of land were allocated to each quarter. The anthropological evidence all supports the tradition of Osa ownership. There is a drinking pool near Zandor to which Gbese Dom annually sacrifices two white fowls. Gbese Dom also gives an annual fowl and prayers for rain to Makpeyoko Hill near Zandor and Owhem gives an annual goat to Lolovo Hill.

Zandor itself was founded by Wonor Krompa on the Gbese Tekwashi strip of land. Kpoyim, now deserted, was Gbese Dom's farming village. This does not in itself prove ownership for this district abounds in the villages of strangers living on land where they have permission, rather than the right, to live.

In 1902 Many Krobo claimed this Zandor land and sued Osudoku and Yilo Krobo accordingly. Krobo's claim was based on alleged tolls which they use to collect from Zandor, and one padi gave evidence of collecting such tolls. Zandor people,

however ...../

however, told me in quite another connection, that Krobo at one time ran a Christian mission at Zanidor and that Padi who was the Catechist had no salary except what he could persuade his Zanidor flock to contribute. This is probably the explanation of the alleged tolls. It is difficult to see on what other grounds Krobo can advance a claim as Ocu was undoubtedly on these lands before the Many Krobos arrived in the district.

The 1902 case was nonsuited on the grounds of insufficient evidence on both sides.

In 1930 Mantse Animle petitioned His Excellency the Governor that an impartial inquiry might be held into his claim of ownership of and jurisdiction over the Lolovo and Akuse lands. I do not know what reply was received to this petition. It seems to be held, perhaps not unreasonably, that where Government has introduced the principle of territorial rather than personal jurisdiction Government may be expected to assist in settling territorial dispute where these are still unsettled.

c. Akuse lands.

There seems no doubt that the first settler on Akuse lands (outlined in green in the sketch-map) were Dokutse Peteye and his party. (see p. 5) Dokutse Peteye's descendants, a family now usually known as Atta Ablah's family, have during the last fifty years defended many lawsuits attacking their title to these lands but it has not been shaken. The point at now issue is this. Is the family now an Osudoku family or is it a Krobo family? Osudoku harps upon the fact that Dokutse Peteye was the son of the Nade priest and claims that he acquired the lands on behalf of his father's people. Krobo insists that Dokutse cut himself off from his father before he acquired the lands and that he later attached himself to Krobo.

On this point I believe that the pertinent questions to ask are, Do this family attend Krobo festivals or Osudoku festivals? and do their girls when performing puberty rites



go to the Osudoku priest or the Krobo priest to receive a blessing?

One point however does arise. The village of Hatriku (or Latriku) was founded as a lookout station of Dokutse Petey, it's land as soon as the Gbese got back from Tetetutu. It was garrisoned entirely by Osudoku people. A possible inference is that Dokutse Petey was not entirely self-reliant (The fact that Osudoku villages exist on Dokutse Petey's land means nothing for there is in this district little correlation between occupation and ownership: multitudes of people build villages by permission, not by right on other people's land. But the fact that it was a garrison village has a possible significance.)

In 1921 these lands were the subject of an action brought by Mantse Animle of Osudoku against E.K. Otibu, (who claiming to be head of the house of Atta Abia had been negotiating for the sale of land at Akuse) together with the Kanor of Many Krobo. This action was most ill-advised for Otibu's claims and Krobo's claims were antagonistic. The result was a non-suit, the claim of nobody being decided. Osudoku appealed against this verdict and finally an appeal was made of the Privy Council. This was dismissed.

In 1924 Many Krobo sued Otibu for claiming to be the head of the house of Atta Abia - i.e. the house of Dokutse Petey. Otibu's claim in relation to that house is as follows:-

Ogbei, priest of Nadu

Dokutse Peteyo	Mate Aka, Priest of Nadu
Pete Atsakale	Tete Nyewigblo
Atta	Theophilus Otibu, alias Moses Ogbei
enote - Atta Abia	E.K. Otibu.
ete Eyor	Idigo

The court ruled that Tete Eyor and not Otibu was head of that house.

Osudoku still cherished the idea of fighting again for the same lands though their chances of winning are extremely slender.