

The Dilemma of the British Government and the Anxiety of the Colonized Africans in Local Government Reforms in the Gyaman Traditional State of West Africa 1936-1957.

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ABSTRACT

“The Existing Suma and Jaman Divisions formed part of the ancient Gyaman Kingdom whose traditional head, the Jamanhene lives over the border in Bondoukou, a circumstance which complicates both constitutional and administrative problems throughout the area and demand extra care in the formulation of proposal for reforming local government”- G.P. Hardy, British Colonial Officer.

Gyaman was a medieval Akan Kingdom of West Africa which flourished in the last decade of the seventeenth century. The founders of the kingdom traced their origin from Akwamu, an Empire that flourished in the contemporary Eastern Region of the Republic of Ghana. The Akwamu fugitives abandoned their original home on account of succession dispute. Having stopped for a while in such places as Asumegya, Kumawu and Suntreso (now located in the Ashanti Region), the migrants went further to carve out the Gyaman Kingdom to the northwest direction of the contemporary Bono administrative region of Ghana. When they successfully subdued the indigenous Kulango, Nafana, and the Gbin the Akwamu fugitives established a centralized government and imposed political and cultural hegemony on the autochthonous people.

In 1893, the British and the French signed a treaty in Paris and partitioned Gyaman between each other. The partition was followed by the delimitation of the international boundary which located the *Gyamanhene*, the King of the Gyaman and a section of his kingdom in the French colonial territory of Cote d’Ivoire, while another portion was located in the British territory of the Gold Coast (Ghana). As the Gyamanhene was estranged from his subjects in the Ghanaian section, they lost a unifying link to hold them together. Provincial chiefdoms of the Gyamanhene that were located in Ghana saw one another as co-equals. Each did not countenance renouncing its sovereignty to become a subordinated chiefdom. Intrigues, jealousy, petty squabbles, scornful look reared their ugly heads in the relationships of the provincial chiefs. This situation complicated constitutional and administrative problem when the British formulated a program proposal for local government reforms in their sphere of influence.

Key Words: British Gyaman, Local Government, Reforms, Anxiety, Dilemma

Introduction

This work discusses the partition of the Gyaman Kingdom between the British and French colonial spheres and subsequent location of the King of the Gyaman [hereafter Gyamanhene] in the French section, while a pocket of his provincial chiefs was located in the British section. It further enquires how the British Gyaman people survived the anxiety superimposed on them by social and institutional changes. Additionally, the work principally debates how colonial isolation of the King of the Gyaman from the British controlled section of his kingdom resulted in disunity, bitterness, and power struggle among his provincial chiefs, a situation that challenged the British policy of indirect rule and local government administration.

Gyaman¹ was an Akan kingdom that flourished in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The founders of the Kingdom claimed that they originated from Akwamu, an Empire that was located in the contemporary Eastern Region of the Republic of Ghana. A version of their traditional account relates that the founders of Gyaman were a section of the Akwamu who broke away from their motherland on account of succession dispute that occurred around 1600, after the demise of King Ansa-Sasraku I. The deflected Akwamu group who were members of the Aduana clan joined their brethren at Asumegya in the contemporary Ashanti Region of the Republic of Ghana.² The group migrated further to carve out the Suntreso traditional state where they lived as Dormaa people.³ Bellicose encounters between the Dormaa and the Kwaman and later the Asante compelled a section of the Dormaa to flee towards the northwestern direction where they carved out the Gyaman Kingdom.⁴ At the peak of its prowess, Gyaman was bounded by the Wenchi state to the east, Banda to the northeast, Asante to the south, Sefwi to the southwest, Bouna to the north and the Comoe River to the west. Gyaman was annexed as a colony to Asante following the former's defeat in the Abo Kofi War launched by Opoku Ware I, the King of Asante in the 1740s.⁵ However, Gyaman declared its independence in 1874 when the British defeated Asante in the Sagrenti War 1874.

In the meantime, after the British had defeated Asante in 1874, the former sought to bring Gyaman under their control not only to weaken the Kumasi government, but also gain upper hand in Gyaman's trade. In 1879, Lees the British Governor dispatched an emissary led by John Smith to the Gyaman country to sign a treaty of protection with them. But, Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman's provincial chiefs would not accept to put their kingdom under European control.⁶ Available evidence revealed that it was one faction led by Kwaku Kosono, the Akyidomhene (also nicknamed Pape) in Kwaku Agyeman's government that denounced the King's decision to avail his country to the British protection.⁷

Mensah Bonsu, the King of Asante who succeeded Kofi Karikari expedited action to recover Gyaman and other territories Asante had lost. This frightened the British; therefore, in 1888, the Governor and the colonial office abandoned the old policy of non-interference beyond the Pra River.⁸ In the meantime, Treich Laplene and Authur Verdier, a planter had been dispatched by the French Government to sign treaties of protection with Bettie, Ndenye and other kingdoms of southern Cote d'Ivoire.⁹ The two reached Gyaman in June, 1887, but on account of bad environmental condition that bred mosquitoes, Treich Laplene was infected by malaria. Sojourning at Abengourou to receive treatment, Treich Laplene dispatched Quattie, his interpreter to contact Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman at Amanvi, the traditional capital of Gyaman. Quattie was instructed to inform the King that the French had vested interest in his Kingdom. Meanwhile, a British expedition led by Captain

¹Gyaman is also called Bono or Brong Kingdom of Gyaman. Francophone scholars refer to it as Abron. Britwum and Terray call it Brong Kingdom of Gyaman or *Un Royaume Abron du Gyaman* respectively. See: K.A., Britwum, "Kwadwo Adinkra of Gyaman, a Study of the Relations between the Brong Kingdom of Gyaman and Asante 1800-1818, *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Legon, xv, no.2(1974),230-45. See again: Emmanuel Terray, 'L'Economie Politique du Royaume Abron du Gyaman, *Cahier d'Etude Africaine*,87/88, no.22(1982),251-75, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4391810>,(accessed on 12th September,2021).

² In this work, I use "Asante" while referring to the Asante traditional Kingdom and "Ashanti" in reference to the Crown Colony of Ashanti or the administrative region.

³ Eva, L.R. Meyerowitz, *Akan Traditions of Origin*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 102.

⁴ A. A., Boahen, *Ghana Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Century*, (London: Longman,1975), 25.

⁵ Ebenezer Assinoah Agyemang, "Gyaman-Its Relations with Ashanti 1720-1820", (MA Thesis Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana,1965),35. The war was named after Gyamanhene Abo Kofi hence the Abo Kofi War.

⁶ Charles Andre Julien, *Les Africains, Tome xii*, (Paris: Edition, j.a.,1990),263.

⁷ Akbar Muhammad, "Djula Intellectualism in Ivory Coast and Ghana a Study of the Life and Career of Alhaji Salih b. Muhammad b. Uthman", (PhD Dissertation, University of Edinburg,1974),39-39.

⁸ W.E.F. Ward, "Britain and Ashanti 1874-1896," *Transaction of the Historical Society of Ghana*, xv, no.2(1974),131-64.

⁹ Seraphin Nene Bi, *Les Institution Colonial de l'Afrique Occidental Francais* (Abidjan: Edition ABC, 2011), 34.

Lonsdale was at Denkyira preparing to enter Gyaman. Lonsdale's advanced team led by Van Dyke, an African military Corporal left to see Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman on the 19th of June, 1887 at Amanvi. Acting on Lonsdale's admonition, Van Dyke presented Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman a Union Jack to symbolize the British readiness to sign a treaty of friendship and protection with him. Later, Van Dyke returned to Abengourou through Bondoukou.

The success story Van Dyke conveyed to Lonsdale became a source of happiness to the British expedition. Later, Treich Laplene and Authur Verdier ambushed and forestalled Lonsdale by concluding with Gyamanhene Agyeman a protection treaty in November, 1888.¹⁰ In the same year, Kofi Dabie, a citizen of Gyaman went to Cape Coast to inform the British Governor that he had been sent by the Gyamanhene. The object of Kofi Dabie's invitation was to put Gyaman under British protection. Accordingly, the Governor dispatched an emissary led by Inspector Lethbridge of the Gold Coast Police to conclude provisional treaty with the Gyaman and bring them under the British protection. The Inspector left for Gyaman accompanied by Richard Austin Freeman, the Assistant Colonial Surgeon and Anglo-German Boundary Commissioner.¹¹ Having set off in November 1888, the expedition reached Bondoukou on the 3rd of January, 1889. Though Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman and his Elders gave the expedition a warm reception, but surprisingly, he, Kwaku Agyeman told Lethbridge and his team that he had no knowledge of their

entry into his country and that Dabie should be released to him for decapitation for that was the deserved punishment for a treasonable conduct. The British officers declined the request and told Kwaku Agyeman that he was well disposed to the English; consequently, they hoped that a treaty of friendship would be signed with him. On the 24th of January, 1889, the Gyamanhene sat in state with his Councilors ready to do business with the British envoy. Lethbridge's confidence boosted when he saw the Gyamanhene holding the Union Jack that Lonsdale had presented him earlier in 1879. At this juncture, Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman vehemently denied having put his Kingdom under the French protection. He further explained himself, and said that he had indeed accepted the French colonizers' flag, and signed a treat whose intent was nothing more than to encourage trade with the French port of Krinjabo near Assini, and to maintain friendly relations with Europeans in general. He went on to say that previously Gyaman traded with the Europeans at Cape Coast, but the Sagrenti War 1874 and the chaotic situation that ensued had made the trade route that passed through Kumasi unsafe. For this reason, the Gyaman had diverted their trade to the French port at Krinjabo near Half Assini. At this point, the British envoy became convinced with the King's explanation; consequently, they went ahead to execute a treaty of friendship, protection and trade. The British officers signed the treaty on behalf of the Queen's Government, while the King and his Councilors made their marks. A pole made of a crooked wood was used to hoist a British flag in Bondoukou amidst cheers and merry making.¹² Thereafter, the expedition returned to Cape Coast. Ward reports that shortly afterwards, the colonial office received the news of Lethbridge negotiation with Gyaman, but would not ratify it because Louis Gustave Binger had forestalled him.¹³ Asante was disillusioned in the French treaty with Gyaman because its dream to reclaim Gyaman had landed on the rocks.

Later in 1895, Samory Toure (Samori Ture) occupied Gyaman. He was a Malinke Djula Muslim who carried out military activities with his band of solders, the *Sofa* between 1861 and 1898 aimed at expanding his Malinke-Djula Empire from a place in modern Sierra Leone through the western direction of the Comoe River in Cote d'Ivoire to modern Ghana in the east. The French had blocked Samory at Assikasso in modern Mali in 1888 to shatter his political fortunes there; consequently, he turned to the east. Panicked over his success in northern Cote d'Ivoire (formerly French Sudan), the French army confronted Samory at Djimini in March,

¹⁰ Julien, *Les Africains*, 271. At Amanvi Van Dyke met Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman and a pocket of his councilors including Kwaku Nyaka, his biological son; Salia Ba Timitey, a representative of the Djula Muslims of Bondoukou and Kwadwo Agyeman who later became the occupant of the Ankobea Stool of Gyaman.

¹¹ Richard Austin Freeman, *Travel and Life in Ashanti and Gyaman*, (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co, 1898.), 2.

¹² Freeman, *Travel*, 207.

¹³ Ward, 'British ' ,135.

1895 and ousted his army from there.¹⁴ The Sofa combatants then turned their attention to the gold rich Kingdom of Gyaman. On the 26th day of April, 1895, the French colonial administrator at Zaranou reported to the Governor of Cote d'Ivoire at Grand Bassam that Samory had occupied Bondoukou (Bonduku), the commercial capital of Gyaman.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman's request to the French for protection did not yield any fruitful results. In desperation of short of arms, he fled to take refuge at Dadiase.¹⁶ Kwabena Afram, the ruler of Suma, a provincial chiefdom of Gyaman went to Cape Coast to request British protection not only against the *Sofa*, but also against Asante, its traditional enemy. In July, 1897, a British military detachment occupied Bondoukou and in September, 1897 decisively defeated Samory. Following his defeat, Samory retreated to Bouna (Buna), a country that lay north of Gyaman. No sooner had the British rescued Gyaman than two French colonial officers namely: - Joseph Clozel, the Colonial Administrator and Lieutenant Lamblin came to Bondoukou with twenty-five soldiers. They informed the chiefs of the French Government's readiness to effectively occupy Gyaman and provide them protection. Kwame Afram, Basarko and Kwaku Kosono who were paramount chiefs of Suma, the Nifa; Gomere, the Akyidom and the Fumassa provincial chiefdoms respectively protested against the French decision because of their earlier disappointment. As a result, the French arrested the three and shot them dead in cold blood at Bondoukou (Bonduku). Anglo-French delimitation treaty was signed in 1893 to delimit the western border of Ghana with Cote d'Ivoire, but the exercise was not carried out until 1899 probably on account of the controversial treaties compounded by Samory's invasion and its resultant instability in Gyaman. On the 14th day of June, 1898, a Convention was signed in Paris between France and Britain for the delimitation of the French possession of Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan and Benin and the British colonies of the Gold Coast, Lagos, as well as other British possessions to the west of the Niger. The Convention at the same time spelt out in clear terms the spheres of influence of the two colonial powers. This Convention placed the western border of the Gold Coast with Cote d'Ivoire on the latitude nine degrees north (9⁰N) at the Black Volta bend to latitude eleven degrees (11⁰N).¹⁷ The Convention came into force in 1899, and divided the traditional Gyaman Kingdom between the British and French spheres. Tordoff reports that following the partition of the Kingdom, the Gyamanhene was located in the French section of the border, while some of his provincial chiefdoms were located in the British section.¹⁸ Henceforth, the two colonial powers established their administrative structures in their spheres and governed the people separately.

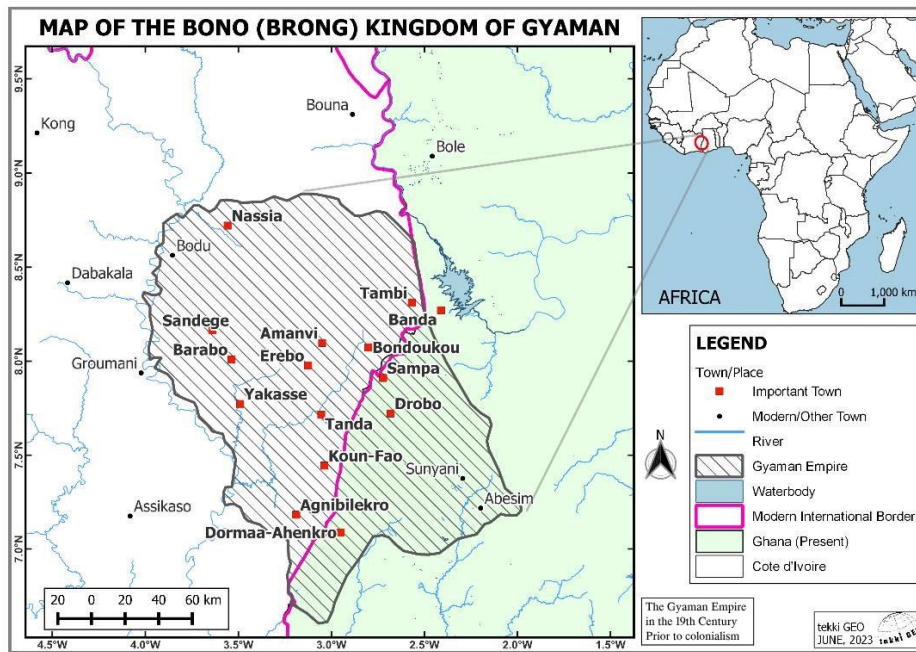
¹⁴ Akbar Muhammad, "Samorian Occupation of Bondoukou, an Indigenous View", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 10, no.2, (1977), 242-58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/217348>, (accessed on 25th July, 2022).

¹⁵ Archives Nationales de Cote d'Ivoire, [hereafter ANCI], 1EE 9 (1), a Letter from the Colonial Administrator to the Governor dated Le 26 Avril, 1897,

¹⁶ Guy Kanga, *La Cote d'Ivoire Par Les Textes de L'aube de la Colonisation a Nos Jours*, (Dakar: Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines, 1978), 75.

¹⁷ ANCI, Abidjan, 1EE 10 (5), Convention Signe a Paris le 14 Juin, 1898 entre la France et la Grande Bretagne.

¹⁸ William Tordoff, *Ashanti under the Prempehs 1888-1935*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 65.



Today, Gyaman people do not live together as they did in the pre-colonial days. They astride the western border of Ghana with Cote d'Ivoire. Asante's defeat by the British in the Sagrenti War 1874 dwindled Asante's power. Consequently, it lost its vassal states to the south of the Pra River. These vassals included: -Akyem, Denkyira, Kwahu, Sefwi, Aowin, Wasa, the Ga and the Fante states. Also, Asante's vassal states to the north and the north-west took advantage of the weakened center to declare their independence. These states included Gonja, Dagbon, Mo, Wenchi, Tachiman, and Gyaman.¹⁹ Mensa Bonsu, the King of Asante (1874-1896) who succeeded the deposed Kofi Karikari wanted to restore Asante to its previous dignity. He launched a program to modernize the Asante army. In this regard, he recruited numerous Hausa into service and by 1879 there were close to four hundred Hausa soldiers to fight for Asante.²⁰ In 1878, Mensa Bonsu sent to tell Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman that the British Government had given Gyaman back to him.²¹ The news took Kwaku Agyeman by surprise, so he sent an envoy to Cape Coast to enquire if that was true. Therefore, the Governor sent emissary to Bondoukou to deny Mensa Bonsu's claim.²² The envoy was also charged to sign a treaty of protection with the Gyaman if they wanted it. Though Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman was inclined to accept the offer, but pressure from the pro-Asante chiefs at his court compelled him to decline it.²³ Kwaku Koosono, also called Papi, the paramount chief of the Benkum province who was the most influential figure among Kwaku Agyeman's Councilors had been enjoying spoils from the Asante wars with other states in which he took part. Kwaku Kosono saw that breaking ties with Asante would not only strike out his chances of enjoying war spoils but also would injure his fame, favour and prestige he was found in the sight of the Asantehene.²⁴ Others who shared his position were Basarko, the paramount chief of the Fumasa (Foumassa) province as well as Kokobo who was intriguing with Asante to have Kwaku Agyeman deposed in his favour.²⁵

¹⁹ Nana James Kwaku Brukum, 'The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast under British Colonial Rule 1897-1956', (PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Toronto, 1997), 47.

²⁰ Ivor Wilks, 'Asante Policy towards the Hausa Trade in the Nineteenth Century', in Claude Meillassoux, ed., *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Market in West Africa*, (Oxford University Press, 1971), 125-141.

²¹ Ward, *History*, 288.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Charles Andre Julien et al, *Les Africains* xii (Paris: Editions j.a., 1990), 262.

²⁵ Julien. *Les Africains*, 263.

The French Treaty with the Gyaman

In 1687, a French mission established itself at Assinie near Ghana's western border. From 1843 onwards, Louis Edouard Bouet-Willaumez, a French Admiral signed treaties with the African states of Grand Bassam, Dabou and Assinie areas to enable him use and control the area as a permanent trading post.²⁶ The Franco-Prussian War, 1871 that culminated in German's annexation of Alsace Lorraine shuttered the French Government's colonial ambition. It withdrew military garrisons it had stationed in the West African trading posts, and put merchants there. In 1878, the French Government motivated Authur Verdier, a shipper from Marseille who was accredited for the establishment of Cote d'Ivoire to take control of the trading posts. The French explored the interior of Cote d'Ivoire in 1886 to establish effective occupation there. The decree of 10th March, 1893 established the French colony of Cote d'Ivoire.²⁷

The British began to feel the pressure of the French and possibly the German from 1884 onwards; consequently, the foremost took a quick action which resulted in the offer of protection to Sefwi and Kwahu around 1888. For fear that the French would forestall them to the North and West, and the Germans to the East as well, the British discarded its policy of non-interference beyond the Pra River as contained in the Treaty of Fomena. They rather took to granting protection to the states of the north-west Asante and metropolitan Asante itself. In 1888, Marcel Treich Laplene, a French explorer concluded protection treaties with the kingdoms of Sefwi (Sanwi), Bettie, Indenie and Yaakase, and the Anyi Bini province of the Gyaman Kingdom, as well.²⁸ Akbar relates that in November, 1888, Laplene proceeded to Bondoukou and concluded a treaty of protection friendship and trade with Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman.²⁹

The British Treaty with the Gyaman

In the early days of 1888, Kofi Dabbie, a royal of Gyaman went to Cape Coast and announced to the Governor that Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman had requested British protection. Governor Brandford Griffith dispatched an emissary led by Inspector Lethbridge of the Gold Coast Police. Lethbridge accompanied by Richard Austin Freeman, an Assistant Colonial Surgeon and Anglo-German Boundary Commissioner of the Gold Coast went to Gyaman for the purpose of signing a treaty of protection with the Gyamanhene.³⁰ The envoy reached Bondoukou in December, 1888. Accusing the envoy of intruding his country, Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman denied knowledge of their invitation and told the Mission to release Kofi Dabbie to him for decapitation for according to the Gyamanhene beheading was the reward for a subversive demeanor. Lethbridge refused to release Kofi Dabbie and explained to Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman that they had understood that the Government of Agyeman was well disposed to the English; therefore, they hoped before leaving, a treaty of friendship between the two countries would be signed. In this regard, Agyeman asked the emissary to stay for a while, so that he talked the matter over with his chiefs; consequently, the envoy retreated to their quarters and stayed till January, 1889 when Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman invited them to a meeting. Agyeman sat in state and flanked by his chiefs and some Wangara Muslims. He then showed the British envoy a copy of the treaty he had signed with the French.³¹ The Gyamanhene explained further to them that though he had signed a treaty with the French and accepted their flag, the treaty to which he was referring was a trade treaty meant to help him have access to the trade route that linked his country to Krinjabo near half Assinie in the southern part of modern Ghana.³²

²⁶ Une Equipe d'enseignants Africains, *Histoire Geographie 3eme*, (Paris :Edition Hatier),32.

²⁷ Guy Cangah et Simon Pierre Ekanza, *La Cote d'Ivoire par Les Textes de Laube de la Colonisation a Nos Jours*, (Dakar: Nouvelles Editions Africaines,1978),122.

²⁸ Julien, *Les Africains*,273.

²⁹ Akbar, 'Dyula Intellectualism,'43.

³⁰ W.E.F., Ward, 'Britain and Ashanti 1874-1896', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, vol. xv, no.2 (1974), 131-164.

³¹ Austin Richard Freeman, *Travel and Life in Ashanti and Jaman*, (Whithall: Archibald Constable and Co., 1898),205.

³² Freeman, *Travel*, 206.

The diversion of Gyaman's trade through Assinie, Krinjabo to Cape Coast was occasioned by Asante's incursions against the British which threatened trade. On this occasion, such influential and powerful chiefs in King Agyeman's Council as Papi the paramount chief of the Akyidom province; Kokobo, the paramount chief of the Sapli province who had turned down the British protection from Asante in 1878, this time agreed to put Gyaman under the British. A protection treaty was then signed between Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman and his Councilors who represented Gyaman on one hand and Colonel Lethbridge and his team who represented the British Government on another hand. Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman was presented with a Union Jack and was informed that the British Government had declared his Kingdom a protectorate. A British flag was hoisted at Bondoukou in a colorful ceremony to mark and seal the pact. But the British Foreign Office accepted the French claim and would not ratify the treaty that Lethbridge signed with the Gyaman. For this reason, the British did not establish police and military posts to protect lives and property as well as to maintain law and order in accordance with the 'principle of effective occupation' enshrined in the Berlin Conference Act. Later, the two colonial powers partitioned Gyaman between each other. This happened because none of the two powers found it possible to claim the whole of Gyaman.³³ Tordoff reports that by the Agreement of the 12 of July, 1893, signed between the two colonial powers in Paris the boundary was drawn leaving Bondoukou, the capital of Gyaman to the French.³⁴ But the boundary was delimited and beacons in 1903 and 1904.³⁵ One section of Gyaman that fell to the British was labeled British Gyaman, while the other section that fell to the French was christened French Gyaman.

Samory Toure's Invasion of Gyaman

Samory Toure³⁶ (1828-1900) was a Muslim cleric, military strategist, founder and leader of the Wassalou Empire whose capital was called Kankan. This was an Islamic empire located in the present day northern and southern regions of Guinea. Ambitious to extend his empire, he moved from the Senegambia area, fought across the Comoe River and eventually attacked Kong, Bouna and Gyaman. The *Sofa*, Samory's army invaded Gyaman in 1895. Available evidence reveals that Samory's invasion was occasioned by economic consideration. He wanted to use and control the trade routes that passed through Gyaman to the Europeans port at the coast.³⁷ Gyaman's military contingent which included some Djula Muslim warriors under the command of Karamako Baba Ali took the offensive against the *Sofa*. Samory won positions west of Bondoukou and later in June, 1895, captured Sanlo, Sangue and Yaakase in the Agni area. Barabo, Kouassibangou, Sogo and Marau, (Marahu). Amanvi, the seat of the Gyaman government fell to the *Sofa*. He garrisoned Sikasoko (now called Sampa) and Duadaso and opened communication with Kumasi. through Berekum.³⁸ As a result of this, Gyamanhene Agyeman requested the assistance of his French "protectors", but the request was turned down. Helpless Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman fled to Dadease, a town located about thirty miles southwest of Bondoukou.

Territorial Re-organization

In 1902, the Crown Colony of Ashanti was administratively divided into two provinces namely the Eastern Province and the Western Province. Ashanti was further divided into districts. The Central District of which the headquarters was located in Kumasi housed Ejisu, Juaben, Bompata Kumawu, Mampon, Nsuta, Agona and Ofinso native authorities; the Northeastern District of which the headquarters was first located at Atebubu and later at Nkoranza comprised Atebubu, Nkoranza, Abeasi and Krachi. The headquarters of the Southern District was also located at Obuasi. This District included Bekwae, Kokofu, Adanse, Manso Nkwanta. The Northwestern District of which the headquarters was first located at Sampa but in 1910 relocated at Odomase included Wenchi, Berekum, Dormaa, Tehiman, Ahafu and Jaman. In 1907 the territorial districts were re-labelled provinces. The Central District was re-named the Central Province, and the Southern District was

³³ PRAAD, Accra, MFA 4/7, Confidential Report from Lord Knutsford, Colonial Secretary to Acting Governor Hodgson of the Gold Coast on the Assinie Boundary, Gyaman and Neighbouring Territories.

³⁴ Tordff, *Ashanti*, 65.

³⁵ PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG 1/2/11/3 British Gyaman.

³⁶ Also spelt Samori Toure or Almamy Samore Latifa Toure.

³⁷ Akbar, 'Dyula Intellectualism', 50.

³⁸ T.C. McCaskie, 'Sakrobondi ne Aberewa: Sie Kwasi and the Witch-Finder in the Akan World', *Transactions of Historical Society in Ghana, New Series*, no.8(2004), 82-135.

also labeled the Southern Province. The Northwestern District was renamed the Northern Province, while the Northeastern District was renamed the Eastern Province.³⁹ A few changes were made and Kumasi, Juaben Mampon, Kumawu, Nsuta, Agona, Ejisu, Bompata, Obogu and Agogo were included in the Central Province. The Northern Province included Banda, Mo, Nkoranza, Abease, Atebubu and Krachi.⁴⁰

In 1913, Ashanti underwent another batch of regional re-arrangements when the four administrative provinces mentioned above were sub-divided into districts. The Central Province was divided into three districts, namely: -the Kumasi District, which included Kumasi as headquarters, Offinso and Agona; the Asante-Akyem District which included Bompata, Juaben Kumawu and Obogu; and the Ejisu District. The Western Province was partitioned into two; the Ahafo District whose headquarters was located at Goaso and the Wenchi District whose headquarters was located at Wenchi.⁴¹ The latter included Techiman, Wenchi and British Gyaman.⁴² When British Gyaman was incorporated in the Wenchi District, the chiefs were opposed to the step but they were told to accept it. As a result of this, Captain Kortright spent much time in 1914 travelling in British Gyaman and reconciling the chiefs to the step taken by the Government.⁴³ The Southern Province and the Northern Province remained intact, except that Atebubu which was formerly in the Northern Province was now included in the Central Province. By 1906 Ashanti had been partitioned into colonial administrative divisions headed by *Amanhene*, Head Chiefs. These divisions were: -the Kumasi Division, Mampon, Juaben, Bekwae, Nsuta, Kokofu, Adansi, Kumawu, Asumeja, Ejisu, Ofinsu, Agona, Wenchi, Mo, Banda, Abeasi, Techiman, Nkoranza, Pamu (Dormaa), Berekum, Jaman.

Local Government Administration in British Gyaman 1901-1936

As early as 1902, three native Divisions had been created in British Gyaman to suit the prescription of the Indirect Rule system. The three were the Pamu (Dormaa)⁴⁴ Division, Berekum Division⁴⁵ and Jaman Division. Each of the three was declared a native authority headed by an *Omanhene*, Head Chief. Before 1936, when the Asante Confederacy was restored, the Jaman Division alone comprised the Drobo, Suma, Kwatwoma, Dwenem, Gyapekrom, Atuna, Nsoko, Seikwa traditional states. The paramount ruler of the Drobo state was the *Omanhene*, Head Chief, appointed by the Government for the Jaman Division.

In 1924, the Government promulgated the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance to define the powers and responsibilities of chiefs in the colony. For effective local government administration, Ashanti was further divided into seven administrative districts. These districts were: Kumasi, Bekwai, Obuasi, Asante-Akyem, Mampon, Wenchi, and the Sunyani.⁴⁶ The administrative officers of the Central Government who operated in Ashanti were hierarchically made up of the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti (CCA) who was stationed in Kumasi, an Assistant Chief Commissioner of Ashanti (ACCA) as well as fourteen District Commissioners (DCs) and Assistant District Commissioners (ADCs). These officers were supported with police force and such

³⁹ Busia, *The Position*, 102.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 103.

⁴¹ Ibid., 104.

⁴² British Gyaman comprised: the Berekum, Pamu, Nsoatre. Odomase, Suma, Kwatwoma, Dwenem, Atuna and Nyame. Nsoko and Seikwa traditional states were though not part of the original Gyaman Kingdom, but were included in British Gyaman for administrative convenience

⁴³ PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG 1/2/11/3, Extract from the Provincial Records Book, Western Province, Ashanti.

⁴⁴ The Wam Pamu Native Authority's geographical jurisdiction covered contemporary Dormaa Traditional Area. It included Wamfie (Mansin) Abesim, Chiraa and Bomaa. Wam Pamu is today called Dormaa Ahenkro, the capital of the current Dormaa state. In this discourse, I refer to a senior chief of a traditional state who was appointed and recognized by the colonial Government and as a 'Head Chief', (*Omanhehe*; plural *Amanhene*) and refer to an ordinary head of a traditional state as a paramount ruler in order to draw a distinction between the two.

⁴⁵ The Berekum Native Authority's geographical jurisdiction covered such traditional states as the Berekum native state itself, Nsoatre, Bechem, Duayaw Nkwanta, Odomasi No1, and Awua Domase, with the Berekumhene as the Head Chief.

⁴⁶ Busiah, *Position*, 102.

technical departments as education, health, agriculture and forestry services decentralized into the seven districts.⁴⁷

Post Asante Confederacy Reforms 1936-1950.

In 1924, Prempeh I was repatriated to Asante from exile in Seychelles and enthroned Kumasihene. The Government decided to restore the Asante Confederacy, a strategy, it was thought would bring lasting peace in Ashanti. The Government had earlier put some native states under their peers to suit the prescription of the Indirect Rule system. This arrangement which contravened pre-colonial Asante's constitution and custom engendered persistent protests from the native states whose sovereignty had been demeaned. Besides, Asante's delusion of a leader did not end the civil wars the way the British had expected. The British were hopeful that peace would prevail when Prempeh I's leadership and the Asante Confederacy were restored. When Prempeh I returned, a fund, code-named Prempeh's Maintenance Fund was established in 1925 to take care of his maintenance. All Divisions in Ashanti contributed money into it.⁴⁸ Before his death, Prempeh I had initiated the restoration of the Asante Confederacy in 1933. When he died, his successor, Osei Agyeman Kyeretwie was installed.⁴⁹ He took the stool name Agyeman Prempeh II. It was he, Agyeman Prempeh II who completed the restoration of the Asante Confederacy. Runing-up to the restoration of the Confederacy, the Government set up a commission of enquiry that was labeled Committee of Privileges. The Committee was charged to determine the pre-colonial constitutional relationship between the traditional states in Ashanti, and correct the irregularities caused by the colonial administrative arrangement that had created unnatural allegiances and the resultant conflicts. The Committee of Privileges was co-chaired by Major F.W.K. Jackson, the CCA and the Asantehene Agyeman Prempeh II. The Committee started its investigation in June, 1935 and ended it in January, 1936. Having investigated the constitutional relationship between traditional states in British Gyaman, the Committee reverted some of the states to their pre-colonial sovereign status. Consequently, Odumase No1, Awua Odumase, Nsoatre, Bechem and Duayaw Nkwanta broke away from the Berekum Division. Suma, Seketia, (Kwatwoma), Atuna, and Dwenem who were member states of the Jaman Division and had been made subservient to Drobo also severed ties with the Drobo state. A challenge to the Drobohene's position as a Head Chief was clouded with controversial claims and counter claims. To settle the storm, the Committee of Privileges requested evidence from the Gyamanhene whose written evidence stated as follows:

- a) Whether the time Suma or Seketia served Jamanhene through Drobo
Reply: Before the French and English occupation, Drobo was placed directly under authority of the king of Gyaman. The inhabitants of Suma were in communication with the King only through a medium of the chief of Songore actually Pinango.
- b) What wing of the Jaman army did Drobo, Suma and Seketia respectively occupy?
Reply: Suma was placed at the right wing of the army. Drobo was occupying the center and ensured at the same time the service of vanguard to the army.
- c) Whether Drobo in olden days had any authority over Suma and Seketia and if so, what authority he had?
Reply: Drobo known under the name Adondenhene held military supremacy.⁵⁰

The above quote alludes to the evidence the Committee of Privileges got from the Gyamanhene on the basis of which it determined the pre-colonial constitutional relationship between the Drobo traditional state and others that the colonial Government placed under it. According to the evidence presented to the Committee, the Drobo state had no constitutional supremacy over the Suma and Seketia states; therefore, the Committee

⁴⁷ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG, 28/8/1, Forestry Dept, 1923-1932, Departments and Institutions, Western Province,

⁴⁸ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 28/2/14, Divisions of Berekum, Dormaa, Techiman, Jaman (Drobo) and others in the Western Province were levied 100 British Pounds annually.

⁴⁹ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 1/2/106 Asante Confederacy.

⁵⁰ Proceeding of the Meetings of Committee of Privileges held on Kumasi from 18th June 1935 to 3rd January, 1936, 205. Seketia refers to the Kwatwoma native state

declared the two independent and detached them from Drobo's hegemony. Dwenem and Atuna also regained their independence from Drobo. Gyapekrom did not present a case to the Committee; therefore, it remained subservient to Drobo.⁵¹

Local Government Re-organization in Asante 1936-1950

By July, 1936, the Asante Confederacy had been restored. The Government passed the Native Authority (Ashanti) Ordinance (Cap 79 of the laws of Gold Coast) that stipulated the powers of the Ashanti chiefs. This Ordinance established additional native Divisions. Henceforth, the Divisions were hierarchically categorized into 'A' 'B', 'C' and 'D'. The Head Chief of the Kumasi Division was the Asantehene himself. Liabilities of the Asante Confederacy was shared according to the hierarchical grading status. A Division was either composed of a single native authority or several native authorities. By 1924 the Crown Colony of Ashanti colony had administratively been divided into seven (7) districts with several native authorities also christened native divisions⁵² and subordinate native authorities.⁵³ The Kumasi native authority alone had several subordinate native authorities.

Native Authorities/Divisions in British Gyaman

The re-organization of local government administration that followed the restoration of the Asante Confederacy created three Divisions and three sub-divisions in British Gyaman. These Divisions were: - Wam Pamu, Berekum and Drobo, which were non-subordinate Divisions. But Suma, Kwatwoma, Nsoatre as well as Odomase No.1 and Awua Odomase were made Sub-divisions of the Kumasi Main Division.⁵⁴ All these Divisions and Sub-divisions were declared native authorities and sub-native authorities respectively. In the new arrangement, Gyapekrom became subservient to Drobo and rose through the ranks from Odikro, Akyidomhene and finally to Akwamuhene. Dwenem, Nyame, Sampa, Atuna, and Bodaa traditional states also became unnatural subjects of the Sumahene.⁵⁵ Under the Native Court Ashanti Ordinance, 1935, Cap 80 of the laws of the Gold Coast, each native Division in British Gyaman had a native court paneled by five members with the *Omanhene*, Head Chief as its president. The native court could handle civil suits, hear criminal cases and impose a fine, imprisonment or both. Furthermore, the court's jurisdiction covered matrimonial cases between spouses married under native law and custom. It could also establish paternity of children. Appeal from the Native Court went to the Magistrate Court located at Wenchi and presided over by the District Commissioner. Further appeal went to the CCA's court located in Kumasi or the Asantehene Court from which further appeal went to the West African Court of Appeal (WACA) whose branch was located in Accra. A further appeal went to the Privy Council in London. Native police force supported the native authorities to keep order. The Sub-Divisions of the Kumasi Division deposited a third of their annual revenue into the Kumasi Division's treasury also labeled Asantehene's treasury and had little to do with the management of the said treasury.⁵⁶

⁵¹ According to Nana Abubakar Osman Aforo, the Gyapekrom state inspired by cordial relationship it had with the Drobo state as a result of dynastic marriage between Takyiwaa Bansua, their queen and ancestress and Sakyiako, the founder of the Drobo state did not break ties with Drobo.

⁵² Kumasi, Bekwae, Nsuta, Mampon, Juaben, Mo, Kokofu, Kumawu, Adanse, Abease, Offinso, Ejisu, Agona, Banda, Wenchi, Nkoranza, Pamu, Drobo, Techiman, Berekum, Atebubu were independent divisions.

⁵³ The Sub-Divisions were: Bompata, Banko, Agogo, Obogu, Bechem, Nkwanta, Kuntunase, Akropon, Duayaw-Nkwanta, Nsoko, Seikwa, Nsoatre, Odomasi, Awua-Domase, Suma, Kwatoma,

⁵⁴ Suma merged with Kwatwoma to form the Suma-Kwatwoma Sub-Division of Kumasi. The presidency of this Sub-Division was observed in yearly rotation between the Sumahene and the Kwatwomahene. Odomase No.1 and Awua Odomase merged but were put under Kumasi. Nsoatre was also put under the Kumasi Division.

⁵⁵ In the Supreme Court of Ghana, Accra/Ghana, Suit No.H1/12/2021, CA.J4/49/2013, The Assemblies of God Church of Ghana (per Rev. Peter Atta) Drobo, Drobo Traditional Council vrs Kwadwo Osei of Kwasiabuokrom, Nana Ampaabeng Kyereme, Volume 1, page 132.

⁵⁶ Tordoff, *Ashanti*, 123.

Constitutional and Local Government Reforms in the Gold Coast, 1951-1959

Before the World War II, Gold Coast elites demanded equal treatment and representation in the colonial government. They assumed nationalistic posture and worked assiduously towards total eradication of social injustice inherent in the colonial administration; nevertheless, after World War II nationalism took a different turn. Gold Coast nationalists were fed up with denial of the Government to accord them a say in the administration of their own mother land. The elites formed the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) in August, 1947 at Saltpond. It was the first political party of the Gold Coast. The UGCC demanded negotiable independence.⁵⁷ But Kwame Nkrumah thought of other leading members of the party conservative, whereas they in return saw Nkrumah radical and revolutionary. There arose mutual suspicion between them and in 1949, Nkrumah broke away to form the Convention People's Party, (CPP).⁵⁸ Nkrumah became the leader of the CPP,⁵⁹ the first political party to win majority seats in 1951, 1954 and 1956 elections that sailed Ghana to independence in 1957.

In 1948, there was a general riot in the principal towns of the country. The riot was occasioned by the shooting and killing of Sergeant Adjetey, Corporal Atipoe and one other who were leading the ex-service men to the Governor to press home a demand for better remuneration. Government's decision to cut down cocoa trees which were infected by the swollen shoot disease added to the grievances of the people. General disturbances hit the country, and so the Government set up the Watson Commission to investigate the root cause of the disturbances. The three-member Commission blamed the disturbances on the Government for it failed to give the people a real say in the government as stipulated in the Burns Constitution of 1946. Other causes of the disturbances as the Watson Commission enumerated were: European and expatriate dominance and monopoly of commerce, shortage of such essential commodities as soap, and other imported goods. The destruction of cocoa trees infected by the swollen shoot disease was among their grievances.⁶⁰ Also added to the plight of the Gold Coasters (now Ghanaians) was a fall in the producer-price of cocoa after the World War II. This infuriated farmers to hold up the sale of the beans and to form union schemes for marketing and shipping the cocoa themselves.⁶¹ The Watson Commission recommended that a new constitution be drawn to give the people a say in the Government. In response to the recommendations of the Commission, Sir Gerald Creasy set up a thirty-nine-member committee chaired by Justice Henley Coussey in January, 1949. In October, 1949, the Coussey Committee submitted its report, which recommended among other things the establishment of either a unicameral or bicameral legislature of British style with an executive council responsible to the Governor.⁶² It further recommended a new system of regional and local government.⁶³ The Local Council Ordinance was promulgated in 1951 in accordance with the recommendations of the Coussey Committee. The Committee had stressed that modern changes required more complex method of administration whose conditions that the then system could not meet.⁶⁴ As a result, a local government ordinance that was passed in 1951. The ordinance replaced the native administration units with local council units whose members were democratically elected. By 1956, 238 local council units, 26 district councils and 14 urban councils had been established.⁶⁵ Colonial designations also changed. Hence, the Native Division was renamed Native State, while

⁵⁷ Leading members of the UGCC were George Grant, Chairman; J. B. Danqua and RS Blay, Chairman; RS Awoonor Williams, Treasurer. Others were: Edward Akuffo Addo, Kobina Kesse of Kumasi; William Ofori Atta of Kyebi; J W de Graft Johnson, (a retired civil servant in the colonial administration) and E. Obetsebi-Lamptey

⁵⁸ Denis, I. Cohen, "The Convention People's Party of Ghana; Representational or Solidarity Party?", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, .4, no.2 (1970),173-94.

⁵⁹ Other leading members of the Convention People's Party were: A. K. Gbedema, Kojo Botsio, Dzekle Dzewu, Kwamina Welbeck, Krobo Adusei, Pobi Biney, Nana Kobina Nketsia, chief of Esikado-Sekondi.

⁶⁰ A.A., Boahen, *Ghana Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth, Century*, (London:Longman,1975),163-165.

⁶¹ Dennis Austin, "The Working Committee of the United Gold Coast Convention' *The Journal of African History*, .2, no.2(1961),273-297.

⁶² Hargreaves, *Decolonization*,125.

⁶³ Prah, *Government*, 389.

⁶⁴ J.K., Nsarko, *Local Government in Ghana*, (Accra: University Press,1964),8.

⁶⁵ Nsarko, *Local*,10.

the Divisional Council was re-titled State Council. The Chief Commissioner of Ashanti and the District Commissioner were also renamed the Chief Regional Officer and the District Government Agent respectively.

Problems with Local Government Reforms

The British created a pattern of unnatural allegiance to suit the prescription of the indirect rule system. Traditional states which had been put under others for colonial administrative reasons took advantage of the local government reforms to press home a demand for independence. The demands sometimes culminated into violent secessionist protests.

The Gyapekrom Secessionist Agitation

Gyapekrom, a provincial state of the Gyaman kingdom raised the curtain of secession. The constitutional re-arrangement that followed the work of the Committee of Privileges put the Gyapekrom state under Drobo. Gyapekrom remained an integral part of the Drobo native state; however, in 1942, a dispute of constitutional nature arose between the Drobo and Gyapekrom traditional states.⁶⁶ Kofi Bosea III the Head Chief of the Drobo state was noted for treating the Gyapekrom chiefs, his unnatural subjects with contempt by hurling insults at them at meetings. Besides, the sharing of liabilities of the Drobo state was done to the cheat of the Gyapekrom people. These abuses inflamed hatred of Kwasi Kyeremeh, the paramount ruler of the Gyapekrom state for Drobo. As a result of this, Kwasi Kyereme appealed to the CCA to revert Gyapekrom to its pre-colonial independent status. In 1942, Major Jackson, the CCA and Asantehene Prempeh II set up the Committee of Enquiry chaired by Neil Ross, the District Commissioner of the Wenchi District. Other members of the Committee were Nana Fosu Gyeabour, the Bechemhene, and Okyeame Boaben, the Asantehene's linguist. The Committee's terms of reference were to investigate the causes of Gyapekrom's quest to break away from the Drobo state and give appropriate recommendations. The Committee learnt that Gyapekrom's expression of a sense of identity and secession was triggered off by the Drobohene's arbitrary rule and contemptuous attitude towards his subjects in general. Nevertheless, it did not approve Gyapekrom's desire to sever ties with Drobo. A decision that was taken by consensus was that arrangement would be made to meet the complaint of Gyapekrom chiefs that they had to walk to attend meetings at Old Drobo, the seat of the Head Chief, *Omanhene* of Drobo that was situated at a twenty-six-mile distance apart. The parties in dispute agreed unanimously that the headquarters of the Drobo native state be relocated at a place near Gyapekrom. Neil Ross made reference to this decision saying:

It is essential that the Drobo Division should have a more convenient center as its headquarters...For some years attempts have been made to transfer the Drobohene's court to near Japekrom. This has always been defeated through the jealousy of Japekrom people...After several meetings and a great deal of coaxing, I succeeded in getting the people assist in clearing a land near Japekrom. The Japekromhene had to be persuaded to play his part in the building of a new court house and offices. If he did not help in this building, it is likely that other Elders would not be keen to contribute their share. I am glad to report that the building of a new court has now commenced.⁶⁷

Neil Ross' statement clearly indicates that the relocation of the headquarters of the Drobo native state to a place near Gyapekrom was the Government's decision aimed at containing the secession agitators. The Government feared that if Gyapekrom seceded, the Drobo state would disrupt, a situation the Government could not afford. Neil Ross revealed this in his words as follows:

... it was a common knowledge that Kwaku Nketia was working in conjunction with Japekromhene who in February, 1942 attempted to break away from the Drobo state. If this had been successful the Drobo Oman would have been completely disrupted.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ PRAAD, ARG 1/2/14.Drobo Native Affairs.

⁶⁷ PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG 1/2/14 Drobo Native Affairs,1942-1945, Kumasi Neil Ross' letter of 20th October,1942, No915/70/73.

⁶⁸ MAG, Kumasi, Adm. RAO 2/14 Drobo Native Affairs, Neil Ross' letter to the CCA, dated 24th March,1942, No.248/70/37, Kumasi.Kwaku Nketia mentioned in the quote was a deposed Omanhene of Drobo who hailed

Gyapekrom traditions relate that Kofi Bosea, the Head Chief of the Drobo native state paid tribute in kind with three bottles of Schnapps (a type of alcoholic beverage) to Gyapekromhene Kwasi Kyeremeh to be given a five-acre piece of land where the New Drobo township was established to accommodate the headquarters of the Drobo native state. The Gyapekromhene and his Elders paid a third (1/3) of the total cost of the Drobo native court house. The Government failed to address the concern the Gyapekromhene raised to the effect that the sharing of the cost of the project was done to the cheat of the Gyapekrom traditional state. In response to their complaint, Neil Ross, the District Commissioner said:

It is alleged that the Gyapekromhene was given a third of the spit fire contribution to pay. This does not appear unreasonable considering the size and comparatively wealthier position of Gyapekrom.⁶⁹

When the Gyapekrom people failed in their attempt to break away from the Drobo state, they hatched a conspiracy to remove Kofi Bosea. The Kwasi Kyeremeh-led plot attracted several conspirators.⁷⁰ They leveled charges of arbitrariness against the Drobohene and petitioned the CCA to destool him. Pending a response to their petition, the malcontents hurriedly declared Kofi Bosea destooled in 1946. Chaotic situation which followed his destoolment invited A.C. Russel, the District Commissioner's intervention. Later, the malcontents were arrested and detained at Wenchi. Subsequently, a state of emergency was imposed on Gyapekrom, Katakryiekrom, and Kwasibuokrom. These towns were also declared 'Peace Preservation Areas.' Fire arms were ceased and part of the Gyapekrom town was burnt down to ashes by the Government's police.⁷¹

When the malcontents were released from custody, they petitioned Edward Gerald Hawkesworth, the CCA to grant them permission to elect a new *Omanhene*, Head Chief. The Committee of Enquiry that was set up to investigate the petition acquitted and discharged Kofi Bosea on the 1st of April 1946. Subsequently, the Government compelled the conspirators to renew their allegiance to him.⁷² In accordance with the Peace Preservation Ordinance Cap. 40 of the laws of the Gold Coast, the Government imposed the cost of peace preservation on the three towns.⁷³ Gyapekrom did not relent in its quest to secede from the Drobo state. Secession agitation which started in 1942 periodically renewed till 1959. In addition to Kofi Bosea's misrule, there were other reasons which inspired Gyapekrom's attempt to break away from the Drobo state. This was revealed in the words of The District Commissioner as follows:

The rest of the Drobo Division obtains little wealth from cocoa and the tendency has been for the population to drift to the neighborhood of Gyapekrom where there is more money to be had. It is probable that one of the reasons for Gyapekrom people attempting to gain independence is the fact that they enjoy a superior economic position to the rest of Drobo and feel annoyed at having to provide financial support to a stool in whose affairs they have minor influence by native custom.⁷⁴

from Abrikasu. Unhealed by his deposition wounds, he allied with Gyapekrom in its attempt to secede from Drobo.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰ Other chiefs who joined the conspiracy were: Yaw Bediako, the Krontihene of Drobo; Kwasi Adjei of Jejemreja and the Nifahene of Drobo; Kwadwo Faka, the Odikro of Kwasibuokrom; Kofi Kwan, the Odikro of Mpuasu; Kwadwo Kese, the Odikro of Kwankrom, Kwaku Dapaa of Katakryiekrom, Yaw Gyamfi of Dodosuo; Kofi Tano of Kwameseikrom.

⁷¹ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 1/2/14. Vol.2, Drobo Native Affairs.

⁷² PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG.1/2/14.vol.2 Asantehene's letter submitted to the CCA dated March,1946, No.120/248/3.

⁷³ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG,1/2/14, Drobo Native Affairs, Colonial Secretary's letter to the CCA.18th September,1946.

⁷⁴ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG,1/2/14, Drobo Native Affairs a letter from the District Commissioner, Wenchi to the CCA, dated 24th March,1942. No.288/70/37.

We learn from the above quote that the remote factor that enthused Gyapekrom to assert its independence was mainly economic pride. If the Drobo royals had amended the custom and constitution of the Drobo state to pave the way for incorporating Gyapekrom into the ruling dynasty of the Sakyiako Stool, or elevated it to a more honorable position than the Akwamu its allegiance to the Drobo state would have been sustained.

The Brong Kyempem Federation

In March 1951, a Brong political movement called the Brong Kyempem Federation was started by the Head Chiefs, *Amanhene* of some traditional states⁷⁵ in the Western Province of Ashanti.⁷⁶ The Federation as spelt out in its constitution was to redeem the Brong people from want, ignorance and tribal inferiority.⁷⁷ The first factor which triggered off the strong expression of Brong sense of identity was the abuses suffered in the hands of the Asante in the latter's historical relationship with the Brong states. The Ahafo and the tribes lying north-east of Asante were not ethnically related to the Brong, but they joined the movement by convenience because they suffered same abuses. The second factor was failure of the Committee of Privileges to return to the Techimanhene some nine villages within the Subin valley in the region of Techiman which Asantehene Opoku Ware I conquered and put under various clan chiefs of Kumasihene. Akumfi Ameyaw III, the Head Chief of the Techiman traditional state felt bitter after failing to have the decision of the Committee reversed through unsuccessful legal battles.⁷⁸

In 1948, Akumfi Ameyaw III pulled out from the Asante Confederacy and succeeded in convincing the states of Tanoboasi, Ofuman, and Tuobodom to break away from the Asante Confederacy and join the Techiman traditional state. Agyeman Badu I of Dormaa and Kofi Bosea III of Drobo also initiated hostilities against the Manhyia Government.⁷⁹ Other chiefs followed suit and by March, 1951, a Brong Kyempem Federation had been formed as a body distinct and separate from the Asante Confederacy or the Asanteman Council.⁸⁰ The Brong Kyempem Federation approached the Government for recognition; consequently, in response to the Federation's demand, the Government set up a committee of inquiry chaired by Nene Azu Mate Kole, Konor of Manya Krobo. The Mate Korle Committee was charged to investigate the differences between the Brong chiefs and Asante. The Committee found out that the rift was of customary and constitutional nature. The Head Chiefs, of the Brong states were treated as second class members of the Asante Confederacy. They swore oath of allegiance to the Asantehene which involved placing the Asantehene's foot on the head of the swearing chief.⁸¹ The ritual stroke at the dignity of the Brong chiefs and was a source of political instability in the institution of chieftaincy in the Dormaa state. Moreover, they were disappointed with the paucity or in some cases complete absence of Brong representation on the various sub-committees of the Asante Confederacy, and pointed at the Scholarship Selection Board as a case in point. The Brong Chiefs bemoaned the change of name from Asante Confederacy to Asanteman Council since they held that they were not Asantes by ethnicity. Additionally, some of the chiefs submitted that the Asantehene's Courts operated to their cheat.⁸² The Dormaa state was so much incensed by the ritual associated with swearing of the oath of allegiance and was the major reason for its attempt to secede from

⁷⁵ The Head Chiefs were: Akumfi Ameyaw III, Techiman state; Agyeman Badu I, Dormaa state; Kwame Agyeman, Abease; Kofi Bosea Gynantwi III, Drobo; Kwaku Kwaa, Atebubu; Kwasi Apraku, Domase No1; Kwame Wusu, Amanten; Kwaku Gyamfi, Techiman-Ahyiyem.

⁷⁶ The Western Province comprised the contemporary Bono, Bono East, and Ahafo regions.

⁷⁷ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 1/2/104, Brong Kyempem Federation.

⁷⁸ The nine villages included: Tuobodom, Tano Boasi, Tanoso, Nchiraa, Buoyam, Ofuman No1, Ofuman No2, Branam, Nwoase and Subinso

⁷⁹ Manhyia is the seat of the Asante government; it is located in Kumasi.

⁸⁰ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 1/2/104, Brong Kyempem Federation. Other chiefs were Kwame Agyeman of Abease, Kwaku Kwaa of Atebubu, Kwasi Apraku of Domasi No.1, Kwame Wusu of Amanten, Kwaku Gyamfi of Ahyiyem.

⁸¹ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 1/2/58. Statement of Grievances by the Dormaa State in Relation to the Ashanti Confederacy now Styled Asanteman Showing why Dormaa Cannot be a member.

⁸² PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 1/2/104, Statement of Grievances of the Drobo State in Relation to Ashanti Confederacy Now Converted to Asanteman Council Verifying why Drobo State Has withdrawn their Allegiance from Asanteman and Would not be a Member Any More.

the Asante Confederacy. This was disclosed in paragraph three of the statement of grievances the Brong chiefs submitted to the Regional Government Agent (formerly Chief Commissioner of Asante) in January, 1951 as follows:

- in particular the mode of swearing oath of allegiance by placing the Asantehene's foot on the head of the chief taking the oath has been assigned to be the principal cause of the Dormaa chieftaincy becoming unstable. Every chief who swears that kind of oath being eventually despised by his people and deposed. The Dormaa state does not feel that this custom can be continued longer without reducing the security of the state.⁸³

The Brong separatist group continued to press home their demand for a new geo-political region that would be independent from Ashanti. The C.P.P. Government heeded to their demand and by 1959, the Brong Ahafo region had been carved out of Ashanti.⁸⁴ The Brong Kyempem Federation ceased to exist after the creation of the region and the Brong Ahafo Regional House of Chiefs, a body similar to the Asanteman Council replaced it.

In 1951, the constitutional and local government reform that took place in the Gold Coast relegated to the background the role of chiefs in local governance. Committees of Administration composed purely of government agents provisionally performed the functions of the native authorities. Divisional Councils were re-labeled State Councils, while local councils replaced native authorities. A local government administration unit which was previously controlled and manned by traditional rulers was managed by a fifteen-member local council, ten of whom were elected by the people, while the remaining five members were appointed from among the members of the State Council. The Head Chief of the traditional state retained his status as president of the local council. Western democratic style gradually replaced the conservative style of local governance controlled absolutely by traditional rulers. Traditional states in British Gyaman which did not present their cases before the Committee of Privileges in order to gain independence later realized their mistake and fought relentlessly to gain sovereignty and government recognition. They were optimistic that by gaining independence, their traditional states would attract public goods.

Gyapekromhene Kofi Takyi like Kwasi Kyereme, his predecessor pressed home a demand for independence and government recognition for the Gyapekrom state. Accordingly, he petitioned the Brong-Ahafo House of Chiefs. As a result, a Committee of Inquiry composed of Nana Akumifi Ameyaw III, the Omanhene of the Techiman state; Nana Kofi Boamah, the Yamfohene; Mr. Jacob Baah and Mr. P. K. Yeboa (Secretary) was set up and charged to investigate Gyapekrom's constitutional relationship with the Drobo state. Kofi Takyi argued that during the pre-colonial time, Gyapekrom was not sub-servient to Drobo, but rather to the Gyamanhene who was located in Cote d'Ivoire following the Anglo-French partition of the original Gyaman Kingdom. He further argued that Gyapekrom was a provincial state of the Gyaman Kingdom and its ruler occupied the Abakoma stool of Gyaman. He stated further that the cordial relationship between Gyapekrom and Drobo was inspired by dynastic marriage between Queen Takyiwaa Bansua, an ancestress of the Gyapekrom ruling dynasty and an ex-Omanhene of Drobo. He also opined that the arrangement that put Gyapekrom under Drobo was done for the purpose of colonial administrative convenience. To ascertain the truth in Gyapekrom's claim, the Committee invited the Gyamanhene's evidence which stipulated as follows:

That I am the head of the Brongs (Gyaman) and I seize the opportunity with great delight to reconstruct the traditional positions of the two chiefs in order that you come to a final conclusion on this vital issue. That the truth I know is that Japekromhene and his elders who are known as Mpuasu were direct royals of Jamanhene Agyeman Panin when the Drobos who met them from Droboso in the Wenchi area. That the Drobohene with his Elders and subjects later settled at old Drobo that time, the Japekromhene and his subjects had already settled under the mountains now known as Mpuasu. That

⁸³PRAAD, Sunyani BRG.1/2/58, Dormaa Native Affairs of Grievance of the Dormaa state in relation to the Asante Confederacy, now styled Asanteman Council showing why the Dormaa state cannot be a member.

⁸⁴ PRAAD, Accra, ADM,4/1/265 Brong Ahafo Region Act, 1959, No.18 of 1959.

to my knowledge and belief the Japekromhene and his subjects were royals. They were not in any way put under the Drobo stool.⁸⁵

On the basis of Gyamanhene's evidence, the Committee passed judgment in favour of Gyapekrom. Henceforth, it broke away from the Drobo state and reverted to its previous independent status .

Kofi Bosea III's misrule was extended beyond the borders of his Drobo state. He claimed ownership of a parcel of land on which the villages of Buobunu, Abrikasu, Konsia, Ampenkro and Asempaneye (Komfokrom) were situated. Additionally, he extracted tribute from farmers in those villages. In 1947, Kwame Ntow, the Atunahene challenged Kofi Bosea's claim of ownership of the land at the Asantehene Court 'A'.⁸⁶ On the first count, Kwame Ntow, the plaintiff claimed title to the land on which the villages mentioned above were situated. Secondly, he claimed an injunction restraining the Drobohene, the defendant from collecting tributes from the people. On the third count, the plaintiff claimed an order which sought to compel the defendant to deposit into the Kumasi Division's treasury all monies collected as tribute. The hearing was adjourned severally as result of the Drobohene's failure to present his witnesses. On the 16th of September, 1950, when the Court sat again, the Drobohene gave further excuse that the Gyamanhene, his principal witness could not appear in court on account of his Yam festival. However, he could not advance any realistic reason why his other witnesses did not come to testify. For this reason, the court decided not to adjourn the case. Based on the available evidence, it ruled for Atunahene Kwame Ntow. His victory inspired him to review the tribute imposed on non-natives who farmed on Atuna lands. The Court's decision became a source of worry for the Drobohene. This inspired him to initiate hostilities against Manhyia culminating in his desertion from the Asanteman Council in March, 1951 to join the Brong Kyempim separatist movement.⁸⁷ On the 13th of July 1951, Kwabena Afram, the Head Chief of the Suma state, acting on behalf of Atunahene Kwame Ntow, his wing chief wrote to notify all "foreigners" who were farming in Atuna's territory to pay cocoa tribute. The directive was contained in a letter he wrote in which he stated the following:

I am hereby serving you this final notice for and on behalf of Nana Atunahene, my wing chief to notify you that effective 1st September, 1951. I will start to collect cocoa tribute from all you who are having cocoa farm on Atuna stool land within my jurisdiction. That in relation with the land dispute in Asantehene's Court 'A' for which judgment was entered on behalf of Nana Atunahene on the 16th day of September, 1950. That also striking out your motion in the land Court in Kumasi dated 2nd day of April 1951, respectively without waiting any time, the only step to be taken is to proceed to collect the cocoa tribute. Kindly take it to final notice.⁸⁸

Secession Agitation in the Suma-Kwatwoma Division

Between 1951 and 1959, the Suma-Kwatwoma Division experienced two secession protests. The Sampa agitators were the first to raise the curtain.⁸⁹ The Sampa people were a section of the ethnic Nafana population that astride the Ghana-Cote d'Ivoire boundary.⁹⁰ The Sampa migrated from Kakala, a place now located in Cote d'Ivoire to their present location. They were invited by the Gyamera, their kins to militarily confront the Korolosa who had been invading the Gyamera in a series of military confrontations. The Sampa military expedition succeeded in ousting the Korolosa from the Gyamera country. After the victory, a section of them

⁸⁵ MAG, Kumasi, Adm, RAO.2/16, Drobo Native Affairs, Gyamanhene's letter to the Committee of Enquiry.

⁸⁶ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 1/2/52. Suma Native Affairs.

⁸⁷ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 1/2/104. Paragraph Four of Statement of Grievances of the Drobo State presented to the Chief Regional Officer.

⁸⁸ Suma Palace Archives, papers.

⁸⁹ The original name was Sangba, which was corrupted to Sampa.

⁹⁰ Information obtained from Nana Kwame Lauphea, the Abakomahene of the Sampa Traditional Area on 11th April, 2003 at Sampa. He confirmed the tradition that the correct name of the Kakala military mercenaries was Sangba. They named their settlement same which was corrupted to Sampa. The place was also called Sikasoko on account of gold trade that took place there.

dispersed to the northeast direction where they carved out the Banda state. Finding it difficult to pay the ransom in gold to the Sampa mercenaries as initially agreed upon, the Gyamera rewarded the former with a stretch of land on which they carved the Nafana state of Sampa. Others dispersed across the Gyamera land to carve states for themselves. At the peak of its glory, Sampa shared boundaries with Gyamera and Koti at the Bete River, with Debibi at the Kojo River, with Kokoan at the Kuor River. Later, the Suma who closed in from Akwamu invaded the Koti, and subsequently carved the Suma traditional state that shared boundary with Sampa. The Suma and Sampa states established a non-aggression pact that was cemented by dynastic marriage. A version of the traditions relate that the paramount ruler of the Suma state married a woman from the Sampa royal house. The union bore Kofi Sono, who later became a paramount ruler of the Sampa traditional state. Later, colonial administrative arrangement integrated Gyamera and Sampa into the Suma state as unnatural subjects.⁹¹

The Sampa township became an important trading center and by 1906, was the headquarters of the Western province. In 1913, the Western Province was divided into two Sub-districts: -the Wenchi Sub-district which comprised British Gyaman and Techiman with the headquarters at Wenchi and the Ahafo Sub-district. The latter included: all traditional states in the contemporary Ahafo region with the headquarters at Goaso. As a result, the Government changed site of the Wenchi district capital to Odomase, near Sunyani and later to Wenchi. Sampa's economic prosperity encouraged Kwaku Konadu, the Head Chief of the Suma state to change the site of the traditional capital from Nweneme (now Suma-Ahenkro) to Sampa in 1948. Kwaku Konadu was a tactful statesman who feared that Sampa's economic prosperity would one day motivate it to break away from the Suma state. This thinking enthused Kwaku Konadu to take this decision aimed at curtailing potential secession protest of the Sampa people, which he feared could disrupt the Suma state.⁹² Traditions relate that Kwaku Konadu known as Asi Kwaku in his private life acquired a piece of land at Sampa to construct a palace. Konadu was deposed when the project was about to be completed.⁹³ Kwabena Afram (also called Kwabena Nkyibena in his private life) who succeeded Kwaku Konadu was also deposed for attempting to continue the palace project.⁹⁴ Why were the two Head Chiefs of the Suma traditional state deposed? Available evidence revealed that the transfer of the traditional headquarters of the Suma state to Sampa offended a larger section of Kwaku Konadu's Councilors, who imbued with ethnic sentimentality accused him of transferring their pride of supremacy to an inferior race. They preferred charges against him, removed him from office, and abrogated the palace project. Kwabena Afram, his successor also suffered the same fate when he attempted to complete the palace project. This palpable disparagement of tribal sentimentality of the Brong section of the Suma state became a source of the Sampa secession protest.

In 1952, Nana Samodua I, the paramount ruler of the Nafana State of Sampa made an effort to break away from the Suma state. He gathered a section of the Nafana people behind him and pressed home a demand for government's recognition of the Nafana State of Sampa.⁹⁵ The bitterness of the circumstances that surrounded Kwaku Konadu's removal from office stimulated the Samodua-led secession protest. However, a dispute between two villages: - Duadaso I, and Duadaso II exacerbated it. A case between the two villages was brought before Samodua I for adjudication and Duadaso I emerged victorious. Feeling aggrieved, the village head, *Odekro* of Duadaso II, who lost the case filed an appeal at the Suma Native Court and the verdict was over turned in his favour. Later, the Sumahene claimed overlordship over the Sampa state and title to all the lands belonging to it. This triggered off land litigation between Suma and Sampa which was contested at the Asantehene's Court 'A'. Sampa did not only win the case at the said court, but also won a subsequent appeal at the West African Court of Appeal (WACA). Henceforth, Nana Samodua I, the Sampahene assembled a

⁹¹ Information obtained from Nana Sie Kwasi, the Gyaasehene of Sampa on the 11th of April, 2023.

⁹² PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG.1/20/79, a letter from Chiefs of Sampa to the Minister of Local Government through Asantehene dated 24th July, 1952, Suma Native Affairs.

⁹³ Information obtained from Mr. Adama at Sampa on 11th, April, 2003.

⁹⁴ PRAAD, Sunyani BRG 1/20/79 Suma Native Affairs.

⁹⁵ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 1/20/79, Suma Native Affairs, a letter from Sampa chiefs dated 24th July 1952, addressed to Otumfo the Asantehene. Samodua succeeded in convincing the states of Duadaso No1, Duadaso No.2, Kokoan, Kabire, Gyamera No.1, Gyamera No.2, Bonakire, Adadiem, Gyinini, Soboo, Sabuasi and Buko.,

section of the Nafana people⁹⁶ and declared a Sampa-Fantra state independent of and separate from the Suma state.⁹⁷ On the 24th of July, 1952, Samodua I and his wing chiefs wrote to the Chief Regional Officer (CRO) and the Minister of Local Government through the Asantehene for recognition. They also demanded government assistance for the establishment of a separate local council and court. The Sampa Improvement Association (SIA) confederated with the chiefs in the hostilities and used ethnicity to rally mass following of the Nafana (Fantra) people. The leaders of the SIA⁹⁸ argued that the Nafana were historically, linguistically and culturally distinct from the Brong segment of the Suma state. This message carried in their campaign incensed the Nafana and magnified the hostility.

Proposition for the Suma-Kwatwoma Local Council

On the 4th day of June, 1953, the Government proposed an instrument to establish the Suma-Kwatwoma Local Council whose offices would be located between Sampa and Nweneme (now Suma Ahenkro).⁹⁹ The Council's geo-political jurisdiction would cover the area of the Suma-Kwatwoma Native Authority including the "Drobo islands" of Old Drobo, Dawiri, Ponko, Amanfoso and Korase. It was also proposed that the Council would have six traditional members to be selected from the Suma-Kwatwoma State Council and the "Drobo Islands"; while ten would be elected to represent the ten Wards. The Head Chiefs of the Suma and Kwatwoma traditional states would preside over the Council in a yearly rotation. The Council would exercise all those powers, duties and functions exercised by the Suma-Kwatwoma native authority.¹⁰⁰

Samodua I objected to certain interpretations contained in the proposed instrument; therefore, the elders and he recommended that the name of the Council be Fantra-Suma Local Council to reflect the ethnic composition of the Council. Besides, they disagreed to the siting of the offices of the Council at Suma Ahenkro and proposed Sampa as its location. They also objected to the presidency of the Council as spelt out in the instrument and suggested same to be observed in annual rotation between the Sumahene and the Sampahene where the former would represent the Bron, while the latter would represent the Fantra.¹⁰¹ In the midst of this controversy, the proposed instrument was suspended and the Committee of Administration continued to operate in place of the Suma-Kwatwoma native authority.

The Awasu Confederacy Local Council

In 1951, Yaw Bene, the paramount ruler of the Dwenem state assembled some sixteen heads of villages, *Adikrofo* drawn from among the members of the Drobo Division and the Suma-Kwatwoma Division. Yaw Bene succeeded in convincing them to form a coalition and press home a demand for a local government unit. The coalition was named the Awasu Confederacy whose headquarters was located at Dwenem.¹⁰² The paramount ruler of Dwenem traditional state presided over the Confederacy as an Ohene-in-Council. In 1952, the Confederacy appealed to the Government not only for recognition, but also for a local council unit to be christened the Awasu-Dwenem Local Council. M. J. E. Paterson, the Government Agent of the Suyani-Wenchi District reported that the Dwenem people had grown relatively more prosperous than their neighbors

⁹⁶ PRAAD, Sunyani BRG 1/20/79, Suma Local Council This section was composed of the Nafana of Sampa, Duadaso No.1 Duadaso No.2, Kokoa, Kabire, Bonakire, Adadiem, Buko, Sobo, Sabuasi and a section of the Gyamera people,

⁹⁷ The Nafana were also called the Fantra by the Brong speaking people.

⁹⁸ The leaders of the Sampa Improvement Association were: Joseph Kra, president; Ebenezer Kwofi, Secretary; Emmanuel Essie, Financial Secretary.

⁹⁹ Suma Ahenkro appears on colonial records as Nweneme

¹⁰⁰ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG1/20/79, Suma-Kwatwoma Local Council Proposed Instrument, June 4, 1953.

¹⁰¹ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG1/20/79, a letter from Sampahene, President of Fantra Division dated 30th July, 1954 addressed to the Minister of Local Government, Accra through the Chief Regional Officer, Kumasi, Ashanti, captioned Proposal and Recommendation made by Nana Sampahene, President of the Fantra Division in respect of the Instrument establishing the Suma-Kwatwoma Local Council.

¹⁰² PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 1/2/53, a letter from Dwenemhene Yaw Bene and others dated 1st October, 1951 addressed to the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti. Member states of the Awasu Confederacy were: Dwenem, Sebreni, Baanafo, Atuna, Bodaa, Konsia, Nyamefie, Batea, Buobunu, Ntabene, Sisikro/Ankaase, Mem, Ntabene, Kwameprakrom, Dodosuo, Korase, Baano and Broboni

out of the cocoa industry and felt annoyed to once again be subordinate to either Drobo or Suma.¹⁰³ In the meantime, the Government withheld the appeal of the Awasu Confederacy.

Proposition for the Jaman Local Council

Wanting to contain the secession resentment that had made local government re-organization problematic, the Government promulgated the Jaman Local Council Instrument scheduled to come to force on the 1st day of October, 1953. The instrument would establish a Jaman Local Council whose area of authority would cover Drobo, Suma, Sampa-Fantra, Kwatwoma and Dwenem traditional states. The presidency of the Council would be observed in yearly rotation between the Drobohene and the Sumahene. On the 22nd day of October, 1953, P.W.C. Dennis, the Government Agent of the Wenchi-Sunyani District organized a public enquiry to know the people's preparedness for the schedules spelt out in the proposed instrument.

The Head Chief of Drobo disagreed sharing the presidency with the Head Chief of Suma. Additionally, he objected to the large representation of the Suma state on the schedule. The Fantra secession agitators also denounced joining the Council under Suma's overlordship, whereas the Awasu group rejected the proposal and demanded their own local council unit. In the midst of the disagreement, the draft instrument was annulled.

The Awasu confederated states persistently pressed home their demand for an independent local council unit and on the 15th day of June, 1956, a draft Instrument for the establishment of Awasu-Dwenem Local Council was promulgated. On the 21st of August, 1956, Paterson, the district colonial officer led a five-member committee to conduct a public enquiry at Dwenem, New Drobo and Suma-Ahenkro to seek public opinion on the proposed Awasu-Dwenem Local Council. Drobo and Suma strongly opposed the establishment of the Council. They contended that since the inauguration of the British colonial rule in British Gyaman, the Dwenemhene had always been subordinate to either Drobo or Suma. Besides, he did not own any parcel of land apart from the one on which the Dwenem township was located. They added that the towns forming the Awasu Confederacy were either drawn from the Drobo or Suma traditional states. According to those who opposed Government's recognition of the Awasu Confederacy and the creation of the Awasu-Dwenem Local Council, implementing the decision would not only be tantamount to supporting the Dwenem state invade their territorial integrity but also would be offensive to their dignity and sovereignty of their traditional states.

The Dwenem state had requisite considerations for the attainment of a local council unit because it was populous and wealthy. The Dwenem township alone numbered 1000 people according to the 1948 Population Census and had 711 registered voters for the 1956 Legislative Assembly elections. The total population of the villages in the area of the proposed council was a little beyond 4,000. Besides, it had deposited £1000 for the proposed council to prove its financial viability. Though the Awasu Confederacy met the necessary requirements for a successful local council unit, Patterson argued that the relationship between the Dwenem state and its compatriots in the Confederacy was not bound by traditional ties to hold them together to ensure continued viability of a local council unit. As a result of this, Patterson recommended that it did not appear worthwhile even on the grounds of expediency to proceed further with the proposed Awasu-Dwenem Local Council; consequently, the decision was nullified.

The Dilemma of the Government

The Government lost enthusiasm to display firmness in the matter of deciding local councils for the area. This was mainly due to the activities of the Awasu and Fantra separatist assemblages. Besides, none of the three: the Drobo, Suma and Kwatwoma states had contiguous geographical boundaries. The Drobo traditional state had some five villages located in the area of the proposed Suma-Kwatwoma Local Council which it did not want to lose. In the same way, the Suma traditional state felt reluctant to relinquish the control of its villages located in the Drobo state. The Awasu-Dwenem Local Council proposed instrument, promulgated and scheduled to take effect in 1956 failed. The Drobo Local Council also could not be established. Similarly, the proposed instrument to establish the Suma-Kwatwoma Local Council could not be enforced. This was because in a public hearing rally held on the 1st of April, 1958, Mr. Pentsil, the Enquiry Officer recommended that the

¹⁰³ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG1/20/79, Suma Native Affairs, Paragraph 17 of the Report on an Enquiry under Local Government Ordinance, Cap.64, Section 3(3), Establishment of Awasu-Dwenem Local Council.

headquarters of the Council would be located at Suma-Ahenkro, and the presidency would be held in annual rotation between the Head Chiefs of the Suma and Kwatwoma states. But Sampahene Samodua I felt cheated and demanded equity in the presidential representation as prerequisite for joining the Council.

By the end of 1956, the Berekum Local Council had been successfully established without internal difficulties.

Secession Protest in the Dormaa (Wam Pamu) State

The Dormaa (Wam Pamu) traditional state did not remain intact in the period of local government re-organization. In 1951, Kwasi Ansu, the paramount ruler of the Denkyira-Mansen tribe who was the Krontihene of the Dormaa state launched a bid to secede from the Dormaa state. Who were the Mansen? the Akwamu migrants (the Dormaa) who were fleeing secession dispute met a Denkyira group at Asumegya who had fled Denkyira on account of a similar problem. The two drank fetish to unite for mutual military defense. They established a constitution that made the leader of the Akwamu (Dormaa) the Commander-in-Chief of the people's militia and a paramount ruler of the amalgam. The Denkyira-Mansen ruler became the Second-in-Command, *Krontihene*. The two groups were guided by this constitutional arrangement during their stay in Asumegya and Suntreso from where they fled to Abanpredease to carved the Boma, Tapa, Abesim, and Chiraa states. Later, the Mansen fled to carve the Wam state whose capital was Wamfie over twenty years before the Dormaa joined them there. The Mansen gave the Dormaa a portion of the land they had conquered to build the Pamu state, (later called Dormaa). The two continued to observe the historic constitutional tradition in their new location. What then triggered off the Mansen sense of identity? King Kwasi Ansu of the Mansen state wanted equity in the distribution of public goods of the Dormaa state; nevertheless, this was always done to his cheat. Nana Agyeman Badu I, the Head Chief, *Omanhene* of the Dormaa state had imposed a two-shilling tax on each bag of cocoa. Kwasi Ansu of the Mansen state demanded £2,750 of the booty, but he was denied. It is significant to know that the Mansen's claim to independence dated to the time they parted company with the Dormaa people at Abanpredease to carve the Mansen state in their present location. How did they fall under the Dormaa hegemony again? Traditions relate that the Mansen were put under the Dormaa by the Asantehene as part of the cease fire agreement between Asante and some leading-chiefs of Gyaman living in Abanpredease, when Asante under Osei Bonsu were beaten by the Dormaa (Gyaman) in the Abesim area in 1882. The pact foiled Osei Bonsu's plan to invade the Wam region. In 1952, the Government Agent relating the historic relationship between the Dormaa and the Mansen said:

The Omanhin of Wam is always known as the Domahine. Wam, under the Mansinghine being the original settlers and being placed under the Domahine by the King in Coomassie when the Doma tribe made their peace and returned from Jaman.¹⁰⁴

Adjei Kyeremeh confirms that the Dormaa¹⁰⁵ made a peace treaty with the Asante at Abesim during the reign of Asantehene Mensah Bonsu. The treaty was signed when the Dormaa returned to Abesim from their sojourn in Amanfi in the French Gyaman territory.¹⁰⁶

The dispute between Kwasi Ansu and Agyeman Badu I reached its summit when the former claimed ownership of the ancestral lands of the Mansen state. On the 2nd day of April, 1952, Kwasi Ansu and his Elders wrote to the Chief Regional Officer through the Government Agent of the Wenchi-Sunyani District. He requested conversion of the Krontire Subordinate Native Authority of the Dormaa state to Mansen Native Authority. The Krontire Subordinate Native Treasury would be converted into Mansen Native Treasury. Besides, they requested the establishment of an independent native court at Wamfie.¹⁰⁷ G.P. Hardy, the Government Agent in his letter dated 3rd day of April, 1952 submitted to the Chief Regional Officer (Chief

¹⁰⁴ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG.2/1/59 Dormaa Native Affairs, a letter from the Government Agent's office, Wenchi/Sunyani District, No.0.0006/vol.3/81 dated 5th July, 1952, submitted to the CCA.

¹⁰⁵ The Gyaman people in the Abesim, Chiraa, Boma and Wam Pamu area were generally referred to as the Domaa, a name they retained in remembrance of the historic Dormaa state of Suntreso.

¹⁰⁶ Adjei Kyereme, "History of Dormaa 1600-1957", (B.A. Dissertation, 1973, Dept. of History, University of Ghana), 13.

¹⁰⁷ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 1/20/59, Dormaa Native Affairs, A letter from Mansenhene's Office, Wamfie, 2nd April, 1952 addressed to the CCA and submitted through the Government Agent, Wenchi/Sunyani District.

Commissioner of Ashanti) recommended to be established at Wamfie the local government unit that Kwasi Ansu requested. However, fearing Agyeman Badu I's threat, he wrote another on the 5th day of April, 1952, two days later, in which he admonished the Chief Regional Officer to suspend the request until further notice on account of the turbulent situation in the Western Dormaa area. The Dormaaahene in a telegram submitted to the Government Agent (District Commissioner) earlier in December, 1951 had informed him of the deposition of Kwasi Ansu and subsequent enthronement of a new Krontihene. In a letter dated 10th day of June, 1952, G.P. Hardy advanced the following recommendations to the Chief Regional Officer (Chief Commissioner of Ashanti) in respect of the dispute between the Mansen and Dormaa.

issue.i: constitutional matters: leave the constitutional disputes between the Asanteman Council and the Dormaaahene and his ex-Krontihene....

issue.ii local council: press on with the formation of the Wamfie-Dormaa-Ahenkro Local Council with the proviso that a separate area committee may be established at Wamfie itself

issue.iii. Wamfie native court: The court must be based on a treasury; that treasury would be the treasury of the Dormaa-Wamfie local council to be established under a local government ordinance.¹⁰⁸

In the meantime, Kwasi Ansu's proposal for the establishment of the Mansen Native Authority and its allied institutions was suspended. Later, the Government promulgated the Mansen Local Council Instrument on the 1st of June, 1952 to take effect on the 20th of June, 1952 after its first elections had been held on the same date. The headquarters of the Council would be located at Wamfie. The Council would exercise the duties of the defunct Dormaa Krontire Subordinate Native Authority. It was also proposed that the Council would be composed of two traditional representatives to be appointed by the Mansenhene and his Elders and five elected members from the five Wards, namely: - Wamfie, Wamfie Rural, Asunsu, Kyeremasu and Kofiasua.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, the Government promulgated the Pamu Local Council Instrument in July, 1952 to come to force on the 23rd of September, 1952 after elections to that effect had been held on the same date. The headquarters of this Council would be located at Pamu (now Dormaa Ahenkro) and the area of authority of the Council would cover the Pamu Native Authority area safe Chiraa, Abesim, Wamfie and other villages owing allegiance to the chief of Wamfie or the Mansehene. Public enquiry was held in two places to ascertain the opinion of the people. At Dormaa Ahenkro, the chiefs and the youth supported the establishment of a uni-local council to include Dormaa and Wamfie. The enquiry held at Wamfie rejected the proposal for a uni-local council. At this point, partisan political interest rose higher above popular decision. This was when the Convention People's Party's branch at Pamu (Dormaa Ahenkro) wrote to the Minister of Local Government endorsing a uni-local council for Dormaa and Mansen. On the basis of the Judicial Advisor's recommendation lubricated by party interest, a Cabinet Memorandum expressed to give a uni-local council a trial. This decision was gazetted in the Cabinet Form 'C' of the Ministry of Local Government. When the public enquiry report came out on the 29th of August, 1953, Kwasi Ansu and his Mansen Elders filed a petition against a uni-local council. The Minister of Local Government then held a meeting with Kwasi Ansu and his Elders in Accra and frankly told them that Cabinet's decision could not be rescinded. Later, on the 16th of December, 1953 approval of uni-local council was given. Consequently, an instrument establishing the Western Dormaa Local Council was declared. The Instrument took effect on the 23rd of June, 1954 when elections to that effect were held. The area of authority of the Council was the Dormaa Native Authority area and the Dormaa-Subordinate Native Authority area less Chiraa, Bomaa and Abesim.¹¹⁰

Why did Kwasi Ansu fail in his pursuit for independence for the Mansen state? He failed for the following reasons. First, Agyeman Badu I, the Dormaaahene clinged the support of the CPP government. Secondly, Kwasi Ansu's pro-Asante stance earned him the failure. Earlier, on the 3rd of April, 1952, he had applied to join the Asanteman Council and to be made *Omanhene*, Head Chief of the Mansen state. Agyeman Prempeh II, the Asantehene had consented to the application and accordingly informed the Chief Regional Officer. King Kwasi Ansu's attempt to ally with the Asanteman Council invited the wrath of the CPP government that

¹⁰⁸ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG.1/20/59, GP, Hardy's letter, No. C.0309/5 dated, 10th June, 1952, submitted to the Chief Regional Officer, Kumasi.

¹⁰⁹ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG1/20/75, Western Dormaa Local Council.

¹¹⁰ Chiraa, Abesim and were Dormaa enclaves located to the east of Dormaa- Ahenkro .

had obscurely engineered the formation of the Brong Kyempim Federation not only to undermine the authority of the Asantehene whom Kwame Nkrumah perceived threatful to the CPP government's survival, but also to weaken the support base of the National Liberation Movement (NLM). The NLM was an Asante controlled political opposition group that had been founded in Kumasi and gained the support of the Manhyia government.¹¹¹

The Chiraa-Abesim Local Council

Chiraa and Abesim townships were administered as the Dormaa Native Authority's subordinate area with the Head Chief of the Dormaa state, *Dormaaahene* as president. The Government announced the Chiraa-Abesim Local Council's proposed instrument on the 27th of June, 1952. The headquarters of the Council would be located at Chiraa with the Dormaaahene as its president. The Council would have two wards with four elected representatives, two from Abesim and two from Chiraa. The number of traditional representations would be two. On the 7th of October, 1952, elections were held to elect the ward representatives and the Council was inaugurated on the same day.¹¹²

The Sunyani Urban Council

In 1951, the Select Committee on Local Government in Ashanti suggested that taking into account its population and revenue estimates, Sunyani should be elevated to an urban status. It was proposed that Sunyani would be politically segmented into eight wards and each ward would have a representative on the Council. Also, four traditional representatives would be selected by the chief of Sunyani and the Zongo tribal heads. The draft instrument establishing the Sunyani Urban Council was approved by the Chief Regional Officer on the 14th of November, 1951. Elections of ward representatives were scheduled to take place on the 15th of April, 1952. The Council would exercise authority over the area of authority of the Kumasi Native Authority and the president of the Council would be the Asantehene, who would be represented by the village head, *Odikro* of Sunyani. The Chief Regional Officer approved the draft instrument, but later, a public enquiry was carried out to ascertain the economic potentiality of the Sunyani township. In response to the findings of the public enquiry, the Chief Regional Officer recommended to the Minister of Local Government that the proposed instrument be quashed for the following reasons:

That the Sunyani township formed part of the Odomasi Native Authority area whose total population was 11,644 with projected annual revenue of £2,700. Of this population figure, the Sunyani township alone absorbed a third (1/3) constituting 4,585 with projected annual revenue of £600. Besides, it was anticipated that the taxable persons amounting to 1000 people would provide a total annual revenue of £1,250. The Government saw that the figure was woefully inadequate to support the development of the town. As a result of this, the District Government Agent said that there was nothing in the performance of the Town Committee to justify optimism in the success of the Urban Council, so the decision was quashed.¹¹³

When it was announced that the proposed instrument had been scrapped, the chief of Sunyani and his elders confederated with the representatives of the various political parties led by the CPP and UGCC to protest against the Government's decision. They wrote a protest letter to the Governor and sent copies of same to the Minister of Local Government, the District Government Agent, Sunyani/Wenchi District and the press of the Gold Coast. For this reason, the Government rescinded its decision and proposed a second draft instrument on the 29th of July, 1952. Elections to elect ward representatives were conducted on 5th August, 1952 and the Council was inaugurated on the same day.

¹¹¹ I used the Manhyia government in reference to the Asante traditional government whose seat was located at Manhyia and headed by the Asantehene..

¹¹² PRAAD, Sunyani 1/20/86 Chiraa-Abesim Local Council, Government Agent's letter No.C0276/SF.25/17

¹¹³ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG 1/2/70 Local Council Reforms 1951 A letter from the Government Agent's Office, No.C.0276/SF.8928,30th July,1952.

The Sunyani Areas Local Council

On the 22nd of October, 1951, the District Government Agent prepared a draft instrument for the establishment of the Sunyani Area Local Council and submitted same to the Chief Regional Officer for approval. The area of authority of the Council would cover the area of jurisdiction of the Odomase-Sunyani Area Native Authority except the Sunyani township, the Nsoatre Native Authority area, and such specified towns as: Tanoso, Techere, Susuanso and Yamfo. The Council would have seven traditional members three of whom would be selected by the chiefs of Odumase No.1 and Awua-Domase. Nsoatre would have two representatives, whereas the chiefs of Tanoso and Techere would select one member. Yamfo and Susuanso would also be given one representation. The area of authority of the Council as spelt out in the schedule would be the areas of authority of the Odumase-Sunyani Native Authority administered by the Kumasi Native Authority.

Covert protest moved the Government to conduct a public enquiry. The exercise which was carried out by Dixon, the Commissioner for Local Government Reforms Enquiry took into account local prejudices and grievances and factored them in the recommendations. The enquiry report recommended that Tanoso and Techere would join the Bechem Local Council. Accordingly, Yamfo and Adrobaa would join the Nkwanta Local Council, while Susuanso would also join the proposed Sunyani Area Local Council.

The Head Chief of Odomase No.1 state opposed the principle that allowed the Kumasi State Council to appoint the traditional representatives. Additionally, he rejected Asantehene's presidency of the Council. The Head Chief of Odomase No.1 further argued that he was a founding-member of the Brong Kyempim Confederacy that opposed the Asanteman Council and therefore would not accept the Asantehene as his overlord. But Dixon explained to him that the proposal was made in tune with the present laws and his state alone would suffer if he failed to cooperate. Following Dixon's recommendations, the instrument was amended to make the Head Chiefs of Domase No.1, Awua-Domase and Nsuatre states observe the presidency in annual rotation. Dixon further recommended that the number of traditional appointees would be six with fourteen elected representatives. The area of authority of the Council would cover the Nsoatre Native Authority area, the Odomase Native Authority area (which comprised Awua- Odomase and Odomase No1) administered by the Kumasi Native Authority. On the 8th of May.1952, the Minister of Local Government approved the instrument and on the 23rd of July, 1952 the first elections were conducted. Subsequently, the Sunyani Areas Local Council was inaugurated.¹¹⁴

The Wenchi/Sunyani District Split

The Local Government re-organization that started in 1951 split the Wenchi/Sunyani district into two, namely: - the Sunyani District and the Wenchi District. British Gyaman was incorporated into the Sunyani District from 1951 till 1960.¹¹⁵ The Drobo Native Authority and the Suma-Kwatwoma Native Authority were deprived of local councils as a result of internal misunderstandings. The Dwenem Awasu Local Council was inaugurated in 1958 at the time when Nana Yaw Bene the initiator, had been deposed. Gyan Kwadwo III who succeeded Yaw Bene presided the Council, but he was not as tactful and charismatic statesman as his predecessor. Corruption, cheat, and nepotism tainted his presidency; consequently, all member-states which were not linked to the Dwenem traditional state by historic and natural ties broke away to rejoin with either the Drobo state or the Suma state. By 1960, the Awasu-Dwenem Local Council had almost become defunct.

The difficulties that contributed to the delay of local council re-organization in British Gyaman on the Gold Coast's road to independence provoked G.P. Hardy, the Sunyani District Government Agent to express his worry as follows-

¹¹⁴ PRAAD,Sunyani, BRG.1/20/72.Sunyani Areas Local Council,

¹¹⁵ PRAAD,Sunyani BRG.1/20/87,Local Government Reorganization.

The existing Suma and Jaman Divisions formed part of the ancient Jaman Kingdom whose traditional head, the Jamanhene lives over the border in Bondoukou, a circumstance which complicates both constitutional and administrative problems throughout the area and demand extra care in the formulation of proposal for reforming local government.¹¹⁶

CONCLUSION

In this work, I have made an attempt to relate the origin of the Gyaman Kingdom. The work has unveiled the circumstances that led to the partition of the Gyaman and its subsequent subjection to dual colonial control of the British and the French. But primarily, this work focused on the dilemma of the British colonial Government and the anxiety of the Gyaman during the introduction of the indirect rule system and subsequent local government reforms. Why was the government put into a dilemma? The partition located the Gyamanhene in French Côte d'Ivoire, while a pocket of his provincial chiefdoms was located in Ghana. The British colonial policy of indirect rule placed prominence on the traditional institution of chieftaincy. However, the British abuse the precolonial constitution and custom of the people by way of creating "warrant chiefs" who were given "unnatural subjects." Wanting to secure their precolonial sovereignty, provincial chiefdoms that were placed under their peers resorted to severe ways of asserting themselves by defying the colonial order and throwing away the yoke of their unnatural overlords. The British attempts to amalgamate traditional chiefdoms into a Western styled local government administration was greeted with contemptuous protest as the people clung to their old loyalties and precolonial allegiances. The result was that many areas were deprived of local government administration till 1957 when Ghana was decolonized.

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¹¹⁶ PRAAD, Sunyani, BRG.1/2/78, GP. Hardy's letter to the Chief Regional Officer, dated 14th July, 1952.No. C.0276/SF.3/12.

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2) Interview

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Nana Kofi Owusu, a royal of Awua-Domase. He was interviewed on 30th April, 2022 at Awua-Domase.

Nana Joseph Kwame Boamah, a 63-year-old chief and a retired educationist was interviewed at Dwenem on 2nd April, 2023.

Nana Jones Kyeremeh, a Royal of Abuom Royal Family. He was interviewed on 30th December, 2021.

Nana Kofi Kyereme a royal. The 88-year-old man was interviewed on 14th March 2022 at Wamfie.

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