

## Gape Katoo, Bofie<sup>1</sup>

The Gape people of Bofie are related to other Dompoo people (Kuulo of Dompofie and other villages) who are descended from Wurache. Like Wurache, the male ancestor of this family, by name Buari Kojo, descended from the sky at a place still known to people today.<sup>1</sup> Buari Kojo descended from the sky through a brass pan that is still in the possession of the family in Bofie. He came together with his family: his brother Obaa and sister Nana Kamaa.

When he came to this place, he didn't find many people; he roamed about to see if he could find other people and came to find Wurache who was living along a tributary of the Bombrie. Buari Kojo discovered that Wurache spoke the same language and that they understood each other. In conversation Buari Kojo asked how it was that Wurache came to the land. She replied that it was on a baobab, while Buari told her that he had come down on a kapok.

Buari continued to search for people—from the Tain River to Bedu, to Nsoko, but he only encountered Wurache and it was because of that that Buari Kojo and Wurache became brother and sister. The name of the village where Buari Kojo lived with his family was Kofia Abanmu.

Later, the Nafana came from their settlement at Tampi. First came Gbaha who saw smoke beyond a hill. He went to the place and there he found Wurache, after which he returned for the rest of the Nafana people.

The Nafana people did not come to Bofie. Rather, the Kumfa people came from Atebubu to join Buari Kojo. The people who came to stay in Obuasi were known as Sobo people and they came from Côte d'Ivoire. Today they speak the Nafaanra language but they are not related to the Nafana people.

[Question: How did Gape people come to live at Bofie?]. A hunter named Kumfa was out hunting and found a crab hole full of pure water. He took his cutlass and widened the hole and on the next day found that the water flowed freely. On his return he informed Buari Kojo that he had found good land for farming and water and that Buari Kojo should come and see if the people could stay there. Buari Kojo chose delegates to go and examine the land. On finding it to be good, Buari Kojo blessed the land for the people and chose an individual from the Gape family to perform rituals for strangers. This is why Bofie has a *trafun* as well as a chief. The names of the place come from the Dompoo language. There came a time when the people had no traps and therefore had to dig holes over which they placed strips in order to catch animals. The phrase that means 'to dig a hole' in the Kuulo language is 'boy pe' and this was the origin of the name Bofie.

Of the former female heads of family Nana Akwia Biyaa is remembered for preserving the

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<sup>1</sup>According to other sources, Buari Kojo descended from the sky at a place known as "Old Bima." Old Bima is the site of a large and ancient settlement. See Bravmann, René A., and R. Duncan Mathewson 1970. A Note on the History and Archaeology of "Old Bima." *African Historical Studies* 3:133-150

family's history. It was through her that the family history was handed down.

[Question: How did they come to hold the position of Adwianaahene that the family now holds?] Any person who comes from the sky held the position from the time they came. They held their clan name from that time. The position was given a Twi name during the time of Sielongo when the Registrar for the colonial government came and imposed the name.

[Question: Have people heard of the old site of Begho?] This is known as a place where many people stayed, including the Muslims who later moved to Sase and Kanka. The place belonged to the Namasa people who descended from the sky to that place after Buari Kojo had come here.

[Question: What crafts did people practice here in the past?] Some people were blacksmiths and there was some dredging for gold in addition to farming. Some were able to weave kente and the people grew their own cotton. They also made baskets and mats. Old people were also getting iron by burning trees called *Senwe* and *Gblenge*.

Male Heads of Family

1. Nana Buari Kojo
2. Tolɛɛ Obaa
3. Yaw Boanya
4. Kofi Ampem
5. Kwabena Tentene
6. Nana Diawisie
7. Kofi Ankana
8. Peh Taan
9. Wulo Kwabena
10. Yaw Mensah
11. Kwame Bosomfo
12. Nana Kwame Kupo
13. Kwaku Ntoa
14. Nana Kwame Asamoa

Female Heads of Family

1. Kamaa
2. Taachie
3. Amma Tia
4. Yaambo
5. Nana Dibiaa
6. Kofiadwoa
7. Nana Akua Biyaa
8. Nana Yaa Kobre
9. Nana Taachie II

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Interview with Nana Kwame Asamoa and elders, July 1995.

Interview by Dr. Ann B. Stahl and Nana Emmanuel Dwira, Chief of Dompofie.

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