

## Kuulo Katoo, Dompofie<sup>1</sup>

The ancestress of Kuulo Katoo was Leleë Nyini Wurache. She came to this place from the sky together with her husband Sie Dafa and her daughter Akosua Yeli. They had a horse with them when they came down from the sky. They established a village, but there was no water there. Wurache decided to go on her horse in search of water. They reached a point in the bush where the horse began to scratch the ground with his foreleg. Immediately, water came to the surface. The Kuulo word for horse is 'Gbanga' and Wurache named that spot "Gbanga." The place is still known today.

There came a time when a man named Gbaha came to the area. He said that he came from Kakala and was an emissary of the Nafana people. He came alone to Wurache and her people. After relating his story to Wurache, he begged her for some fire. She gave him some and he went away.\*

In three days time, Gbaha came back to Wurache's settlement while everyone was away. He fetched some fire from their hearth and then proceeded to put out the remaining fire. He then left the settlement. When Wurache came home from the bush, she found that someone had put out her fire and she began to weep, for she had no fire with which to cook. As she was weeping, God sent down a person to ask her why she was weeping. Wurache related her story and the messenger provided her with a chain which carried her to the sky. There she was given more fire and returned to earth.

Sometime later, Gbaha returned to Wurache's settlement in order to fetch more fire. Wurache asked him whether he was the one who had put out her fire and he admitted that he had. Wurache allowed him to take more fire, but cursed him by saying "you will never be out of trouble" (in Nafaanra *Ma kala la*) which became shortened to "Makala," the name of Gbaha's village. After this, cordial relations prevailed between the two groups. Wurache gave her daughter, Akosua Yeli, to Gbaha to marry.

Sometime later, a small group of Muslims (two men and one woman) came to Wurache. She gave them a place to sleep. During the night, a quarrel broke out between one of the Muslims and his wife. Wurache settled the argument between the man and his wife. The man was so grateful to Wurache for her maturity in settling the argument that he decided to stay with Wurache. Wurache directed them to a place to stay at Kora (Sase). Later, the younger brother moved on farther and settled at Kanka.

With the passage of time, the population of the Nafanas grew bigger at Makala because more people came to join them from Kakala. Wurache and the leader of the Nafanas therefore had to decide on some positions of the land (i.e. who would be chief). Since Wurache was a woman and

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\* See history for Gbaha Katoo, Makala.

could not, therefore, be chief, she conferred the power to the Nafana; however, she retained ownership of the land.

Kuulo Katoo formerly played a role in the installation of the paramount chief. This started in the time of Wurache. Wurache provided a local medicine which was used to wash the chief prior to his installation. Before washing him, the Royal Family provided Kuulo Katoo with a chicken and seven kola nuts. The chief would then be washed down seven times with the medicine on the eve of his installation. The reason he was washed seven times is that the medicine was a mixture of seven different kinds of leaves. At the installation, the Kuulo Katoo was responsible for holding the Chief by his waist and lowering him three times onto the stool. The family's share of the animal killed on the stool was the waist. The family played this role at the installation of all chiefs from Kralongɔ to Kofi Dwuru II.

Formerly, the Kuulo held the position of Trafun or, in Kuulo "*Kahole Wura*," literally owner of the land. It was for this reason that they played a role in the installation of the paramount chief. They also offered sacrifices to the land on behalf of the whole area. As an example, they were responsible for offering seven chickens and a goat at the beginning of the dry season at the time that the grass and forest is burned for the hunters. This had to be done before bush hunting could begin.

Today, a sub-landlord has been installed at Ahenkro who has taken over these responsibilities. This is the result of a land dispute that arose as follows. Wurache's daughter was married to Gbaha. Therefore, Wurache allocated a portion of the land to Gbaha. Gbaha, however, was very greedy and after some time, began to trespass on Wurache's land to enjoy its benefits. This resulted in a quarrel between the people of Kuulo and the people of Makala. This case was taken to court during the time of the white man and was heard at Kintampo. This was during the time of the Chief Yaw Sielongɔ. The ruling by the white man was that, since both parties were under the paramount chief, neither could be considered to own the land. Thus, the power of the land was vested in the paramount chief. It was at this point that a Trafun was installed in Ahenkro.

Wurache grew to be very very old and was near death. On a day when everyone was at their farms, she was sitting on her stool holding her bowl when she sank into the ground. Since no one was there to witness her sinking into the ground, a baobab seedling germinated on the spot where she sank on the very same day to mark the spot. The baobab still stands on the outskirts of the village and the fruit of this tree is never consumed. A custom which began with Wurache's funeral was a form of drumming known as "Landɔ." It is played during times of war or when celebrating the funeral of the ancestors.

Male Heads of Family

1. Hanyaw Gbini
2. Kofi Kɔkɔ
3. Shiembɔ Agba
4. Pɛ Kwabena
5. Kwame Ampoma
6. Kwadwo Fordjour

Female Heads of Family

1. Wurache
2. Ejininge Twale
3. Penimbo
4. Yookɔ
5. Leleɛ Abena
6. Afua Fofie
7. Akua Nyimimpe
8. Mabinu
9. Kosua Adae
10. Afua Fofie (head in 1986)

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Interview conducted 6 August 1986 with Tolɛ Kwadwo Fordjour (Odikro), Leleɛ Afua Fofie (Female Head), Kwame Broma, Kwasi Millah, Kwasi Donkor, Kwabena Mensah, Kwame D Meabra, and Emmanuel Dwira.

Interview conducted by Dr. Ann B. Stahl and Mr. James Anane.

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