

Yaw Dabla Katoo, Banda-Ahenkro¹

Yaw Dabla Katoo is one of the seven founding families of Banda-Ahenkro. The family supplies the Apamhene who serves as the chief messenger for the Omanhene. The position was first established when the first District Commissioner was at Kintampo. The Omanhene was asked to send a representative. The first man that he sent was corrupt, so the D.C. sent a message to the Omanhene that he should be replaced. Nana took the matter to the public and it was a member of Yaw Dabla Katoo who opted to take the job. Hajojuu was the first man from this family to hold the position. Prior to this time, the family had no special duties at the palace.

The ancestors of Yaw Dabla Katoo originally came from a place called Wasa in the Western Region. They spoke Twi when they lived in Wasa.* Upon leaving Wasa they lived among the Jamaa people who speak the Kulango language. It was during their stay here that the people of Yaw Dabla Katoo came to know of Banda. At this time there was a stool dispute in Wasa and one group took away the stool. Another group from Wasa came to the Bandahene to ask for a loan in order to get the stool back. The Nafanahene gave them a basket of gold which they paid as ransom for their stool. This gave the people of Yaw Dabla Katoo a good impression of Banda when they saw the amount of gold that must be in Banda. They thus moved of their own accord to Banda. Their leader, Shitaki, moved with them. They left Wasa because of unsettled conditions that prevailed at the time. The ancestors of Yaw Dabla Katoo came to live in Banda long before the white man came to the area.

One former member of the family, named Kwaku Cheki, fought in the wars against the Mo people and was wounded in the groin by a bullet. He did not die outright, rather suffered for a long time. It was during the time of Kwaku Cheki that the first telegraph lines were put in from south to north. The D.C. at Kintampo sent a message to the Bandahene that he should send people to carry the wires. At this time there was no other paramount chief than the Bandahene between Kintampo and Bole.

If you swear something by the name of Cheki, you must provide a sheep to appease the man's grave. The significance of this is that he suffered so in war. If you swear by any of the rest of the former heads of family, you must provide a cock.

Male Heads of Family

1. Shitaki (led people from Wasa)
2. Yaw Dabla
3. Kwaku Cheki
4. Hajo Juu (first Apamhene)
5. Amulei
6. Yaw Matia
7. Kwaku Zuku (head in 1986).

* Note: Some members of the family maintain that the family did not come from the Western Region, rather they came from the north and spoke Mo.

Interview held on 24 July 1986 with Kwaku Zuku (Apamhene) and Jonathan Kwabena Miwo (primary source of information).

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

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