

THE HISTORY AND ORIGIN OF KWASO

Asuo Kwao, w'ato me aa sabi nom

Asuo Kwao, obi nhwee yen nsuo yi da

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The Early Settlers

Over four hundred years ago, a group of people from Asumigya Asantemanso led by Nana Asonkor relocated and settled in Worakese. The migrants included elders Ameyaw, Fosu, Adutwum, Amoako and Agyemang. Some years later, Ameyaw and Fosu together with their sister Ohu Agyeiwaa, their children and others relocated and settled at Apromaae.

Many years later, as their numbers grew and the people got well rooted in Apromaae, a family dispute ensued within the ruling Aduana clan. The conflict pitted one faction against the other. With their history of migration and most importantly, for peace and tranquillity to reign, Fosu's brother Adu Nontwiri together with some Aduana family and members of other clans moved from Apromaae, crossed the River Oda and settled at Kokofu near Donyina. In the course of time, the Chief of Apromaae, Nana Dufri created the Gyaase stool for a settler, Nana Akwasi Kumah, to become the Gyaasehene of Apromaae.

With time, Nana Adu Nontwiri, the Chief and others moved to settle in Deduako where Ohu Agyeiwaa gave birth to twins, Atta Panin and Atta Kumah. With time, many of the aged migrants from Apromaae, Donyina and Kokofu died and were laid to rest in Deduako. As time passed, Nana Fosu and his extended family resettled at Anunkusuaso, the current location of the Kwaso township cemetery. At Anunkusuaso, in the reign of Nana Amoah Akyiaw, the new settlers could not coexist peacefully or tolerantly with the wild animals including the lions.

The Origin of The Name Kwaso

Nana Fosu's son Amoakopanin during one of his hunting expeditions, strayed deep into an area near Awaasuso. He came across a body of water with qualities of a pond, a well and a stream with "healthy fish" swimming in it. The area was serene, the vegetation lush and he felt some spiritual inner peace around the waters. Amoakopanin caught some fish, cooked and fed the fish to his dog. The dog drank from the 'river' and

survived. On his return home, Amoakopanin informed Nana Fosu who together with the Gyaasehene sent an expedition group to ascertain the validity of the claim of the “new place” for possible settlement.

The delegates returned and reported their adventure to the then Chief Nana Adutwumpanin, who later sent the Gyaasehene, Amoakopanin and two others to Apromaase to consult the oracle Boaboduro (fetish shrine) for spiritual insight regarding a potential permanent settlement near the “new found land”. Boaboduro, after incantations and rituals gave good news to the delegates of the habitability of the environs and the welcoming nature of the body of water.

Nana Adutwumpanin gathered his people for a communal work to clear around the river for settlement. Building of houses began as the people moved into the new settlement. It is said that the first house was built by Nana Kwaku Sarkodie at Apemso near the river. Nana Fosu would often proclaim “***M'anya Asuo yi kwa ... kwaoo!!***” (I got this body of water for free) and had the privilege of naming the new permanent settlement “Kwaso ... Kwaoso”.

Nana Amoakopanin was later enstooled as Krontihene of Kwaso for his discovery of the river Asuo Kwao. He was from the “Agona” clan. Later the whole Anunkusuaso settlers steadily moved to settle near ‘Asuo Kwa (Kwaoo)’ and begun proclaiming to themselves and others in nearby villages that, they live around the River Kwao, hence the name Kwaso.

Status of Kwaso Stool

The permanent village settlement saw a steady growth and expansion. Its welcoming and hospitality nature spread far and wide in the Ashanti kingdom. The Kwaso stool was assigned to the left wing of the Asantehene stool and Nana Kwasohene swears with the “***Mponponsuo***”, the principal sword of the Asantehene. By tradition, Kwasohene and Kwasohemaa (Kwaso Chief & Queen) are appointed from the Aduana clan.

Names of Kwasohene

1. Nana Adu Nontwiri
2. Nana Amoah Akyiaw
3. Nana Adutwumpanin
4. Nana Adu Kwame
5. Nana Akaampong Kwame
6. Nana Ata Fosu
7. Nana Ntiamoah Amankuo
8. Nana Kwaku Baah
9. Nana Kwadwo Nketiah
10. Nana Kwabena Gyebi

11. Nana Kwaku Asumadu
12. Nana Kwame Ntiamoah
13. Nana Ofosu Agyemang
14. Nana Nketiah Boampong II (current Chief)

Names of Kwasohemaa

1. Nana Ohu Agyeiwaa Bruwaa
2. Nana Ama Nyame
3. Nana Akua Afriyie
4. Nana Nyantakyiwaah Akosomo
5. Nana Akua Gyedu
6. Nana Adwoa Dakwaa
7. Nana Afia Gyamfuwaa Amonu

Kwaso In The “Hwa” War

Asanteman war that had a direct bearing on Presbyterianism in Ashanti was the “*Hwa Sa*” (Hwa war). The war was fought between the Ashantis and the Ewes during the reign of the Asantehene Nana Kofi Karikari in the late 19th century.

Nana Adubofour, Gyaasehene of Kumasi and the war leader recruited able-bodied men as fighters in the army. Personalities drafted from Kwaso included Okomfo Dei, Kwadwo Amoah, Opanin Gyerim, Kofi Akora and Kofi Akoto. The war lasted for three years. When dust finally settled on the battleground, Adubofour-led Ashanti army had won and taken prisoners of war some of whom were Rev. Fritz Ramseyer, his wife and their young son.

Kwaso warriors captured the Ramseyers from a Castle at Anum (Presbyterian mission house). Their son died en route to Ashanti and the couple were thereafter taken to Kwaso under the guidance of Kwasohene. The Kwasohene, Nana Ata Fosu was fascinated by their complexion and provided well for them. Later the Ramseyers were presented to the Asantehene, Nana Kofi Karikari but they were taken back to Kwaso and settled in the house of Okomfo Adade (currently Opanin Kwame Wora’s house). This became their permanent residence for a long time. Some years later, in consultation with the governor of Gold Coast, the Asantehene Nana Kofi Karikari, released Rev. Ramseyer who later left the Gold Coast to Switzerland.

Kwaso Presbyterian Congregation

Rev Ramseyer returned to the Gold Coast to help establish Presbyterian churches in Ashanti including the Kwaso Presbyterian congregation. The Kwasohene had a warm relationship with Rev Ramseyer and he supported his work and allocated land for the building of a church at Kwaso. The Kwaso congregation was started in 1896 with six members: Kofi Dom, Kwaku Forkuo, Yaw Amota, Kofi Mensah, Abena Bruwaa and Afia Ohu. Six years

later in 1902, it was inaugurated with nine members. With time, the congregation saw growth in strength and membership. The senior Presbyter Nana Pimpim and others built a small but respectable chapel and hosted the first '**Asempatre'** in 1917.

Nana Fosu Panin Oath (Banda War)

History has it that, around 1920, Nana Fosu Panin of Kwaso, a faction leader of warriors went to war at Banda in support of Asanteman. It is said that, there was a mysterious “giant woman” on a rock who cast death spell on anybody who sees her. Unfortunately, Nana Fosu Panin, saw the giant woman on the rock and died. His successor and brother Nana Adutwumpanin also saw the “giant woman” and the same fate befell on him and died. Both unfortunate deaths occurred on the same day.

The Gyaasehene, Nana Kofi Dum of Asona clan was one of the frontline leaders who fought till the end of the war. The mystery and pain of the deaths in the war effort served as the basis of the oath of Kwasohene in tempestuous scenarios. Thus, the oath “***I swear by Nana Fosu and Nana Adutwum Banda***” became and continues to be a great oath of Kwaso.