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KREPI STATES IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURIES

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Introduction

There has been a great deal of uncertainty as regards the delimitation of the area known as Krepied, Krepee or Crepee. In some British documents, Kwadjo Dei, the paramount Chief of Peki, has been referred to as the king of Krepie. Indeed, in the various treaties which Kwadjo Dei signed with the British, he appended his signature as “King of Krepe”. This implies that the name Krepie connotes what people misconstrued as “Greater Peki” or “Peki District”. In other documents, the name Peki was applied synonymously to Krepie. J.B. Yegbe’s description of Krepie includes such states as Ada, the Ladoku states as well as Accra, Akyem and Akuapem. Yegbe further concludes by saying that the main component states of Krepie were Peki, Ho, Kpando, Taviefe, Anum, Boso, Agortime, Tsito and Anfoe¹.

It is relevant to point out that the name Krepie or Krepee was given by the Danes to all the Ewe speaking people who came through the northern and middle streams from Notsie to settle in the central part of the present day Volta Region². Therefore, prior to the introduction of colonial rule, the term Krepie had been used to refer to a wider area in Eweland.

By the Danish delimitation, Krepie included some Guan Speaking states like Buem, Boso, Anum, Akpafu, Awatime, Tafi, Nyangbo et

¹ J. B. Yegbe, *The Anlo and their Neighbours, 1850 – 1890*, M. A. Thesis, I.A. S., Legon. p. 5.

² A. K. Asem, *History of Awudome*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, Accra, 1992. P. 10.

cetera. The name Krepi began to appear in British administrative documents and maps of the Gold Coast from 1850 when the British took over trading activities in the area from the Danes.

Contemporary historians now apply the name to those Ewe speaking people known as *Ewedometowo* – literally meaning people who occupy the valley (of the Volta Region). Therefore, Krepi in the context of this particular work refers to the Ewes who settled in central part of the present day Volta Region. This certainly does not exclude those Guan states found within this geographical area.

Some people suggest that the Guans were the original people who came into this region in 1850³. These aboriginal people formed small isolated political units such as the Nyagbos, Tafis, Logbas and Awatimes. These non-Ewe speaking people mostly settled on hills. This suggests that they were pushed up by the Ewes who came later. Inter-marriage with these Guans led to the domination of other Guan dialects by the Ewe language. The Ewe language has spread all over this area and is used as *lingua franca* to this day.

Migration and early forms of political organisation - 'dukowo'

Historians all agreed that Ewes migrated from Notsie in groups and that each group consisted of lineages. The records are however not clear as to when exactly the Ewes left Notsie. Historians find it difficult to pinpoint any one date for the event. Adu-Boahen, for instance, says the Ewes might have left Notsie in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries⁴. Gayibor asserts that they might have left Notsie between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵ After analyzing the traditions of the *Ewes pari passu* the date for the founding of Allada and Dahomey, Amenumey points out that the Ewes began to leave Notsie before 1600.⁶ The various dates given by historians are due to the fact that all the Ewes did not leave Notsie at one and the same

³ D. A. Chapman, "The Human Geography of Eweland", *Premiere Conference International des Africanistes de L'Quest. Copets rendus. Tome 1, 1950*, p. 79.

⁴ Boahen, Adu, *Topics in West African History*, Longmans, London, 1966.

⁵ Gayibor, T.N. *Migration – Societe – Civilization: Les Ewes du sud Togo*. Doctorate, Sorbonne, 1975, p.97.

⁶ Amenumey D.E.K.: *The Ewe In Pre-Colonial Times*, Sedco Publications, Accra, 1986, p.6.

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time. Moreover, some groups experienced greater difficulties than others and consequently spent longer time in settling down.⁷ Based on these assertions, particularly Amenumey's analysis, one is inclined to peg the date for the first settlement of the Krepi people in their present homes at 1670; and this must be quite near the truth.

On arriving at their present homes these lineages developed traditional units or 'dukowo' – independent small states. Within a traditional unit (duko) one could find a number of villages one of which was the capital or 'fiadu'. The Chief of the capital was known as 'fiaga', literally meaning 'great chief'. The Chief's Council was made up of the 'asafohene', the linguist (Tsiamé), senior heads of household groups, a number of executive officials and the Queen-mother and her officials'. These offices evolved when they came into contact with the Akwamus.

The capital was not always distinguished in terms of its size but in terms of its traditional history with regard to original settlement. During the initial stages of their settlement, a farming site known as 'agblekofe' developed into permanent settlement as an offshoot of the parent settlement. This happened particularly in situations where the distance from the parent settlement was far. This explains how the Ewes (Krepis) came to be split into small political units. By 1700 there were about 120 such small independent units among the Ewe.⁸

One fascinating development that occurred among some of the Krepi States during the Asante and Akwamu invasions was that the positions or seats of 'fiaga' were transferred to other sub-villages. For example, after the Asante invasion of the Volta Region, the paramount seat of the people of Dzolo (which used to be at Dzolokpoeta) was transferred to the people of Dzolo-Gbogame. The reason for the transfer, according to oral tradition, was that the Asafohene of Dzolo-Gbogame supplied two men to prosecute the war against Asante.⁹

In a similar fashion, after one of the wars between the people of Kpalime and the Akwamus, Kpalime-Todome lost the paramount seat

⁷ The various oral traditions which the researcher came across confirm this view.

⁸ ADM 39/1/238 Unification of Tribal Divisions Case No. 176.7.26.

⁹ Interview conducted with Mr. C.K. Ayomi, Linguist of Dzolokpoeta. See also Court proceeding recorded in the meeting of the Hokpe State Council at Dzolokpoeta on August 4, 1952. Court proceeding. File No.6.

to Kpalime-Duga. Hitherto, Adza Yeh of Todome was the Paramount Chief of the Kpalimes. But after the war, Dente Fe of Duga became the Paramount Chief. According to the tradition of the Kpalimes, the people of Duga were exposed to the fiercest part of the battle in which Kpalime claimed victory over Akwamu. Consequently, as compensation for their role, the people of Duga demanded the Paramount Seat.¹⁰

One characteristic feature of all the Ewe states was that, the various lineages which migrated from Notsie were led by religious leaders. This is evident from the various traditions of the people on the migration process. Indeed, these religious leaders played significant roles in the founding of the present homes of the various Ewe states. The names of some of the political units have their roots in some miraculous feats that these religious leaders were said to have performed in the course of migration.

After the migration process, the Ewes in general and the Krepi states in particular adopted kingship institutions ostensibly because they had experienced kingship under Agokoli at Notsie. It is also apparent that on reaching their present home, they realized that all the states around them had kings. One would recall that the Gas, with whom the Ewes migrated from Ketu, were also led by religious leaders to their present homes.¹¹

In fact, there is no gainsaying the fact that the kingship institutions which the Krepi states developed were borrowed from their neighbours, particularly the Akans. Ancestral stools and the rituals that went with them were believed to have been borrowed from Akwamu.¹² There is no traditional account which states that the Ewes (particularly Krepis) brought ancestral stools with them from Ketu or Notsie. Peki, Woadzie, Have and Sokode ancestral stools are cited as

¹⁰ E.Y. Aduamah: *Volta Basin Traditions*, Institute of African Studies, Legon, No. 1965, p.1.

¹¹ C.C. Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, Oxford University Press, London, 1937, pp.36. and 40. - This view is also supported by oral traditions from some Gbi states eg. Peki and Bla.

¹² This view is supported by the oral traditions of the people of the Anfoega, Bla and Vakpo, all in the Volta Region.

examples of stools that were borrowed from the Akans.¹³ Similarly, the Ewe language is replete with Akan expressions and derivations which are connected with chieftaincy affairs or court rituals. The names of most of the Krepi chiefs are of Akan origin. Examples of such names are Dompreh, Debrah, Denteh, to mention a few.

Krepi insignia has Akan practices that are highly perceptible. The drum that the Krepi states beat to summon people is called 'Atumpani' (Atumpan). The one who beats the drum is called 'Atsrima' (Okyerema). These were all Akan derivations. Kofi Baku postulates that initially, the Krepi states did not elect or enstool chiefs and kings. It was not until they had been forced into contact with the powerful Akan, principally Asante and Akwamus, that they developed their current political and social institutions.¹⁴ The tradition of Anfoega has it that in early times, a would-be chief of Anfoega had to be sent to Akwamu to undergo training in the art of chiefship.

The point must be stressed, however, that the fact that the Ewes had no chiefs until they came into contact with the Akans does not mean that they did not have any idea or experience of chieftaincy before their migration into their present homes. In any case, the Yorubas with whom they lived in the vicinity of the Niger had kings known as the Obas. One also has to remember that the Ewes lived under King Agokoli for years. It is certain, therefore, that the Krepis and for that matter the Ewes had an experience of chiefship prior to their migration.¹⁵ This is why some historians are of the view that if we have to postulate a borrowing at all, an eastern one is more logical than a western one.¹⁶ While the research on the exact source of the borrowing continues, one cannot help but observe that the present chieftaincy institutions that exist in the Krepi states have too many

¹³ E.B. Asare: *Akwamu-Peki Relations in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Institute of African Studies, Legon, 1974.

¹⁴ K. Baku: "The Asafo in Two Ewe States", *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*. Sankofa Education Publishers, New Series, No. 2, 1998 p.21.

¹⁵ See detailed account on the experiences of the Ewes prior to their migration from Notsie in D.E.K. Amenumey: *The Ewes in Pre-Colonial Times* Sedco, Accra, 1986, p.13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp.13-14.

Akan names attached to certain offices and practices, for one to doubt that Akwamu was the principal source of borrowing.

In adopting kingship institutions, however, the Krepis were careful not to develop centralised states or kingdoms similar to those of the Akans. Their experience under Agokoli was still fresh in their minds and made them wary about vesting too much power in any single person. Besides the Agokoli experience, several other factors account for the reason why the Krepis, and the Ewes in general, never formed a single political unit but remained a loose collection of small political states. In the first place, most people were lost to one another at the time the Ewes were settling in their present homes. Secondly, there existed among the various states, linguistic differences. Even though they all spoke the same Ewe language, dialects of the language tended to change from one political unit to another to the point that each political unit (*duko*) was easily identifiable with the dialect of its people. Such linguistic differences were obstacles to co-operation. Thirdly, the way the Krepis scattered all over the central part of the present-day Volta Region was an inhibiting factor. Having migrated from Notsie – an enclosed environment under the cruelty of Agokoli they found themselves in a different geographical setting where, with the joy of liberation, they occupied a vast area with little or no resistance from the indigenous people. Such was the dispersed nature of the people that they got separated from one group to the other by the Togo-Atakora ranges and the ‘Eweto’ (Ewe mountain). This made it difficult to traverse the whole Krepis country with ease at the time when modern means of transport and communication were non-existent. The mountain ranges therefore produced a restrictive environment which encouraged segmentation.

Fourthly, each ‘*duko*’ had its own deity or religious cults as well as cultural peculiarities. Therefore, even though some degree of cultural uniformity was perceptible, they were not, culturally, entirely homogeneous. Each ‘*duko*’ kept little contact with the other except by way of trade which was fairly developed among them.¹⁷ Fifthly, it is important not to gloss over the fact that during the early years of their settlement, the various states were pre-occupied with the important issue of carving areas for themselves and safeguarding their areas of

¹⁷ K.A. Ansah: *The Ewe of South –Eastern Ghana and Togo on the Ewe of Colonialism*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, Tema, Ghana 1964, pp.19, 20.

occupation. At the end of the process each 'duko' became independent and unique in many respects. In this way, none of the states was prepared to sacrifice her independence. Under these circumstances, it was difficult if not impossible, to see where an acceptable leadership could emerge to bring all the people together under one kingdom or empire.¹⁸

Some historians are of the view that, these differences and individualistic tendencies notwithstanding, the Krepi were conscious of the fact that they were one people and had at one time lived together. Of course, there were occasions when the dispersed lineages managed to come together to celebrate festivals to mark their common ancestry or tradition. An example of such a festival was 'Sasadu' which brought Akrofu, Saviofe and Alavanyo towns together on rotational bases. But the point here is that, though the people were aware of their cultural unity, it had not led to any aspirations for political, unity among them. W.E.F. Ward puts it aptly when he says:

It seems to have been left to the European administration to begin the welding together of the sub-tribes into larger, centralised groups, and to the effects of European rule to create a national, Pan-Ewe consciousness.¹⁹

Even this Pan-Ewe Consciousness for political unification originated with a few educated British and French Ewes as recently as 1945. It was only during this period (from 1945 to 1947) that the Krepi states showed any real feeling of national solidarity when they petitioned the United Nations Trusteeship Council for the unification of the Ewe people.²⁰ But as stated earlier, this was a late development. Among the Krepe states, this movement did not last beyond 1956.

¹⁸ It is interesting to note that the people of Akuapem have a similar history. Until 1730, they had separate Guan settlements and they lacked national unity because the different groups were conscious of their individual characteristics. See M.A. Kwamena-Poh, "The Emergence of Akuapem State 1730-1850", *Ghana notes and Queries*, pp.26-36.

¹⁹ W.E.F. Ward, *A History of Ghana*, Allen and Anim Ltd., London, 1958.

²⁰ D.E.K. Amenumey: *The Ewe Unification Movement*. Ghana Universities Press, 1989 p.25. See again M.A. Kwamena-Poh, *Government and Politics in Akwapem States 1730-1850*. Longman, Northwestern, 1973, p.240.

One may haste to conjecture, however, that given the time and the much needed peace, the Krepis might have evolved strong political systems, but for the Asante-Akwamu invasions.

The Krepis states and Akwamu

The relationship between Akwamu and the Krepis states started from the first decade of the eighteenth century.²¹ This contact came about as a result of a programme of conquest and expansion which Akwamu had initiated from 1629 onwards.²² From 1707-1833, Akwamu launched a series of attacks on the Krepis states.²³

The main motive behind Akwamu's programme of conquest and expansion was the desire to have exclusive control over the coastal trade which was very lucrative at the time. By taking control over the trade routes from Accra to the interior, Akwamu hope to collect tolls from traders plying the routes. This will in turn help Akwamu to buy firearms and ammunitions.²⁴

What was to cow Krepis states into submission to Akwamu suzerainty was the latter's association with Asante. It was not until the battle of Katamansu in 1826 when Asante was defeated by the British, the Danes, and some coastal states that the strength of Akwamu became weak enabling the Krepis states to initiate moves to overcome Akwamu's dominance.²⁵

Indeed, the seemingly autonomous positions that each 'duko' assumed on their arrival in their present homes prevented them from making any concerted effort to fight Akwamu. This accounted for the failure of the Awudome and Nyive revolts in 1829 and 1831.²⁶ Apparently, it was this apathy and disunity which made the Krepis

²¹ Akwamu was one of the powerful states that the Krepis States came into contact with from 1707-1833. See E.B. Asare: *Akwamu-Peki Relations*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Institute of Africa Studies, Legon, 1967, p.5.

²² C.C. Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, Ghana Universities Press, Accra, 1966, p.60.

²³ R. Kea, *Ashanti-Danish Relations, 1760-1831*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis I.A.S, Legon, 1967 pp.17-18.

²⁴ David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana, 1850-1928*, Oxford, 1963, p.12.

²⁵ I. Wilks; "The Rise of Akwamu Empire 1650-1760". *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, University of Ghana, Legon, 1957, p.129.

²⁶ H.W. Debrunner: *A Church Between Colonial Powers*, 1965, p.100-110.

states susceptible to foreign attacks and they were to remain under Akwamu dominance for over nearly 100 years. What was to aggravate the already precarious situation was the way Peki (a Krepi state) allowed herself to be used as an instrument of Akwamu indirect rule in Krepi. Peki had the reputation for collaborating with Akwamu to fight and exploit other Krepi states for slaves. All Krepi states paid tribute to Akwamu through Peki.²⁷ This attitude of Peki estranged other Krepi states.

The many years that the Krepis suffered under Asante and Akwamu had devastating effects on the political organization of the people. The Krepis were plunged into a deplorable and wretched condition. Many towns were devastated as a result of repeated raids and kidnappings. Traders from Krepiland suffered greatly at the hands of Akwamu on their way to Accra to sell their goods. At times, the Akwamus attacked and robbed them of their goods and money.²⁸

In 1833, long before the British took over the Danish settlements in the Krepi country, a grudge developed between Kwadzo Dei, the Chief of Peki, and Akoto, the Chief of Akwamu.²⁹ Consequently, Kwadzo Dei defected from the Akwamu – Peki alliance to lead other Krepi states to overthrow Akwamu overlordship in 1833.³⁰ According to Amenumey, between 34-35 states comprising 116 towns formed the coalition headed by Kwadzo Dei to fight Akwamu in 1833.³¹

The leadership role that Peki played in the Krepi-Akwamu war of 1833 later generated a controversy among historians as to whether Peki actually had real dominance over other Krepi States. Historians are divided on the issue. One group led by E.B. Asare asserts that with the overthrow of Akwamu overlordship, Awudome and all others which rallied round Kwadzo Dei to fight the war continued to pay

²⁷ E.B. Asare, *Akwamu-Peki Relations*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis Institute of African Studies, Legon, 1967, p.18.

²⁸ C.C. Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, 2nd edition, London 1966, pp.244-45 and p.304.

²⁹ C.W. Welman, *The Native States of the Gold Coast: History and Constitution of Peki* No.1, Longman, London 1924, p.10-14.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ D.E.K. Amenumey, *The Ewes in Pre-Colonial Times*, Sedco Publications, Accra, 1986, p.80.

allegiance to Peki. Asare goes on to say that these Krepi states continued to recognise and accept Peki leadership for a long time after their war of independence against Akwamu. The court of Kwadzo Dei, according to Asare, became the place where people were said to have sought redress.³²

The other group led by A.K. Asem contended vehemently that Peki never exercised any suzerainty over the other Krepi states, and that the people rallied round Peki in their bid to ward off Akwamu invasion.

A careful examination of the situation, however, shows that until 1886 Peki did not exercise any suzerainty over other Krepi states. The fact that Kwadzo Dei led the other Krepi states to fight the 1833 war did not mean that he was recognised as a paramount chief of Krepi. A number of factors made Peki the obvious choice as the leader of the combined Krepi force. First, the long association of Peki with Akwamu from 1707 to 1730 enabled Peki to become conversant with the military organization, tactics, strength and weakness of the Akwamu army. According to some of the traditions associated with Peki-Akwamu alliance, Peki once served in Akwamuhene's wars as the Chief Vanguard.³³

Second, Peki was caught in an inextricable situation. The crux of the matter was that by withdrawing from the Nyire-Peki negotiations at Taviefe, Kwadzo Dei earned the ire of Akwamu. Herein lies the cause of the 1833 war. It is on record that the Krepi-Peki alliance was formed when Akoto defeated Kwadzo Dei at Bame in August 1833 and proceeded to enter Peki forcing Peki people to retreat.³⁴ It is therefore reasonable to suggest that Peki had to be the leader of the alliance, for she had no choice in a situation where she became the first object of attack for defying the orders of Akoto at Taviefe.

There is no mention of any customary rites, ceremonies or treaties in any of the traditional accounts that show that the other Krepi states (who fought in the war) were actually bound in a permanent alliance

³² E.B. Asare, *Op.cit.*

³³ E.B. Asare; "Akwamu-Peki Relations in the Eighteenth and the Twentieth Centuries", Institute of African Studies, Legon 1967 p.18. See also I. Wilks "The Rise of the Akwamu Empire 1650-1710" *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Legon 1957, p.2.

³⁴ E.Y. Aduah: *Volta Basin Traditions*, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. Date 1965-, pp.1-2. V.2.

with Peki on the eve of the 1833 war or thereafter. On the contrary, the historical background of the Krepi states (as discussed earlier) shows that these states would never willingly surrender themselves to the authority of any single state as to create a kingdom reminiscent of Notsie. Yet, no tradition says that Peki ever embarked upon an expedition against the other Krepi states with the aim of creating an empire or a kingdom. Even if we are to conjecture that some towns continued to recognise Peki's leadership well after the 1833 war (as claimed by some historians), it might be those states that were in the immediate environs of Peki like Boso, Anum, Awudome, Bame, Tsibu and Kpeve. Awudome and some other Krepi states even denied ever recognizing Peki overlordship and contended that they merely entered into a military agreement in 1833. These states were Taviefe, Kpandu, Ho, Fodome, Adaklu, Agotime, Lume, Likpe, Akpafu, Nkunya, Bowri and Santrokofi.³⁵ According to Manoukian, the Ewe-Speaking people have never formed a single political Unit. She goes on to say that even though some political units formed alliances in times of war these were only temporary, breaking up when peace was restored.³⁶

It can therefore be reaffirmed that the 1833 Krepi alliance was merely a military alliance, a kind of contingency measure aimed at dealing with the Akwamu menace and that after the war, the alliance became moribund. The various states then reversed to the policy of 'as you were'.

With the Asante and Akwamu invasions over, one would have expected that the various states would come together. But as it turned out, the contrary happened. The end of these external invasions was to lead to serious quarrels among the various Krepi states with one state accusing the other of helping Akwamu and Asante to prosecute the war against them. A case in point was the first Taviefe war fought in 1875 when Peki in a show of chauvinism, attacked Taviefe. The chief of Peki, Kwadzo Dei IV accused the people of Taviefe of assisting Adu Boffo³⁷ (the Asante army commander). In 1988, for instance,

³⁵ ADM 39/5/73 Ho District Record Book p.6.

³⁶ H. Manoukian, "The Ewe-Speaking People of Togoland and the Gold Coast", *International African Institute, Ethnographic Survey of Africa*, London, Part VI, 1952, p.30.

³⁷ The name Adu Boffo featured prominently in most of the oral traditions that the author collected on Asante-Krepi wars in the Central Volta Region.

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Taviefe also was alledged to have attacked Ziavi and killed seventeen people partly because Ziavi assisted Peki in the Taviefe war of 1875.³⁸

The creation of Krepi paramountcy

When Britain took over Danish possessions in 1850, Krepi became part of the British Protectorate. The theory of Indirect Rule that Britain used in administering her colonies required that a paramount Chief must be created where none existed. Coincidentally, the role that Peki played as the leader of the coalition against Akwamu was well recognised by the British. In this connection, Kwadzo Dei fitted very well into the overall scheme of British Colonial policy of indirect rule. The British therefore decided to make Kwadzo Dei what they called a "Head Chief" of Krepi to be used as an instrument of Indirect Rule. All Krepi States were made to sign an agreement in 1886 recognizing Kwadzo Dei as "Head Chief" of Krepi.³⁹

It was envisaged that the creation of the Krepi paramountcy will bring about peace and unity among the various political units. It was only from this period (1886-1890) that one could really talk about some Peki dominance of a sort over other Krepi states by virtue of a British imposed treaty. The terms of the treaty were presented by Riby Williams to the Krepi people at Peki in June 1886.⁴⁰

The most important part of the agreement that is relevant to this study had to do with judicial administration:

All ordinary judicial cases were left in the hands of the great chiefs, to make such arrangements in every town and village as will secure the due

Adu Boffo was noted for his ruthlessness and bravery in the Krepi-Asante wars.

³⁸ See ADM 39/5/73 p.92. See also W.W. Claridge: *A History of Gold Coast and Ashanti*, 2nd Ed., Frank Cass and Co. Ltd. London, 1964, pp. 315-316 for details on the war.

³⁹ ADM 39/1/174 Anglo-German Boundry. Also A. K. Asem, *History of Awudomey*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, Tema, 1982, p.4.

⁴⁰ Riby Williams was the District Comssioner for Volta District. He signed on behalf of the Governor of the Gold Coast Colony. See ADM 11/175 SNA Case No. 75/1912 Treaties with Native Chiefs.

and imperial administration of justice an appeal lies from only and all other native courts to the court of the chief paramount (Kwadzo Dei) ⁴¹

The import of this clause was that all appeals from all courts in Krepiland had to go to the court of Kwadzo Dei. By this treaty, Kwadzo Dei had assumed paramount status in Krepiland. The terms of the agreement, as was usually the case in all dependencies, were not negotiable. Forty Chiefs were forced to sign the agreement but Kwadzo Dei signed as "Head Chief" or a paramount chief. ⁴²

By virtue of this treaty, all the signatories, no doubt, recognised Kwadzo Dei as their paramount chief. The British flag which Kwadzo Dei distributed among the signatories was significant. ⁴³ It is in the light of this that one considers E.B. Asare's assertion that by receiving the flag, the Krepil states were more or less saying they owned allegiance to the British Crown through the Peki (their local overlord) a valid statement. As to whether the chiefs who signed the agreement understood the import of it is another proposition. The fact that they did sign it with all its details is a pointer to the undisputable fact that Peki, from 1886, assumed the position of paramountcy over other Krepil states. This fact notwithstanding, the argument in favour of Peki dominance over other Krepil states from 1886 cannot be pushed too far for a number of reasons. One is inclined to believe that the treaty of 1886 was signed by the forty chiefs in principle. This is because in 1887 Adai Kwesi, Chief of Awudome, instigated some Krepil states not to recognise the jurisdiction of Kwadzo Dei. The British government in her bid to enforce the treaty sent the Gold Coast constabulary under Assistant Inspector Applin to Awudome to discipline' chief Adai Kwasi. The latter was made to pay a fine of 300 pounds. ⁴⁴

⁴¹ ADM 39/1/174 Anglo-German Boundary File No.27/1/1908. See also ADM 39/1/16 Anglo-German Frontier. See again, File No. 23/1/1710. A.K. *Asem History of Awudome*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, Tema, Ghana 1982, p.4.

⁴² See Appendix 'B' for the full list of Chiefs who signed the Agreement in 1886.

⁴³ The District Commissioner for the Volta, District, Riby Williams gave British Flags to Kwadzo Dei from whom the Various Krepil Chiefs received the flags. The flag was a symbol of British authority. See ADM 39/5/73.

⁴⁴ ADM 11/1/647 A

It would appear therefore that the period of serious collaboration and unity among the Krepi states was over ever since the threat from Akwamu and Asante was over. The reality was that even through some of the Krepi States formed alliances in times of war, these were only temporary, breaking up when peace was restored. The records are clear that there had never been a political confederation of Ewe sub-tribes in the conventional sense of the word.⁴⁵ Therefore, not even the Krepi Bond of 1886 could knit together the various states. In this regard, if the purpose of the agreement was to monitor the day-to-day administration of the various political units, then one can say that the bond turned to be a chimera. E.B. Asare admittedly stated that the union appeared to have been an uneasy one fraught with tension and divisive factors.⁴⁶

Furthermore, Kwadzo Dei's position as paramount chief over other Krepi States did not go beyond four years, for in 1890, Krepiland was partitioned between Britain and Germany. The partition ceded a sizeable part of Kwadzo Dei's confederacy of Krepi states to Germany. With this, the famous Krepi bond of 1886 became defunct.⁴⁷ Certainly, four years was too short a period for Peki to effectively exert her control over the relatively large Krepi area. Indeed, the partition of the area deepened the fragmentation of the Ewes and put on hold any attempts at forming an Ewe confederation.

Conclusion

The above panoramic view of Krepiland on the eve of German occupation shows that tension, fear, mistrust and disunity had been the bane of the lives of the Krepi people. A centralised government could have been created through force, but no Krepi state was strong enough

⁴⁵ M. Manoukian, *The Ewe-Speaking people of Togoland and the Gold Coast*, International African Institute, Ethnographic Survey of Africa, Western Africa, Part VI, 1952 pp. 5-10.

⁴⁶ E.B. Asare, *Akwamu-Peki Relations in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, M.A. Thesis, Institute of African Studies, Legon., 1974. p.36.

⁴⁷ Of course, those states which fell to Britain as a result of the partition might continue to recognize, Peki's authority; but that even has to be fully investigated in the light of Awudome's objection. Note also the tension, which characterised the relationship between Peki on the one side and Anum and Boso on the other after the partition. See ADM 39/7/16. Anlgo-German Frontier.

to do so. King Kwadjo Dei, Chief of Peki traditional area, had quite an impressive reign and he could have created an empire given the time and the peace. But by the time he started the process it was a little too late. The Germans had come!