

**THE ROLE OF RELIGION ON THE CHIEFTAINCY INSTITUTION: A CASE
STUDY OF CHAMBA TRADITIONAL AREA IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF
GHANA**

By:

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B.A (RELIGIOUS STUDIES)

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES, KWAME
NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE
OF
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

AUGUST, 2013.

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that with the exception of the views of the respondents and references with which I have duly acknowledged, this thesis is a product of my own research work. I further affirm that this thesis has never been presented either partly or fully for the award of a degree in any University.

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Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on thesis laid down by the University of Science and Technology.

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ABSTRACT

The focus of the research was to find out whether or not religion plays a role on the chieftaincy institution especially in the area of selection, installation, enskinment and post-enskinment of chiefs in study area. The study examined the role that religious functionaries; Imams, Mallams, Diviners and Earth Priest play in the selection of chiefs in the study area. It also examined the religious duties of Imams, Mallams, Diviners and Earth Priest to the chiefs in the study area.

The study has shown that religion indeed plays a vital role on the chieftaincy institution. A chief is supposed to serve as a link between the ancestors and the living. In selecting such a person for installation and enskinment a lot of consultation, divination, rituals, prayers and sacrifices are done to know the wish of the ancestors. The findings of the research have also established that the court can disqualify a chief from carrying himself as a chief or disqualify a person from being enskinned or enstooled as a chief after the person has gone through all the necessary rites as required by tradition. However, whoever is declared as the rightful person to be enskinned or enstooled, has to go through all the necessary religious rites and practices as required by tradition before being enskinned.

Traditional and Islamic rites and practices will continue to be part and parcel of enskinment processes in the study area because the above religions have influence on the lives of the people including the chieftaincy institution. Besides, religious functionaries; Diviners, Imams, Mallams and Earth Priest will also continue to offer religious duties such as divination, prayers, provision of protective charms to the chiefs and also offering of sacrifices to the gods of the land on behalf of the chiefs in the study area.

The methodological approach to the study was qualitative case study. The study used secondary and primary data. The secondary data includes analyses of both published and unpublished books. The primary data were acquired from fieldwork through the use of interviews.

The research is relevant because the findings of the research would serve as a reference point or academic material for those who would want to research into the chieftaincy institution.



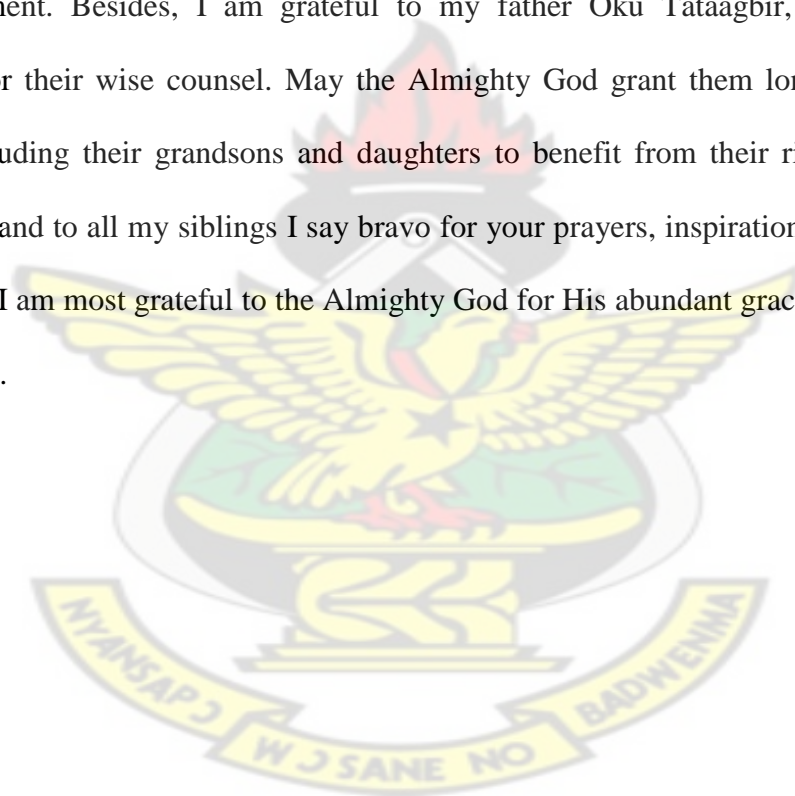
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT(S)

As the saying goes, a journey of thousand miles begins with the first step. It is the hope of getting to a successful end of this journey that has kept us blazing the trail under difficult circumstances. Gratitude it is said is the least of all virtues but ingratitude is the worst of all the vices. It is against this background that I feel indebted to persons who have played significant roles in helping me to complete this M.Phil Programme and thesis.

First and foremost, I am most grateful to the University, the Department of Religious Studies and the School of Graduate Studies for offering me admission to pursue Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) in Religious Studies. My profound gratitude also goes to my supervisor Sheikh Zakaria M. Seebaway for his invaluable constructive criticisms and suggestions, his encouragement and guidance, his sense of humour and above all reading every stage of this work despite his busy schedule. To him I say may Allah richly bless him and his family abundantly and may he live to be a centenarian for many people to benefit from his rich experience. I am most grateful to all the Lecturers of the Department of Religious Studies for the knowledge they have imparted into me and also helping to shape my work and my future. I am also very grateful to Dr. A.S. Anamzoya a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Sociology, University of Ghana, Legon for giving me the necessary books that are relevant to my work to do photo copies without any hesitation. May Allah richly bless him and his family.

I am highly indebted to the two chiefs in the study area namely: *Na* Abukari Iddrisu and *Ubor* Bilin-igban Punpiir, Kingmakers, Elders, Diviners, Imam, Mallams, Pastors, Earth-Priest, the Assembly member for Chamba West Bawati David and two teachers namely: Awal Iddrisu Poatob Gladys. They have played vital roles in sharing their rich experience and perspectives on the role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution during the

fieldwork. Their experience and perspectives have contributed immensely in shaping the content of this thesis. Of special mention are Awal Iddrisu and Ntoni James who always carried me to and fro on their motorbikes to the homes of the respondents during the field work. I also acknowledge thank Jakpa Mamebi Moses for sharing his thoughts on the thesis. Similarly I appreciate my fellow M. Phil students particularly the 2011 year group, especially Dassah Esther, Cassandra Enniful, Yussif Mohammad Mutawakil, Mohammad Umar Ibn Raees, Oduro-Ewisi Kwame Affro, Quajo Ntiamoah, Treve Wise and all those whose names I am unable to mention for their moral support and encouragement. Besides, I am grateful to my father Oku Tataagbir, my mum Oku Yilikdoe for their wise counsel. May the Almighty God grant them long life for more people including their grandsons and daughters to benefit from their rich wisdom and experience and to all my siblings I say bravo for your prayers, inspiration and support. In conclusion I am most grateful to the Almighty God for His abundant grace throughout the Programme.



DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my lovely wife Kuncham Naomi and our children: Nlamawan, Mbitilaar and Abena without whose cooperation, support and encouragement this work would not have seen the light of the day.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

In Ghana the chieftaincy institution goes back at least five hundred years and predated European contact and remained the basis of traditional governance in Ghana and for that matter Chamba Traditional Area. Ghanaian chieftaincy now has family units with family heads at the base of the chieftaincy triangle and the [Overlords or Kings] at the apex. Chieftaincy in Ghana has therefore emerged from the social fabric of the land. This means that unlike chieftaincy set-ups in other parts of Africa, the Ghanaian chieftaincy is nobody's creation and therefore cannot be easily destroyed.¹

In order to unearth the topic under discussion, an attempt will be made to look at the views of scholars in their attempt to define religion and chieftaincy. There is always a problem when the question, "what is religion" is posed. The question seems simple because we often talk about religion. It is not only students of religion who talk about religion but the religious people also do. Beyers quoting Momen, Hammer and Crossby assert that over the centuries, there have been attempts to define the phenomenon of religion. These attempts have come from various perspectives, ranging from the Psychological, Philosophical, Sociological and Anthropological and most recently, they have come from a biological perspective. Not only can these attempts be arranged according to perspectives, but also according to theorists

¹D. Addo, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The Future*. Accra: Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2004, P.1

providing definitions for the groups of definitions. Although varied, the theories and definitions became in stereo typical forms.² Beyers again citing Asad argues that as a result of the confusion caused by the plethora of definitions there have even been suggestions to discard the mostly dominant western term religion altogether.³

Agyemang on his part argues that whilst some aspects of religion are empirical and hence can be... investigated and specified as to what they are, there are other aspects like the emotional conditions of religious people and non empirical entities that some religious people vehemently claim exist. These subjective aspects accentuate the difficulty in coming out with a general and universally acceptable definition of religion.⁴ In spite of the difficulty in coming out with a universally acceptable definition of religion, Gedzi quoting Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar (2004), defined religion as 'a belief in the existence of an invisible world, distinct but not separate from the visible one, that is home to spiritual beings with effective powers over the material world.'⁵ Gyekye on his part defined religion as an awareness of the existence of some ultimate, Supreme Being who is the origin and sustainer of this universe and the establishment of constant ties with these Being-influences, in a comprehensive

²J. Beyers, What is Religion?: An African Understanding, *The 9th European Association for the Study of Religion*. University of Messina, 14-17 September, 2009, Messina: Open Journal Publishing, 2010, p.1.

³Ibid., p.1.

⁴Y.S. Agyemang, *The Study of Religion*. Unpublished, University of Cape Coast, 2003, pp.2-4.

⁵V.S. Gedzi, *Principles and Practices of Dispute Resolution in Ghana: Ewe and Akan Procedures on Females' Inheritance and Property Rights*. Hague: Shaker Publishing, 2009, p.49.

way, the thoughts and actions of the African people.⁶ The definition of Gedzi and Gyekye reflect the world-view of the people of the study area because they believe in the existence of the Supreme Being, ancestors' gods and other host of divinities and worship them in their own right. They also rely on these supernatural beings when taking political decisions like selection of chiefs, social decisions like marriage and economic decisions like farming and trading.

According to Awuah-Nyamekye, chieftaincy is a system of governance or political arrangement in which the leader is known as a chief. The chieftaincy institution is the most visible and prominent form of political system among all the ethnic groups in Ghana. However, the history of the institution in Ghana is not uniform. It differs from society to society and there is evidence that not until the colonization of the country, some Ghanaian societies did not have centralized government under chiefs but lived in what has been described as acephalous-groups with no centralized political heads as such-way of organization.⁷ Asante in Odotei *et al.*, (2006), defines the Chieftaincy Institution in terms of an institution relating to the traditional political system or governance in Africa [and that this institution] in many respect is sacred.⁸

⁶K. Gyekye, *African Cultural Values: An Introduction*. Accra: Sankofa Publishing Company, 1996, p.5.

⁷Awuah-Nyamekye, "The Role of Religion in the Institution of Chieftaincy: The Case of the Akan of Ghana". Unpublished M. Phil Thesis, University of Cape Coast, 2009,p.3.

⁸E.Asante, "The Relationship between the Chieftaincy Institution and Christianity in Ghana", in Odotei, I.K. and Awedoba, A.k. (eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*.Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2006, p.231.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Mbiti posited that Africans are notoriously religious and each people have its own religious systems with a set of beliefs and practices and that religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it.⁹ What this means is that religion to the African is indispensable. Ghana, even though a secular state, still has links with the traditional leadership of which religion and religious persons play critical roles especially in the areas of selection, installation, enskinment and post-enskinment.

Asante on his part asserts that none can be an adequate chief if he refuses to perform the religious functions of his office. The sacred status of the chief and the religious rites connected with chieftaincy cannot be overlooked in any serious discussions of the institution of chieftaincy in Africa. Even Christians who have been enstooled or enskinned as chiefs have all felt the obligation to perform traditional religious rites in order to ensure the welfare of their people, good health, plentiful harvest and fertility. They have done this either directly by themselves or indirectly by delegation.¹⁰

In spite of the above assertions about the role of religion on the chieftaincy institution, a court can put an injunction on a disputed skin, disqualify a chief from carrying himself as a chief in a Traditional Area or disqualify a person from being enskinned as a chief after the person has gone through all the necessary rites as an individual who hails from a royal family. The question that one may ask and justifiably so is if

⁹J.S. Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*. Nairobi: Heinman Kenya Ltd, 1969, p.1.

¹⁰E .Asante, "The Relationship between the Chieftaincy Institution and Christianity in Ghana", in Odotei, I.K. and Awedoba, A.k. (eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2006,p.231.

this trend should continue, would religion continue to play any role on the chieftaincy institution especially the selection, installation, enskinment, or enstoolment and post-enskinment or enstoolment of chiefs now and in future? It is against this background that this research seeks to find out the role that religion plays on the selection, installation, enskinment or enstoolment and post-enskinment of chiefs in Chamba Traditional Area.

1.2 Research Questions

The following questions were asked the interviewees to solicit their views on the topic under discussion. What role does religion play in the selection, installation, enskinment and post-enskinment of chiefs in your Traditional Area? Would religion continue to play a major role in the enskinment or enstoolment of chiefs in future in the face of courts disqualifying some chiefs or persons to be enskinned or enstooled as chiefs? What religious duties do Imams, Mallams, Earth Priest, Diviners and Pastors offer to the chiefs in the Traditional Area?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this research was to investigate whether or not religion plays a role on the chieftaincy institution. In pursuing this objective, the study:

- Examined the historical development of the chieftaincy institution in Ghana.
- Examined the views of scholars on the inter play between religion and the chieftaincy institution.
- Investigated the role that religion plays in the selection, installation, enskinment and post-enskinment of chiefs.

- Found out the duties of religious functionaries like Imams, Mallams, Earth Priest and Diviners to the chiefs in the study area.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Although, scholars have written about the political organization, religious beliefs and practices of the people of northern Ghana much has not been done in the area of enskinment and post-enskinment of their chiefs and the role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution especially in Chamba Traditional Area. It is against this backdrop that this research is significant. Besides, the findings of the research would serve as a reference point or academic material for those who would want to research into the chieftaincy institution.

More so, if people are properly educated on the role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution especially the selection using this research findings and other findings it would offer credible, effective and acceptable chiefs or kings for enskinment. It would also help reduce suspicion of the manipulation of selection to the highest bidder. This will help reduce the acrimony that characterizes enskinment of chiefs or kings thereby minimizing chieftaincy disputes which when not properly handled degenerate into chieftaincy conflicts.

When one commits a crime and is being summoned to appear before a chief from one gate he or she also goes to counter summon his protagonist to also appear before his or her rival gate. In the end criminals are left to go off the hook unpunished as a result of chieftaincy disputes in those Traditional Areas.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study was limited to Chamba Traditional Area in the Northern region of Ghana. The study focused on the Role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution in the area. The choice of the area as a study unit first of all was due to the fact that African Traditional Religion and Islam have been incorporated into the chieftaincy institution. These religions play a critical role in the selection, installation, enskinment and post-enskinment of chiefs. Finally, the recommendations of the study will not only benefit the study area but the entire country since similar problems can be found in other parts of the country.

1.6 The Study Area

Chamba is one of the town's under the Nanumba North district of Northern region of Ghana with Bimbilla as its district capital. "Bimbilla is the traditional capital of Nanun or the Nanumba Kingdom, one of the traditional states established in Northern Ghana in the 14th century" (Anamzoya 2010:47). The Nanumba Traditional Area constitutes Nanumba North and South Districts. The Bimbilla Skin is a Paramount Skin and the study area falls under the Bimbilla skin. The study area is bounded to the East, by East Gonja District, to the North, by Nanumba North District and to the South, by Nanumba South District. The dominant religion in the study area is African traditional religion. The main occupation of the people are farming and trading. The town is cosmopolitan in nature. Various ethnic groups are found there and these include: Nanumba, Konkomba, Chamba, Bassare, Akan and Ewe.

The clan heads or elders of the various northern ethnic groups in the area like the Konkomba and Bassare nominate or select a person they want to be enskinned as

chief. After that the Nanumba chief does the enskinment. *Ubor* Bilin-igban the chief of Konkomba told me that they were acephalous and that in the olden days settled their disputes arising out of marriage, and farm lands using their clan heads. They therefore never saw the need for having a chief(s) so did not have structures for enskinment of chiefs. With the passage of time they have now seen the need for having chiefs to deal with issues that are beyond clan heads. In the study area both Traditional and Islamic practices are performed side by side in the enskinment of chiefs without any prejudice.

1.7 Methodology and Data Collection

It is important to select the methodological approach that will help achieve the stated objectives when one is carrying out a research. This will provide the guidelines as to how the needed information can be obtained for the study. It will also help in eliciting appropriate responses to the research questions posed to the respondents for valuable conclusions to be reached. The research therefore employed qualitative case study of the role of religion on the chieftaincy institution in Chamba Traditional Area of Northern region of Ghana. The types of questions asked were either open-ended or close-ended.

The study also employed non-probability Sampling technique. Under then non-probability sampling, purposive and snowball sampling methods were employed. The purposive and snowball sampling were used to select the respondents. According to Kumekpor in purposive sampling, the units of the sample are selected not by random procedure, but they are intentionally picked for study because of their characteristics or because they satisfy certain qualities which were not randomly distributed in the universe but they are typical or they exhibit most of the interest to the study.

Snowball sampling method was used to select Diviners and Mallams in the study area. This method was carried out by identifying someone who meets the criteria for inclusion in the study and the subsequent sample based on referrals from initial informants or respondents.¹¹

The study made use of primary and secondary sources of data collection methods. The instrument used for the primary data collection was unstructured interview schedules. The instrument was pre-tested to ascertain its appropriateness and reliability. The interview method was used because most of the respondents were of low education background. Kumekpor stipulates that with the unstructured interview, the interviewer may or may not use full-scale interview questionnaire. Even if he has one, he does not follow it closely. In most unstructured interviews, interviewer has a number of points or ideas he wants to study or explore. The interviewer can proceed with any order of the questions he deems appropriate. It is flexible in terms of sequence of questions as well as their phraseology. He can pursue certain questions further than he does for others. He may take cues, for additional questions he did not originally plan to ask from a respondent's answer. As the interview proceeds, he may add or delete questions as appropriate. He is not bound, in any way to adopt the same procedure with all respondents. The interviewer has more flexibility and discretion which he or she is expected to use.¹²

In case of very experienced respondents more time can be spent and more questions asked to solicit more information and for less experience respondents, the number of

¹¹T.K.B. Kumekpor, *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research*. Legon: University Press, 2002, p.138.

¹²T.K.B. Kumekpor, *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research*.P.188.

questions can be reduced and the interview shortened. It is against this backdrop that the study made use of the unstructured interview to collect data. Under the unstructured interview, personal face-to face approach was adopted by contacting the respondents. This made it possible for follow up questions to be asked for further clarification and also to develop personal friendship and rapport with the respondent(s) for future research as and when the need arises.

1.7.1 Units of Analysis

The key informants comprised the Chiefs, Imams, Mallams, Diviners or Soothsayers, Earth Priest, Kingmakers, Pastors, Assembly member and Teachers. The choice of the above respondents are based on the fact that most of them hail from the study area and have lived there most of their lives and have witnessed the enskinment of chiefs in the Traditional Area. As such they have the requisite knowledge and experience in the processes of selection, installation and enskinment of chiefs. The chiefs are regarded as the repositories of customs, values and traditions. In this study descriptive method of data analysis was employed. Some of the results are presented in a table and pie chart.

1.8 Limitations of the Research

The study sought to explore the role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution. This could not have been successful without some constraints in the course of the research. The following constraints were therefore encountered. First and foremost, due to the chieftaincy disputes that the institution is grappling with, some of the chiefs' were not willing to grant interviews for fear of implicating themselves. They started granting me interviews after speaking to their relatives far and near. In

addition, explanation of certain rites posed a problem because certain rites or rituals are shrouded in secrecy and its explanation need no further clarification. When it came to such rites or rituals you would often hear respondents saying that is what our forefathers told us. That was anticipated.

Scarcity of documentary materials that deals with enskinment of chiefs especially from the Northern region was a challenge. Besides, I had to travel several times before meeting the interviewees after they have scheduled their own time or date for the interview. I believe that the above stated constraints are likely to confront any researcher who wants to research into a cultural topic like the above. This notwithstanding, with patience, perseverance, ingenuity and the use of diplomacy as a guiding principle, those limitations were surmounted.

1.9 Literature Review

This segment considered a review of books and related materials already in existence that has dealt with the chieftaincy institution especially the selection, installation, enskinment and post-enskinment of chiefs on the “Role of Religion on the Chieftaincy Institution”. Prior to the actual field work, information was gathered from Secondary sources or textual materials in the form of books, both published and unpublished, journals, articles and internet on religion and chieftaincy. The use of different methods, sources and techniques such as unstructured interviews and analysis of documentary material will go a long way to have a holistic approach to the research.

Mendonsa in his book entitled *Continuity and Change in a West African Society: Globalization Impact on the Sisala of Ghana* (2001) posits that “divination is widely

practiced throughout Northern Ghana and is the main medium through which the living contacts their deceased ancestors.”

Owusu-Ansah in his article entitled “Prayer, Amulets, and Healing” in Levtzion and Pouwels, *The History of Islam in Africa* (2000) opines that diviners are consulted for explanations on negative conditions such as prolonged drought, crops failure and unexplained deaths in the community. It is widely believed that diviners are able to... improve upon client’s chances of success in an event or contest. It is the diviners’ ability to foretell future occurrences, influence and manipulate them in their clients’ favour that has made their services in high demand among the aspirants for high office and the population at large.

Oppong in his book entitled *Growing up in Dagbon* (1973) on his part argues that diviners are consulted upon every conceivable occasion; at succession to office and undertaken a new enterprise. Diviners play considerable political roles in that they are consulted when a new *Ya na* is chosen. On Earth Priest he noted that the former, “people of the land”, *Tengbihi* are particularly associated with the cult of the earth spirit, whose shrines are under the care of the Earth Priest. The Earth Priest performs the necessary rituals and sacrifices, which ensure the prosperity of the land and the fertility of the people and their crops and stock. On the death of *Ya na* his royal corpse is buried with due ritual and ceremony in a grave in the royal compound, which subsequently becomes the site for rites and sacrifices to be performed as part of the royal ancestral cult including the provision of food.

Tonah in his paper entitled “Diviners, Mallams, God and the Contest for Paramount Chiefship in Mamprugu (Northern Ghana)” (2006) quoted Anamzoya 2004 and Ladouceur 1972 as saying that in “Northern Ghana, competition for high traditional office is particularly fierce among the centralized and hierarchical states of Dagbon,

Mamprugu, Nanun and Gonja. In Dagbon the bitter struggle between the two royal gates¹³ (Abudu and Andani).” In Nanun, conflicts between Gbugmayili and Bangyili have characterized succession to the Bimbilla *Na* (Skalnik 1987). Becoming a chief is the most cherished achievement of all persons of royal descent hence the fierce struggle which sometimes leads to violence and chaos among the contestants. The consequence is that those places suffer in terms of development because no investor will like to invest at a place where his capital is not safe.

Anamzoya in his article “Chieftaincy Conflicts in Northern Ghana: A Challenge to National Stability.” In Tonah (eds). *Contemporary Social Problems in Ghana* (2009) noted that “the soothsaying method was adopted and later abandoned after the selection of *Na* Gungobli in 1627 because according to the elders by choosing Gungobli (the younger of the two princes) the soothsayer had gone wrong.” Five years later, Staniland in his book entitled *The Lions of Dagbon: Political Challenge in Northern Ghana* (1973) argues that ‘in present circumstance, it is virtually impossible to talk about a ‘proper’ procedure [of selecting a *Ya na*], since there are conflicts over several crucial elements of selection.”

Anamzoya, in his article “Chieftaincy Conflicts in Ghana: The Case of Bimbilla Skin Succession Dispute.” *In the University of Ghana Inter-Faculty Journal* (2010) according to him, when a chief is finally selected the head of the king makers sends

¹³A gate is a royal house or family with common descendants from which a prince can aspire to chieftaincy position in a particular traditional area (cf. Anamzoya 2009:212). According to Tonah (2007:46) as cited in Anamzoya, “[A] gate is both a social and geographical category. Members of a particular gate consist of the descendants of a former paramount chief who occupy a particular section of the settlement. Among many ethnic groups in Northern Ghana, the occupant of a ‘skin’ (i.e. the king or chief is selected from among royals within a particular gate.”

him kola for distribution to his family members, relatives and neighbours, to inform them that he has been given *naam* (chiefship).

Wilks, in his article “The Growth of Islamic Learning in Ghana” in the *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria* (1963) observes that the opinions of diviners and mallams have been closely associated with the appointment or selection of suitable candidates among a number of competitors for a vacant traditional title or chieftaincy position.

Goody in his book entitled *Succession to High Office* (1996) posits that whatever procedure is use for selecting from among a pool of candidates, “the human choice often requires the confirmation of divine authority. Either the electors themselves are seen as guided by God (or by his clergy), or else they resort to some materials device in order to divine the wishes of the unseen powers...for in putting the onus upon luck or the gods, men remove element of friction from their own affairs.”

Tonah in his paper entitled “Diviners, Mallams, God and the Contest for Chiefship in Mamprugu in Northern Ghana” (2006) sharing his views on the role of Earth Priest in the chieftaincy institution noted that just as the lineage/household head performs sacrifices on behalf of his lineage/household, so too the Earth Priest performs similar religious sacrifices on behalf of the entire community. This pattern of religious life is widely practiced throughout Northern Ghana.

Davis, D.C., in his Ph.D Thesis unpublished entitled “Continuity and Change in Mamprugu: A study of Tradition as Ideology” (1984) argues that with respect to Mamprugu, during the pre-colonial days, the three Earth Priests were instrumental in the choice of a new *Nayiri*. They would consult diviners knowing very well that there

were many contestants from different gates and only one person could be given the title and announced the winner of the contest.

Rattray, in his book titled *The Tribes of Ashanti in the Hinterland* (1932) stipulates that in Dagbon when a chief died and a new chief was to be selected, the chief of Kpatia and councilors of the chief of Gushiegu call soothsayers or diviners to discover who was to be the next chief. They meet in the bush out of the sight of everyone else, during the day time because in the day time the belief is that benevolent spirits are at work. The soothsayers or diviners sit aside and are called upon one after the other. The leader of the kingmakers will pick three stones representing the contestants. The stones are hidden in different locations and one of the soothsayer's or diviners is called forward with or without a divination stick to pick the rightful candidate to be enskinned. The head of the kingmakers tells the soothsayer or diviner that the town or the village is now without a chief, the royal houses has assembled and want a chief who will be able to bring the community together without dividing the community. A chief whose reign will be peaceful may the ancestors guide them to choose such a person for them. This goes on until all the diviners or soothsayers have their turn. If all the soothsayers do not settle on one contestant and are divergent in their selection another set of soothsayers are invited far away from the community until majority of the soothsayers settles on one of the candidates. Although these processes of selecting a candidate are supposed to ensure fairness and forestall any likelihood of biases in divination if not properly handled can degenerate into chieftaincy conflict.

When selection and installation is done, on the day of enskinment, the chief elect is led into the skin house and lowered three times on the skin. He is also made to bath herbs of chiefship. This traditional bath is supposed to fortify the chief spiritually in

the discharge of his duties without fears. After this ritual bath, the chief is then given an insignia of his office that is calabash covered with goat skin, a spear made up of iron club and a wooden spear and the chief dresses in a white hat, white shirt and white trousers. A cow is then brought into the yard and slaughtered by an Imam. Some portion of the liver, lungs, the stomach and small intestines are cut and boiled. A calabash is brought and the boiled meat is put in it. The meat is then sent into the skin house. Some portions of the meat are put in between the teeth of the chief and the chief bites it and spit in front. He is given another piece which he spits it at his right hand side, and yet another, which he spits it at his left hand side, after which he eats a piece. The rational for spitting of the meat three times on the ground is to let the ancestors and the other host of divinities to take their portion before he takes his. Those who are present in the yard are then given the remaining meat to eat.

Rattray again noted that in Mamprugu Traditional Area when a chief dies and a new chief is selected among some of the processes that he goes through during the enskinment includes the following: his hair is shaved with a blade by a court barber and the hair is then handed over to *poa-na* (a female chief or Queen) and *Saduko-dana*, the clothes of the chief-elect are taken off and he is dressed in a *walega* skin. After he is dressed in this skin, the Saduko-dana takes him by both arms and makes pretence of sitting him on *Na-Moge* (a skin of the late chief). He does so for three times before sitting him upon the skin of the late chief. After this ceremony, he is made to bath and drink concoction made up of leaves prepared by the Queen.

The lowering of the chief on the skin three times is to mystically and spiritually link him to the ancestors and other divinities that have a role to play in the enskinment and also make the chief sacred. The bathing and drinking of the concoction is to fortify the chief spiritually for his public appearances and also to discharge his duties without

fear. The next day in the morning, the chief dresses in a red gown accompanied by some sub-chiefs mounts a donkey and visits two shrines and offers sacrifices. When they return from this visitation, the donkey on which the chief sat is killed with a dog and the meat eaten by the royal family. Anybody who has had an affair with the wife of a chief is not supposed to eat the meat otherwise he would be killed by the ancestors. This is to help curb immorality among the members of the royal family since they are potential chiefs; they are supposed to be moral paragons in the community. The drummers will then sing mentioning the names of the previous chiefs who have passed on seeking their blessings for the current chief. A cow is then killed by an Imam to Allah seeking his blessings for the chief and his subjects. The chief will then disclose his skin name and is hence forth called by that name. In the light of the above one can clearly see the role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution.

Rattray, in his book, *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, (1927), stipulated that “the funeral rites for an Ashanti king and the ultimate disposal of his remains seem to differ materially from the obsequies of an ordinary individual. After the death of a king or a chief, attempts are made to preserve his remains more carefully and reverently in order that these might serve as a medium or shrine for his spirit when it was summoned to return to his people in times of national re-union or national emergencies. Rattray’s work will serve as a guide to find out how the people of Chamba Traditional Area bury their chiefs and whether or not religion plays a role. The statement “to preserve his remains more carefully and reverently in order that these might serve as a medium or shrine for his spirit when it was summon to return to his people in times of national re-union or national emergencies” is very significant. This is because chief’s or traditional leaders see their leadership as a type

of leadership that thrives on religion and religious beliefs. For them, causes and solution(s) to their crises lie in the hands of the ancestors and gods of the land. When a leader or a chief relates very well with his ancestors by performing all the necessary rites and sacrifices as required, in times of calamity he would not be disappointed. However, if he does not relate well with his ancestors by performing all the necessary rites and sacrifices as required, the community is bound to suffer some setbacks such as outbreak of diseases and rampant snake bites.

Levtzion, in his book entitled *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A Study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in Pre-Colonial Period* (1968), posited that Kamshe Na that is the chief of Kamshe who doubled as a Mallam in his village, used to whisper prayers into a guard and send to *Ya na*. On receiving it, the *Ya na* carefully opened the guard and blessings came out to him. Later, Kamshe Na sent his son to Yendi to stay with the *Ya na* and pray for him. He further stated that Yendi has a tradition in which an Imam appoints one of his followers to live with the chief to slaughter animals and to pray for him. The creation of imamship brought a community closer to the centre for the Imam to serve the chief and also to pray at festivals and other ceremonies both private and public.

He also noted that in Dagbon, the consultation of soothsayers or diviners in the selection of a chief dates back to the seventeenth century. According to him, after the death of *Na Zokuli*, the elders consulted soothsayers or diviners who unanimously selected for the paramountcy the chief of the small village of Yamol-Karaga, the poor and sick Gungobili. Levtzion's work will among other things assist in investigating to unearth the religious duties of Imams, Mallams, Diviners or Soothsayers to chiefs in the Traditional Area. It will further help the study in investigating the role of religion on the chieftaincy institution.

Busia, in his book, *The Position of the Chief in Modern Political System of Ashanti*, (1951), posits that after a candidate had been elected and accepted, all adult men and women of the royal lineages hold a meeting with the chief-elect in the queen's house. They then settle any disputes or differences that might be between the chief-elect and any member of the royal family. After this, the adult male members each swear an oath of allegiance to the chief-elect, promising to serve him as the chosen occupant of the stool of their ancestors, and to support him in his administration as a chief of the Division. This precaution besides expressing the solidarity of the royal lineage imposed the moral and religious sanction of the oath on any member of the royal lineage who might feel injured on being passed over, to prevent him from working against the chief.

A day is then appointed for the installation of the chief. All the elders and headmen and their followers assembled in Wenchi. The Kontihene, through the Okyeame, formally send for the chief-elect, dressed in an *adinkra* cloth, signifying that he was mourning, accompanied by the members of the royal lineages. The Okyeame addressed the chief-elect as follows: Konti, Akwamu, Bokoro, Konton, Asere, Kyidom, Benkum, Twafo, Adonten, and Nifa – all the elders say that I should give you the stool. Do not go after women, when we give you advice, listen... take the stool the elders say they have given to you. The chief-elect in a standing position then take an oath pledging to comply with all that the elders have told him and should he violate the Oath, he should be destooled. The elders also in turn take the Oath of allegiance to the chief. Busia's opinion on Oath swearing will serve as a guide to find out the religious role of Oath on the chieftaincy institution in the Chamba Traditional Area.

Busia also opines that during the enstoolment, those in attendance in the stool house for the enstoolment rites include the following: the elders, spokesman and the Queen with a sheep and a bottle of schnapp. The Spokesman informs the ancestors whose stools are in the stool house that a new chief from their own descendant in the matrilineal line had been elected to take their place and govern the Division. The *Kontihene* will then hold the right hand of the chief, the spokesman will hold his left and the queen his waist. He is lowered gently two times on the stool and the third time he is made to sit on the stool. The buttocks of the chief are not allowed to touch the stool the first two times. The belief is that the spirits of the departed ancestors are present in the stool and if the buttocks of the chief touch the stool the first and second time he will be rendered **impotent**.

The spokesman then pours libation and prays for the new chief. A sheep is killed and its blood sprinkled on the blackened stools. On the same day after the ceremony in the stool house, another sheep (*nyame-dwane*: sheep for the Supreme Being) is killed in the open yard in front of the stool house. The chief first prays that the Supreme Being and the ancestors should help him so that there will be peace and prosperity during his reign. After this the chief becomes an acknowledged successor of his ancestors and head of the Division. He then visits each town in his Division in turn to thank his people, and to show himself to the gods at Gyansoso, Akrobi, and Droboso. Once this has been performed, the traditional belief is that the chief has become sacred and this is culminated by the many taboos that he is required to observe after his enstoolment.

He added that, chiefship in Ashanti is a sacred office. This had been shown by the rites of the chief's enstoolment and the role that he plays during ceremonies. As long as he sits upon the stool of the ancestors, his person is sacred. As the successor of the

ancestors, he performs various rites for the welfare of his people, with that office is also join other functions which may be described as administrative, executive, judicial and military. If he abuses his powers, he is divested of it by having his special connexion with his ancestors established on his enstoolment severed. This happened when he commits or was made to commit one of the tabooed acts. His sanctity is violated and he is no longer able to sit on the stool of the ancestors.

Busia sharing light on the role of religion on the chieftaincy institution again asserted that every twenty one –days an Ashanti chief offers libations to his royal ancestors on behalf of his subjects, praying that the soil may be fruitful and the tribe increase. He further, stipulates that only the chief could bring all the lineages together and sacrifice to his royal ancestors on behalf of the community as a whole. To the people this was his most important function. Before they came together to settle in a town as a community, the chief first sacrificed on their behalf. An example was when the people of Mampong at one time lived at Behenease between Nsuta and Juaben.

They decided to look for another place in which to live because they found Behenease too small. The chief of Mampong by then was Nana Akuamo. He sent his hunters to look for a suitable site. They found the site of the present Mampong. An area was marked out near River Tadie. The chief sent a sheep and some palm-wine to the Traditional Priest. The sheep was sacrificed to the river, and the wine was used for pouring libation. The chief and his people were coming to live near the river so they needed the protection of the river against malevolent spirits. After the performance of this sacrifices that the chief and his people move and settle there. I do agree with Busia because Ghana even though a secular state, there is the belief that malevolent and malevolent spirits exist. With regards to the malevolent spirits, unless certain

traditional rites or rituals are performed to drive those spirits away, they can cause havoc to humanity.

Asante in his research “The relationship between the Chieftaincy Institution and Christianity in Ghana” in Odotei *et al.*, *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*, (2006) asserts that “none can be an adequate chief who refuses to perform the religious functions of his office”. The sacred status of the chief and the religious rites connected with chieftaincy cannot be overlooked in any serious discussions of the institution of chieftaincy in Africa. Even Christians who have been enstooled as chiefs have all felt the obligation to perform religious rites in order to ensure the welfare of their people in terms of good health, plentiful harvest and fertility. They have done this either directly by themselves or indirectly by delegation.

He also opined that the sacredness of the chieftaincy institution derives both from the general sacred conception of the ancestors and the mystical relationship existing between traditional rulers and their royal ancestors. It is also derived from the customary rites, rituals and practices that appear to have religious undertones which the chieftaincy institution is associated with. He further stated that traditional leaders’ on their enstoolment become ritual figures in the sense that their lives are governed by ritual activities. They perform rites that are believed to guarantee the safety of their people and also their own. They maintain sacredness or make the totality of their personality suitable for the sacred or divine conditions.

He observed further that the position of the chief (in Asante community) gains significance within the organized ceremonies by which the people express their sense of dependence on their ancestors. The tradition on Akan believes that the society’s wellbeing depends upon the maintenance of good relations with the ancestors on

whom the living depend for help and protection. The Akan keep in touch with their ancestors through ritual practices at the core of which ritual practices is the blackened stool which is the shrine of a lineage's ancestry. The chief therefore is appointed to act as the intermediary between his royal ancestors and the group. The sacredness of traditional rulers or the chiefs finds expression in the esoteric rites connected with their investiture and installation and emphasized by the taboos surrounding their lives. All of these are to underscore the point that the chieftaincy institution in many respect is a religious institution and that religion plays a pivotal role in the institution. Traditional rulers' or chiefs therefore are expected to maintain certain sacredness suitable for the sacred or divine condition.

In respect of the Akan, Asante again observed that one who has been elected a chief by the due processes of Akan custom and usages is led to the stool-house where the blackened stool representing his royal ancestors are kept upon the blackened stool of the most renowned of his ancestors, the chief is lowered and raised three times. He is then enstooled. By this installation rite, the chief is brought into a peculiarly close relationship with the royal ancestors. Hence forth, he becomes the legitimate intermediary between the people and their royal ancestors without whose protection and aid misfortune will befall the community. The installation rites therefore bring about the sacralization of the chief. From the moment that the chief is enstooled, his person becomes sacred. This is emphasized by taboos. All the taboos remind the chief and everybody else that he occupies a sacred position. He is the occupant of the stool of the ancestors and for that matter, he is treated with the greatest veneration.

Mbiti in his book entitled *African Religions and Philosophy* (1969) noted that the Earth Priest features prominently in the installation of kings and making of chiefs.

Mbiti said, the duties of the Earth Priest is chiefly religious, but since Africans do not dissociate religion from other departments of life, he or she may or may not have other functions. The Earth Priest is a spiritual and ritual pastor of the community or nation: it is he or she who officiates at sacrifices relating to his knowledge. He performs rituals which could be daily, weekly, monthly or yearly. He is also responsible for pouring of libation.

He further stated that both the chief and the Earth Priest ultimately derive their authority from their relationship with the spiritual foundation of the society. The chief represents the clan and lineage as the link between the living and the ancestors of the society and could act as a channel through which the mystical powers of the ancestors are mediated to the living. In the same way, Earth Priest powers are derived from the earth and as the Earth Priest he mediates the sacred power of the earth upon which all humans depend for their survival. This is a manifestation that in principle the chieftaincy pole of authority related to kinship and the Earth Priest pole of authority in relation to land are complementary in the sense that they both share the functions of the exercise of political power which mediates mystical or spiritual powers that are crucial for the well-being of the society.

Akrong in his research “Religion and Traditional Leadership in Ghana” in Odotei *et al.*, *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*, (2006) posits that, “the king or a chief is believed to possess charisma - the divine mandate which sets him apart from all others: the scepter, stool or skin, crown and other symbols of office sets him apart from all others”. The sacred nature of kingship or chiefship is based on the belief that the king or the chief’s divine status as the mediator of divine power enables him to perform the necessary rituals capable of sustaining and protecting society, from chaos. He further asserts that in Ghana, there is no stool or

skin which is not attached to a deity or shrine. Also, the clan chiefs as well as the kings are regarded as the incarnate of their clan *obosom* (cult) and acted as the high priest of the cult. If Akrong's assertion is correct, then it means that religion plays an indispensable role on the chieftaincy institution.

Besides, Akrong observes that the stool on which the chief sits symbolizes the link between him and the founding ancestors. The stool therefore becomes the sacred location or the temple that represents the biding presence of the founding ancestors. This explains why as part of the enstoolment rituals, the chief is expected to sleep in the stool room of the ancestors. The belief is that the ancestors would transfer their virtues and authority to the chief in order to make him a worthy representative and a legitimate intermediary between him and the living. It is believed that, the transfer of these virtues by the ancestors will reinforce the moral life of the chief to act in ways that will make him a worthy representative of the ancestors on earth. The ancestral authority that legitimizes the reigning chief resides in the stool, which symbolizes the link between him and the ancestors.

Also concerning the Earth Priest, Akrong opines that the Earth Priest powers are derived from the earth and as the Earth Priest; he mediates the sacred power of the earth upon which all humans depend for their survival. This is a manifestation that in principle the chieftaincy pole of authority related to kinship and the Earth Priest pole of authority in relation to land are complementary. The reason is that they both share the functions of the exercise of political power which mediates mystically or spiritually that is crucial for the well-being of the society. Both the chief and the Earth Priest share in politico ritual roles since rituals and kingship is inseparable. Mbiti and Akrong's works are very significant because it will go a long way in helping to find

out during the research, the role of the Earth Priest before and after the enskinment of chiefs in the study area.

Awuah-Nyamekye “The Role of Religion in the Institution of Chieftaincy: The Case Study of the Akan of Ghana” M. Phil Thesis, 2009 quoting Yanka, posits that the office of a chief is considered to be sacred because he is regarded as the earthly representative of the ancestors. In view of this, his selection is preceded with religious activities such as divination and other ritual activities as offering of prayers and sacrifices. I do agree with Awuah-Nyamekye that the selection of a chief(s) is preceded with religious activities such as divination and other ritual activities as offering of prayers and sacrifices.

Owusu in his research “Chieftaincy and Traditional Taboos: An Empirical Approach” in Odotei, *et al.*, *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*, (2006) on confinement of chiefs or kings and the role that religion plays, asserts that with regards to Asante kings, the *Gyaase* must put every approved nominated king in confinement. While in confinement, the king is to be given instructions on traditional taboos; the *Gyaase* also takes him through several rituals. Similarly, the *Awoamefia*, the king of Anlo... his selection as a king is followed by a long period of confinement (6 months) to induct him into various issues, especially on taboos and his role as a religious leader.

Quoting Amuzu, Owusu again observes that the *Awoamefia*’s education during confinement covers not only the history of his people and their customs, but the greater part of the curriculum also covers religious and traditional systems. The king is taught his role as a religious head of deities like *Nyigbla*, *Sui*, *Afa* and *Yeve*.

Gyekye, in his book, *African Cultural Values*, (1996) observes that, the chief of the African state is, traditionally, both the political head and the religious head. The taboos relating to his conduct and mannerisms are all intended to remind him and his subjects and others that the position he occupies is sacred. The stool (throne) he occupies is believed to be an ancestral stool. This belief is the source of the great dignity, respect and veneration with which he is always treated. I agree with Gyekye when he said that the chief of African state is, traditionally both the political head and the religious head because in rural communities persons who feel that their lives are being threaten run to the chief palace to seek refuge or seek justice. Also when there is a mishap in the community, as a religious head the questions that often crops up is whether the chief is aware or has he been informed and what did he say? Whatever directives or sacrifice that he directs to be performed settles the matter.

Parrinder in his book *West African Religion* (1961) stipulates that a diviner is generally an expert in medicines and herbs, in addition to his work as a seer, diviners accumulate a vast store of knowledge and have a deep acquaintance with human nature. To him people go with all manner of problems in life, infertility or bareness, at the selection of a chief or king, before embarking on a journey, in time of sickness, in time of loss or theft and at any time for divination. The religious position of a chief or traditional leader is further emphasized by the fact that it is God who appoints a leader or a chief and man enskins or enstools him.

This is dramatized in both installation and the enskinment rites. I could not agree more with Parrinder because traditional leaders see the skin or the stool they occupy as a seat of their ancestors and their occupation is divine. This explains why their selection, installation and enskinment are often preceded with a lot of consultations and divination. Due to the important role that religion plays on the chieftaincy

institution, chiefs before taking certain major decisions in the course of discharging their duties, they do a lot of consultations with the elders and ancestors through divination. Parrinder's work will serve as a guide during the field findings or data collection to investigate who diviners are, whether or not they are being consulted during the selection of chiefs or kings in Chamba Traditional Area and also the religious duties of Diviners, Imams, Mallams, and Earth Priest to the chiefs.

Sarpong in his work *Ghana In Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture* (1974) opines that diviners are consulted by and on behalf of both individuals and groups at family crises like child birth, sickness or death, at public emergencies like drought at seasonal and ceremonial turning points like [enskinment or enstoolment of chiefs]. The literature review will have a lot of impact on the research because what is discussed in the literature might not be different from what pertains in the study area. The reason is that the authors whose works are being reviewed conducted their research from the North or South.

In sum the accounts of the above scholars have demonstrated clearly that religion plays a significant role on the chieftaincy institution and any attempt to ignore religion in the entire processes of enskinment or enstoolment may run into serious difficulties.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The thesis will be organized into five chapters. Chapter one will consist of background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objective of the research, significance of the research, the scope, description of the study area, methodology and data collection, limitations of the research and literature review.

Chapter two will deal with the interplay between religion and the chieftaincy institution. Chapter three will deal with the field work by examining the role of religion on the chieftaincy institution with Chamba Traditional Area as a case study. Chapter four seeks to analyze literature review vis-a-vis research findings. Chapter five will deal with a summary of key findings, conclusion and recommendations.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN RELIGION AND THE CHIEFTAINCY INSTITUTION

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the background to the study in which the study indicated that even though Ghana is a secular state, it still has strong links with traditional forms of leadership like the chieftaincy institution. In this chapter, Historical Development of the Chieftaincy Institution in Ghana starting with the definition(s) of a chief will be examined. The interplay between religion and the Chieftaincy Institution taking into account Oath swearing, taboos, disenskinment or desenstoolment of chiefs will also be examined. These will be look at with the help of the views of some scholars'. Answers to the above issues raised are essential because it will help throw more light on the research under investigation.

2.1 Historical Development of the Chieftaincy Institution in Ghana

For any meaningful discussion and analysis of the topic, it is important to look at the historical development of the chieftaincy institution in Ghana before zeroing down to the interplay between religion and the chieftaincy institution. In Ghana the chieftaincy institution goes back at least five hundred years and preceded European contact and remained the basis of traditional governance.¹⁴ Addo asserts that the definition of a chief has a chequered history. According to him, in the pre-colonial period, a chief

¹⁴ Accessed on the internet on 15-8-13

was somebody who in accordance with custom had been nominated, elected, enstooled or enskinned as a chief or as the case may be appointed and installed as such.¹⁵ This definition connotes that chief's held office ordained by tradition. The communities or the societies concern have the power or authority without any outside interference to either enskin or enstool or disenskin or destool a chief.

He further posits that during the colonial period, a chief was somebody who in accordance with customary law, had been nominated, elected, installed as a chief and was recognized by government. This was the period when colonial enactments of chieftaincy made all chiefs to be somehow answerable to the Governor in matters involving enstoolment. The phrase, for the time being recognized by the Government means that a chief ceases to be a chief if Government recognition was withdrawn. This means that even a situation where a chief continues to enjoy the good will of his subjects whom he presides over, the chief cannot effectively rule. Also, if the people rejected their chief but his recognition by Government is not withdrawn such an infamous chief could continue to function as a chief. That was the beginning of Government interference with the chieftaincy institution. Chiefs became rubber stamps doing the will of the Governor. They could not become critical or criticized the Governor as and when it became necessary. This shows that literally chiefs only sat on Government gazettes and not on skins or black stools. They were therefore afraid, that if they go contrary to the wish of the Government they may lose their positions as chiefs.

¹⁵A. Addo, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The Future*.p.19.

After the independence of Ghana, one would have thought that the definition of a chief would have changed especially where government has to recognize a chief before he is deemed to be a chief. Strangely enough after independence the following is the definition for a chief:

“A chief is an individual who in accordance with customary law, has been nominated, elected, enstooled or enskinned and installed as such or as the case may be, appointed and whose name for the time being appears as a chief in the register of chiefs. Provided that no person shall be deemed to be a chief for the purpose of the exercise by him of any function under this Act or under any other enactments, unless he was recognized as such by the Minister, by notice published in the Local government Bulletin.”¹⁶

The 1957 and 1969 constitutions under Kwame Nkrumah and Akwasi Amankwa Afrifa respectively retained the colonial phrase “for the time being recognized by government. Following the shortfalls in the 1957 and 1969 constitutions’ definitions of a chief by retaining the colonial phrase, for the time being recognized by the Government which made chiefs appendage to the Government, during the constitutional review, the chieftaincy Act including the definition of a chief was also reviewed and the phrase deleted.

The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana Article (277) defines a chief as a “person, who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage”.¹⁷ It is important to indicate that professional terms like chief director, chief Justice, and chief engineer are not covered by the definition of a chief as captured in the 1992

¹⁶A. Addo, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The Future*.p.20.

¹⁷1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana

constitution of the Republic of Ghana. The important elements in the plethora of the definitions by various regimes are that

(a) the chieftaincy institution is based on hereditary that is; person's who want to be enskinned or enstooled as chiefs should be able to trace their ancestry to the first chief in the Traditional Area.

(b) one has to be selected, installed and enskinned or enstooled according to customary law and usage and have his name gazetted in the register of chiefs and that legally qualifies him as a chief.

Oppong sharing his views on the kingship and royalty in Dagbon noted that the kingdom is divided and subdivided into a number of hierarchically ranked chiefdoms or divisions. Some chiefdom in Dagbon are held by royal chiefs, sons and grandsons of the previous holders or kings. These are the royal chiefdoms *Ya na bihi nama*. Others are held by commoners loyal to the king and appointed by him. Some offices are 'terminus' chiefship, which means that once a man has succeeded to such a post, he has reached his limit of ascent upon the ladder of the political hierarchy and this is symbolized by the fact that such a chief is installed in the night. All 'terminus' chiefs are entitled to sit on lions skins including *Ya na* who is the 'Lion of Dagbon'.¹⁸

According to Addo during the time of Guggisberg in 1927 chiefs had power to adjudicate cases brought before their courts in their Traditional Areas and could impose fines or imprison culprits or both if found guilty. During the reign of Kwame

¹⁸ C. Oppong, *Growing up in Dagbon*. Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1973, pp.20-21.

Nkrumah, he changed the whole structure of the chieftaincy institution by ensuring that almost all the paramount chiefs in Ghana became his party loyalists. He passed (Act 23) of the 1958 abolishing traditional courts. He maintained constitutional power of the colonial authorities to make and unmake chiefs. During the same year, the House of Chiefs' Act, (Act 2) of 1958 was also passed dealing mainly with the chieftaincy institution. It maintained the jurisdiction of the state council and Houses of Chiefs in matters of constitutional nature, and created Appeal Commissioners to be appointed by the Judicial Commission, to hear appeals in matters of constitutional nature affecting chiefs. Despite the above measures taking by Nkrumah in interfering with the chieftaincy institution, he passed the chieftaincy Act (Act 81) of 1961 which streamlined some powers of the chiefs like giving recognition to Divisional Councils, re-designated states as Councils and retaining the jurisdiction in matters of Constitutional nature.

The 1969 Constitution of Republic of Ghana also established National and Regional Houses of Chiefs with the National House of Chiefs having an over sight responsibility over Regional Houses of Chiefs. They were also to see to the codification and unification of customary laws like succession, marriage, and land demarcation. Two-thirds of the seats in the local council were also given to the chiefs. The 1979 Constitution of Republic of Ghana ensured that the chieftaincy institution coupled with its traditional councils as established by the customary law was guaranteed.

The 1992 Constitution also enacted the following articles to enhance the chieftaincy institution. Article 270 (1) "the institution of chieftaincy, together with its traditional councils as established by customary law and usage is hereby guaranteed. Article 270 (2a) provides that "parliament shall have no power to enact any law which confers on

any person or authority the right to accord or withdraw recognition to or from a chief for any purpose whatsoever; (b) in any way detracts or derogates from the honour and dignity of the institution of chieftaincy”. The fact that parliament shall not meddle in chieftaincy affairs coupled with Article 242 (d) of the 1992 Constitution that in the “appointment of District Chief Executives and Municipal and Metropolitan Chief Executives, the president has to do so in consultation with the traditional authorities and other interest groups”. This is a manifestation of how important and resilient the chieftaincy institution is.

2.2 Oath Swearing

Oath is a solemn promise, often invoking a divine witness, regarding one’s action or behaviour. Oath is also a profane or offensive expression used to express anger or other strong emotions.¹⁹ In this context the former is more relevant. On Oath Swearing, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana Article (80) states that “A Minister of State or Deputy Minister of State shall not enter upon the duties of his office unless he has taken and subscribed the Oath of allegiance, the Oath of Minister of State and the Cabinet Oath, as the case may be, set out in the Second Schedule of this Constitution.”²⁰ The three things that can be deduced from this Article of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana that are relevant to the discussion are that: Oath Swearing is mandatory upon assumption of office as a Minister, Deputy

¹⁹<https://www.google.com.gh/search>. Accessed on the 30th May, 2014.

²⁰ The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

Minister and a chief or a king. One cannot start performing his or her duties as a Minister, a Deputy Minister and a chief or a king without taking an Oath. One has to abide by the Oath that he or she has sworn to his or her subjects or followers.

Addo on his part argues that the Oath is not only a social contract, but it provides political direction of the rulers. He said:

Our ancestors therefore instituted the Oath-swearing systems which in effect, are a sort of social contract binding both the family offering leadership and the families forming the community to observe strictly the agreement they had accepted. The leader had jurisdiction over all the members of the community and gave political direction, led tribal armies to wars, settled disputes, administered land and did many acts for the governance of the community.²¹

In this context what Addo is simply saying is that Oath swearing marks the highest point of the installation process in traditional leadership. Not until the chief-elect swears the traditional Oath; he is not considered as fully installed. The chief-elect swears an Oath to the elders and his subjects and the elders also reciprocate it by pledging their loyalty to the chief-elect. The Oath swearing is considered as a social contract between the traditional leaders and their subjects and who ever goes contrary to it will have to face the consequences. The importance of Oath-swearing is that it serves as a reference point for disenskinment or distoolment of a chief should he breach the injunctions or taboos. The Oath has an element of religiosity.

After the injunctions, the chief-elect then thank the elders and his subjects for the honour done him in a standing position. Still in that same standing position he takes an Oath before the elders and his subjects to abide by the moral and religious injunctions attached to the skin or stool which he has willingly accepted to occupy.

²¹D. Addo, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The Future*. p.72.

Once he has sworn the Oath, he is then under obligation to observe all the moral and religious precepts attached to his new position. He concludes by affirming his moral and religious obligation to fight and defend his subjects in times of war and declares his preparedness to die for his people in a battle rather than to run away from his enemy. The elders will also in turn swear an Oath pledging allegiance to the chief. What makes Oath swearing religious is that the ancestors, the gods and God Almighty are called upon to serve as a witness.

2.3 Taboos of Chiefs

According to Sarpong, the consequences of breaking a taboo²² may befall a whole society and an individual both mystically and physically. It is sufficient for one fool to commit fornication with a girl under the age of puberty and there is bound to be a famine in the community unless something is done ritually to cleanse the community of the abomination. The spirits are punishing the community for the crime of an individual.²³

Owusu posits that taboos are leadership cultural icons for Chiefs, Queens, Priests and Priestesses and for this reason; every Chief or Queen must swear an Oath at the

²²Taboo is derived from the Polynesian term *tabu* which simply means forbidden and can be applied to any sort of prohibition. From this general connotation, however, *tabu* has been adopted to signify a prohibition of a special kind. Sarpong, P. *Ghana In Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture*. Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1974, p. 51.

²³Ibid., P. 53.

assumption of office. Taboos then become the traditional commandments through which leaders are protected from social and spiritual ambivalence.²⁴

Gyekye on his part observes that the chiefs of the African state are traditionally both the political head and the religious head. The taboos relating to his conduct and mannerism are all intended to remind him and his subjects and others that the position he occupies is sacred. This belief is the source of great dignity, respect and veneration with which he is always treated. Some of the taboos are: A chief is not supposed to walk bare-footed. If he does that and his feet touch the ground, some misfortune will befall not only he but the community at large. He is not supposed to strike anybody neither should he be struck. If this happens the ancestors will bring misfortune upon the person who struck the chief and vice versa. He is not supposed to walk bare-footed lest he stumble. If he should stumble, a calamity or a misfortune will befall not only he but the community at large. The calamity or a misfortune can only be averted through sacrifice(s).²⁵ He is not supposed to eat the food of a woman during her menstrual period or greet her.

Owusu quoting Drewal asserts that among the Yoruba, menstruating women are kept at a distance because menses are thought to pollute Priests, chiefs and powerful medicines rendering them less efficacious when menstruating women touch food items that are used to prepare food for the above mentioned persons. Women in their menstrual period are believed to be a source of danger to people who have certain powers: kings, traditional Priests and medicine men. For this reason, the palace

²⁴B. Owusu, "Chieftaincy and Traditional Taboos: An Empirical Approach." In Odotei, I.K. and Awedoba, A. K. (eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*.p.221.

²⁵K. Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*.p.109.

architect provides a special space for women so that they would not break the taboo by contacting and polluting the chief.²⁶ This is to ensure that the chief does not come into contact with the menstruating woman who at that period is considered unclean to render his powers powerless.

Some of the importance of taboos in respect to the chieftaincy institution is as follows: first taboos help shape a chief to be a role model. Being a chief is a call to duty and of course a spiritual duty as well. He cannot work without being guided by taboos. In addition, taboos provide the foundation for religious discipline and ethics. From the above, it can be said that nobody can be a chief no matter the person's level of education or status without observing some taboos or chieftaincy ethics. These taboos or chieftaincy ethics control our conducts and keep our communities or organizations together. It also has some religious implications when broken.

2.4 Disenskinment or Distoolment of Chiefs

Though the tenure of office of a chief is not fixed, a chief or a king can be removed from office if he commits the following acts: When he violates the Oath of allegiance that he swore to the elders and his subjects, when he breaks the taboos which serve as a check on his conduct, when he conducts himself in a manner which will bring or is likely to bring his office into disrepute, ridicule or contempt, when he is incapable of performing his functions due to infirmity of body or mind and continuously rejecting

²⁶B. Owusu, "Chieftaincy and Traditional Taboos: An Empirical Approach", in Odotei, I.K. and Awedoba, A.K. (eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*.p.223.

the advice of the elders.²⁷ All of these when brought to the notice of the elders they will investigate it and a consensus reached. If the chief or king is found to be culpable then, the kingmakers will then initiate his disenskinment or distoolment. Those who have the powers to enskin or enstool a chief equally have the powers to disenskin or distool a chief and that are the kingmakers.

Chiefs or kings are destooled or disenskinning through the following acts: Taking the chief's sit under his buttocks and letting him sit on the bare floor and striking the chief and insulting him. Once these taboos are broken, the sacredness of the chief is also broken and therefore no relationship exists again between him and the ancestral spirits. Once this mystical and religious relationship is broken, the chief ceases to be a chief but become an ordinary person and is treated as such. As soon as he becomes an ordinary person, he is no longer bound by the injunctions that were imposed on him during his installation.

Akrong, on his part opined that any time the chief who is expected to be the custodian of the moral values and ideals of the society breaks the moral law and undermines the value of the society, his *ipso facto* abdicates his role as a representative of the ancestors and therefore cannot legally and morally continue to be a chief. This is the more reason why some of the more serious offences that brings about distoolment or disenskinment are those that have to do with behaviour and conduct of chiefs.²⁸

²⁷ K.A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in Modern Political System of Ashanti*. pp.21-22.

²⁸ A. Akrong, "Religion and Traditional Leadership in Ghana." In Odotei, I.K. and Awedoba, A.k. (eds), *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*. p. 193.

In sum, this chapter has established that in many traditional Ghanaian societies, chiefs occupy key or sensitive positions and are considered as the number one citizens of the community. Their actions and inactions are regulated by Oaths, taboos and sanctions such as disenskinment or disenstoolment. The skins or the stools that they occupy serve as a link between them and their ancestors and therefore make them sacred persons. They are also view as political and religious heads of their communities who have to abide by both their private taboos and those that surrounds the skins or the stools that they occupy. They cannot embark on any action without the consent of their elders and subjects.

In the light of the above, it is impossible to segregate religion from politics because political leadership is intrinsically interwoven with spiritual leadership. In other words religion is the seed kernel of traditional authority and the two cannot be decoupled. The next chapter which is the research findings focused on the role of religion on chieftaincy the institution using the processes of enskinment of chiefs or kings in the study area. Chiefs, Kingmakers, Mallams, Imams, Diviners, and Earth Priest were interviewed because they constitute the major stakeholders when it comes to the chieftaincy institution in the study area.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.0 Introduction

The content of this chapter is derived from the interviews conducted in Chamba Traditional Area of Northern region of Ghana between July, 2012 and January, 2013. This was to solicit the views of Chiefs, Elders, Imams, Mallams, Diviners, Earth Priest, Kingmakers, Pastors and Teachers in the area on “The Role that Religion plays on the Chieftaincy Institution”. The sample size for this particular analysis is twenty four respondents. They were those who were interviewed on the role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution. The persons interviewed included: two Chiefs in the Traditional Area representing 8.3%, three King-makers (12.5%), six Elders (25%), three Diviners (12.5%), one Imam (4.2%), three Mallams (12.5%), one Earth Priest (4.2%), three Pastors (12.5%), and finally two Teachers representing 8.3%. This is shown in the pie chart below:

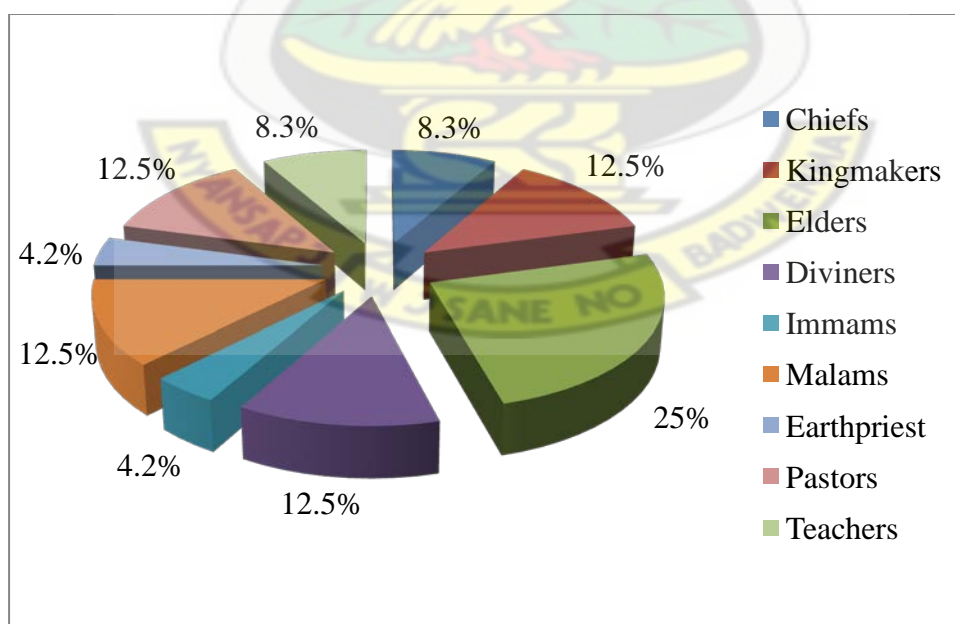


Figure 1: Above shows respondents in the study area expressed in percentage terms.

The highest respondents interviewed in the study area were the elders representing 25% whilst teachers and the chiefs were least represented.

Appendix 1 shows an interview with *Na* (chief) Abukari Iddrisu Nanumba chief and *Ubor* (chief) Konkomba chief and appendix 2 assesses the Experience Level of Respondents and appendix 3 a map showing Nanumba North District and the study area. From appendix 2, it is clear that most of the respondents do not only hail from the community but have also lived in the community throughout their lives. They have also witnessed enskinment of chiefs in the Traditional Area and therefore have acquired some experience to share their views on the role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution.

The choice of the chiefs was based on their experience in leadership in the Traditional Area. Namely *Ubor* Bilin-igban Punpiir and *Na* Abukari Iddrisu have both ruled in the Traditional Area for about 9 and 7 years respectively according to the table in appendix 2. The two Chiefs have gone through all the necessary rites and rituals of selection, installation and enskinment and are therefore regarded as repositories of customs, values and tradition in the community. The resultant effect is that they have vast knowledge, experience and expertise to share their perspectives on the role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution.

In the case of the Kingmakers apart from the fact that they have lived in the community throughout their lives, they have also been involved in the processes of selection, installation and enskinment of chiefs. For the Elders, they have been involved in advising the chiefs on settlement of disputes such as issues relating to land, marriage, theft and others. The choice of Diviners, Imams and Mallams were based on the conviction that they have also witnessed the enskinment of chiefs in the Traditional Area and are often consulted for divination, prayers and charms. The

Earth Priest plays a pivotal role by performing sacrifices to the gods of the land on behalf of the chiefs at the beginning and the end of the farming seasons. They also perform sacrifices for atonement of wrongs committed by individuals against the gods of the land. The role of the Pastors as religious leaders in the community is to offer prayers for the people for peace. Finally, the choice of the two Teachers who hailed from the research area are based on the fact that they are teachers and have read about enskinment or enstoolment of chiefs and are therefore well placed to share their views on the topic under discussion. The perspectives of teachers have helped to validate the views of other respondents.

3.1 The Role of Religion in the Selection of Chiefs

First of all, the information by the respondents especially the two chiefs were based on the processes that they themselves went through during their selection, installation and enskinment some years ago as indicated on the table at appendix 2 and what is currently prevailing in the Traditional Area. The other respondents who shared their perspectives on the topic were also based on their dealings with the chieftaincy institution. In an interview with *Na* (chief) Abukari Iddrisu²⁹ on whether or not religion plays a role in the selection of chiefs in the Traditional Area, he affirmed that religion indeed plays a vital role in the selection of chiefs in the Traditional Area. He said, the selection of a new chief occurs when an incumbent chief dies or is

²⁹*Na* Abukari Iddrisu, Na numba Chief interviewed on 7th July, 2012 at his Palace.

disenskinned or resigns. When any of the above mentioned happens, as an interim measure, a regent or a caretaker chief or king is immediately appointed from the royal family. In case of the death of a reigning king or chief, his replacement is made after the funeral rites have been performed. The appointment of the regent is done to avoid any administrative lapses or gaps that might occur. The regent might not be the most eligible person, but for the purposes of administrative gaps which might be created as a result of the death of the reigning chief which he fills, is considered as a better option under the circumstance. After that a search is then conducted for a substantive chief.

According to him, some forms of religious consultations of Imams, Mallams and Diviners or Soothsayers as well as the elders are done to know the wish of the ancestors. Divination or consultations are done vigorously until majority of the Imams, Mallams and Diviners or Soothsayers settle on one of the contestants who is then presented to the elders for installation and enskinment. Before installation and enskinment, the chief-elect has to be confined. In the case of an Overlord, he is confined for three months, paramount chief two months and sub-chiefs two weeks. The essence of this confinement is to take the chief-elect through some taboos, rituals and customs surrounding the chieftaincy institution and also to teach him drum language. He is also reminded of his position as a religious leader among other things. *Ubor (chief) Bilin-igban Punpiir* also shared similar views.

Ubor (chief) Bilin-igban Punpiir further opined that religion and the chieftaincy institution are bed fellows. Whatever action or journey chiefs want to embark upon they have to consult the Diviners or Soothsayers, Imams and Mallams to know what is at stake before undertaking such a journey. This is to enable them to know whether the action or the journey they want to embark upon would be fruitful or not. If there

are some impediments, some rites or sacrifices can be performed to avert the situation. He also noted that sometimes after invitations of chiefs to social gathering, they delegate people to attend on their behalf because of their spiritual consultations with the Diviners, Imams and Mallams may show that going to the ceremony in person might not be safe hence the delegation of a sub-chief to the ceremony. However, if a chief feels that his absence at the ceremony will not please his subjects whom he swore an Oath to serve diligently, a remedy can be found by way of performing certain rites or sacrifices or calling on an Imam for special prayers to prevent any mishap that is likely to occur.

On the selection, he again asserted that the contestants in the race sometimes go behind what the kingmakers do to divine to know whether the ancestors want them to occupy the skin or not. All of these are manifestations that religion plays a role in the selection of chiefs.³⁰ On the question of whether or not religion will continue to play a role in the enskinment of chiefs in the face of courts disqualifying some chiefs or persons to be enskinned? The two chiefs mentioned above, argued that even though courts can disqualify a chief or disqualify a person from being enskinned or enstooled, whoever is supposed to be enskinned has to go through certain rites and rituals before being enskinned as a chief. No person can hold himself traditionally as a chief if he has not gone through those rites and rituals. From the above, it is therefore clear that religion would continue to play a major role in the enskinment of chiefs in future. The above views expressed by the chiefs in the Traditional Area shows that religion is the foundation on which the chieftaincy institution is anchored in the Traditional Area.

³⁰Ubor (chief) Bilin-igban Punpiir Konkomba chief interviewed on 7th July, 2012 at his Palace.

The next group of persons that were interviewed were the king makers namely, Abarika Atta, Kpihi Bara and Imiranaa Worikpamo.³¹ They were interviewed in a group. The same question was posed to the kingmakers “whether or not religion plays a role in the selection of chiefs in the Traditional Area.” The kingmakers identified themselves with the assertions made by the first respondents that religion plays a great role in the selection of chiefs in the Traditional Area. The kingmakers asserted that a person to be selected as a chief is supposed to occupy the skin of the ancestors and serve as a link between the ancestors and the living. They can only determine the wish of the ancestors through consultations of Imams, Mallams and Diviners through divination. They were quick to add that the act of consultation and divination has been the practiced in the Traditional Area since time immemorial.

According to them before the coming of Islam and Christianity their forefathers always consulted the Diviners or Soothsayers before coming out with the rightful choice. However, with the coming of Islam to the area in the nineteenth century and with some of the chiefs and their subjects being converted to Islam, some of the Islamic rites and practices were incorporated into the chieftaincy institution in the Northern region and for that matter the Traditional Area hence the consultation of Imams and Mallams during selection. To ensure neutrality, objectivity, fairness and to avoid any likelihood of biases in divination of Imams, Mallams and Diviners, they have to travel outside the community for divination. A number of Imams, Mallams and Diviners are consulted to ascertain the person the ancestors want to be enskinned

³¹Abarika Atta, Kpihi Bara and Imiranaa Worikpamo king makers interviewed on the 10th July, 2012 at Kpihi Bara’s house.

as a chief in the Traditional Area and the prospects that his tenure of office would bring to the Traditional Area. They finally arrive at a consensus when majority of the religious persons cited above settle on one of the candidates. The exercise according to the kingmakers is known as spiritual screening. Apart from the spiritual screening they also undertake physical screening. Among some of the virtues that they look for under the Physical screening are the following: being humble, honest, courageous, brave, truthful, showing commitment to the course of the community and above all God fearing. Though both physical and spiritual screenings are very important the spiritual screening supersedes the physical screening.

Another group of persons interviewed were the elders or the councilors of the chiefs. They were also interviewed in a group namely: Iddrisu Yirisah, Zakaria Nantonmah and Abukari Ziblim³² elders of *Na* Abukari Iddrisu, Nanumba chief and Ntibi Doukum, Tagi Yibamondoe and Namok Yajagee³³ elders of *Ubor* Bilin-igban Punpiir Konkomba chief. Their responses on the role of religion on the chieftaincy institution and its selection of chiefs in the Traditional Area were not different from the views expressed by the chiefs and the kingmakers. The elders or the councilors stated that religion is an indispensable element in the chieftaincy institution and that the chieftaincy institution cannot exist and function effectively if religion is taken out of the equation. In the light of the above no selection can be done without recourse to religion.

³²Iddrisu Yirisah, Zakaria Nantonmah and Abukari Ziblim elders of *Na* Abukari Iddrisu, Nanumba chief. Interviewed on the 12th July, 2012 at Iddrisu Yirisah's house.

³³Ntibi Doukum, Tagi Yibamondoe and Namok Yajagee elders of *Ubor* Bilin-igban, Konkomba chief interviewed on 20th July, 2012 at Ntibi Doukum's house.

The elders opined that when a skin becomes vacant through the death of a chief, after the performance of the funeral rites a new chief has to be selected from the royal family and enskinned according to custom and tradition. As part of the selection process, the kingmakers have to consult Imams, Mallams and Diviners or Soothsayers who can foretell who should be enskinned as the next chief in the Traditional Area. The elders added that the exercise is very rigorous because the kingmakers have to consult a wide range of Imams, Mallams and Diviners. Besides, when there are unnatural occurrences like premature deaths, rampant snake bites and crop failure they have to resort to religion by finding out the causes of such calamities. When the cause(s) are identified, the necessary rites and sacrifices are performed to appease the gods of the land who might be angry about some of the abominable acts that might have been committed by a citizen(s) in the Traditional Area. All these are spearheaded by the chiefs in the Traditional Area.

Another group of respondents that were interviewed were Diviners. The first person to be interviewed was Tanyinkai Moasunn. The questions posed to him were: who are Diviners? Does religion play any role in the selection of chiefs in the Traditional Area and on the chieftaincy institution as a whole? According to him, Diviners are persons who may or may not be attached to the various shrines of the divinities. They have an insight into the past, present and the future. He further stated that in some lineages or clans some people are born Diviners from birth and as such certain religious rites and rituals are performed for such persons to be officially ushered into the profession to be able to divine properly. Others who are not born Diviners but

want to join the profession can also undergo apprenticeship to acquire spiritual powers from those who are already Diviners. N-nandow Nadaah and Dana Jakadow's views on whom diviners were; were not different from Tanyinkai Moasonn.³⁴ They mentioned the following as some of the methods of divination: being possessed, the use of cowries and mirror gazing.

N-nandow Nadaah a diviner explained the divination by cowries³⁵. This method is commonly used by most diviners in the area. With the selection of chiefs, the diviners interviewed affirmed that indeed religion plays a major role in the selection and cannot be underestimated. N-nandow Nadaah who doubles as a Traditional Priest, began his answers to the interview with this statement that "appearance can be deceptive" thus some of the royals may appear outwardly to be good but inwardly that might not be the case. This therefore calls for divination because it is only God and the ancestors who know the hearts of men who are good and those who are bad. This explains why when choices are supposed to be made, people resort to religion by going for divination to come out with the rightful choice. He was quick to add that

³⁴Tanyinkai Moasonn interviewed on 1st January, 2013, Dana Jakadow 2nd January, 2013 N-nandow Nadaah interviewed on 4th January at their various houses.

³⁵Divination by Cowries is where a set of cowries ranging from ten to twenty are thrown on the floor or on a divining mat by a Diviner with some incantations recited. The pattern that the cowries assume after the throw will determine the message that a Diviner will give to his client. On the surface this method may appear to be simple in nature but difficult because many similar patterns can be formed from the throw. This calls for spiritual prowess to be able to give accurate interpretation. A client has an opportunity to ask for further clarification if he or she does not understand something. This happens especially when a client is not certain about a person or the object or issue or event being described by the Diviner since such person(s) or object(s) or issues may have some semblance or the event might have occurred at the same time. If it has to do with the selection of a chief to be enskinned especially when the contestants are more than one, the Diviner then uses his divination stick and picks one of the stones or sticks representing a contestant as the rightful person for enskinment. The process can be repeated several times by a client until he or she is left with no doubt in his or her mind. Where a client was still in doubt, he can go to consult other Diviners and compare what each has said and then take his or her decision.

there may be some charlatans in the profession who can play on the emotions of people and dupe them so people should be careful when dealing with some of the diviners. His assertion may explain why the kingmakers consult many diviners, Mallams and Imams before coming out with the person to be enskin. He also said apart from the kingmakers coming to divine to know the wish of the ancestors, the royals themselves also do come to them to divine to know which one of them that the ancestors want him to occupy the vacant skin. If the ancestors want him to occupy the vacant skin and someone elsewhere among them or outside the royal lineage are trying to put some impediments in his way; he can be shown the necessary sacrifices or rites to be performed to become a victor in the race. What was brought to the fore during the interview with the diviners were that because some of the royals themselves who wish to occupy the skin also come to divine, sometimes they may not be surprised about the person that the kingmakers do come out with as the ultimate choice.

What also came out during the interview with the diviners was that it is not only the kingmakers, chiefs and royals who come to divine to know who should be enskinned but people from all walks of life like politicians contesting elections, businessmen and women, people having challenges with their marriages especially child bearing, those suffering from one form of ailments or other, people who want to travel abroad do come to them to divine. These go to buttress the statements made by Mbiti and Parrinder respectively that “Africans are notoriously religious”³⁶ and that “Africans

³⁶J.S. Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*. Nairobi: Heinman Kenya Ltd, 1997, P.1.

are incurably religious”.³⁷ Religion does not only play a role in the selection of chiefs but the entire chieftaincy institution and influences the way the occupants of the institution perceive and conceive reality.

In an interview with Abdul Haanan Sumani an Imam in the Traditional Area agreed with the previous respondents that religion plays a crucial role in the selection of chiefs in the Traditional Area. He added that during the selection, the king makers come to consult him both within and outside the Traditional Area to find out which of the candidates would be most suitable or more qualified to occupy the skin of their ancestors. He further said that the aspirants themselves also do come to consult him to find out their chances in the contest.³⁸

In interviews with Mallams: Abdul Razak, Afa Mohammad and Ukpejo Yasser Arafat they affirmed that religion plays a role in the selection of chiefs in the Traditional Area. They were interviewed individually and what cut across their submissions were that no chief in the Traditional Area had been selected without the kingmakers undergoing vigorous religious exercise like consultation of Mallams, Imams and Diviners.³⁹

In my interview with the Earth Priest⁴⁰ Abukari Ziblim to solicit his views on the role of religion on the selection of chiefs, he agreed with the previous respondents that

³⁷G. Parrinder, *West African Religion*. London: Epworth Press, 1961, P.9.

³⁸Abdul Hanaan Sumani an Imam interviewed on 7th January, 2013 in his house.

³⁹Abdul Razak interviewed on 9th January, 2013, Afa Mohammad interviewed on 11th January, 2013 and Ukpejo Yasser Arafat interviewed on 13th January, 2013 in their various houses.

⁴⁰An Earth Priest is a person who is specially trained to perform religious duties and ceremonies to the gods of the land within a particular geographical area. His powers are derived from the earth upon which human beings depend for survival. For one to be an Earth Priest it is hereditary and a call by the gods of the land and refusal to heed to the call has its own consequences.

religion plays a role in the selection of chiefs in the Traditional Area. He said no chief can be selected and enskinned without due consultation with the Imams, Mallams and Diviners to know the plight of the ancestors in the Traditional Area. He said that if there were other things that play a great role on the chieftaincy institution, religion supersedes that. Religion plays a key role in the selection, installation, enskinment, and even the death of the occupant of the institution. When a chief dies, the announcement is different from an ordinary person in the community. His burial is equally different. When a chief in the Traditional Area dies, the rites that are performed leading to his burial are different and not open to the general public like an ordinary person. Chiefs in the Traditional Area are buried in their rooms. All the above explains the role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution and the chief as an individual.⁴¹

In an interview with the Pastors namely: Austin, Oppong and Wumbei⁴² in the Traditional Area to elicit their views on the role of religion in the selection of chiefs, it came out quite clearly from their submissions that religion plays a role in the selection of leaders like chiefs. During their submissions they quoted (Acts 1:15 – 26) to articulate their views. They variously asserted that when Judas Ischariot betrayed Jesus to the Jewish leaders and collected thirty silver coins from the Chief Priest for his nefarious act, he bought a field or a piece of land with the reward of his wickedness, he fell headlong and burst open and all his bowels gushed out. There was therefore the need to get somebody to replace him. Such a person should have the

⁴¹AbukariZiblim an Earth Priest, interviewed on 14th January, 2013 in his house.

⁴²Austin Kingsley Anthony, Roman Catholic Priest, Oppong Bamfo Abraham, Church of Pentecost Pastor and Wumbei Paul Kwame, Assemblies of God Church Pastor in their various houses.

following qualifications: witnessed the resurrection of Jesus Christ, walked with Jesus Christ and should have been his disciple from the time of John the Baptist to the ascension of Jesus. Joseph called Barsabbas surnamed Justus and Mathias who were put forth for one of them to fill the vacant position that has been created. Prayers were said for them calling on God to show which one of them He wanted to take the place of Judas Ischariot. When the lots were cast, the lots fell on Mathias who was subsequently enrolled as the twelve apostle. In the light of the above, the kingmakers before embarking on who should be selected and enskinned as a chief prayers have to be said to God, and ancestors to guide them to select the best person to be enskinned to lead the people.

3.2 The Role of Religion in the Installation of Chiefs

On the question of the role that religion plays in the selection of chiefs, all the twenty four respondents interviewed alluded that religion plays a role in the selection of chiefs in the Traditional Area. With the installation, *Na* (chief) Abukari Iddrisu noted that religion plays a role in the installation. The elders and the kingmakers go to the hiding place of the chief-elect, seize him and bring him to the skin house. He is made to drink concoctions and bath herbs and roots that have been prepared down for him. The bathing and drinking of the concoctions are supposed to prepare the chief-elect for his coronation and also fortify him spiritually to be able to speak with boldness and to dispense justice without fear or favour.

As part of the installation processes, the chief-elect is dressed in all white thus white hat, white shirt and white pair of trousers signifying happiness and joy. The chief-elect is then handed over the skin and a black tail of a horse or a cow of his ancestors

by the spokesman with the following admonishments: “Yesterday you were a child but today you are no more a child, you have assumed the position of your father and your forefathers. Adhere to the advice of the elders.” This is to tell the chief that wisdom is not bestowed in one person and the need for consensus building. “Do not insult the Imams, Earth Priest, and Mallams.” These persons are supposed to assist the chief in carrying out his religious duties and if they are insulted by the chief, they can also refuse to carry out their religious duties as and when the need arises. When that happens it can have negative effects on his administration and this cannot be quantified. “Do not be a miser.” This injunction is to ensure that all the royalties accruing from the sale of land should be used for the benefit of all his subjects and not for his family alone. “Do not go after other peoples wives.” The chief is supposed to be a moral icon for his subjects to emulate him.

In a standing position, the chief in return thanks the elders and then takes an Oath promising to abide by all the injunctions placed on him. The elders also reciprocate by swearing an Oath in return pledging their allegiance to the chief. After that an Imam would pray for the chief and his subjects. The chief –elect then thanks all persons who came to his coronation and asks for God’s blessings for his Traditional Area throughout his tenure of office.⁴³

The views of *Ubor* (chief) Bilin-igban Punpiir were not different from the views espoused by *Na* (chief) Abukari. He went further to say that an Oath is an act of invoking God or the ancestors to serve as a witness to either speak the truth or to keep

⁴³*Na* Abukari Iddrisu, Nanumba chief interviewed on the 7th July, 2012 at his Palace.

a promise and if one fails to speak the truth or renege on his or her promise, God or the ancestors would punish him or her accordingly. He further explained that Oath swearing as part of installation processes is religious because God Almighty and the ancestors have been called upon to serve as a witness and should the chief renege on his promise he would incur the displeasure of God and his ancestors and that can cause his disenskinment.⁴⁴

3.3 The Role of Religion in the Enskinment of Chiefs

On the question of whether or not religion plays a role in the enskinment of chiefs in the Traditional Area, all the respondents were very emphatic that religion plays a tremendous role in the enskinment of chiefs and the chieftaincy institution in general. *Na Abukari* said after the installation ceremony, in the night, the new chief is led into the skin house where he is once again made to drink and bath concoctions made from herbs prepared for him by the elders. After that his hair is shaved by a traditional court barber and the hair carefully collected and buried by the chief himself or his son for religious and security reasons. The belief is that somebody who might be against him because of the position he is going to occupy may have access to those hairs and use it to harm him spiritually.

The next stage of enskinment process is when the chief is lowered three times on the skin. When that rite is performed, a cow is slaughtered and part of the liver is cut and boiled. This meat is kept in the calabash and a piece of the meat is put between the

⁴⁴*Ubor Bilin-igban Punpiir*, Konkomba chief interviewed on the 7th July, 2012 at his Palace.

teeth of the chief. He bites it and spits it in front of himself, he is given another piece he bites it and spit it out to his right hand side. He is given another piece, he bites it and spits it at his left hand side after which he eats portions of the meat and the rest given to those in the yard. The spitting of the liver three times are symbolic gestures to allow the ancestors to bless and sanctify the meat for him to eat. This explains why when traditional men and women are offered water, drink and food they have to first pour a little of the water or drink on the ground or cut small morsel of food deep it in the soup and drop it on the ground for the ancestors to first test and to sanctify it for their consumption.⁴⁵

An Imam will then read Quran 113 and 114 (*Mu'azantain*).⁴⁶ Quran 113 –*Surat –Al – Falaq* reads:

“In the Name of Allah, the All beneficent, the All merciful. Say ‘I seek the protection of the Lord for the day break. From the evil of what He has created and from the evil of the dark night when it settles, and from the evil of the witches who blow on knots, and from the evil of the envious.”

Quran 114 –*Surat Al –Nas* reads “In the Name of Allah, the All beneficent, the All merciful. Say, ‘I seek the protection of the Lords for humans, sovereign of humans, gods of human from the evil of the sneaky temper. Who puts temptations into the breasts of humans from among the jinn and humans.”⁴⁷

These *Suwar* during enskinment in the Traditional Area are written on the slates and washed for the chief to drink as protection against the penetration of a spear, gun, knife and cutlass when stabbed or shot. These verses are also written on a portion of a skin part of which is cut and used as amulets or talisman and sewn either on the hats of chiefs or on the traditional dress of chiefs. When it is used as a talisman, it is worn

⁴⁵Na Abukari Iddrisu Nanumba chief on the 7th July, 2012 at his Palace.

⁴⁶*Mu'azantain* is an Arabic word meaning the two protective verses.

⁴⁷The Quran with a Phrase by Phrase English Translation. Translated by Ali QuliQard, 2004.

around the waist of a chief. These are supposed to protect chiefs from all forms of weapons, enemies and malevolent spirits.⁴⁸

When *Ubor* (chief) Bilin-igban Punpiir was also interviewed on the same subject his views were not different from those expressed by *Na* Abukari Iddrisu except to add that a non Muslim is not obliged to drink the concoction washed from the slates if he feels that will conflict with his personal beliefs or nor is he under any obligation to accept the writings of the verses on the slates to be used as amulets or talisman against penetration of a spear, gun, knife, cutlass when stabbed or shot if he already has such charms and would not like to have additional charms to that effect.⁴⁹ The above empirical evidence point to the fact that religion plays a role in the enskinment of chiefs and the chieftaincy institution as a whole.

In order to validate what the Chiefs, Kingmakers, Elders, Imam, Mallams, and the Diviners said, I tried to interview four teachers from the Traditional Area. Two men and two women to find out their views on whether or not religion plays a role in the selection, installation and the enskinment of chiefs and the chieftaincy institution in general as asserted by the Chiefs, Kingmakers, Elders, Imams, Mallams and Diviners. Since they were teachers they might have read about enskinment or enstoolment of chiefs. Awal Iddrisu and Poatob Gladys availed themselves for the interview. The other two respondents failed to honour their promise. They only left messages with their children that other equally important businesses had taken them out of town.

⁴⁸*Na* Abukari Iddrisu, Nanumba chief on the 7th July, 2012 in his Palace.

⁴⁹*Ubor* Bilin-igban Punpiir, Konkomba chief on the 7th July, 2012 in his Palace.

The question that was posed to them was, does religion plays any role in the selection, installation and enskinment of chiefs and the chieftaincy institution as a whole in the Traditional Area? Awal Iddrisu responded in the affirmative.

According to him when a chief dies and the elders are supposed to enskin a new chief in the Traditional Area, the kingmakers do consult Imams, Mallams, and Diviners to find out which one of the royals should be selected and enskinned. Also in the mosque, special prayers are said to Allah to guide the kingmakers to come out with a good choice for a smooth enskinment. On the day of installation Oaths are taken by both the chief-elect and the elders inviting God, the ancestors to bear witness to the installation so that no party would renege on his part of the pact. Though the enskinment processes are not opened to the general public and is done late in the evening, the chiefs are often taken through certain rites and rituals which are religious in nature. This therefore shows that religion plays a role in the enskinment of chiefs and to a larger extent the chieftaincy institution because nobody can be enskinned without subjecting himself to religious rites or rituals.

He further argued that religion does not only play a role on the chieftaincy institution but religion also plays a role on the national politics and forms part of work ethics for certain professions. Before assumption of office, Judges, Doctors and Nurses have to swear an Oath. During the celebration of Independence Days, Pastors, Imams and Traditional Priests are called upon to pray for the commencement of the march pass and after the march pass every year. Quoting from the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, he noted that in the preamble is enshrined **“IN THE NAME OF THE ALMIGHTY GOD we the people of Ghana, In EXERCISE**, of our natural and inalienable right establish a frame work of government which shall secure for themselves and posterity the blessing of liberty, equality of opportunity and

prosperity.” In Oaths like the Oath of allegiance, the Presidential Oath, the Oath of the Vice-President, the Judicial Oath, the Oath of Members of the Council of State, the Oath of Ministers of State, the Oath of Secrecy, the Official Oath, the Speaker’s Oath, the Oath of a Member of Parliament and the Oath of the Auditor-General all have the following enshrined IN THE NAME OF THE ALMIGHTY GOD and ends with SO HELP ME GOD. He concluded that the above is an attestation that religion does not only play a role on the chieftaincy institution but cut across all facets of life including national politics and peoples’ professions.⁵⁰

The same question was posed to Poatob Gladys to solicit her views on the topic under discussion. She also alluded to the fact that religion plays a significant role in the selection, installation and enskinment of chiefs and the chieftaincy institution as a whole. She said that from the selection to the enskinment of chiefs in the Chamba Traditional Area, Imams, Mallams, Diviners and Earth Priest are involved throughout. She added that a chief cannot be enskinned without going through spiritual screening, installation and enskinment rites and rituals. She also argues that when a vacancy is created through the death of a chief and a search is being made, their Pastor after leading a general prayer for peaceful enskinment informs them to individually continue to pray for peaceful enskinment. She was quick to add that even during national elections, politicians call on religious leaders to pray for peace, organize prayers themselves for peaceful elections and victory for their presidential and

⁵⁰Awal Iddrisu a teacher interviewed on 20th January, 2013 in his house.

parliamentary candidates. All of these show that religion plays an indispensable role not only on the chieftaincy institution but all aspects of national life.⁵¹

3.4 The Religious Duties of Diviners, Imams, Mallams and Earth Priest to chiefs in the study area

On the question of religious duties of diviners to the chiefs in the Traditional Area, the diviners variously agreed that they owe some religious duties to the chiefs in the Traditional Area because they were part of the community. They have their families as well as their clients in the community and whatever happens in the area certainly will have effect on them and their families. According to Nadaah N-nandow before the coming of Islam and the incorporation of Islamic rites into the chieftaincy institution, the diviners used to provide and are still providing protective medicines or charms to the chiefs. Diviners also provide charms that enable a chief to know persons who are coming to his palace with evil intentions.

Besides, with the formation of the Ghana National Association of Traditional Healers (G.N.A.T.H) Traditional Priests, Herbalists and Diviners do not only embark on curative methods but they also embark on preventive measures. He said during their meetings, one of them may be able to see a vision that calamities such as premature deaths or outbreak of some diseases are likely to occur in the Traditional Area. A possible remedy is then communicated to the chiefs in the Traditional Area and the appropriate measures are taken to avert the catastrophe. If the rites or the sacrifices

⁵¹Poatob Gladys a teacher interviewed on 22 January, 2013 in her house.

that are supposed to be performed are beyond the financial constraints of the chiefs in the Traditional Area, *gongon*⁵² is beaten and the amount that each household is supposed to pay is made known. The items are then bought and the sacrifice is performed by the Earth Priest if it relates to the gods of the land to appease them to avert the catastrophe. Before the formation of this association what was done was that once in a year a fire dance was organized where diviners were invited from far and near and fire set with wet fire woods and they dance round it from eleven o'clock pm till the next day. In the course of the dance if there is any mishap that would happen in the Traditional Area one or some of the diviners would see it by gazing at the fire and the necessary antidote(s) to the calamity prescribed and communicated to the chiefs in the Traditional Area. According to them before the coming of Islam and the incorporation of Islamic practices into the chieftaincy institution, diviners provided and are still providing protective charms to the chiefs. They also provide charms that enable the chief to know persons who are coming to his palace with evil intention.⁵³

On the question of his religious role or duties to the chiefs in the Traditional Area, Abdul Hanaan Sumani an Imam said, traditionally they the Imams are viewed as the wives of chiefs especially in Northern Ghana. He posits that before and after the celebration of the fire festival, he has to write some verses of the Holy Quran on a slate then wash it with water for the chief and the members of the community to bath

⁵²Gongon is an instrument used by the chiefs to disseminate information or to summon people in the Traditional Area for an emergency meeting or a normal scheduled meeting.

⁵³Nadaah N-nadow a diviner and Traditional Priest interviewed on the 4th of January, 2013 in his house.

the next day after celebrating fire festival. This is suppose to protect the chief and the community against evil spirits. Apart from this, he has to visit the chief's palace to foretell events that are likely to happen within the year and what can be done to avert any misfortune that may be associated with the blessings that may come to the Area. More so, as part of his religious duty to the chief, at the end of the Ramadan, he has to lead the chiefs and his subjects who are Muslims to perform Eid-ul-Fitr prayers. Besides, he has to always visit the palace of the chief every Monday and Friday to offer prayers for the chief, his subjects, the community, the region and the country as a whole.⁵⁴

The Mallams who were interviewed above stipulated that they served as spiritual consultants to chiefs, politicians, military officers, businessmen and women. As Mallams they prepare charms, talismans and amulets for chiefs to fortify themselves, ward off evil spirits and for their public appearance. Chief's either invite them for divination or they send their agents to them for divination.⁵⁵

The Earth Priest interviewed enumerated the following as his religious duties to the chiefs in the study area. First, he said before the selection, installation and enskinment of a chief in the Traditional Area, he is consulted to perform certain sacrifices to the gods of the land to inform them that they are going to select and enskin one of their sons. He asks for their guidance during the selection process to come out with the right person for installation and enskinment. Certain promises or vows are made to the

⁵⁴Abdul Hanaan Sumani an Imam interviewed on 7th of January, 2013 at his house.

⁵⁵Abdul Razak, Alfa Mohammad and Ukpejo Yasser are Mallams in the study area.

gods before the enskinment in the form of animals' goats cows or even a fowls depending on the financial strength of the chief- elect to thank the gods of the land after a successful enskinment. Blessings are also sought for the chief, the community, the district, the region and the nation at large.

He stated further that the success or the failure of a chief can also depend on the performance or failure to perform sacrifices that have religious underpinnings which the chieftaincy institution identifies itself with. According to him, the sacrifices they perform are supposed to seek blessings for the chiefs and their subjects, prevent misfortunes or seek remedies to mishaps in the community. Before the commencement of farming activities especially clearing the land for raising of yam mounds which is characterized with snake bites sacrifices are made. Chiefs apart from praying for incident free farming, also direct the Earth Priest to perform sacrifices to appease offended spirits, to show appreciation for favours received during the previous year and to seek for more favours. This can be performed as and when the need arises. It is the responsibility of the Earth Priest to do so because his powers are derived from the earth and he plays a complementary role to the chief. If a chief refuses to ensure that such sacrifices are performed, it can contribute to the downfall of his administration. As a result of this, chiefs always ensure that sacrifices relating to their office are performed promptly.

The Earth Priest also said it his duty to introduce the new chief to the shrines or the sacred groves of the gods in the Traditional Area. The totem of the area is a crocodile so if anybody intentionally or un intentionally kills a crocodile, he has to be summoned by the chief and made to buy certain animals for sacrifices to be made to appease the gods of the land to avert a calamity from befalling such an individual and

the community at large. In sum, the Earth Priest said, the chieftaincy institution is a religious institution and that religion plays a critical role on the institution.

The Pastors, who were also interviewed as indicated earlier in the Traditional Area, said they did not have any specific religious duties assigned them like the Imams and the Earth Priest. However, what they do as part of their normal duty is to pray for the community for peace and tranquility. When there is no peace in the community, evangelism in the area suffers. Their marginalized duty to the chiefs might be due to the late arrival of Christianity to the area and their non involvement in preparation of charms.

In conclusion the findings of the study have affirmed that religion plays a crucial role in the selection, installation and enskinment of chiefs and the chieftaincy institution as a whole. The respondents however, acknowledged that the processes may vary from one Traditional Area or from one region to the other. This notwithstanding, religion still plays a major role on the institution. Also looking at the responses of the interviewees, concerning the role that religion plays on the selection, installation and the enskinment of chiefs and for that matter the chieftaincy institution, one can deduce from the research findings that the people of Chamba Traditional Area see God, ancestors and gods as the pivot upon which the chieftaincy institution revolves. The chiefs only act as a link between the ancestors and the living. In view of this when a skin become vacant, the selection is often characterized with consultation of Imams, Mallams and Diviners to know the wish of the ancestors.

A royal who is being selected is the one that majority of the Imams, Mallams and Diviners have settled on. The chieftaincy institution cannot exist and function effectively and be revered if religion is taken out of the equation. Most people revered the institution and the occupant because of the religious nature of the

institution. The next chapter will focus on the analysis of the research findings vis a vis literature review.

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CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the research findings based on the interviews conducted in Chamba Traditional Area of the Northern region of Ghana. In this chapter the research will examine the combination of Traditional and Islamic practices performed in the installation, enskinment and post-enskinment of both Muslim and non-Muslim chiefs without any prejudice.

To start with, African Traditional Religion is the spirituality of Africans and was the dominant religion before the coming of Christianity and Islam into Ghana. African Traditional Religion is still the dominant Religion in the study area. Christianity came through the sea to the coast and Islam through the Northern part of Ghana.

Before the arrival of Christianity and Islam, the people in the study area enskins or disenskin their chiefs based on their customs and traditions. However, with the coming of Islam to Ghana especially Northern Ghana, Islamic practices were incorporated into the chieftaincy Institution in Northern Ghana. According to Samwini (2006) Muslims in Gonja and to a lesser extent in Mamprugu, Dagbon and Wala forged close ties with the chiefs and also took up the language and some of the customs of the local people. Muslims of Dyula background allowed Islam to be 'domesticated' to a considerable extent to the local culture.

Also some of the kingdoms especially the Gonja and Wala, were established by the collaborative efforts of warriors and Muslims clerics as spiritual advisers. Besides, Muslims serve as the clerks, secretaries, accountants and chroniclers to the chiefs of

these states using their literacy in Arabic and Arab culture until the 19th and 20th centuries when European visitors appeared on the scene.⁵⁶

Levtzion (1968) on his part also assigned the following reasons for the incorporation of Islamic practices into the chieftaincy institution. According to him Dagbon traditions says explicitly that their ancestors were completely pagans until the time of Na-Zangina. Officially Dagbon history does not mention Muslims in the period before Na-Zangina (C.1700).⁵⁷ This does not suggest that there were no Muslims in Dagbon in the Pre-Zangina period but what it suggests is that Muslims had made no significant impact then, and that relations between chiefs and Muslims had not been close. Eighteenth century saw Islamic elements being incorporated into the culture of the chiefly states and relations between chiefs and Muslims were moulded. He also argues that at least in Gambaga and its environs, Muslims came to pray in the funeral even when the deceased was a pagan.⁵⁸

Considering the close ties that Muslims forged with chiefs and the fact that some of the kingdoms were established by the collaborative efforts of warriors and Muslims clerics as spiritual advisers, it is only fair to have the practices of the two religions incorporated into the chieftaincy institution without any prejudice and that is exactly what is done in Chamba Traditional Area.

⁵⁶N.I. Samwini, *The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since 1950: Its Effects upon Muslims and Muslim-Christians Relations*. Birmingham: Transaction Publishers, 2006, pp.23-24

⁵⁷Levtzion, N. *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A Study of Islam in West Africa in the Middle Volta Basin in Pre-Colonial Period*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968, p.86.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p.133.

4.1 Analysis of the Selection and Confinement of a Chief

The selection of leaders in Africa and in Ghana is a very serious issue that is at the hearts of millions of households across the continent and is largely responsible for some of the economic woes and military interventions in many African countries. In Ghana we have experienced such military interventions. Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party (C.P.P) on 24th February, 1966 was overthrown in a military *Coup d'état* led by Col. E.K. Kotoka and A.A. Afrifa leading to the formation of National Liberation Council (N.L.C.) on the 26th February, 1966. K.A. Busia and his Progress Party (P.P.) on 13th of January, 1972 was also overthrown in a military *Coup d'état* while Busia was in Britain on medical reasons led by Lt Col. I.K. Acheampong leading to the formation of the National Redemption Council (N.R.C). In October, 1975 Acheampong replaced National Redemption Council (N.R.C) with Seven-man Supreme Military Council I (S.M.C. I) chaired by himself. In 1979 F.W.K. Akuffo and his Supreme Military Council II (S.M.C.II) were overthrown by junior officers of Air Force and other ranks led by Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings on the 4th of June, 1979 leading to the formation of Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (A.F.R.C.). Rawlings was the chairman of Armed Forces Revolutionary Council. It became clear that Ghanaians did not want to be ruled by soldiers of any sort in view of this Rawlings and his men have to step down. Elections were fixed on 18th of June, 1979 with People's National Party (P.N.P) led by Hilla Liman emerging as winner in the Presidential election. On 31st of December, 1981 Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings in a *Coup d'état* and formed the Provisional National Defence Council (P.N.D.C.), (Fynn, J.K & Addo - Fening R.1991:263-292).

It is against this backdrop that frantic efforts are made by individuals, civil society, religious leaders and all well meaning Ghanaians in praying to God for peaceful

elections or elections. In the case of the selection of chiefs especially in the study area a wide range of consultations are done and this includes Imams, Mallams, Diviners and Earth Priest through divination to come out with an acceptable person for the Chamba Traditional Area.

Culture it is said is dynamic and not static and responds to the needs of a people. What this means is that if the circumstances of the time change culture also changes. Before the coming of Islam into Northern Ghana the people selected their chiefs by consulting only diviners or soothsayers through divination but the trend has changed. Imams and Mallams are now being consulted because the roles that they play on the chieftaincy institution are enormous.

Besides, most of the chiefs and their subjects are now Muslims and Islamic practices have being incorporated into the chieftaincy institution. Every palace of a chief who is a Muslim now appoints an Imam attached to his palace for prayers and other spiritual assistance. Even during the enskinment of non-Muslim chiefs, Islamic practices are being performed together with traditional practices without any prejudices. An example of the above assertion is the study area, is the case of *Ubor Bilin-igban* though not a Muslim but according to him during his installation and enskinment both traditional and Islamic rituals were performed.

In some Traditional Areas, it was a taboo for a chief to see a blind man let alone work with him or her. However, with the appointment of Henry Seidu Daanah who is blind as Minister for Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs in 2013 those chiefs have since revised their stance and are working with him. When the circumstances of life in a given time change, culture also changes to respond to the needs of a people. That means religion and culture are intertwined and influence each other.

Non-Muslim chiefs now seek for spiritual assistance from Imams and Mallams. To buttress this, Levtzion (1968), states that charms were prepared by the Imams of Kamshegu, Buipe and Kpembe and sent to Asantehene as well as an assurance that each of them was praying for the king and his kingdom. Samwini (2006), quoting Levtzion, asserted that there was communication between Imam Adam of Gambaga and the Asantehene. Asantehene sent presents to the Imam for the former's supplications and blessings. Asante kings believed that the powers from Muslim prayers and amulets could give protection in war and against other bad omen, so Asantehene and his divisional chiefs applied for the same supernatural aid the Imams and Mallams offered to their chiefs in the North.

Awuah-Nyamekye (2009) quoting Yanka, posits that the office of a chief is considered to be sacred because he is regarded as the earthly representative of the ancestors. In view of this, his selection is preceded with religious activities such as divination and other ritual activities as offering of prayers and sacrifices. Tonah (2006) the chieftaincy position embodies not only political office but also includes many spiritual functions. This becomes apparent in the numerous sacrificial roles and veneration of ancestors that accompany the holding of political office at all levels. The spiritual qualities embodied in a chief are regarded as source of power, prestige, and respect and provide the general foundation for the legitimacy of the ruler.

The findings of the study corroborated the positions of Awuah-Nyamekye and Tonah. The respondents asserted that a person to be selected as a chief is supposed to occupy a religious and political position. He is supposed to occupy the skin of his ancestors and serve as a link between them and the living. The kingmakers and elders can only determine this through consultation with Imams, Mallams and diviners. The selection process is very important in the chieftaincy institution. The customary

procedures in selecting and enskinning chiefs in the study area are secretive and not codified. This leads the processes open to manipulation by people with different interest and motives.

Looking at the views of scholars like Levtzion, Samwini, Awuah-Nyamekye, Tonah and respondents from the study area, it is clear that the kingmakers seems to focus much on the spiritual aspect when choosing a chief. It is very good to do so because God knows the heart of all men and women. However, there should be a careful balance between the spiritual qualities and that of the physical qualities like intelligence, honesty, integrity, experience, humility just to mention a few.

On intelligence, a chief should be able to gather, synthesis and interpret information and solve problems. Whilst it is desirable to use to the full, the experiences and wisdom of elders and his subjects, he should not always allow them to do his thinking or make decisions for him. When a chief is very intelligent it will help him to provide good leadership and make well informed decisions and understand the implications of such decisions. If a chief is unable to do that then he is just a mere figure head and not a leader.

On honesty and integrity chiefs should build trust between themselves and their followers by being truthful, sincere and show consistency between their words and deeds. When a chief or a leader possesses the above mentioned qualities, he will be able to win the respect and the cooperation of his subjects. Dishonesty or immoral behaviours are vices that legally disqualify a person from being made a chief. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana Article (275) states “A person shall not be qualified as a chief if he has been convicted for high treason, treason, high crime or an offence involving the security of the state, fraud, dishonesty or moral turpitude”.

A combination of both spiritual and physical qualities will make the chief more

effective and efficient to champion the course of his subjects for peace and tranquility to prevail in his Traditional Area.

In Odotei *et al.*, Owusu (2006) on confinement of chiefs or kings and the role that religion plays, asserted that with regards to Asante kings, the *Gyaase* must put every approved nominated king in confinement... while in confinement, the king is to be given instructions on traditional taboos; the *Gyaase* also takes him through several rituals. Similarly, *Awoamefia*, the king of Anlo... his selection as a king is followed by a long period of confinement (6 months) to induct him into various issues, especially on taboos and his role as a religious leader. Again Quoting Amuzu, he observes that, the *Awoamefia*'s education during confinement covers not only the history of his people and their customs, but the greater part of the curriculum also covers religious and traditional systems. The king is taught his role as a religious head of deities like *Nyigbla*, *Sui*, *Afa* and *Yeve*.

In regard to what Owusu has said on confinement, the findings of the study to some extent are in line with his views. The study has shown that before installation and enskinment in the Chamba Traditional Area, the chief-elect is confined. In the case of the Overlord he is confined for three months, paramount chief two months and sub-chiefs one month. The essence of this confinement is to take the chief-elect through some taboos, rituals and customs surrounding the chieftaincy institution, and his position as a religious leader.

The chief-elect is also taught drum language because during social gatherings or ceremonies, it is drums that are used to recite his appellations and also to usher him into the gathering. Drums are also used to disseminate information and to summon the spokesman and elders to the chief palace. However, where the study and literature seems to differ is the number of months that a king or overlord is confined and also

the use of drums or drum language. The differences might be due to the geographical and cultural differences existing between the aforementioned Traditional Areas.

4.2 Analysis of the Installation of a Chief

A social relation or contract exist between human beings themselves and God, gods, ancestors and spirits on the other hand. In other words just as human beings do everything possible to maintain cordial relation with relatives, friends and neighbours for their mutual benefit, chiefs also do everything possible to maintain a cordial relationship with spiritual being(s) in order to enhance the quality of life of their subjects during their administrations.

Busia (1951) posits that religion plays a role in the installation process and that after a candidate had been elected and accepted, a day was then appointed for the installation of the chief. The Kontihene, through the Okyeame, formally sends for the chief-elect, dressed in an *adinkra* cloth, signifying that he was mourning, accompanied by the members of the royal lineages. The Okyeame addressed the chief-elect as follows: Konti, Akwamu, Bokoro, Konton, Asere, Kyidom, Benkum, Twafo, Adonten, Nifa – all the elders say that I should give you the stool. Do not go after women, when we give you advice, listen... take the stool the elders say they have given the stool to you. The chief-elect in a standing position then take an Oath with a sword as a symbol of authority pledging to comply with all that the elders have told him and should he violate the oath, he should be destooled. The elders also in turn take the oath of allegiance to the chief. According to Busia the Oath imposed moral and religious sanction on the elders from working against the chief.

The findings of the research reflect the views of Busia that religion plays a role in the installation of chiefs. After a chief is selected a day was fixed for his installation. They however differ in the costumes that the chief-elect wears for the ceremony and objects used. For example the people in the South use a stool and their symbol of authority is a sword. The people of Chamba Traditional Area in the Northern region use a skin and their symbol of authority for taking an Oath is a tail of a horse or a cow. The chief-elect in the study area appears in an all white thus white hat, white shirt and white pair of trousers signifying peace, happiness and joy. The differences again in the items used in the installation processes apart from being cultural and geographical differences might also be due to the availability of those items in the Traditional Areas or in the regions. In Northern Ghana, cotton is cultivated there which is use to weave a variety of traditional smocks and clothes.

The instructions or admonishment given to the chief-elect during the traditional Oath swearing are also the same. After swearing of the Oath by both the chief and elders in the Traditional Area, an Imam then prays seeking for Allah's blessings for the chief, his subjects and the community at large even if the chief is a non-Muslim. Occupying such a high position, the chief might be going through a lot of fears, and psychological and emotionally instability. This prayers offered by an Imam on such occasion can remove or reduce such fears, worries to the barest minimum and repose confidence in him to go about his duties without fear or favour.

Traditional leaders like chiefs, the occupants of the chieftaincy institution are aware that the institution is a religious institution. They are equally aware that they sit on the skins or the stools of their ancestors and their position and personalities are sacred. They therefore attribute their success in leadership not to their natural ability and social status but to God and the ancestors. They see themselves literally as worthless,

sinful, weak and powerless without God and the ancestors. With these at the back of their minds, they always seek the guidance and directions from God and ancestors in finding suitable ways and strategies for their leadership so they depend heavily on God and ancestors for everything that they do.

As indicated earlier by Busia that the Oath imposes moral and religious sanctions on the elders from working against the chief, the interviewees especially *Ubor* (chief) Bilin-igban Punpiir said that “during Oath swearing, God Almighty and the ancestors have been called upon to serve as witnesses and should the chief renege on the Oath he took, he would incur the displeasure of God and his ancestors and that can cause the downfall of his administration”.

4.3 Analysis of the Enskinment of a Chief

The enskinment is the last stage of all the processes that one has to go through in order to be traditionally accorded the title of a chief. Legally for one to be accorded the title or for someone to be called a chief his name should be gazetted in the Traditional Council or Regional Houses of Chiefs or National Houses of Chiefs. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana Article 270 (b) states that “a Traditional Council or Regional House of Chiefs or National House of Chiefs is to establish and operate a procedure for the registration of chiefs and the public notification in the Gazette or otherwise of the status of persons as chiefs in Ghana”.

On the enskinment of a chief, the chief- elect is led into the skin house and lowered three times on the skin. A cow is then brought into the yard and slaughtered by an Imam to God. The sacrificing of the cow to God is a religious act and is very significant. The person(s) offering the sacrifice sees himself or themselves as humans

and that there is a Being that is higher and more powerful than them. There is therefore the need to establish a close relationship with that Being. Where worshippers and the Supernatural participate in the sacrificial object in the form of a communal meal, it establishes a closer union or bond between humans and the supernatural at the vertical and horizontal levels, those who participated in the communion are integrated and now see each other as friends.

The object(s) that are used for sacrifice should have value or should be valuable to the receiver and dear to the giver. In Islam and in Christianity, Ibrahim or Abraham willingly agreed to offer his only son Ishmael or Isaac as sacrifice to God. There is nothing that is more valuable than human life that Ibrahim or Abraham agrees to offer to God. When he was aware of the sixth commandment in Bible which says “You shall not kill” (Gen.20:13). The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana also cites the taking of some one’s life as a criminal offence. Article 13(1) state that “No person shall be deprived of his life intentionally except in the exercise of the execution of a sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence under the laws of Ghana of which he has been convicted”. Another instance in which the issue of value comes into play in sacrifice was in Genesis (4), Cain and Abel’s sacrifice to God. Cain was a farmer and Abel a shepherd and they all decided to offer sacrifices to God. Cain offered his farm produce whilst Abel offered firstlings of his flock. God accepted Abel’s offer because it had more value or it was dear to his heart and rejected that of Cain because it had no value or dear to his heart. Sacrifice need not only be tangible things like animals or food stuffs but it could be intangibles like being ethical. Doing what is right and avoiding acts that are wrong or bad and sharing one’s experience with others.

The study has also shown that after the enskinment a white sheep and a white cock are slaughtered to thank the Supreme Being and the ancestors for a successful enskinment. It is also to ask for peace and blessings from the Supreme Being for the Traditional Area. In the Traditional Area, a white object symbolizes among other things peace, joy and happiness. The slaughtering of these animals to the Supreme Being and the ancestors all go to attest to the role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution.

The study corroborated the views of Busia (1951) concerning the slaughtering of a sheep for the Supreme Being after enstoolment. The slight point of departure between literature and the research findings are that literature only talk about a sheep being slaughtered to the Supreme Being but the findings have shown that in Chamba Traditional Area it is not just any sheep that is being slaughtered but a white sheep.

4.4 Analysis of Post Enskinment

Busia (1951) noted that after enstoolment, the chief visits each town in his Division in turn to thank his people, and to show himself to the gods at Gyansoso, Akrobi, and Droboso. Once this has been performed, the custom is that the chief has become sacred and this is culminated by the many taboos that he is required to observe after his enstoolment. The views of Busia are not different from what I found out in the study area. As custom demands after the enskinment, the chief goes to the various communities within his jurisdiction to thank his subjects for their prayers and moral support. This may also include visit to the gods of the land as opined by Busia.

According to Levtzion (1968) a chief is neither a [complete] Muslim nor a complete pagan, but what may be defined as 'half Islamized'. Chiefs refer both to Earth Priest and Imams and require the ritual ceremonies of both the Earth Priest as well as the

prayers of Muslims. He is in a position between traditional worshippers and Muslims. Though I was not told that the chief after enskinment visits the shrines of the gods but looking at how Levtzion defines a Muslim chief as 'halfIslamized' and that he is an intermediate between traditional worshippers and Muslim followers, I will not be surprised if a chief visits the shrines of the gods after his enskinment even if he is a Muslim.

Busia again stipulated that every twenty one –days an Ashanti chief offers libations to his royal ancestors on behalf of his subjects, praying that the soil may be fruitful and women to give birth to more children to fill the land. He further, asserted that only the chief could bring all the lineages together and sacrifice to his royal ancestors on behalf of the community as a whole. To the people this was his most important function. Before they came together to settle in a town as a community, the chief first sacrificed on their behalf.

Asante in Odotei *et al.*, (2006) contributing to the topic made a point that none can be an adequate chief who refuses to perform the religious functions of his office. Even Christians who have been enstooled as chiefs have all felt the obligation to perform religious rites in order to ensure the welfare of their people, good health, plentiful harvest and fertility. They have done this either directly by themselves or indirectly by delegation. The sacredness of the chieftaincy institution derives both from the general sacred conception of the ancestors and the mystical relationship existing between traditional rulers and their royal ancestors. He further stated that traditional leaders on their enstoolment become ritual figures in the sense that their lives are governed by ritual activities. They perform rites that are believed to guarantee the safety of their people and also their own.

From the research findings, the chiefs on the contrary do not offer sacrifices every twenty one –days to their royal ancestors as asserted by Busia. It is the Earth Priest that performs those sacrifices on behalf of the chief(s) because his powers are derived from the earth. Also he is in charge of the major gods of the land. The chief(s) only provide the necessary items to be used. The claim of Asante that Christians who have been enstooled as chiefs either perform religious rites by themselves or delegate people to do that on their behalf can be identified with the assertions of an Earth Priest performing the sacrifice on behalf of chiefs in the Chamba Traditional Area.

The study has shown that the only time that various lineages in the Traditional Area came together for sacrifices are: during natural disasters, showing gratitude to the gods for the favours received. In that case all the lineages or everybody in the community is allowed to go and witness the sacrifice being performed by the Earth Priest. Whatever animals are slaughtered there, the meat of the animals are roasted or boiled and eaten there. Two types of relationship are established out of these sacrifices when performed, namely, the vertical and the horizontal relationship. A Vertical relationship is the relationship that exists between people and their objects of worship or the Supernatural. At the vertical level, the sacrifice brings the devotees closer to their object of worship. Horizontal relationship is the relationship that exists between the adherents themselves. “Society is made up of individuals who though are social animals and hence have social instincts are more often than not self-seekers. The task societies face is how to promote social instincts in the individual and reduce intra-group and inter-group hostilities and egocentrism” (Agyemang n.d.131).

Acts such as sacrificing together and partaking in the meal or the meat together, praying together, embarking on pilgrimage together just to mention a few make the devotees see themselves as one or brothers and sisters and this contributes towards

their integration in the community. The reason is that there are things that people may do or may not do because they see themselves as belonging to a certain religious culture.

Busia added that, chiefship in Ashanti is a sacred office. This had been shown by the rites of the chief's enstoolment and the role that he plays during ceremonies. As long as he sits upon the stool of the ancestors his person is sacred. As the successor of the ancestors, he performs various rites for the welfare of his people, with that office is also join other functions which may be described as administrative, executive, judicial and military. If he abuses his powers, he is divested of it by having his special connexion with his ancestors established on his enstoolment severed. This happened when he commits or was made to commit one of the tabooed acts.

The study affirmed what Busia said especially when he described the sacredness of the chieftaincy institution, the rites associated with the enstoolment of chiefs, the rites that a chief performs or delegate people to perform on his behalf for the welfare of his people. As indicated earlier when there is a major sacrifice, such as the one that affects the whole community, the chiefs act swiftly by asking the Earth Priest to perform it promptly. They know the consequences that will befall them for refusal to act. Religiously it can affect their administration and when that happens, a chief will not be able to have a full complement of his ancestors and the gods of the land. Politically, his subjects can rise against him making the place ungovernable for him.

Rattray (1927) stipulated that the funeral rites for an Ashanti king and the ultimate disposal of his remains seem to differ materially from the obsequies of an ordinary individual. After the death of a king or a chief, attempts are made to preserve his remains more carefully and reverently in order that these might serve as a medium or

shrine for his spirit when it was summoned to return to his people in times of national re-union or national emergencies.

The people in the study area believe that death is inevitable but not the end of life. When a person dies, it is only the body or the material parts that decomposes but the soul still exists. This goes to explain the concept of life after death. As a result of the belief in life after death, dead persons are often buried with precious items such as money to be used to buy water for his or her transportation, jewelry, flash light and in recent time's mobile phones. In the case of a chief, the announcement of his death is different from an ordinary person. Terms such as the chief is gone to his village, the Oak or the mighty tree has fallen, he has kicked the bucket are used. He is dressed in the same way that he was enskinned and buried in his room with items such as a piece of goat, lion, and sheep skins. He is buried in a round grave. The belief is that the dead person will need those items in his post-earthly home. All of these are done to befit his status as a chief. Apart from that it is away of preserving the remains of the chief or king for consultation and veneration.

Gyekye (1996) observed that, the chief of the African state is, traditionally both the political head and the religious head. Gyekye's observation of a chief being a religious and political head was authenticated during the study. Politically, the People in the study area first of all go to the chief's palace to either seek refuge or seek justice when they feel that their rights are being trampled upon or abused. When there are mishaps in the community like frequent thunder strikes killing people, frequent crocodile attacks on people going to fetch water from rivers, dams or attack on cattle going to drink water from those sources, appearance and disappearance of rats during the day time among other things. When such misfortunes occur in the community, a chief being seen as a religious head is informed to find an antidote to those unusual

occurrences. “Traditional rulers and other institutions are generally seen as being indigenous, close to the population and responsive to their needs, while state institutions and national leaders are perceived as being distant, alien, elitist and sometimes illegitimate by large sections of the population, especially those in the rural areas” (Zips & Reveroy van Nieuwal 1998). All the above show the religious role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution in the Chamba Traditional Area.

4.5 Analysis of Religious duties of Imams, Mallams, Diviners and Earth Priest to chiefs

The objective of looking at the religious duties of the above to the chiefs is for academic purpose and not theological. The reason is that there is the danger for some people to consider the various spiritualities in a competitive manner thereby placing value judgment on which religion performs much role on the chieftaincy institution or which religion is the best. That will undermine the underpinning objective of the research and make it dysfunctional because every religion is unique and autonomous. By knowing the religious duties that each religion offers to the chiefs in the study area it will help deepen religious tolerance and respect for people who hold different faiths in the area.

Tonah, (2006) observes that Islamic clerics contribute significantly to legitimizing the position of traditional leadership at all levels of traditional political hierarchy. Every paramount chief appoints and enskins one Muslim cleric as the chief Imam or a leader of Muslim community.

Levtzion (1968) stated that Yendi has a tradition in which an Imam appoints one of his followers to live with the chief, to slaughter animals and to pray for him. The

creation of Imamship brought a community closer to the centre for the Imam to serve the chief and also to pray at festivals and other ceremonies both private and public. Besides, Levztion posited that Kamshegu-*Na* that is the chief of Kamshe who doubled as a Mallam in his village, used to whisper prayers into a gourd and send to *Ya-Na*. On receiving, the *Ya-Na* carefully opened the gourd and blessings came out to him. The views of Levztion corroborated what happens in the study area especially in *Na* Abukari Iddrisu's palace as a Muslim. The chief apart from praying for himself and his subject, an Imam is attached to his palace who also prays seeking Allah's guidance and blessings for the chief and his subjects. More so, as part of his religious duty to the chief, at the end of the Ramadan, he leads the chief and his subjects who are Muslims to perform *Eid-ul-Fitr* and *Eid-ul-Adha* prayers and also the symbolic slaughtering of animals in the chief palace.

Though the respondents do not say that they whisper prayers into the gourd for the chiefs as opined by Levztion however, the services that they render to the chiefs in the Traditional Area seems to have a correlation with what Levztion has posited. The respondents said they are consulted during the selection of chiefs and also during emergencies especially when a calamity hits the Traditional Area. Besides, as part of their religious duties to the chiefs, they prepare charms, talismans and amulets for the chiefs upon request for protection.

Parrinder (1961) stipulated that people go to diviners with all manner of problems in life; birth of children, at the selection of a chief or king, before embarking on a journey, in times of sickness, in times of loss or theft cases and at any time for guidance and comfort. Sarpong (1974) on his part observes that diviners are consulted by and on behalf of both individuals and groups at family crises like child birth, sickness or death, at public emergencies like drought at seasonal and ceremonial

turning points like enstoolment of chiefs. What came out during the interviews with the respondents confirmed the views of Parrinder and Sarpong.

According to the respondents it is not only the kingmakers, chiefs and royals who come to them to divine to know who should be selected and enskinned but people from all walks of life. Politicians contesting elections, businessmen and women, people having challenges with their marriages especially child bearing, those suffering from one form of ailments or the other and people who want to travel abroad do come to them for divination. This go to buttress the statements made by Mbiti and Parrinder respectively that “Africans are notoriously religious and that “Africans are incurably religious”. Religion does not only play a role on the chieftaincy institution but all facets of life and influences the way people perceive and conceive reality.

Before the coming of Islam and the incorporation of Islamic practices into the chieftaincy institution, diviners provided and are still providing protective medicines or charms to the chiefs.

Besides, with the formation of the Ghana National Association of Traditional Healers (G.N.A.T.H) in 2006, Traditional Priests, Herbalists and Diviners do not only embark on curative methods but they also embark on preventative measures. The respondents said during their meetings, one of them may be able to see a vision that a calamity such as premature deaths, outbreak of some diseases are likely to occur in the Traditional Area. A possible remedy is therefore communicated to the chiefs in the Traditional Area and the appropriate measures taken to avert the catastrophe. If the rites or the sacrifices that are supposed to be performed are beyond the financial constraints of the chiefs in the Traditional Area, *gongon* is beaten and the amount that each household is supposed to pay is made known. The items are then bought and the sacrifices are performed by the Earth Priest if it relates to the gods of the land to

appease them to avert the catastrophe. Hitherto to the formation of this association what was done is that once in a year a fire dance was organized where diviners were invited from far and near. Fire was set with wet fire woods and diviners danced round it from eleven pm till the next day. In the course of the dance if there was any calamity that would befall the traditional area, one or some of the diviners would see it by gazing at the fire and the necessary antidote(s) to the calamity prescribed and communicated to the chiefs.

The respondents further opined that whatever action or journey a chief(s) want to embark upon, he has to consult the Diviners or Soothsayers, Imams and Mallams to know the wish of their ancestors. The above shows that religion does not only play a role on the chieftaincy institution but all facets of life and that people rely on religion as a panacea to their problems.

Mbiti (1969) noted that the Earth Priest features prominently in the installation of kings and making of chiefs. He said the duties of the Earth Priest are chiefly religious, but since Africans do not dissociate religion from other departments of life, he has or may not have other functions. He is a spiritual and ritual pastor of the community or nation: it is he who officiates at sacrifices relating to his knowledge. During my interview with the Earth Priest in the Traditional Area in respect of his religious duties to the chiefs, he said before the selection, installation and enskinment of a chief in the area, he is consulted to perform certain sacrifices to the gods of the land and that is a confirmation of what Mbiti posited when he said the Earth Priest is a spiritual and ritual pastor of the community or nation: it is he who officiates at sacrifices relating to his knowledge.

He explains the rationale behind the performance of certain sacrifices. This is to inform the gods that the elders and the kingmakers are going to select and enskin one

of their sons. He calls for the guidance of the gods during the selection process to come out with a rightful person for installation and enskinment. As stated earlier, promises or vows are made to the gods before the enskinment in the form of animals like a goat, a fowl or even a cow depending on the financial strength of the chief-elect to thank the gods of the land after a successful enskinment. Blessings are sought for the chief, the community, the district, the region and the nation at large.

Mbiti again stated that the Earth Priest performs rituals which could be daily, weekly, monthly or yearly. He is also responsible for pouring of libation. According to the respondents in the study area, there are no time lines for the performance of sacrifices. Sacrifices are performed as and when the need arises. Mbiti also asserted that both the chief and the Earth Priest ultimately derive their authority from their relationship with the spiritual foundation of the society. The chief represents the clan and lineage as the link between the living and the ancestors of the society and could act as a channel through which the mystical powers of the ancestors are mediated for the living. In the same way, Earth Priest powers are derived from the earth and he as the Earth Priest mediates the sacred power of the earth upon which all humans depend for their survival. This is a manifestation that in principle the chieftaincy pole of authority related to kinship and the Earth Priest pole of authority in relation to land are complementary. This is so because they both share the functions of the exercise of political power which mediates mystical or spiritual powers that are crucial for the well-being of the society.

According to the respondents, a chief serves as an intermediary between the living and the ancestors and act as a channel through which the mystical powers of the ancestors descend to the living. The Earth Priest on the other hand derives his powers from the earth which falls within the jurisdiction of chiefs and this call for a complete

collaboration between chiefs and Earth Priest. This confirms the assertion of Mbiti that the role of a chief and the Earth Priest is complementary. The respondents went further to add that chiefs always ensured that sacrifices that may emerge during their administration are promptly performed. Failure to do so can contribute to the downfall of their administration. This also explains why among other things, it is a taboo for a chief to insult an Earth Priest, Imam and Mallams. In the light of the above analysis both from literature and the research findings, it is clear that the chieftaincy institution is a religious institution and that religion plays a critical role on the institution in the Chamba Traditional Area.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter analyzed data using literature review and the research findings. The main objective of the study was to investigate the role that religion plays on the Chieftaincy Institution in Chamba Traditional Area as a case study. To achieve the said objective, the processes of the selection, installation, enskinment and post enskinment of chiefs in the Traditional Area were used. The study employed qualitative case study of the role of religion on the chieftaincy institution. The study also employed non-probability sampling for example purposive and snowball sampling methods. The descriptive method of events and analysis was also employed.

The choice of the respondents was based on the belief that most of them hail from the study area and have lived there in most of their lives and have witnessed the enskinment of chiefs. In view of these, they have the requisite knowledge and experience in the processes of selection, installation and enskinment of chiefs and can therefore share their views on the topic to the best of their knowledge. The interview method was used to collect data from the respondents. This present chapter is therefore going to deal with summary of key findings, conclusion and recommendations taking into account the following five thematic areas: selection, installation, enskinment, post enskinment and religious duties of Imams, Mallams, Diviners and Earth Priest to chiefs in the study area.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

1. On the issue of the role of religion on the selection, installation, enskinment and post enskinment of a chief in the study area, all the twenty four respondents who were interviewed on that confirmed that religion plays a great role on those processes which forms the basis of the chieftaincy institution. According to the respondents, no chief in the Traditional Area has ever been selected without consultation with the Imams, Mallams, Diviners and Earth Priest to know the wish of the ancestors. The final choice is made when majority of Imams, Mallams and Diviners through divination settle on a candidate.

2. The study has also shown that for a chief to be finally enskinned, he must go through some religious activities such as installation and enskinment. During the installation, the chief-elect is given a symbol of authority to swear a traditional Oath to treat his subjects fairly and also to abide by all the taboos relating to the chieftaincy institution in the Traditional Area. The elders are also made to swear an Oath in return to be loyal to the chief. The Oath imposes moral and religious obligations on the chief and his elders. Any of them who goes contrary to the Oath would attract punishment from God Almighty and the ancestors whose names were mentioned to serve as witnesses. When one breaks a taboo, one is restored to normal condition through purification rites. The purification rite gives a person a peace of mind. He is now reconciled with his ancestors, deities and with his or her society. This in effect is a clear demonstration of the role that religion plays on the chieftaincy institution in the Traditional Area.

3. The finding has established that during enskinment:

- (a) a chief is lowered three times on the skin before being enskinned.

(b) He is made to bath and drink some concoctions for fortification.

(c) He is also given insignia of his office such as a calabash covered with a goat skin, a spear made up of iron club or a wooden spear and dressed in a white hat, white shirt and white trousers.

(d) After that a cow is slaughtered and part of the liver is cut and boiled. The meat is kept in the calabash and a piece of the meat is put between the teeth of the chief. He bites it and spits it three times on the ground after which he eats portion of it and the rest given to those in the yard. An Imam then recites Quran 113 and 114 known as protective verses.

(e) These verses during enskinment in the Traditional Area are also written on the slates and washed for the chief to drink in case he is a Muslim. If he is not a Muslim and his faith will allow him to drink he is obliged to do so. This is to among other things protect him against the penetration of a spear, gun, knife, cutlass when stabbed or shot and malevolent spirits. The verses are also written on a portion of a skin which is cut and used as amulets or talismans and sewn either on the hat of chiefs or on the traditional dress of chiefs. These are supposed to protect chiefs from all forms of weapons, enemies and malevolent spirits.

4. Also on post-enskinment, the respondents said, the chief goes to all the communities under his jurisdiction to thank his subjects for their support. The study has also shown that a white sheep or cock or both are slaughtered to God Almighty and the ancestors after a successful enskinment. Before the commencement of farming activities especially, clearing of land for raising of yam mounds which is characterized with snake bites, chiefs apart from praying for incident free farming, also direct the Earth Priest to perform sacrifices to appease offended spirits and to

show appreciation for favours receive during the previous year and to seek for more favours during this year's farming season. Besides, in case of emergencies such as breach of peace in the Traditional Area, the first point of call for an amicable settlement is the chief palace.

5. The religious duties of Imams, Mallams, Diviners and Earth Priest to the chiefs.

(a) The Imam in the research area before and after the celebration of the fire festival, the Imam has to write some verses of the Holy Quran on a slate, wash it with water for the chief and the members of the community to bath the next day after the celebration of fire festival. Apart from this, he visits the chief's palace to foretell events that are likely to happen within the year and what can be done to avert any misfortune that may be associated with the blessings that may come to the Traditional Area. More so, as part of his religious duty to the chief, at the end of the Ramadan, he has to lead the chief and his subjects who are Muslims to perform *Eid-ul-Fitr* and *Eid-ul-Adha* prayers. Besides, he has to always visit the palace of the chief in the Traditional Area every Monday and Friday mornings to offer prayers for the chief, his subjects, the community, the region and the country as a whole.

(b) Mallams as part of their religious duties to the chief(s) prepare charms, talismans and amulets for the chiefs upon request for protection. They are also consulted during the selection of chiefs in the Traditional Area.

(c) According to the respondents, the diviners as part of their religious duties to the chiefs do not only embark on preventive measures but also curative measures. For example, with the formation of the Ghana National Association of Traditional Healers (G.N.A.T.H) in 2006, the respondents said during their meetings, one of them may be able to see a vision that a calamity such as premature deaths, outbreak of

some diseases which are likely to occur in the Traditional Area. Steps are then taken and a possible remedy is communicated to the chiefs and appropriate measures taken to avert the catastrophe. They also assist kingmakers through divination to come out with a choice that will be acceptable to both the ancestors and the people in the community. They also prepare protective charms that can ward off evil spirits, against enemies and those that can be used during war.

(d) The interviewees also said that before the selection, installation and enskinment of a chief in the Traditional Area, the Earth Priest is consulted to perform certain sacrifices to the gods of the land to guide the kingmakers, in their selection to come out with a suitable person for installation and enskinment. All the major rituals or sacrifices relate to the land are referred to the Earth Priest to perform on behalf of the chiefs.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the following conclusions can be made about the belief systems of the people of Chamba Traditional Area and the role that religion plays on chieftaincy institution in the Traditional Area.

1. The people in the study area first and foremost belief in the Supreme Being. This notwithstanding, they also belief in Allah, Jesus Christ, Ancestors and other divinities and worship them in their own right.
2. They also resort to divination or consultation of Imams, Mallams and Diviners to interpret the mind of the sacred when they are faced with a lot of choices to make like selection of a chief(s) for enskinment and premature deaths, sickness and diseases.
3. The study has shown that death does not end the relationship between the living and the dead. In view of this, the respondents in the study area venerate their dead.

They also bury their dead with dignity and consult them in times of need or when major decisions are supposed to be taken.

4. The marginalized role played by Pastors may be as a result of late arrival of Christianity into the study area coupled with non involvement of Pastors in the preparation of charms for chiefs.

5. All the twenty four respondents interviewed said that no chief in the Traditional Area has ever been enskinned without going through the rites and rituals of selection, installation and enskinment. They also added that a court may disqualify a person from being enskinned and from carrying himself as a chief but whoever is chosen to be enskin has to go through certain rites and rituals associated with the chieftaincy institution in the Traditional Area. In sum, the study has been able to establish that religion plays a major role on the chieftaincy institution and that is the main objective that the research sought to achieve using the processes of enskinment.

5.2 Recommendations

It is gratifying to note that a vast majority of Ghanaians especially the rural dwellers relate more easily to traditional authorities than even government agencies. In the event of any mishap or emergency, chief palaces are the first point of call. Chiefs and for that matter the chieftaincy institution become a mobilizing force to gather people and resource to address any mishap emanating from emergency situation. Chiefs by virtue of their social status in the political and social spectrum are the custodians of culture and traditions. It is against this backdrop that I would like to make the following recommendations to help strengthen the chieftaincy institution.

1. There should be intensive public education and sensitization on the role that religion plays particularly in the selection process. This process should not be shrouded too much in secrecy because the selection process is an aspect that forms the basis of most chieftaincy disputes. It is after selection that other processes like installation and enskinment take place. When the selection process is not properly managed to the satisfaction of all parties or candidates involved, it can lead to chieftaincy dispute and when it is further not handled properly, it can escalate to chieftaincy conflict leading to loss of precious lives and property.

2. The National House of Chiefs as part of its function as enshrined in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana Article 272 (b) states “the National House of Chiefs shall undertake the progressive study, interpretation and the codification of customary law with a view to evolving, appropriate cases, a unified system of rules of customary law, and compiling the customary laws and lines of succession applicable to each stool or skin”. The National House of Chiefs through the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs should expedite action on the Code of Ethics and Codification of lines of succession to the skins and stool. A critical look must be given especially to the skins and stools that rotate among gates or lineages. When this is not properly factored into the succession plan as pertained in each Traditional Area, it can create more problems than solutions. The Code of Ethics and the Succession plan should be subjected to a review to meet the exigencies of the time. When this is done:

- (a) It would serve as a check on chiefs who would misconduct themselves.
- (b) It would also go a long way to make the institution more vibrant and

(d) It would also help bring to the barest minimum chieftaincy disputes that the institution is saddled with.

3. Living together as a nation or community requires people to take notice of religious traditions that impede progress rather than help life in the community especially when the nation or community in which one lives is multi-religious in character. Failure to recognize and accommodate different customs, traditions and faiths gives rise to prejudices and misinformation of each other's faith. Even though better information may be available from persons of respective traditions, there is often unwillingness to accept the integrity of adherents of those traditions which create hostilities in the communities and if not properly dealt with it can lead to religious conflicts. Chiefs as religious and political heads are much revered, so they should always preach religious tolerance to their adherents. Imams and Pastors should do same in their mosques and chapels respectively.

4. As a result of globalization, education, search for jobs and job opportunities, various people with different faiths have come to live closer with one another than before. Adherents of various faiths now collaborate with each other. In many Ghanaian homes, it is common to find followers of different religions living together. During *Eid-ul-Fitr* and *Eid-ul- Adha*, Christmas, Traditional festivals and funerals adherents, of various religions send good will messages to their friends and loved ones. They also attend such gatherings without questioning each other's religious affiliations. Chiefs are supposed to preside over all the various adherents within their jurisdictions and act as unifiers. Every religious practice be it Traditional, Islamic or Christian that will not create any problem to the institution and the occupant of the seat should be incorporated into the chieftaincy institution to strengthen its religious role without any prejudice.

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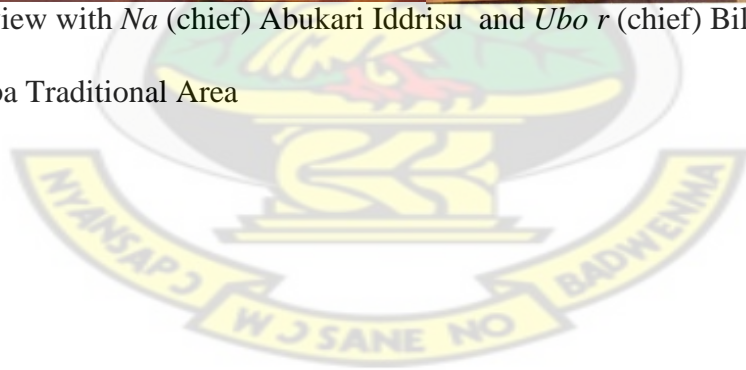
[https:// www.Google.com.gh/ search](https://www.Google.com.gh/search), accessed on 30th April, 2014.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX:1



An Interview with *Na* (chief) Abukari Iddrisu and *Ubo r* (chief) Bilin-igban Punpiir in Chamba Traditional Area



APPENDIX 2: Assessing the Experience Level of Respondents

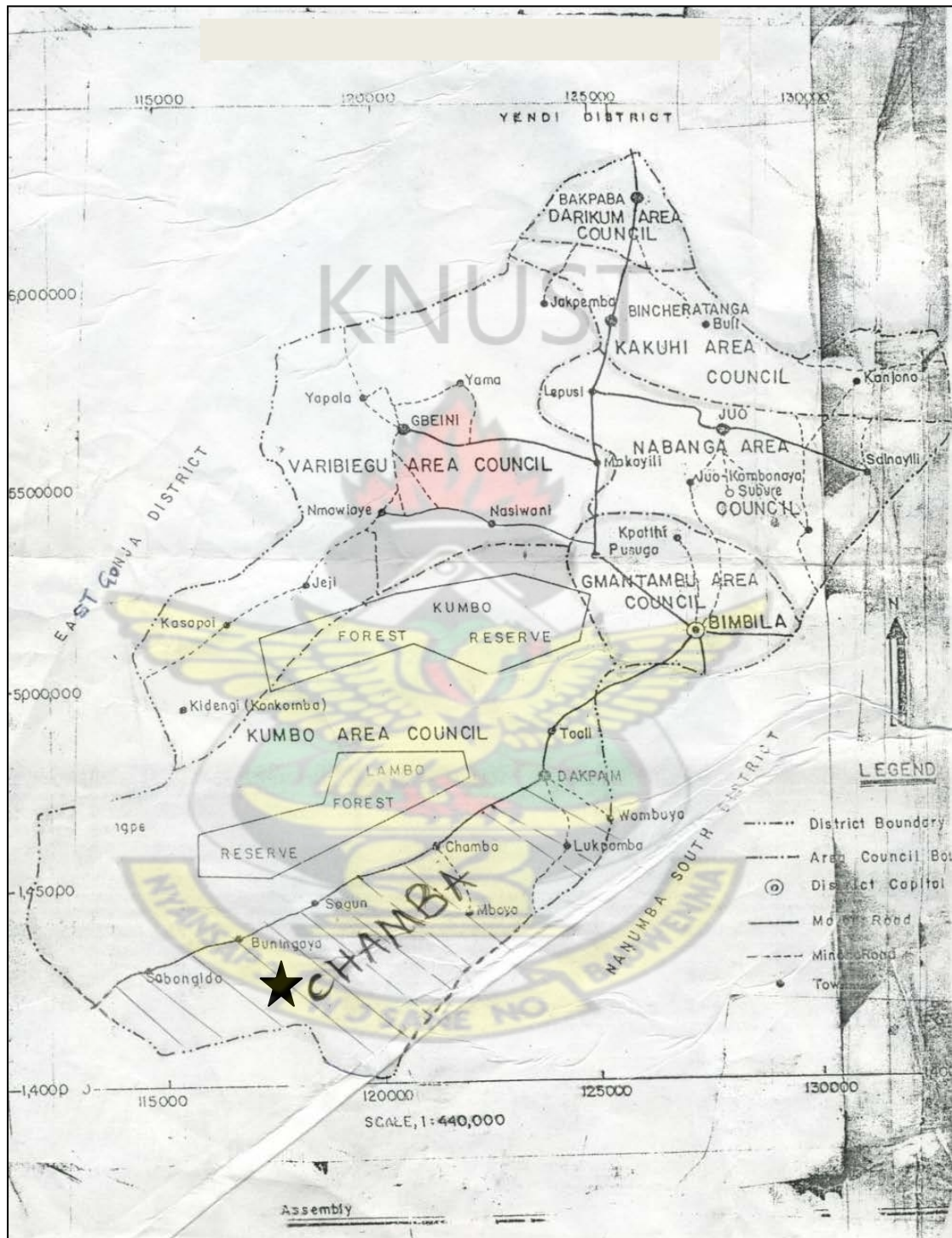
Name of Respondents	Age	Position of the Respondents	Number of Years Respondents lived in the Community	Number of Years respondents ruled as a chief
AbukariIddrisu	65	Chief	*	7 years
Bilin-ighanPunpiir	78	Chief	*	9 years
Abarika Atta	59	King maker	*	
Kpihi Bara	70	King maker	*	
ImiranaaWorikpamo	69	King maker	*	
IddrisuYirisah	75	Elder	*	
ZakariNantonmah	65	Elder	*	
AbukariZiblim	66	Elder	*	
NtibiDoukom	60	Elder	*	
TagiYibamondoe	55	Elder	*	
Udou Dalababu	58	Elder	*	
Abdul Razak	45	Mallam	*	
Alfa Mohammad	50	Mallam	*	
UkpejoYassare Arafat	30	Mallam	*	
Abdul HaananSumani	50	Imam	*	
DaanaJakadow	40	Diviner or Soothsayer	*	
Nadaah N-nandow	60	Diviner& a Traditional Priest	*	
TanyinkaiMoasunn	50	Diviner	*	
AbukariZiblim	66	Earth-priest	*	
Rev. Fr. Anthony Kingsley Austin	47	Pastor	3yrs	
Rev.Wumbei Paul Kwame	57	Pastor Pastor	2 ½ years	
Rev.Abraham Nana BamfoOppong	45	Pastor	2 ½ years	
AwaiIddrisu	26	Teacher	●	
Poatob Gladys	33	Teacher	●	

Source: Field survey, 2012.

Key:* Respondent has lived in the community all his/her lifeand has held a position.

● Respondent has lived in the community all his/her lifebut has not held any position.

APPENDIX 3: Nanumba North District Map



Source : Nanumba North District Assembly Map showing the research unit of Chamba in the Northern region of Ghana. **KEY:** Chamba Traditional Area

