

Interview with Abusua Panin (head of family) Nana Badu, Mprafie, Mampong
Venue: Ashanti Newtown, Kumasi

Prof: Today is February 26th 2006; we are at Asante New Town with Nana Badu, Mprafie Mampong Abusuapanin. Nana we are here to have a chat with you. You can speak now.

Nana Badu: Mpra is a deity. Mpra is a deity originally from Nkoranza, a village called Perehini. The deity met Mamponghene at a place called Akrofonso. They were very crowded there, at that time even Efiduase and Ejura were part of Mampong. And Mampong hene told her to go and look for a bigger place for all of them. So Mpra traveling in a trance came and found the current site of Mprafie. So she went back and told them that she had found a place and it would become an Oman pon (meaning a prominent state). So she built the first house for herself and built one for the stools that would be brought from Akrofonso to the new place (Mampong). So the actual origin of the Mampong stool is Mprafie. The deity's priestess was very young so she got married and had two children after that. When she died, she was succeeded by one of her two children as Okomfo (priestess). Then she had our grandmother and she had my mother and she had us. Then some moved to Kumasi. We first moved to Antoa, then the Imam's father's mother, at that time Kumasi was a very small village, we settled around the Methodist Church, it was called Domenase at that time, and that was the place for Muslims then. Then we built our house at Adontoaso, some stayed there and the rest moved on to Suame. All the female children died except for one female. But it is the one child who has sustained the family line. Then some of us became Christians and some became Muslims, but Mpra is still there in our house and every Akwasidae, Mamponghene comes there and pours libation. That is the history I know. You can go and talk to Nana Mamponghene.

Prof: Now I see that in this family you have Christians, you have traditional religion (Mpra deity) and you have Muslims. Your son is the current Asantehene Kramo. Can you tell us how this came about?

Nana Badu: This house, we don't have many people. The Imam's Father's mother was a twin, the twins and my grandmother were from the same mother. Their only brother was called Kwasi Nka. It is said that he became friends with some Muslims at Domenase. One of them was called Kramo Teaa, and another one was called Kramo Dauda. They were so close that Kwasi Nka gave her nephew (Abenaa Sraha) to Kramo Dauda. They married and had six children. That was during the influenza outbreak. That was when I was conceived. They say that I am ninety-one years old.

Prof: That was in 1918 so that makes you eighty-eight?

Nana: She had six children and died. My mother adopted the last born, and Agya Dauda took the rest to Kwadaso before coming to Suame later.

Prof: So from Domenase, you went to Kwadaso

Nana: Yes. Imam's father's senior brother still has a house at Kwadaso.

Prof: We know that one of the first towns in Asante that Islam flourished was Mampong. We've heard of Safo Kantanka. Is there anything you can tell us about that?

Nana Badu: That you would have to talk to Nana Mamponghene. My grandmother never converted to Islam but we lived like Muslims because we were very close. For example, we are not Muslims but we do not eat pork. The sisters did a lot together so we observed most of their taboos and rituals in our house just to accommodate the whole family.

Prof: Nana, I understand that your name is Badu. I have also heard that the Apagyahene before this one was called Badu or Adu. Do you know anything about him?

Nana Badu: The Apagyahene that I saw was called Kwasi Afriyie. I have seen four Apagyahenes in my lifetime. But you would go and talk to them right?

Prof: Yes. We will go and talk to them but it helps if you tell us what you can remember and we piece them all together. The one that the current Apagyahene succeeded was called Nana Kofi Adu.

Nana Badu: The current Apagyahene's mother had ten children. I know the last one was with Prempeh II but I don't know how many more she (Nana Amma Dapaa) had with Asantehene. When Prempeh I was arrested, Akwasi Nka was also taken away. They also took Nana Osei from Ejisu. Water was very scarce in Kumase and Kwasi Nka helped bring pipe-borne water to Kumase. So our house in Mampong was the first house built on the land. So the house number is B1 and B2. B2 is the extension.

Prof: Nana, we will go to Mampong. Who should we talk to when we get there?

Nana Badu: I am the only elder left at Mpra fie. The rest are mere children. You would have to go to Mamponghene's palace.

Prof: Nana, can we come back if we remember other questions? Because as we go and talk to other people, some questions would come up, can we please come back so that you can help us understand them?

Nana Badu: When you go to Mampong ask for Nana Kronkohene, he is very old now but he knows the history very well. The rest are all children, I can't think of anyone else. You should talk to Mamponghene. Well, what does he know anyway? All the elders are dead. There is also another man at Botase called Opanin Kwabena Buor. He is the grandson of Nana Boahen Anantuo. So he knows some history.

Prof: then I would go and talk to Opanin Kwabena Buor and Nana Kronkohene.

Nana Badu: Do not tell them that I gave you their names.

Prof: Nana Badu, thank you very much.

Nana Badu: Mpra accompanies the Mampong stools whenever it is outdoored. When a Mamponghene dies and the stools are hidden, they are hidden with Mpra. And Mpra is always put on a stool with all the black stools behind it.