

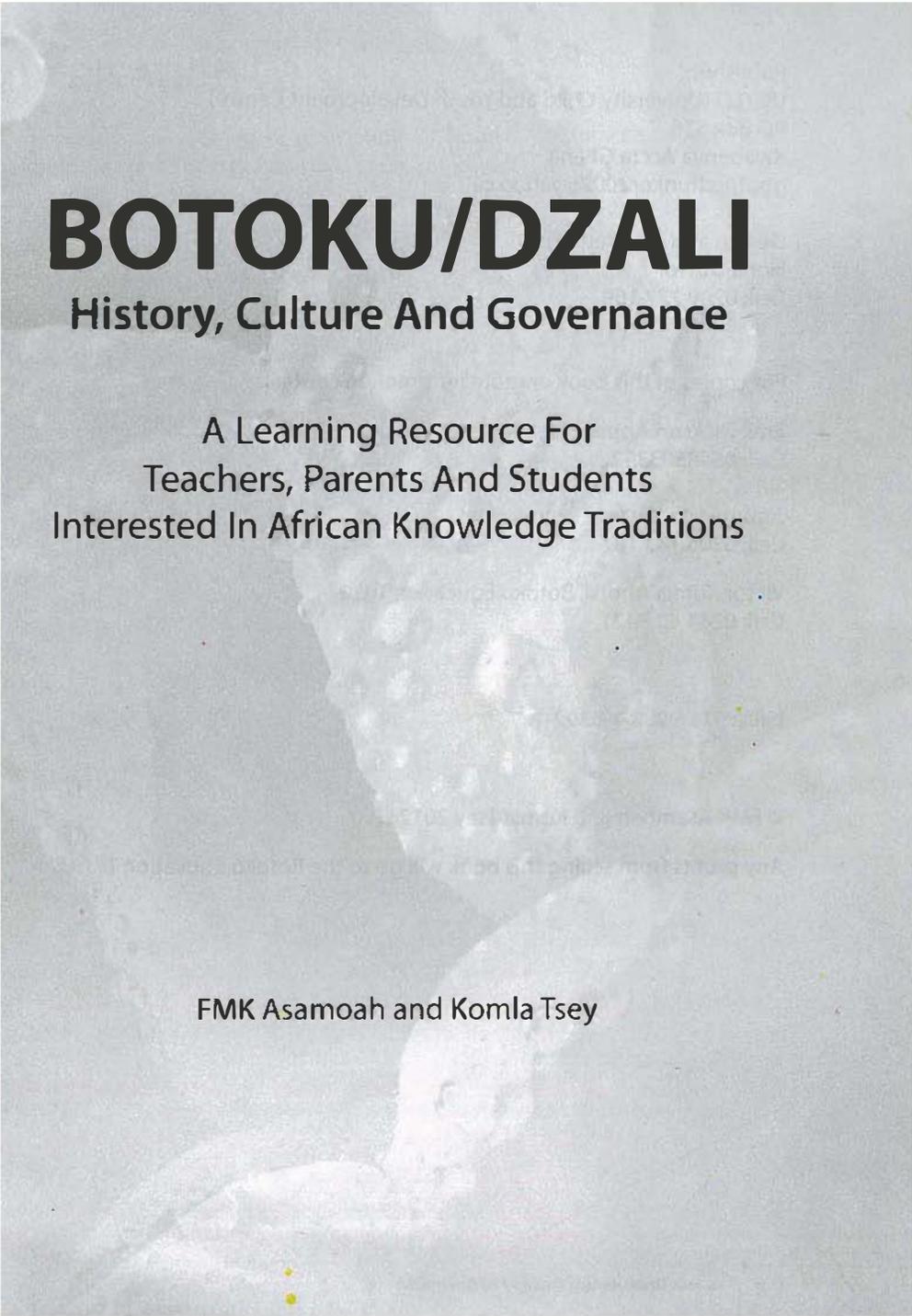
# **BOTOKU/DZALI**

**HISTORY, CULTURE AND GOVERNANCE**



**LEARNING RESOURCE FOR  
TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS INTERESTED  
IN AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE TRADITIONS**

*FMK ASAMOAH AND KOMLA TSEY*



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A Learning Resource For  
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FMK Asamoah and Komla Tsey

Publisher:  
UCYLD (University Child and Youth Development Centre)  
PO Box 536  
Kwabena Accra Ghana  
godfriedfunkor2002@yahoo.ca

Design and Typesetting:  
Horla Duwor  
Cell: 0209 277 169

For copies of this book or more information contact:

Emil Dickson Appiah, Headmaster, Botoku EP Primary school  
Cell: 0548303352

Agbenyega Kwame Tsey (Ayoyo)  
Cell: 0208 183 187

Victor Komla Abotsi, Botoku Education Trust  
Cell: 0244 42 8421

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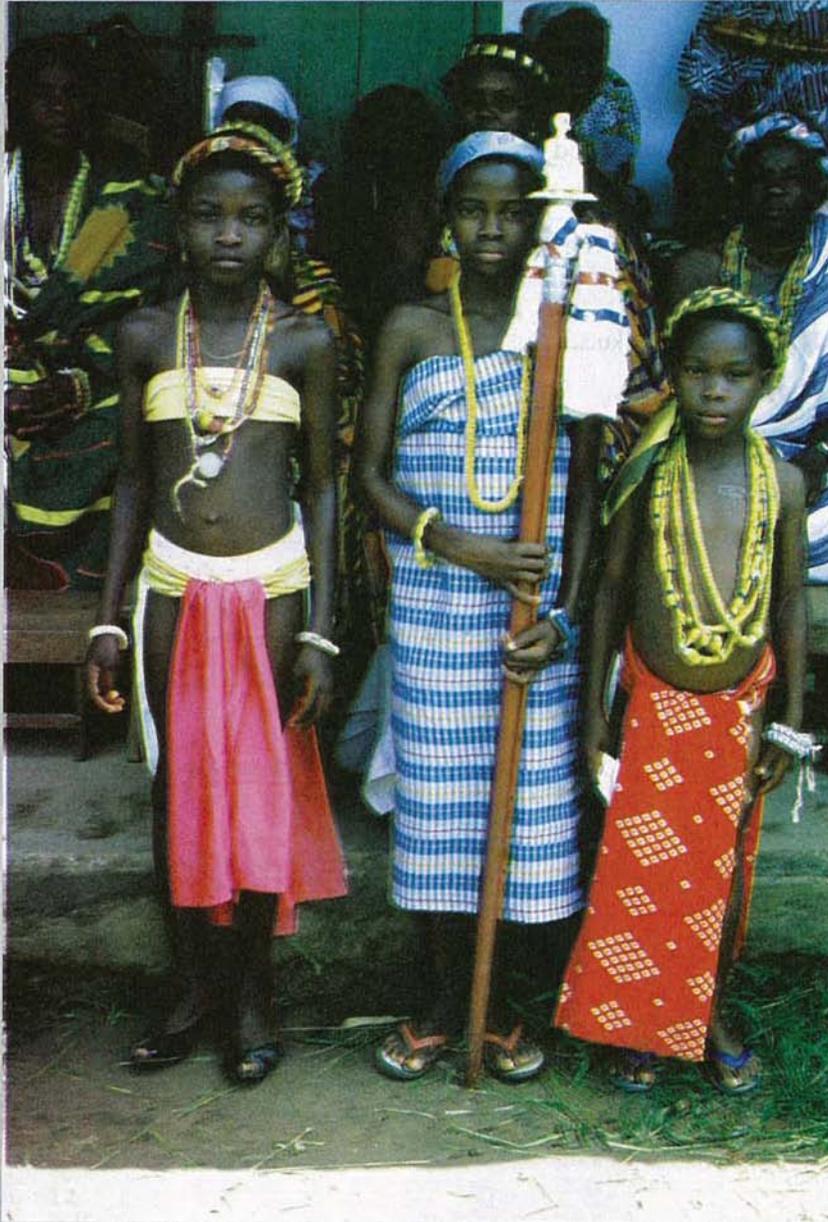
## DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the people of Botoku for their commitment to improving the ancestral home

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*Young girls dressed up to accompany female chiefs to a function*

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# INTRODUCTION

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## What We Were Asked To Do

Before the second Avazoli celebration, hosted by Botoku, on the first to the third December 1989, the Botoku Traditional Council set up a History Committee comprising Lt. Col (rtd) F.M.K. Asamoah as the chairperson and Dr. Komla Tsey as the secretary. Other members of the History Committee were Osofo C.K. Akatu, Afeno Elizabeth Adams and Afeno Patience Adawrama.

The History Committee was tasked to write a history of Botoku Dzali from their migration as part of the Avazoli family group from Notsie, in present day Republic of Togo, to present day Botoku in south-eastern Ghana.

## The Reasons We Were Asked To Do It

It was realised that there were discrepancies in the oral history of Botoku Dzali as narrated by the various oral historians. A reliable written history of Botoku Dzali was therefore necessary for the present and future generations.

It was also realised that due to the influence of Christian religion, the traditions and culture of Botoku people were eroding fast. For instance, it was noted that the chieftaincy institution which was the core of the culture of Botoku for administration and unity of the traditional area, was in jeopardy as many of the stools were without occupants because the eligible people who were nominated to be chiefs refused the offer on the ground of their Christian religion.

There was yet another negative factor which was undermining the culture and the tradition of Botoku. It was noted that the majority of the children of Botoku citizens living outside have little knowledge of the culture and traditions of Botoku. Some of them could not even speak the Ewe language properly. This was due to the fact that they spent very little time at Botoku when they accompanied their parents to funerals or other events. They left immediately when the events were over. They spent most of their time outside Botoku, attending school and spending their holidays with their parents who were not residing at Botoku. They finally stayed away working.

There was a feeling that a written history would serve as a useful resource for parents interested in educating their children about their ancestral roots.

## **How We Went About It**

The Botoku Traditional Council appointed Togbe Akodu, an oral historian and authority on Botoku culture, traditions and chieftaincy affairs as the main consultant for the History Committee. He narrated the history of Botoku Dzali from their stay at Ziavi, Etodome to their present abode and other historical developments that took place. However, the History Committee consulted many other prominent oral historians such as Togbe Ata Koku Hagan.

The History Committee utilised the information gathered from relevant history books, especially on the Akwamu domination of so-called Krepee states, the Krepee Ashanti war (1869) and the German and British colonial periods in order to provide context for the Botoku story.

The long essay written by Komla Tsey in 1979 on Botoku Dzali when he was an undergraduate at the University of Ghana, Legon, also provided valuable information to the History Committee. Komla was particularly privileged to have interviewed most elders at the time, including Mama Afaribea who was among the first group of Botoku girls to attend school around the 1900s.

The information in this book was presented to the Botoku chiefs and elders including the late Togbe Tamtia V for their comments and feedback. It is our hope that by publishing and making this information available to Botoku people and their friends, the aim of the Botoku Traditional Council who set up the History Committee would be achieved. More importantly, we hope the information will inspire Botoku citizens to develop greater understanding and appreciation for their ancestral roots.

## **Those Who Helped Along The Way**

Several people helped the History Committee in its work. It will not be possible to mention the names of all of them. We would however, like to acknowledge the valuable services rendered by the following: Kafui Afi Asamoah, who arranged with her friends to type all the handwritten notes and draft manuscript using the old-fashioned typewriter. Without them this history of Botoku Dzali could not be published. They deserve our thanks. We are also grateful to Togbe Busuo Letsu II, who read part of the script and

offered useful suggestions. Our thanks go to the Honourable Akua Dansua, M.P. for North Dayi Constituency, for taking time off her busy schedule to edit sections of the earlier draft. Finally, we acknowledge family, friends and colleagues in Australia for their wonderful support in preparing the manuscript for publication. In particular, we thank Dr Annie Preston-Tsey for the final editing, Astri Baker for her suggestions on how to use photos to make the book user-friendly, and Elena Rhine for formatting. As the Botoku people say 'akpe kakaka nami loo'!

## **How Can You Make This Book Useful For You?**

Before you go on to read the rest of this book, we encourage you to take a step back at this point and ask yourself: how can I make this book relevant and meaningful to me, my families and friends?

There are many Botoku families living outside Botoku who, for many reasons, do not have the opportunity to visit home regularly. There are other families living away from Botoku too but who do visit many times every year. And of course, there are people, whether they are from Botoku or not, who spend most of their lives in Botoku.

Our goal is to find ways of making the information in this book relevant to everybody who has an interest in Botoku and its history and culture, no matter where they live. For this reason, we suggest some practical activities at the end of the book as a guide for making the information interesting for young people.

At this point, you may even wish to go straight to the end of the book and take a quick look at the suggest activities before returning to read the rest of the book. This way, as you read through the stories, you can come up with your own ideas about how to use the information to make the learning about history, culture, society, and indeed development, exciting for young people.