

## **GOEMAI PEOPLE OF DOROK DISTRICT, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA: THEIR BELIEF ON TYPES AND FUNCTIONS OF FREE SPIRITS**

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### **Executive Summary**

*There are many different kinds and categories of free spirits among the Goemai people of Plateau State, Nigeria. However, many contemporary Goemai People seem to be ignorant of this fact possibly because of carelessness, the influences of modernization and civilization. The focus of this research is to find out the origin of Goemai people, to investigate the types and functions of free spirits among Goemai people. The data for this research were collected from books, journals, dictionaries and encyclopedias, among others which were sourced from the internet and libraries. The data were basically analyzed through the discussion, descriptive and historical methods, among others. The research found out that the different types of free spirits among the Goemai people include spirit of dead people who are rejected in the land of the ancestors for either living a bad life or indulging in certain evil activities while alive, the spirits of those who die in war, hunting expedition, through the activities of sorcery, in accident and those who have double self and the spirit of those on the path of the deities who are basically divided into white and black spirits. The free spirits basically perform the functions of blessings and curses. The research recommended that the elders in Goemai land should teach the younger generation about their religious heritage, especially in relation to free spirits and the younger generation should complement the efforts of their elders by availing themselves to learn this religious heritage, among others.*

**Keywords:** Goemai People, Belief, Free Spirits,

### **Introduction**

The world comprises of 7 continents namely: Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, Australia and Antarctica. Similarly, the world comprises of about 195 countries including India, China, United States of America, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Brazil, Bangladesh, Russia, Mexico, Iran, Japan and State of Israel, among others (George 1-3; Josh 1-4; World Atlas 1-4; Worldometer 1-5; Davis 1-2;

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Worldmeter 1-4). These different continents and countries of the world are homes to varying religious traditions. For example, India gave birth to Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism, China gave birth to Taoism and Confucianism, Japan gave birth to Shintoism, Israel gave birth to Judaism and Christianity, Saudi Arabia gave birth to Islam, Iran gave birth to Baha'i Faith and Zoroastrianism and Africa gave birth to African Traditional Religion (Deshmukh 1-10; Vaughan 1-3).

African Traditional Religion which is the indigenous religion of the African people. The religion is as old as the people in the continent. It believes in the existence of Supreme Being or God and that this Supreme Being or God is too big to be worshipped directly but through other mediums including deities and divinities. It also believes in human beings, magic, ancestors, medicine men, witchcraft, after life and spirits. The kinds of spirits existing among the Goemai people are called "free spirits". These free spirits are believed to be into different types and perform different functions as will be discussed below (Parlong 7-9; Gehman 145-153).

### **Origin of Goemai People**

Goemai people of Dorok district originated from the Kwararafa Empire. This is because of the similarities in their tradition, culture and civilization with that of Jukun, the aboriginal of Kwararafa Empire. Their migration began in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the dynasty was beginning to disintegrate due to intra-dynasty feuds. The migrants came into this part of the "Goemai" land and joined with the autochthons who were the natives (i.e. the pure "ankwe") to form the present "Goemai". Nevertheless, it is now very difficult to trace the where about of this pure "Ankwe" (Longban *et al* 36). When the migrants who were Jukun came, they first settled at Damshin, a town connected to Kalong. Their next settlement was at Shimankar and Moekat. The migrants intermarried with the pure "Ankwe" to make up the communities. The town of Ajikamai was founded by the Jukun of Dampar. The Goemai of Namu who trace their origin to Dorok and Kwo holds that they were originally autochthons of Middle East before migrating to the Kwararafa Kingdom (precisely Wukari) and finally to the above mentioned places. Other Kwararafa descendants include Alago, Igala, Idoma among others. The major factor responsible for the migration of this Jukun who finally became Goemai and settled in Plateau State was the disintegration of the Kwararafa Empire, which preceded the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio. One important evidence that the Goemai of Dorok had Jukun origin was the fact that they annually attended a Jukun festival, *Puje*, which was attended by all Jukun at Wukari (Longban *et al* 37-38; Ames 179; Meek 297; Fremante 20; Isichei 1).

The origin of the Goemai of Dorok can be traced to two varying views. Firstly, they were founded by the descendants of Damiyl (Adami). Secondly, they were founded by

the descendants of Watoe who were from the Jukun royal family. Watoe migrated alongside his followers from Wukari and briefly settled at Tu'un-Bo'on, a desert settlement located closed to Mekera. They continued their journey to Ganwa Moekwarkum and finally to Kwap-Watoe (Dungram), where they permanently settled. It was in this place that Watoe gave birth to five sons who later became the Dorok Royal Dynasties. They included Lankup, Bombuk (Goewam), Washior, Lanwar and Agyo. The main purpose of their migration was for hunting. However, the issue of security and the expedition for new land/settlement forced them to change their locations severally and settle in places like Dungguar, Garko, Gwashigwa, Ganwa Moekwarkum, Dungkul, Npal, Kanwa, Diasbip, Ngwa, Kwap-Dabi and Kwap-Watoe (Dungram) (Longban *et al* 38-39; Walu 8; Middleton 71 & 145).

The name “Kalong” in Goemai language means “the head of the king”. Kalong was founded by Yongkur Yilzem who was a pre-dynasty Chief. He migrated alongside his followers to first settled at Dungkul. In the course of time, Yongkur Yilzem died and one of his descendants, Latyil who reign from 1813 to 1820 moved their headquarters to Npal. It was during this time that the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio penetrated into this area in 1820. Although, the Jihadists did not enter Dungkul, but they killed Latyil Lanwar, a pre-dynasty Chief in 1820 who was settling at a “Lake” located at the North-Eastern part of Npal. Similarly, Kalong was later made the headquarters of Dorok and Gwandia Yongkur was installed as its first Chief (Long Dorok) by Captain Charles Gordon who was controlling the then Administrative Province of Muri in 1907. Likewise, it was at this time that the Goemai nation got their autonomy from Wase. However, due to the activities of the Jihadists, the headquarters was relocated by Datul Yongkur to Dungkul in 1867, which attracted a lot of asylums. Datul Yongkur, one of the Chiefs of Dorok, was also assassinated while in Duntul by the Jihadists who were led by Muhammadu Kobri, Sarkin Dutsen Wase in 1886. This made the settlers to desert Duntul and to establish Kwap-Dabi, a settlement located closed to the present day Goesa and Poe-Matiri by part of the Bombuk (Goewam) and Agyo clans (Longban *et al* 39).

This constant Jihadists attacks caused many to relocate from Kalong to Yabung, Tehl/Montol land, Awe and Lafia. It should be noted that the activities of the Jihadists in 1820 and *Shal Dungkul* (war of Dungkul) of 1886 brought about a great displacement of the Dorok people in the vicinity of Kalong to other parts of the Dorok land including Ngwa, Ngootlong and Ngoo-Tugut. Nevertheless, the positive and good part of the Jihad was that it created a close relationship between the people of Kalong and Wase through marriage. This is because one of the daughters of Kalong by name “Rep-Jiba” (later renamed “Patu” and also nicknamed “Senseni”) who was taken captive to Wase later got married to the Emir of Wase and this union produced Abdulhahi Maikano who became the 12<sup>th</sup> Emir of Wase (Longban *et al* 40).

‘Gongvel’ was founded by the descendants of a professional Royal Ritualist who was residing in the defunct Kwararafa Empire. He alongside his followers migrated from the Kwararafa Empire to settle in Dungkul. While he was in Dungkul, he gave birth to many children including Niangsek and his brother, Mukgoenye who later migrated from Dungkul to establish Gongvel, a settlement located towards the Western part of Dungkul. In view of the religiosity of this clan, they were made the custodians of the *Muut-Fan* cult, which was related to rain-making in the land of Dorok. The purpose of their migration from Dungkul to Gongvel was for security, to escape the Jihadists attacks (Longban *et al* 40).

‘Goesa’ was founded by Nkum in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He alongside his followers migrated from Kwapdabi to settle around Kurwat. In this place, one of his wives became tired by the journey and decided to branch to *Pang Tandarang* Knoll. They continued their journey to Gyailong, where they settled. Nkum did not die a natural death, but he later disappeared by submerging into the bowels of the earth. After this, his sons, Yilgap, Yilwan and Duutbam succeeded him as Chiefs in Goesa. The purpose of their migration was for security, to escape *Shal Dungkul* (a war between Kalong and Wase in about 1886). It was also recorded that one of their ancestors by name “Ntis” migrated from Wukari alongside his followers and briefly settled by Ruom Lake located close to Shagang before moving to settle at Kwapdabi. In the course of time, the successors of Ntis moved to briefly settle in Sokkiak, Zenghen and Kwapdabi before they finally settled at Kasa’a (Goesa) meaning “on pebbly ground” (Longban *et al* 41-42).

‘Ngo’otlong’, which literally means “the hid-out of the King” was founded by Allahde the then Chief of Dorok (Long Dorok). He alongside his followers relocated from Garkwo in search for a safer place (1827-1867). The purpose of their relocation was for security, to escape from the Jihadists who were constantly raiding that area. He moved from Garkwo to Ngo’ot-Kwapdas, where he met Niyu Kwapdas who was a brave hunter controlling that part of the land and its people. Niyu Kwapdas asked Allahde and his followers to stay with him for their welfare and security and Allahde agreed and stayed with him. In the course of time, the name of Ngo’ot-Kwapdas was changed to Ngo’otlong (Longban *et al* 42).

‘Ngo’ot-Tudut’ meaning “the hid-out of Tugut” was founded by Tugut. This place was also known as “Ungwan Rina” by the Hausa Jihadists meaning “Haven of Wasps”. This is because when the Jihadists first came, they were attacked by Wasps and hence the name “Ungwan Rina”. However, after the Jihad, Ngoot-Tugut became a safe haven, which later attracted different people including the descendants of Watoe (the clans of Lankup, Goewam, Agyo and Washior) and Moefe Lanwar. Others migrated from Moekat including the descendants of Angyu who joined this settlement. Still, others migrated from Goesa, Jimduut and Lu-Hwau to join this settlement. Still yet, others

migrated from Kwande to join this settlement. He alongside his followers migrated from Jiban (Kuka) and passed through Wali (Jikgurum) to finally settle in Ngo'ot-Tugut. While he was in this place, he did not establish absolute control over the place because his attention was usually drawn back home (Jiban or Kuka) for their annual religious festival/ritual. Wali was later joined by his brother, Atil, a fisherman who decided to settle by the edge of Ruom Lake, Shagang. However, during the reign of Latyil, the Chief of Dorok who resided at Npal in Kalong, the Jihadists attacked him and killed him. This development caused the displacement of his descendants (Moefe Lanwar) and others to escape to places like Ngootlong (Demshin) and Jonggwe located towards the Western part of the present day Ngo'ot-Tugut (Longban *et al* 42-43).

'Ngwa', which was also known as "Ungwan-Dadi", was founded by Ndoezak. 'Ngwa' basically means "an area", and the change of the name to "Ungwan-Dadi" came up because of the war of 1886 by the Jihadists, the inhabitants of Ngwa provided material and nutritional support for the Jihadists against Kalong and hence, the name "Ungwan-Dadi" in Hausa Language meaning "a place of enjoyment". Ndoezak was a member of Agyo clan who was crowned as Latyil's successor by the Chief of Wase (Sarkin Dutsen Wase), Hassan Giwa in 1820. This happened when the Jihadists attack led to the death of Latyil who was the then Chief of Dorok, which made them to be responsible for the installation of the new Chief and in which case Ndoezak was crowned as the new Chief in Wase. When he came back from the coronation in Wase, he moved the headquarters of his settlement towards the Western part of Kalong located at the bank of Matiri close to river Shimankar. After which, he moved alongside his followers to the present-day Ngwa, a place located in the territory of Ganwa Moekwarkum, which literally means "the walled settlement of the spirits". This place was actually a desert settlement inhabited in the past by Damyil Lumuut and in the present become the most important shrine of the Dorok Royal Families. Apart from the clan of Agyo which occupied Ngwa, other clans from Birbit, Kwande and Turniang also came to join the settlement (Longban *et al* 43).

'Shimankar', which was also known as "Menkat", was founded by Goeka. He alongside his three wives (Noewar, Senset and Demnoe) and other followers migrated from Wukari to briefly settle at Tuun-Boon, a desert settlement located close to Mekera and Moekat. It was from this place that Goeka moved to establish Menkat. Goekat later became old and disappeared into the earth and became a tutelary deity. This particular spot of Goekat disappearance later became a shrine, where barren women go to make supplication (usually seven times) for the problem of their barrenness. Another version has it that Menkat was founded by the descendants of Damyil (Adami) who was the ancestor of the royal families of Dorok. Dangcum or Goedangcum who was one of the sons of Damyil was the founder of Menkat. However, this version still maintained the tutelary deity of Damyil. This version was affirmed by the Goemai phrase *Dangcum*,

*Shik Goe Kum Ka'a Moe-Menkat* meaning “Dangkum is the knife that shaves the hair of the people of Menkat”. This phrase implied that there was really connection between Dangkum and the people of Menkat. The leadership style of this clan was “Septennial leadership”, where each Chief ruled for a period of seven years each. Examples of Menkat Septennial Leaders include Goeka, Ntiem, Pusbuet, Payil, Njin and Agap. Before the colonial time, the Chiefs of Menkat were under the control of Aku Achuwo who was a Jukun official answerable to the Chief of Wukari, Aku Uka. It should be noted that the Chief of Wukari was responsible for the installation of the Chiefs of Menkat in the pre-colonial times Chief (Longban *et al* 44; Gella 106; Meek 345).

‘Moekat’ was founded by Angyu. He alongside his followers migrated from Wukari and first settled in Tuun-Boon. Angyu later died while he was still in Tuun-Boon and was succeeded by Abaga his brother. The need for water made Abaga to migrate from Tuun-Boon to Tongki, a stream located close to Moekat and then finally settle in a more convenient settlement called “Moekat”, which in Goemai Language means “we have found it”; implying that it is now that they have found a convenient settlement. Maambial, which was also known as “Biembiem”, was founded by the Aji, a brother of Angyu. It was recorded that while Angyu and the rest of the clan members were still in Tuun-Boon before moving to Tongki, Aji who was a very good hunter decided to move to Nkas (Haambang), where he briefly settled for the purpose of hunting. In the process of time, he found out that Maambial was a more convenient and richer place for hunting and therefore, he and his followers moved to finally settle there. After a very long time of awaiting the return of Aji to Tuun-Boon, Angyu sent one of his younger brothers by name “Anuku or Nuku” to look for him (Aji) and he was finally found in Maambial. Nuku was also attracted to stay with Aji in Maambial probably because of hunting. The stay of Aji in Maambial alongside his followers continued to attract people from different places to join the settlement for two reasons: firstly, to join Aji in his hunting business and secondly, for security since Aji was a hunting warrior who would be able to protect his subjects from enemies. The Abakwariga clan which migrated from Wukari under the leadership of Agabi also joined Aji and his followers in Maambial. Eventually, Aji became the first Chief of Maambial and its inhabitants including his descendants, followers, Abakwariga who came from Wukari and the other later migrants (Longban *et al* 46).

*Luu-Hwau* was founded by the descendants of Anhom and his brother, Dimu. They alongside their followers migrated from Wukari and first settled in Luumi, which was located close to Kanje or Njen (the equivalent in Goemai). Their migration took place in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They continued their journey to Kwaplui, which was located in Puoos, close to the lake of Doeben. In the course of time, while they were still in Kwaplui, Dimu moved to Kalong leaving his brother, Anhom behind. Anhom later died in Kwaplui and his son by name “Goebal” moved with the rest of the clan

members to establish the present day *Luu-Hwau*. *Hwau* was named after one of their deities and *Nkiru* was the shrine of this deity, which was located in the territory of *Luu-Hwau* community. Their Chiefs who also bear the title *Hwau* as derived from their prominent deity were the custodians of the *Kwamteng* cult (Longban *et al* 48).

‘Wali’, which was also called “Jikgurum”, was founded by the descendants of Langwalang, Tugut, Luu-Hwau, Japgor and Shendam. The town was located towards the Western part of Jimduut and Luu-Hwau. The purpose of their migration was basically for security, to escape the attacks of the Jihadists from Wase. During this time, Wali became a place of refuge for those escaping the Jihadists and other forms of internal civil disturbances, especially refugees from Dorok. For example, the clan of Langwalang under the leadership of Beryil was displaced by the royal family of Agyo from their native settlement of Yabung (the present-day Kalong) during the *Shal Dungkul* of 1886 and established their settlement at the centre of Wali. Similarly, the clan of Tugut (Jibang group) was also harassed and displaced from Ngoot-Tugut during the war of 1886 and also established their settlement at Diasbip located towards the Western part of Wali. There was no doubt that the coming of these people into Wali was what gave it a cosmopolitan outlook. However, it was during the temporary leadership of Yildiem who was from the clan of Jiban in Wali that Hwau Ton’an migrated from Luu-Hwau to be made the prominent spiritual attendant of Long Dorok (Longban *et al* 48).

‘Jiban’, which basically means “the journey has ended here”, was an expression which denotes that the migrants have found a conducive place of settlement. This place was also known as *Kuka* in Hausa Language. It was recorded that when they took their journey from Wukari, they moved towards the Western part and found a settlement, where they settled under a “Baobab tree” meaning *Kuka* in Hausa Language and hence, the name of the place. Jiban was founded by a Jukun man by name “Damuut” who was a son/descendant of Njin. He migrated alongside his followers from the Kwararafa Empire and to be précised, Wukari in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (probably 1780) when the Empire began to disintegrate (Longban *et al* 49; Gella 2).

There were two possible purposes for their migration: firstly, to escape the outbreak of sleeping-sickness epidemic in Wukari and secondly, to protest Chieftaincy position denial. In 1820, Jiban was attacked by the Jihadists led by Yakubun Bauchi. The Goemai called this place of attack *Poe-Tini*, which literally means “by the Baobab tree”. In view of this attack, the inhabitants of Jiban under the leadership of Tugut Damuut were forced out of Jiban and scattered into other parts of the Goemai land and even beyond including Npap, Lu-Niyu (Bakin Ciyawa), Poeship, Sabon Layi, Tengzet, Kwap-Yilkan, Lu-Tinghen/Poegung, Kurwat, Wali, Kalong, Shagang among others. Tugut who was their leader fled and passed through Luu-Hwau and briefly settled in

Kanwa, where he obtained permission from the Long Dorok, Latyil before moving towards the Western part to establish a more permanent settlement called “Ngoot-Tugut”, which literally means “the hide out of Tugut” in Goemai. After the Jihad, the remaining part of Jiban clan under the leadership of Mangtu and Niemen relocated to establish the settlements called “Luu-Molo” and Kwap-Niemen respectively, which were located within the territory of *Poe-Tini* or *Jiban* (Longban *et al* 49; Gella 2).

### **Belief on Types and Functions of Free Spirits among the Goemai People**

There are different kinds and categories of free spirits operating in Goemai land. The first category is called *Tamsun* spirits. Although, the etymology of the term *Tamsun* is obscured, but in most cases, it is used to refer to spirit of dead people who are rejected in the land of the ancestors for either living a bad life or indulging in certain evil activities while alive. Examples of spirits rejected from entering into the land of the ancestors include the spirits of witches, wizards, sorcerers, thieves and wicked minded people. These rejected spirits return to torment, especially their left behind enemies in their former community. The best time, these rejected spirits operate is usually the night time. However, they can be prevented from tormenting the community by the help of medicine men, especially witch doctors. They do this by fortifying the community with powerful medicines and charms. This action confuses the rejected spirits from identifying their victims and thereby, they continue to wander and get lost in the bush. Nevertheless, these rejected spirits may migrate to another community (Parlong 8).

The second category of the free spirits is the spirits of those who die in war, hunting expedition, through the activities of sorcery, in accident and those who have double self. Once the death of these people is made public or announced and women cried, their spirits will never return home again, but will rather go to either establish themselves in new places or continue to roam around as ghosts in the bush. Sometimes, these spirits visit their family members and intimate friends through dreams, as ghosts and in human forms to either pass important messages or encourage the despaired family members. However, if the family members are scared, the spirits will depart and never visit the family members again, probably for the sake of their peaceful existence. There is also the practice of re-incarnation in the Goemai land, in which the spirits of dead people return to the world of the living through the wombs of their loved family members and these kinds of children usually resemble their dead family members (Parlong 9).

The third category of free spirits is the *Mukwarkum* spirits. Although, the etymology of this word *Mukwarkum* is not very clear, however it is suggested that the word is a corruption of the Goemai phrase *moe goe war kum* literally meaning “those on the path of the deities.” This implies that these spirits have some resemblances with the deities.

*Mukwarkum* spirits have powers to do both good and evil but they never entice people into evil practice. Goemai people categorized *Mukwarkum* spirits into white spirits (*Mukwarkum Goe Pia*) and black spirits (*Mukwarkum Goe Tep*). *Mukwarkum Goe Pia* refers to good and benevolent spirits, which are very useful and helpful to man. Whenever these spirits meet with men or visit the community, it is for good and blessings. The Goemai word *Pia* means “something that is white.” The white in this context is used as a symbol to refer to cleanliness, purity and transparency. It is in view of this that the Goemai people refer to God as *Bi goe pia goe goetengnoe* meaning “That white thing (being) living up in the sky” (Parlong 9).

The major function of the white spirits is to bring goodness and blessings to the people in particular and the community in general. In this regards, diviners, medicine men and witch doctors trace their powers to these white spirits through their encounter with the spirits either in the mid-night (*Ngong-Goezanwor*) or noon-time (*Arap Pus*). Those that encounter these white spirits only benefit from them by strictly adhering to their instructions because doing that will make the white spirits happy to unleash their blessings (especially of power) upon their clients. Nonetheless, these white spirits have less to do with witches, wizards, sorcerers and wicked minded people. White spirits require sacrifices from their clients periodically in order to strengthened their relationship. This is very important because it is through that the powers they give to their clients are maintained and curses, bad luck, sicknesses are averted. Items required for the above sacrifices are only known to those that had encountered with the white spirits and the items vary from person to person and purpose to purpose. Examples of these items include chickens, goats and beers, among others, which are used either monthly or at the end of the year (Parlong 9).

White spirits are believed to live in places like rivers, big trees (especially by the roadside), forests to mention but a few. Although the white spirits are invisible, but at times, they choose to reveal themselves for certain purposes. Their most convenient mission time is the night, but under special conditions, they appear in the noon or anytime of the day. Encountering both the white and black spirits can be avoided through the following ways: not walking during the night time, not visiting rivers in the evening, noon and early morning times because during these times, the spirits are usually out for feeding. Meeting these spirits or ignorantly stepping on their properties will attract punishment, sickness and curse of different kinds, which can only be treated by medicine men with *Fun Ka* meaning “second sight”. Although meeting some of these spirits, especially the white ones, has some benefits, the average Goemai people never wish to meet any of these spirits, not even the white ones because meeting them is usually dreadful and one cannot really tell the outcome of the meeting (Parlong 9).

Similarly, *Mukwarkum Goe Tep* refers to black, evil and malignant spirits. The word *Tep* means “something that is black” and is also associated with darkness, bad, dangerous, evil, wicked and death. The encounter with these black spirits brings nothing good, but rather curses and bad luck on whoever meets them. The result of this encounter is usually instant death, becoming cold and shuddering, mental disorder, sicknesses that may eventually lead to death. Some of these black spirits smoke and drink like humans (Parlong 9).

Also, some of them are extremely dangerous, while others are mild. They attack their victims, especially in the night time by impersonating those they already know, but possibly travelled away. They do that by calling the name of the person and once their victim answers, the victim will begin to follow them without really knowing it and without any sense of direction like zombie. In view of this, Goemai people barely answer calls at night, from the forests, farms and bushes, except sighting the person making the calls. The above happening is common to what is obtainable amongst the Chadic-speakers. Those that have *Mu goe ka fun* (power of the second sight), especially children are prone to attacks from black spirits because they tend to see and know the secrets of these black spirits (Parlong 9).

Beside children, those who take the properties of the *Murkwarkum*, eat their food and step on any of their items are usually prone to these attacks. In most cases, when this happens, sickness follows and in which case, diviners are consulted to identify the cause of the sickness, whether the sickness is caused by *Mukwarkum goeteng* meaning “spirits that live on the dry land” or *Mukwarkum kong* meaning “spirit that live in the river”. The diviners also perform divination rituals to know, which kind of medicine men to be consulted for the treatment. The rightful medicine man takes the victim (especially a child) with either the thing he stole or took away from the spirits. The medicine man performs the rituals as he begs the spirits as well as asking the victim to give the spirits their property. The items used for this ritual include beer and white sheep. The performance of these rituals will block (*Dor Ka*) the *Ka fun* meaning “second sight” of the victim, especially the child (Parlong 9).

## Conclusion

Goemai people of Dorok district who migrated from the Kwararafa Empire in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, especially when the dynasty was disintegrating due to intra-dynasty feud believe in the existence of free spirits. They believe that the free spirits are into different types. These different types include spirit of dead people who are rejected in the land of the ancestors for either living a bad life or indulging in certain evil activities while alive, the spirits of those who die in war, hunting expedition, through the activities of

sorcery, in accident and those who have double self and the spirits of those on the path of the deities who are basically divided into white and black spirits.

Both the white and black spirits are believed to play significant functions among the Goemai people of blessings and curses. Whereas, the white spirits bring goodness and blessing to the people in particular and the community in general, the black spirits who are associated with darkness, badness, danger, evil, wickedness and death bring curses and bad luck to the people. Encounter with white spirits brings about heal, prosperity and long life while encounter with black spirits brings about sicknesses, mental disorder, poverty and death.

### **Recommendations**

1. The elders in Goemai land should endeavour to teach the younger generation about their religious heritage, especially in relation to free spirits.
2. The younger generation should complement the efforts of their elders by availing themselves to learn this religious heritage.
3. For relationship with the white spirits to be strengthened, Goemai people will need to offer them sacrifices from time to time.
4. Goemai people should avoid stealing or touching properties belonging to the spirits because that would attract their punishment.
5. In the event of attacks by black spirits resulting in sicknesses and other forms of curses, Goemai people should consult diviners and medicine men for identifying the sickness, curses and their causes and getting the right medication.

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