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DEATH IN PEKI SEQUENCES



I arrived in Peki on a Thursday in late November 2016. I had booked a room at a local guesthouse where I had previously stayed during my initial, brief visit in August that same year. No other arrangements had been made at that point. Friday morning came bright and early with the warm November sun peeking through the bush of banana plants in front of my window at 6 am. But instead of marking the beginning of the weekend as a period of relaxation, such as I was accustomed to in the German (Christian) tradition, Friday in Peki is the day for starting the funeral celebrations that take place over the course of the weekend. Preparations are less visible during the day but become more public as soon as night falls. By midday on Friday, sitting sheltered in the shade beneath a giant mango tree in the yard of my guesthouse, I could hear loud music from afar. The guesthouse was located on the edge of town and offered a secluded refuge from whatever was going on in town proper. But just a fifteen-minute walk away in Peki-Avetile, ‘spinners’ (Ghanaian English for DJs) were testing their sound systems, and brass bands were rehearsing, setting the mood for the evening.

A few hours later, in the dark of a tropical night at around 7 pm, I found myself on the concrete road that connects five communities within Peki, leading from Peki-Avetile to Peki-Wudome. The street was filled with groups of people who had shown up to welcome the bodies of their relatives or friends back into town. There was barely space to walk, and I had to squeeze through crowds who were dancing and singing, past pick-up trucks loaded with bodies that had been collected from the morgue, groups of people ready to carry the deceased into the family compounds where they would be laid in state, as well as brass bands and hearses, which in Ghana have the form of ambulance cars with flashing lights and piercing sirens. As I slowly walked down to Peki-Wudome, which was located at the far end of a long and winding road, I felt the intensity of the busy funeral preparations

sink in with every step I took. When I made it to my destination, where I wanted to attend two lyings in state – one of a female elder who was my friend and assistant Collins Jamson's¹ relative, and one of the former paramount chief's daughter – I was already tired and wide-eyed from walking and observing.

As will become evident throughout this book, my observations of different funerals are obviously the result of chance or rather the funerals and events that occurred while I was present in town. You will find that I focus largely on the deaths and commemoration of 'normal' Peki community members. This, despite being a product of chance, is nevertheless representative of how death receives attention in town. While funerals of community members from royal families, such as the paramount chief's daughter whom you will hear about in a second, are obviously to some extent more conspicuous than funerals of poor community members, every death is worthy of attention and public display. I have found that this is one of the most important aspects which add to the intensity that the field of death and commemoration acquires in town. Despite not having had the chance to attend a chief's funeral (and we have learned that there are many and different kinds of chiefs, making that distinctive title somewhat blurrier), I do not believe that I have missed vital observations. After all, negotiations about power also take place between regular community members. Yet, the desire to extend the time that a politically important chief's body spends in the morgue and the worries that accompany their succession and funeral are also present in their family member's lives and deaths. They can be felt even after the funeral of such a chief, as their succession and the ways in which they died and were buried continue to occupy the community, pointing towards the continued importance of 'traditional' political leadership in Ghana and the impact that traditional leader's deaths have on communities.

Death in Africa, Ghana and in Ewe Culture: Historical Perspectives

Discussions of death in Africa have been, and remain, a noticeable research focus (Jindra and Noret 2013). Based on the classic studies of Hertz and van Gennep (Hertz 1907; van Gennep 1909), contemporary scholars identify death as an event of 'physical, spiritual and social rupture' in African contexts (Lee and Vaughan 2008; Banyubala 2014). Van Gennep attributed this event of rupture to the particular 'traditional' structure of African societies with their extensive kinship ties. Applied to 'African traditional societies' with their 'high relationship economies' (Gudeman 2016) and tightly knit kinship systems, the assumption that a dense social fabric produces activities that were directly aimed at maintaining its integrity used to be, and still is, wide spread. Activities that relate to death, including funerals, which have particularly high public visibility, are recognized as important social events in Africa (Lee and Vaughan 2012; Jindra and Noret 2013; Kalusa

and Vaughan 2013), including Ghana (Goody 1962; van der Geest 2000; Witte 2001, 2003).

The notion of an 'African' funeral has come to be known as an umbrella term for a 'social phenomenon', though different in specifics due to localities (Jindra and Noret 2013). In fact, African funerals and activities that deal with death take on a variety of forms, depending on the specific location, ethnic groups, religious practices and so on. In the introduction to their edited volume *Funerals in Africa*, which traces different forms and expressions of funerals or events surrounding death on the African continent, Michael Jindra and Joël Noret attest to a 'continuing (though changing over time) political significance to dead bodies in Africa' (2013: 2). This marks the central commonality between diverse death-related practices across the continent. Aiming to use studies of funerary practices to illuminate changing power relations and the increasing diversity of contemporary post-colonial African societies, they 'intend to show that funerals are major occasions for the (re)production and the (un)making of both solidarities and hierarchies, both alliances and conflicts' (2). Similarly, Rebekah Lee and Megan Vaughan state that 'funerary and mortuary practices express and shape a wide range of social relations, including the maintenance of kinship ties, the reproduction of communal values, and notions of succession and property inheritance' (2008: 344). Hence, activities dealing with death have a lot of potential in African societies and the afore-mentioned authors all credit death and funerary activities with the role of a total social phenomenon, following Marcel Mauss. However, while acknowledging the historically developed structures of African societies that make them distinct, Jindra and Noret no longer see these societies as superstructures with a kind of consciousness of their own that denies the diversity and diverse intentions of individual members; nor are they the pure incarnation of non-individualised societies, as Hertz frames them. Rather, they credit African societies and their relationship to the social processing of death with a high degree of differentiation and with multiple influences that shape them.

In that context, Ghanaian funerals in particular have come to be recognized in anthropological research as remarkable events due to their social importance and often conspicuous nature, such as in the works of Jack Goody, Marleen de Witte, Sjaak van der Geest or Suzanne Gott (Goody 1962; Witte 2001; van der Geest 2004, 2006; Gott 2007). Communities and groups across Ghana celebrate funerals as public events that take more time, energy, and attention than any other rite of passage, be it a birthday, a wedding, or a traditional religious celebration. The only events that may compete with funerals in terms of their consumption of time and money are church services in the Christian south, but usually a service will form part of a funeral, adding to its excessive nature. Activities and ways of dealing with death are equally important among the Ewe as an ethnic group living in south-east Ghana and parts of Togo and Benin. However, no contemporary piece of anthropological research has dedicated itself to commemorative

practices in Ewe history and communities. The Ewe as an ethnic group have not been at the centre of scholarly attention (for example compared to studies of Akan culture) when taking into consideration all ethnic groups living in Ghana, though some foundational texts from colonial times as well as more recent work exist. While early mentions occur in the texts of missionaries Jakob Spieth (1906, 1911; Spieth and Amoakou 2011) and Diedrich Westermann (1905/6, 1907, 1935), later works have also selectively focused on Ewe culture while touching on funerals and death-related practices (Asamoah 1971, 1986; Rosenthal 1998; Meyer 1999; Alsheimer 2007; Lawrance 2007; Brydon 2009; Venkatachalam 2012). Even though it is particularly the Akan in Ghana who are known for their very festive and conspicuous funeral celebrations (see McCaskie 1989; Witte 2001 van der Geest 2006; Gott 2007), Ghanaian Ewe communities have their own – to some degree similar, to some degree different – ways of making death the most important event in a person’s life, as well as a communal mournful or celebratory occasion. In comparison to the Akan, these have not received a comparable amount of attention. Some written sources provide information regarding funerary and commemorative practices among different Ewe groups as well as elsewhere in Ghana. These texts are regarded as being generally informative regarding all Ewe groups. Divine Banyubala makes a claim for the comparability of attitudes towards death within Ghana based on similarities in traditional religious beliefs (2014). Regarding the shared colonial history and cross-pollination between indigenous practices and beliefs, this may be true, but practices across Ghana do remain locally specific and differ depending on culturally ethnic and local contexts. And while differentiation in scholarly discussion has come from an external Western point of view, as seen in the many categories into which Ewe people alone were grouped, as well as from Ghanaian scholars, local and cultural difference retains a valuable degree of information. Here, this matters specifically with regards to Ewe practices and Ewe history in relation to the nation state.²

Death in Ewe Culture: Jakob Spieth’s *Die Ewe Stämme* and *Die Religion Der Eweer in Süd-Togo*

An important early source regarding Ewe funerary practices and beliefs is the work of missionary Jakob Spieth. His *Die Ewe Stämme* (Spieth 1906; Spieth and Amoaku 2011), accompanied by a volume focusing on religious life among the Ewe (Spieth 1911), describes aspects of Ewe life around the turn of the century. Spieth was an Ewe speaker and Bible translator, which, in contrast to other authors writing about Ewe people at the time, made him particularly able to communicate with Ewe interlocutors (Alsheimer 2007: 225). Spieth’s account is a historical source written from the perspective of a German missionary living among Ewe people with the intention of furthering Christianity there. As such, it represents a particular point of view on

Ewe life and makes use of a selective frame of reference in which important pieces of information are placed. Interestingly, however, Spieth worked with native writers, trained in missionary schools, to note down conversations he had with informants as well as stories and narratives that these students heard in their communities.³ Spieth's works constitute historical documentation written in a plain, observant style without strong personal judgement. As such, they also provide a structural picture of mortuary rites and the place of death in Ewe life and spirituality over a hundred years ago, filtered through the lens of a German missionary in interaction with the local population. According to Spieth's accounts, most communities differentiated between what was deemed 'good' deaths and 'bad' deaths (1911: 233–40). A 'good' death was a death from natural cause such as illness, allowing some time to prepare. In such cases, messengers were sent to neighbouring communities to inform relatives and other acquaintances of the death and guns were fired. This was followed by sympathizers coming to the house of the deceased's family, the washing and dressing of the corpse, and its subsequent burial. Men were likely to be buried in the compound, often under the floor of a room in their own house. The grave was dug from outside, reaching the house via a tunnel without providing an entry to the grave via the house. Women, who in a patrilineal society did not formally own houses, were usually buried in the bush. Spieth differentiates between the graves of rich people, who could be buried under their houses, and those of poor people, which are dug without much care and left shallow (1911: 237). Graves were dug either by people who were appointed to the task by the chief and were paid for their services in food, drink and cowry shells, or by male family members, who also received food and drink for their work. A wake was kept for the dead, who would then be buried within a few days after their death. The dead were buried wrapped in cloth or a mat and with some of their clothing, without a coffin. The grave was mostly left unmarked. Some people added items such as dishes, pots, ladles and calabashes to the grave (Spieth and Amoaku 2011: 309). Several days after the interment, the family visited a local priest to speak with the dead and inquire about the cause of their death (Spieth 1911: 238–39). This was because the dead might have been killed by a dead relative or a magician, who would then have to be held responsible for the death. This could be found out by carrying the body of the deceased around the town, which would attempt to direct its bearers to the house of its murderer.

Within a period of between a month and a year, the deceased's possessions were divided up within the family: 'After the funeral celebration the (movable) property of the deceased is distributed. Everything that is bad is carried outside the village and thrown by the way side, in order that the dead person himself can make use of it' (Spieth and Amoaku 2011: 307). After a period of up to six months, the 'rolling of the mat' takes place, a symbolic closing of the funeral rites. Some groups are reported to destroy the houses of the deceased after their deaths (307). After some time, the 'flattening

of the grave' (*das Grab ebenen*) was celebrated, an event after which the spirit was regarded as having reached his spiritual home and final resting place. However, the spirits of the deceased and physical manifestations of them could still enter the world of the living, for example to visit markets (Spieth 1911: 239). If the spirits failed to reach their spiritual destination, they could be dangerous for the living. One reason for such restless spirits could be a 'bad' cause of death. Other possible reasons were the inadequate performance of funerary rites, objects of the deceased remaining in the possession of a living person or debts outstanding to the deceased on the part of a living person. A 'bad' death was a sudden, unexpected death, which could, for example, occur through snakebite, hunting accident, suicide or in labour. A 'good' death could be treated according to a sequential protocol, which would culminate in the arrival of the deceased in the land of the souls. A 'bad' death, however, put the community at risk of suffering other 'bad' events. The spirit of a deceased person who had died suddenly could be potentially harmful to the community and required a funeral outside of town, the destruction of the deceased's house, the town's purification and revenge in the form of killing or attacking what had caused the death – for example, killing snakes in revenge for a snakebite (239–40). The spirits of those who died a 'bad' death could come back to haunt the living and their relatives. To prevent this or in reaction to a haunting, the property of a deceased person could be deposited along the roadside (249). The relatives of those who had died by suicide were asked to make recovery payments to the chiefs and the community. The bodies of people who had died by suicide were quickly buried in the bush without any lying in state, but nevertheless a funeral with food was held several days later. In cases of bad deaths outside, Spieth's *The Ewe People* gives several accounts of 'spirit collections'. In these rituals, soil is carried from the place of the accident to the grave of the deceased in a pot and left there. Sometimes rolling a mat after a violent death also involves offering food on a mat outside the town for all those who have died violent deaths. Questioning the dead to find their cause of death – a possible murder by a wandering spirit or a personal *gbetsi* spirit – shows that the cause of death is considered important and can be identified by contact with the spirit world. Spirits of the dead who have not come to rest can also kill and be identified as a cause of death. This means that the spirits of the dead become conversation partners when moderated by a priest, possible threats or possible helpers in the form of ancestors, who can bring about good things for their family members. In these various forms, the dead and ways of grappling with death are important for the lives of everyone in the community. The dead can bring support or devastation, depending on their nature, the nature of death and the treatment they receive. Ultimately, the question of where material and spiritual elements of the dead are located, whether they are in the right place, is meaningful. When looking at practices related to death in Peki today, it is therefore also important to understand the town's location as a place with historical implications.

Death and Place in Peki Today

Peki as a geographical location has a special meaning for people ‘from Peki’ when it comes to death. Funeral proceedings, interments, other ‘traditional’ practices or Christian church services for deceased persons from Peki are expected to be held in Peki, not somewhere else – a phenomenon that Peter Geschiere has described as autochthony (2009: 55, 190–211). Most of my interlocutors agreed that one counts as being ‘from Peki’ when one can prove one’s family’s presence over several generations back, including a local house that is recognized as the family house. Otherwise, one may be considered a stranger, even if one was born in Peki. This concept of autochthony is common in African perspectives on belonging. Burying community members at home is therefore a way to reinforce this claim of belonging, which, as Geschiere shows, is often a neotraditional invention rather than an age-old practice. The physical last resting place of dead bodies serves the claims of living family members for belonging and recognition in a place. For those who live away from their ancestral town, the wish to be buried in ancestral ground means that they have to become involved in local politics before their return or while they are away. Acknowledging comparable developments in other African countries, Geschiere shows with his study of Cameroon what an unexpected role ‘funerals came to play as a final test of belonging in the new political debates triggered by political liberalization and democratization’ (190). The same is true in Peki, where a successful life ends with a burial in Peki (if one is from a recognized Peki family). A family or person who has married into a Peki family or moved here (even if now second or third generation) remains a ‘stranger’, possibly over several generations. In contrast, members of Peki families who grew up or lived elsewhere in Ghana or overseas, and then moved to Peki are and remain locals. The urge to bury a person from Peki in their hometown also applies if this person, although from a Peki family and born in Peki, lived and died away from Peki.

It is the geographical location, the material presence of local soil and the presence of the community that determine this heightened relevance of Peki as a place for the dead. Funerals bring various guests to town. These populate the streets, hotels and compounds over the funeral weekends and often beyond that. The importance of ‘being’ in Peki, combined with the circulation of services, things and people from outside, is a significant factor in various aspects of community life. Understanding the implications of ‘being’ in Peki, its insides and outsides, means understanding how the community is connected. Surrounded by cooling forest and situated at a higher altitude, the town of Peki⁴ feels far removed from the heat and buzz of coastal urban Accra. People say Peki is ‘cool’, a description that seems somewhat untrue to anyone who is not used to a tropical climate. But usually, no matter how hot the day, a gentle breeze will start to blow in the late afternoon, sweeping the sweltering heat away and leading into the night. The big advantage of

Peki – in comparison to many towns that are located on busy roads with heavy traffic – is that six of its towns are grouped around a paved road which is not used by overland traffic but only serves to connect the communities. Peki-Dzake is more isolated at about a kilometre from the nearby overland road and some three kilometres away from the central part of town. The other six Peki communities are aligned like pearls on a string with the town of Tsame being situated near the overland road. For anyone who is not a local, the borders between the ‘towns within the town’ are invisible. The distinction between individual towns and the fact of their belonging to Peki proper does not follow an official, authoritative drawing of borders and affiliations. The town structure of several communities united under the umbrella term ‘Peki’ is a remainder of pre-colonial community structures and reflective of clan structures that are grouped together as neighbours, forming the Peki towns. Yet, practices relating to death cross all borders within the community, be they visible or invisible, temporal or social. These practices are deeply influenced by transformations that have occurred in the community and form an integral part of transforming political and other social structures in Peki today.

Lynne Brydon describes the ‘Krepe’ region as well-connected and mobile throughout the colonial period (2009). Birgit Meyer starts out by describing Peki as a place that ‘was not (and probably never has been) an isolated location’ at the time of her research in 1989, with frequent minibuses transports between Peki and Accra on a daily basis (1999: 23). The same is still true today. Life in Peki, as I experienced it during my time in the town, has its moments of feeling remote as well as feeling at the centre of local events, depending on the flow and pace of movement and the availability of transportation. People frequently travel from and to Peki, yet the absence of a bus station means that the journey is not always readily available, such as in Accra, but rather requires contact with drivers in the community if one wants to take a ‘Peki car’. Otherwise, finding a seat on the traffic that passes through town depends on chance. Accra is only about 120 km away, yet the trip may take up to five hours due to bad roads and heavy traffic when coming into the Greater Accra area. The length of the journey and its relative discomforts therefore create a greater distance than the actual kilometre count might suggest. However, it is possible to travel back and forth within a day if necessary and people do so frequently. The artificial Volta Lake is not far from the town, but with Peki being situated in a valley between hills, it is cut off from direct and easy access to the lake. When travelling lakeward, be it to cross the big bridge near the Akosombo dam or to visit the town of Dzemeni in the Volta Region with its busy market, one must circumnavigate the hills, which takes about fifty minutes by car. Peki profits from an ‘internal’ cemented street connecting all five sub-towns of Avetile, Afeviofe, Blengo, Dzugbati and Wudome. The street is a convenient means to get around within the community, both on foot and by car. In comparison to Birgit Meyer’s account from the early 1990s, and judging from what

my interlocutors told me, it seemed that the availability of taxis as modes of transportation to get around in town has increased significantly in recent years. People in Peki perceive this as a process of urbanization in the towns. Owning or driving a taxi has become a popular job and drivers circle the town on a set route, going from Dzake to Wudome and back. Prices for a shared taxi ride are fixed, which in the end gives the taxis the same function as that of *trotro* minibuses in Accra.

The roads and means of mobilizing people in and around the town successfully achieve a connection between Peki, the surrounding towns and urban Accra, supplying Peki with goods of various sorts and enabling a coming and going of guests and townsfolk. At the same time, the internal town road is a centre for leisure-time activities and socializing. Being connected and yet seemingly tucked away, the ‘rural’ state of Peki seems to be somewhat undermined. With a passing car always just a few moments away, one is never really stuck in this town between the hills, but may be gone within an instant and return the same way. Benjamin N. Lawrance discusses transformations of Ewe identities in former German Togoland throughout the colonial period. In his detailed historiographical study, he challenges the concept of the rural-versus-urban divide. Instead, he argues that ‘tensions between village-level social and political cultures, and indigenous political movements that operated within the framework of “nation”, were tackled in and around an increase in “periurban zones”’ (2007: 2–3). In these ambiguously uncategorizable parts of land near a town or urban centre that were neither rural nor urban, ‘periurban colonialism’ influenced and shaped negotiations around social change. A rise in periurban zones, ‘breaking down the dichotomy between rural and urban during the mature colonial area’, is what he sees as the key to understanding ‘the trajectories of change in Eweland and by extension in much of sub-Saharan Africa’ (3). In that respect, it would be an over-simplification to understand Peki as just a rural town. Rather, its infrastructure places it somewhere between the urban and the rural, tentatively periurban. Furthermore, and more importantly, Lawrance’s study suggests that spatial configurations and the ways in which these have been amended during the colonial period were reflective and formative of indigenous reactions to social change and the challenges of foreign rule. Categories of identification such as nationhood were tools for positioning indigenous interests tactically.

Peki grew in houses as well as in population as the result of an economic boom from cocoa-farming which began around 1890 and had ceased completely by the 1950s. When the boom ended due to infertile soil and plantation pests, the previously acquired wealth could not be maintained, and people left the town to look for work elsewhere in the Gold Coast or returned to the subsistence farming of local crops. Since then, people in Peki have had to find new ways of earning money, exchanging products and producing food and other things for their daily lives. The 2010 South Dayi population census treats Peki as one of the district’s urban areas (Ghana

Statistical Service 2014). While that may be true when comparing Peki to smaller village settlements in the district or the Volta Region more generally, it still appears less urbanized in a lot of ways, for example when compared to the Volta Region's capital of Ho or to the national capital Accra. The availability of imported products and more sophisticated technological equipment and services is sparse. I learned about the intricate networks of people, information and things travelling between Peki, Accra and abroad when I worked with bereaved families and graphic designers from Peki, who were involved in the production of printed obituary media. While Peki does have a copy shop that offers black-and-white printing, there are no facilities with a printer capable of producing colour-printed banners on PVC, let alone prints of the size that make a banner or poster noticeable. Both the material as well as the print itself must be acquired in a bigger city or town. The economy of producing and transporting things (as well as bodies alive and dead) between Peki and Accra is important for organizing funerals and reveals how people navigate both space and time cleverly to achieve a favourable outcome for their dead. People rely on each other's presence and activities to provide necessary products and services in town, so there is no immediate need to leave town for anything.

Places of Death: Cemeteries, Graves, Spirits

The community boasts a total of seven cemeteries, which are all differently organized, owned and managed. This is important since it reflects the diversity of actors, regulations and claims which come to play a part in the management of Peki burials. The Avetile cemetery is an example of a public cemetery that is organized and leased by the town's traditional governance authorities, represented by the chief of Avetile's palace and a group of elders working with it. In comparison, Dzake cemetery is privately owned by a family, and the palace in Dzake has nothing to do with the leasing of plots and burials. In Tsame, there is a public cemetery which works like the Avetile cemetery, and there is also a second cemetery that is shared by three clans, whose members may be buried here. Non-members of the clans can purchase the right of burial in this cemetery despite their outsider status. Wudome cemetery belongs to the E.P. Church and is open to all members who have paid their tithes to the church. All others, again, must pay the church in order to bury a relative there. Some parts of this cemetery, including adjoining land, are privately owned and grave plots may be leased from the families who own it. The difference between these two administrative institutions in Wudome cemetery is also reflected in the material construction of the graves. On the land of the E.P. Church, graves may not be cemented or covered with concrete, nor decorated with tiles or any other kind of permanent headstone. Private plots will allow this, which is reflected in their price. In addition, there also exists a cemetery shared by the three communities of Blengo, Afeviofe and Dzugbati, which is partially

owned by the E.P Church and partially under private ownership. These shared ownerships create a somewhat confusing mixture of responsibilities and rules. Parts in which graves can be cemented, meaning that they will remain there indefinitely, are under private ownership and burial costs must be negotiated differently than with the representatives of the palaces, families or the E.P Church. The seventh cemetery is a newly opened, private cemetery owned by a wealthy industrialist from Peki. Finally, there are also two *agbadome* 'luggage' cemeteries for the spirits and belongings of accident victims, one in Avetile and one in Wudome. The impact of this diverse mixture of places and responsibilities around cemeteries on the community will be at the centre of the second and third part of this book, which follow movements across boundaries in the community. For now, it is important to make one initial and essential point: there are a lot of cemeteries in Peki, in relation to the size of the community. Their presence, in combination with associated sets of rules and regulations, retains the dead in the heart of the community. While my interlocutors have voiced concern over the proximity of the dead to the living, most cemeteries are in fact integrated into the plan of the town, sometimes on the edges of settlements but not completely removed from them, sometimes within a quite densely populated area. Not counted, but to be mentioned here, are church cemeteries in the church yards of mission-built churches. These consist mostly of older graves going back to missionary times, but the grave of a pastor may occasionally be added to it. There are also many graves on private land, next to people's houses, some older but some also very recent. While these kinds of home burials (which I have not witnessed myself) are legally not permitted, there are certain loopholes of acquiring the right to bury a relative on the family land, as I will discuss in Part II. A general observation from these different practices and opinions may be that attitudes to the dead differ among community members, and that there is an equal desire to keep one's dead close and to keep them spatially removed.

Regarding the participation of local actors and institutions in funerals and commemoration, it is also important to note from the outset that the community distinguishes between Christian, Muslim and traditional funerals, all of which are conducted differently and by different people in authoritative roles. Muslim funerals are exempt from the temporally durational aspect that the popular Christian funerals follow. Muslim community members usually leave the washing and burying of their relatives to family members of the same sex as the deceased and the whole procedure is supposed to be completed within a day. Graves are either left unmarked or marked with natural rocks. As such, these funerals, which are also reflected in the materiality of the graves, go against the trend in the community to bury in a durational way and make excessive use of material things while doing so – they even forego the use of coffins, burying the deceased only in a sheet. Christian funerals are much the opposite, involving a panoply of materials, things and finally in the ideal case, a cemented grave that promises

the eternal presence of the dead on earth. Christian burials, as Birgit Meyer (1999) notes, were an attractive alternative to traditional burials in missionary times, since they were cheaper (dues were only paid to the Church instead of to a large group of chiefs and guests) and spiritually the Christian God offered eternal life at a much lower risk. Traditional funerals were supposed to involve the gifting of food and drinks to all guests, the donation of sacrificial goats to chiefs and the ability to hold festivities that might last for several days without a break. Today, Christian funerals of any church affiliation involve a lengthy church service, which may be held by lay preachers and volunteers if need be. During my fieldwork, all services that I attended as part of a funeral took place in a family home or at a public location, none in an actual church building. This seems to have evolved since the 1990s, when those paying their regular tithe could expect a service at church. Yet, even then there was the flexible option of using volunteer preachers and taking the event home if the money didn't suffice for the 'full service'. But Christian funerals also offer another advantage in comparison to services offered by traditional practitioners: Christian priests, spiritual leaders and higher chiefs are allowed to see and interact with the dead body. For traditional religious practitioners with the role of priest, this is not allowed. They may only partake and offer other services that do not involve visual or physical contact with the body, and still require a white sacrificial animal for purposes of purification afterwards. As I will discuss, contemporary solutions to the problem of having 'the best of both worlds' may result in a mixed Christian-traditional service. Importantly, people in Peki continue to distinguish between a 'good' and a 'bad' death, the 'good' death being a death that is somewhat foreseeable and not sudden, the 'bad' death resulting from an accident or similar event. Today, cars are among the main causes of such accidental deaths. In cases of 'bad' deaths, people in Peki do different additional things that deviate from the sequence prescribed for a 'good' death, which I will outline in the following section before turning to the sequence for 'bad' deaths.

***Ku*: The 'Good' Death Sequence**

Whether a death counts as 'good' or 'bad' death is most recognizable by the ubiquitous 'funeral banners', large scale images colour-printed on PVC (sheet plastic polyvinyl chloride), and smaller-scale self-adhesive posters that plaster the town's walls. While posters list many details on mourners and funeral proceedings, requiring a closer read, it is particularly the banners that visually categorize a death by giving headlines such as 'Celebration of life' and 'Call to glory', or alternatively 'What a shock' and 'Gone too soon'.

In response to a 'good' death, family meetings take place to organize finances, responsibilities and tasks. Families and clans take note of the monetary contributions and labour each member has offered to the clan and the community. Reflecting the tradition of Ewe oral culture, most important



Figures 2.1 and 2.2 Examples of a banner for ‘good’ death and a banner for ‘bad’ death, pictured in Peki in late 2016. © Isabel Bredenbröker

information is generated and passed on orally. While financial contributions to funerals or to a clan’s collection of money may be recorded in written form, attendance at clan meetings, funerals and community labour is registered by witnesses, and information circulated and reproduced in the community. These records, whether in the form of actual documents or as a set of opinions and stories, are negotiated in various ways, before and after a person’s death. The outcome of these negotiations influences the way the funeral is held, the financial implications for relatives and the moral standing of families and individuals in the community.

After a death has occurred, the body of the deceased is stored at the local morgue. This is situated in Peki-Tsame and forms part of the Peki Government Hospital complex. The morgue is paid by relatives at a rate of 17 Cedi per day (rates in 2016/17). Funerals take place every second weekend, following a schedule released by the *adontebene* of the Peki Traditional Area. In the week before a funeral, an undertaker prepares a room in a family compound where the deceased will be laid in state. The ‘dressing of the room’ usually happens on the Wednesday or Thursday before the funeral. Graves are also dug on Wednesdays. On Friday morning, the bodies of those deceased who are going to be buried at the weekend are washed at the local morgue by a delegation of relatives and undertakers. The bodies may only leave the morgue in a white body bag and may not enter the town before nightfall. After sunset, the body will be dressed and decorated at the family compound by an undertaker. The subsequent lying

in state on Friday nights is an occasion upon which the community and family members can mourn the deceased, who is displayed in a coffin or sometimes on a chair. Now, the body can be visited, communicated with, touched and mourned as the remains of the lost person. It is common to announce that ‘there will be no wake keeping’, meaning that the public is expected to leave the family at some point during the night. Ghanaians differentiate between a lying in state and the keeping of a wake. It has become unfashionable to hold a public ‘wake’, which means a gathering of people around the body that lasts from dusk until dawn. The reason for this is that wake-keeping is associated with traditional beliefs and practices. In the case of a Christian funeral, the family might want to distance themselves from this. Also, the usual reason for not announcing an official wake is that the longer and later such events go on, the more likely it is that arguments break out, drunken people fight, or people indulge in other forms of unwanted excessive behaviour. Posters giving detailed information on funeral arrangements therefore mostly include the sentence ‘There will be no wake-keeping’ to discourage people from expecting an all-night event that, if following traditional protocol, would then have to include free drinks, adding to the expenses of the bereaved family. However, close family members will stay with the body throughout the night.

Friday nights, when multiple lying in states occur may be busy nights for community members. It is quite common to visit several houses on these nights or to come across different parties of mourners in the process of transporting a body. These events may take unexpected turns and produce states of agitation whenever irregularities occur – which is frequently the case. Families may encounter disagreements when exchanging the customary bottles of spirits at the predetermined meeting point. In the case of one young accident victim (who therefore died a ‘bad’ death), the family hid the body from a large group of youths who had come to transport it into town from the morgue, possibly intending, as interlocutors suspected, to engage in somewhat wild behaviour, throwing the coffin around as an expression of anger over their friend’s premature death, and transporting it to different places he may have wanted to visit in town. The result was an angry group of young people going around the town in search of the body. As a social pastime activity, visiting lying in states is a common thing to do on Fridays, especially for young people. Depending on the age of the deceased, crowds of young people may gather at homes and use the occasion to celebrate, drink and dance. The bodies themselves have a quiet but present role in these gatherings, as essential material representations of a lost community member. On Saturday morning, a church service will be held, either at a church or at the family house, after which the coffin is transported to a cemetery and buried there. Christian funeral services are often integrated into the funeral proceedings in the family house. The churches may also offer guided ceremonial statements and meetings at a count of seven days, forty days and one year after the funeral. This can include the remembrance

of a person in a Sunday service, or the attendance of a minister at a meeting to sing songs and unveil a finished grave at dawn after one year. Traditional rites may be dedicated as an alternative to Christian funerary rites or take place in the form of additional practices such as drumming or the slaughtering of animals while a Christian service is held simultaneously.

The production, exchange and circulation of material goods is another main aspect of activities relating to death, involving businesses, services and commodity production, for example, by coffin makers or undertakers. Whether at the funeral, in the making of an funeral banner, when organizing an allotment at a cemetery, when sharing the deceased's properties or when pacifying the spirit of someone who had departed in an untimely fashion, all activities involve a lot of different actors and locations. Among others, these include guests, family and clan members, youths, local officials such as chiefs and politicians, priests, craftspeople, medical staff, government workers, drivers and local volunteers. By advertising a funeral and a death via funeral banners in town, every death creates its own local public. Funerals and places where people gather in relation to them, such as the morgue on a Friday morning, are also popular places for small-scale vendors of produce, like fresh vegetables, dried fish or *kenkey*. Here, they hope to find potential buyers among those who have gathered. I was always grateful to come across a girl selling particularly tasty and filling tofu shashlik sticks around funerals as the lengthy church services would otherwise leave me starving if unprepared. Funerals and the question of how and when they take place are under the authority of the *adontehene* and his palace staff as traditional governance authorities. The palace releases a funeral calendar with permitted weekends for burial. Whoever wants to bury at the weekends in between must make a steep payment of 1,500 Cedi to the community account, administered by the *adontehene*.

A weekend may have up to thirty funerals in town, depending on the season. Through the regulation of funerary time by means of the calendar, the traditional governance authorities have control over funerary events in town and can restrict the intensity of events while also increasing the density of dedicated funeral weekends. In Peki-Avetile, payments for grave allotments, interim weekend funerals and the construction of cemented graves also go towards a communal account administered by the local chief's palace. These payments enhance the importance of the palace as an institution which regulates funerary events and benefits from them. In his *Anthropology of Time*, Alfred Gell remarks that control over the calendar is a tool for exercising power and that authority as well as knowledge of calendrical structures have been used by indigenous and colonial authorities in various contexts and at various times (1992: 306–313). In the case of Peki, the funerary calendar issued by the palace works as a powerful tool, which the indigenous political and religious authorities can use against the control of representatives of the larger national state, who have introduced their own rules into the funerary cycle. It helps to re-direct power, attention,



Figure 2.3 A document signed by the *adontehene* listing the weekends on which there may be burials in Peki in 2017 is hanging on the wall of a printing studio in Peki. © Isabel Bredenbröker

people and money into the local system of administration and the town as a lived social environment, thereby lessening the power of state rules and representatives, such as that represented by the Environmental Health Office, which are supposed to enforce state laws in relation to funerals. And

although a team from the Environmental Health Office is staffed by Peki residents, their professional engagement in the service of the state makes them ‘foreign agents’ to some degree. Referring back to Ernst Kantorowicz’s description of the transmission of power within the body politic beyond the king’s body mortal (2016 [1957]), the process of channelling power in the organization of funerary events in Peki may be understood as a similar tool. By controlling the workings of funerary events in town more closely than state representatives can do, local traditional governance representatives reproduce and reinstate their influence within the community.

Ametsiava: The ‘Bad’ Death Sequence

For the restless souls of those who have died a bad death, there are *agbadome* places, dedicated bushlands in and around town, one of them right next to the Avetile cemetery, where people can place ‘luggage’ for those who died suddenly. The *agbadome* are places where these restless spirits are believed to live, and the living may only enter safely by previous announcement (‘knocking’ in Ghanaian English) and pouring libation (a ritual pouring of liquor on the ground) for the spirits. *Agbadome* places and Peki cemeteries have recently been undergoing spatial transformations and some sites are wanted for new uses, which risks desecrating the land. But before luggage can be deposited there, other things must be done. In the case of a bad death, the soul of the deceased can be picked up from the site of their death, a week after the funeral has taken place. The family must pay for a traditional priest to lead the ceremony. In a communal effort, during which many community members participate in their role as members of the *asafo* (the traditional army under the orders of the paramount chief, which is open to men and women), family members and others visit the site of the accident at dusk. Usually accompanied by drumming and chanting, the priest retrieves the soul at the site in the form of a handful of soil, which is wrapped up in a piece of white cloth and carried like a baby on the back of a female family member. All attendees are given a strip of the fabric which they tie around their wrists and with which they return to the family house. Here, the soul is laid to rest for some time with the pieces of fabric, while everyone is invited to share water and flour that are mixed and drunk from a calabash which is passed around. Then, the soul is carried to the grave of the deceased and buried there by the traditional priest and family members. Until the evening, the family members wait in the house, which may on occasion involve heavy drinking and the smoking of marijuana. In the evening, different foods such as dried maize, rice and peanuts are prepared and tasted by a group of people. These are included in the offerings for the soul of the deceased that need to be deposited in *agbadome*. Usually, offerings include the clothes of the deceased, toiletry items and cooking utensils, furniture such as chairs and tables, as well as pots and containers. In the evening after sunset, all gifts are carried to an *agbadome* site. The traditional priest is present to request

entry at the site and keep everybody who is involved safe. During the time of my research, I was invited to take part in two ceremonies of picking up and depositing a soul, one of which I was invited to witness through until the end. It is not certain that those who have lost a family member through a ‘bad’ death will perform events from this sequence of events, since the traditional priest, gifts, food and drinks for the living have to be paid for. Sometimes, people choose not to perform these tasks because they conflict with their Christian faith. However, I did hear frequent stories in which people in the community or town had suffered from the negative effects of refusing these practices. Accidents and other bad events that occurred after the ‘bad’ death of a relative were linked to a failure to perform these rituals. Hence, the social pressure to take a ‘bad’ death seriously and act according to protocol appeared to be quite high.

Moral Evaluations of Death: Communal Labour, Diasporic Debt and Social Credit

The evaluation of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ deaths, linked to the cause of death, is not the sole indicating factor that determines what moral categories are ultimately associated with the death of a person. Apart from the ‘chance’ external factors that may cause a death to occur, other aspects, such as the social engagement of a deceased, their role in the community and their general conduct also come into play. Any evaluations under these categories are always put in connection to the initial cause and moral assessment of a death. Relatives and community members may try to turn a ‘bad’ death into a ‘good’ one or challenge the conditions under which a death can be made ‘good’, for various reasons and intentions. As I argue elsewhere in relation to funeral banners, even the apparently straightforward binary categories that banner headlines display are, on a deeper level of socio-material practice, not decisive (Bredenbröker 2024a). Rather, it is the use and omnipresence of banners which help to transform ‘bad’ deaths into acceptable ones and make ancestry achievable to deceased persons who formally may not have qualified for it. One important factor which links the way in which deceased are assessed post-mortem and in which members of the community will then respond to their death lies in communally organized labour. Before burial, a deceased person’s life is assessed based on their positive contributions to communal life and labour. If that person or their children are perceived as having been inactive, their families are supposed to be charged a penalty fee of 100 Cedi, according to information from Peki Union⁵ representatives. The real fines may possibly be higher, reflecting additional debts that need to be settled depending on what else was amiss in the person’s life and who else makes demands on the family. The organization of labour and loyalty in Peki has a communal aspect. Communal labour (also interchangeably called community labour) is a form of organized work for the community and individual sub-towns, in which

men and women contribute to tasks that serve the communal good. This can be cleaning streets, sewers and public places, collecting rubbish, building a communal toilet for a town and comparable tasks. For communal labour, the town chiefs and their palace staff set tasks that need to be worked on, and fix times and dates. Usually, these tasks are set in agreement with elders from the clans in a Peki town. Since towns are divided into clans, with several clans making up a town, these clans are always in communication with their town chief. Once decided upon, tasks for communal labour are announced through public loudspeaker systems. Participation in communal labour, performing tasks that serve the greater communal good, is therefore an expression of loyalty to the chiefs who administer the communal labour and to the clans who inhabit the town, one of which will be one's own clan to which one is directly connected through monetary and participatory obligations. The towns regularly call for communal labour, which means all inhabitants who are fit and able should offer to help with cleaning or construction jobs around the town. Elders are exempt from physical labour. Communal jobs for women and men differ. Men are usually called on to do hard physical labour like digging and building, while women carry water and other things, clean and cook food for the workers. The public cemeteries are supposed to be cleaned by women on Fridays, the day dedicated to communal labour for this task. As part of this job, women collect and burn rubbish and cut foliage that is overgrowing in the cemetery. By contributing to communal labour, so-called 'registered' resident Peki citizens who live in the community perform part of their expected share of being a 'good person'. Registered Peki citizens are formally expected to pay a monthly tax to the community, administered by the town chiefs. However, most people say that this payment is usually not enforced or made by those living in Peki, and non-payment is not penalized.

The community distinguishes between registered citizens who are present and those who live abroad or out of town. Those who are present can contribute to communal labour and are therefore theoretically charged a lower monthly communal tax of five Cedi. Only registered Peki citizens have the right to be buried in Peki – and, as mentioned before, burial in a place of ancestry is highly desirable. For those who are 'from Peki' while not living in the community, there exists an administrative system to maintain ties, contributions and loyalty from afar to secure one's right to be buried in Peki and to receive help once a funeral needs to be carried out. The diaspora in Peki is organized in such a way that those who are from Peki can be kept in the orbit of the Peki community. Since 1923, the 'Peki Union' has served as an institution which keeps those who have wandered from their ancestral land in a relation of friendly obligation towards the community. After independence in particular, migration to the city and abroad became more frequent, creating a need for communities to engage their members outside in mutual obligations to benefit from these expansions, rather than simply having to accept a loss of community members, often the young who are

supposed to work and build the community. Since those in the diaspora are unable to contribute to the communal good, for example by participating in community labour or attendance at clan meetings and funerals, they must pay a higher community tax to compensate for their absence. They also must contribute to the communal good in other ways or in the form of additional payments, depending on their status and perceived income. Whether Peki people live in Accra or London, the Peki Union is there so people outside the town can make contributions to the community in the hope of accruing the kind of social credit that others who are present in town gain through labour and active participation in communal life. There are many Peki Union sub-groups for the individual towns as well as for towns and cities where Peki expats live, such as the Avetile Union, the Accra Union or the London Union. This is reflective of communal organization structures in the town itself, with cemeteries being organized differently from town to town and with the town's traditional governance structures differing slightly from one another. Originally, the Peki Unions served as local manifestations of home, where people could meet and connect, and they were important for the distribution of information about Peki before the advent of modern communication technologies. Today, in an increasingly connected world, this purpose has become unnecessary, leading in parts to a perceived decline in the importance of the Peki Union, as well as in its function as an equalizing institution which helps expats to make up for their lack of presence in the town.

Responsibilities for organizing a funeral usually fall to the nuclear family of the deceased, particularly their children. However, the clan and extended family are also involved in the organization and may either contribute to expenses or demand money from the children of the deceased. Whether children are going to receive support or whether they are going to face demands from the side of traditional governance and clan members depends on two factors: the evaluation of their deceased parent's participation in community life in the eyes of community representatives, and their own participation. If either of the two are seen as lacking, penalty payments will be demanded, often by different parties. When it comes to evaluating the deceased, the results will be shifted onto the shoulders of their children who, if the parent is found to have been inactive, will have to 'atone' for this. There may also be liabilities towards one's own clan which may need to be settled individually. Clans organize their member's obligations differently, but whatever the case may be, these internal organizations can create additional demands on top of the demands made by chiefs and representatives of the palaces. In the case of a clan from Peki-Wudome, for example, the clan collects ten Cedi from every member if a clan member has lost a relative and needs to organize a funeral. This money is then given to the family to finance the funeral preparations. Clan members also help during the festivities by digging graves, preparing food, carrying the coffin and other tasks. All of this requires their immediate presence, which can only partially be

made up for by sending money. During the funeral, monetary contributions are collected from sympathizers, one third of which is then supposed to be paid back to the clan. If a member of a clan is not present in Peki, does not send money to cover their dues and does not attend funerals to help and contribute there, they accrue a debt to the clan. Whether this debt is in the end identified as belonging to the deceased person, or whether it has been accrued by a child of a deceased, both scenarios require settlement of the debt plus penalty fees, payable by the children. In the example of the Wudome clan, fees are split into a demand made by the male clan members to the male children, and a demand made by the female clan members to the female children. If a penalty is not paid to the parties who are demanding it – the communal accounts administered by the town's palaces or to the clan – the family will not be allowed to bury the deceased. This may simply be the case if a locally residing community member is found to have been inactive, but it becomes more complex if the deceased or their children lived outside Peki, in which cases additional demands may be raised. A person may be accused of having failed to send money to the community or of not having engaged in the Peki Union. Contributions to the Peki Union may, these days, not even be recognized as a valid stand-in for active participation in the community, and monetary contributions may not be considered equivalent to help and contributions given in person, that is, by those who are immediately present.

Contesting Moral Assessments of Death

Community labour, diasporic payments and the assessment of a life spent as socially valuable are entangled with funeral arrangements and the demands that can be made on relatives. As becomes apparent from this, death is a moment in the social organization of the Peki community that opens spaces for possible contestation and pressures being exerted on people – both morally and economically. Public judgement, public space and the latter's maintenance as well as use are factors that play critical roles in funerals and in the demands stimulated by a death. Other fields that are directly linked to these processes of negotiation are innovation, disagreement, personal or group agendas, political struggles and claims for land. In addition, the multiple institutions of political governance and identification, the broad network of kin relations and obligations diversify the plane of relating to power. The state of Ghana and its representatives shares this plane with multiple 'traditional' and religious institutions on a local and national level. Shaped by concepts of belonging and their associated practices that existed pre-colonially and influenced by certain ruptures that these saw through colonial intervention, state power is to an extent a weaker and less appealing authority. It is this uncertain and always possibly challengeable position of the state, alongside other positions of institutionalized power, that becomes evident when looking at death-related practices in Peki.

There is no doubt, as the first part of this book has shown, that the influence of European politico-religious ideas and practices has been shaping Ghanaian religious thought and social organization throughout the pre-colonial and colonial periods until today. This is also reflected in historical and contemporary practices relating to death. In many ways, the social arena of death-related practices has been shaped by attempts at ‘dealing with an Other’, possibly in the form of resistance, or by appropriating new things and concepts. By giving room to assessing past and present states of social organization, governance and death-related practice in Ghana and Peki, I acknowledge and heed to the importance of considering historiographical accounts. This book is working under the methodological assumption that the past has a lasting influence on the present, reflected in the ways in which societies organize, identify and live. This chapter has provided an overview and assessment of historical texts by missionaries as sources of knowledge, framed these within a critical post-colonial perspective, considered historiographical and ethnographic studies on Ewe culture in an area that is today known as Ghana and Togo, and contrasted these with my own impressions from the field. With this first part of the book, I hope to have provided a good overview of what can and cannot be known about Ewe culture more generally and Peki specifically, particularly as a basis for understanding the relevance of funerary and death-related practices in the Peki community today. Material and spatial organization have influenced the ways in which people have been able to articulate identification with larger social units, such as nationhood. Moreover, spatial reconfiguration through external factors shaped how the Ewe (as well as other groups in Africa) have expressed resistance or taken opportunities to achieve a favourable political position for a community or group. As a conclusion with regards to Ewe political strategies, Benjamin Lawrance finds that ‘among the Ewe there existed an indigenous tradition of political opportunism, a by-product of the rapidly shifting terrain of colonial rule and the varying proximity of the interactions characteristic of colonialism’ (2007: 5). In relation to Gillian Feeley-Harnik’s analysis of Sakalava strategies of resistance or withdrawal from the grip of colonial rule (1991), which were, among other things also expressed through a favour for specific local materials and difficult material practices, this is an interesting fact about past Ewe political strategies to keep in mind. Today, in post-colonial Ghana, various other external forces, such as global capitalism, the global market economy and relative poverty (in a global perspective) in West Africa, combined with ‘Western’ expectations of reform and gratitude for ‘financial support’, can be said to have taken the place of former colonial pressure. Practices and material elements relating to death, among them synthetic materials, have been a site of convergence in which various factors of change have been played out, alongside but also in opposition to one another, engendering change and the rise of resistance and struggles between multiple agendas and interests. The following part

of this book will now turn to the details of such material practices and the role that bodies, temporality and materials play in them today.

Notes

1. The use of names in my ethnographic accounts requires a statement. Going forward, if I am using full names (first and family name) for deceased people this is for two reasons, one being that their names were publicly published on obituary media throughout the community and the other being close relations with their families while in the field. I revert to first names only once a last name has been introduced, for better reading flow. Where the aforementioned criteria (or one of them) are not met, I revert to using first names as pseudonyms. Where sensitive information has been recounted to me, I will make the context untraceable to individuals. This is out of respect for the privacy of the dead and their relatives. I use full names or first names only for living interlocutors who wish to be represented in this way, equally using first names as pseudonyms where appropriate in cases where this does not apply, or where I could not ask for an interlocutor's opinion. For people unfamiliar with Ghanaian naming habits, it will be interesting to know that Ghanaian people usually have several first names, one of which tends to be their Christian name and one a local name, often indicating the day of the week on which they were born. In the Ewe tradition, Yao, for instance, is the name of a male person born on a Thursday. So, Alfred Yao, for example, are the Christian and Ewe first names of a deceased. It is also common practice in Ghana to use nicknames, some of which can be found in my acknowledgements. Nicknames are often used interchangeably or in place of first names given at birth and are no misrepresentation of people if they chose to carry this name. For further reference please consult the paper on Ghanaian nicknames by Albert Awedoba and Stephen Owoahene-Acheampong (2017).
2. Spieth divides his research subjects into twelve different 'tribes', of which the Peki people are closest locally to the 'Ho tribe'. The Peki Ewe are treated as a separate group of Ewe in research works (Meyer 1999; Akyeampong 2001; Venkatachalam 2015).
3. Parts of the material in the collection that was published are therefore also printed in Ewe alongside a German translation and appear to speak from a native point of view. The book has recently been translated into English by the Department of African Studies at the University of Ghana.
4. The District Analytical Report for South Dayi District, which forms part of the most recent governmental census from 2010, only gives an actual figure for five of the seven Peki towns, as part of a shortlist of the twenty largest settlements in the South Dayi district (Ghana Statistical Service 2014). The report gives a total number of 16,145 inhabitants for the five Peki communities of Wudome, Blengo, Tsame, Avetile and Dzake, also listing Agbate (a farm outside of town) and the town of Adzokoe (which is quite far away and not really integrated into the town), while Apeviope and Dzugbati are not mentioned at all. It can therefore be assumed that the total population is higher than the above number.
5. The Peki Union is an organisation for maintaining connections to the town between locals and expats.