



## "Nzulezu" - The City Where Every Child Owns A Boat

By Hannah Asomaning

A visit to Nzulezu, a small hamlet constructed on the Amanzuri Lagoon off the Gulf of Guinea in the Western Region of Ghana, gives one a real adventure.

Every child who attains age four is given a boat to enable him/her free movement to other neighbouring villages. It is also believed that children in the community would never be drowned once the ritual of dropping the child three times into the Amanzuri Lagoon is performed, Mr Ackah, an elder in Nzulezu told the GNA in an interview.

Nzulezu means "on water", hence the name of the village meaning a village on water. One has to paddle a boat for over an hour to get to the village and it is exactly what children in the village do when they are going to school or going to buy bread in nearby towns.

Everything apart from the baking of bread is done in this wonderful village because the village is built of wood and using fire for purposes such as baking bread could set the whole village on fire.

The people prefer to live on the water rather than on land, Mr Ackah, said and that is because of the strong belief in God, who protects them. "Enemies cannot follow us to this place. Our ancestors brought us here to protect us from our enemies," he said.

### HISTROY OF NZULEZU

The people of Nzulezu migrated from Mali because of war. They lived on at a place where gold was the main natural resource hence some strangers decided to come and live with them on the land so that they could have access to the gold.

When they protested, there was war and in order to have their peace they decided to move from the place to settle at a place where people could not attack them. Led by God, who took the form of a big snail, they moved to find a place where they could have their peace.

Only one person could talk to the Deity. Forty-three households undertook the journey from Mali through Burkina Faso to settle at Wenchi and Techiman, both in present day Brong Ahafo Region, and then to Shama and Esipon, in the Western Region before eventually settling at the present location. Some of the households settled along the way.

They built rafts on the Lagoon and settled but they soon discovered that strong winds in the area caused frequent fire outbreaks, so some of them moved to settle at the other side of the Lagoon - the Abbey Lagoon.

They discovered the present site when Muga, a farmer in their group, went out one day to look for a land to farm and found the place, which looked more peaceful with no strong wind.

The people at Nzulezu numbering 400 are Ghanaians. They have intermarried with Nzemas and their original language "Wusere" is lost, the common language spoken is Nzema.

A boat ride is very fascinating. Passengers have to continually scoop water from the boat to prevent it from sinking.

As one rides along, one would see fishes jumping out of the Lagoon intermittently. By the end of the journey one clothes get wet.

The greenery is a sight to behold and not to be told. Those who seek adventure should visit Nzulezu. The bumpy nature of the road from Agona Nkwanta to Beyin can make a pregnant woman give birth instantly.

There is a guesthouse, a drinking bar and a house for sale at Nzulezu. Going to Nzulezu is an adventure. Some members of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Trade and Tourism, who visited the place as part of programme of the Ghana Tourist Board observed that when developed Nzulezu could attract streams of tourists and create wealth for the people.

**Source: GNA**

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