

**DISCOURSE WITH FOASE TRADITIONAL WOOD CARVERS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR ART EDUCATION**

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the MA (Art Education) and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the university except due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents and siblings, the Hudson family, and my supervisor, Dr. Joe Adu-Agyem.

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The logo of KNUST (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology) is centered in the background. It features a torch with a flame at the top, a book in the middle, and a shield with a star and a crescent at the bottom. The shield is flanked by two wings. Below the shield is a banner with the motto "KNUST" in the center and "Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology" on the sides.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the operations of Foase traditional wood carvers and its implication to Art Education in Ghanaian schools and colleges and on the broader spectrum, national development. Education, which is the medium through which culture is passed on from one generation to another needs to be clearly planned in our today's Ghana where Western concepts have tremendously influenced all walks of life of students and the young in general, resulting in production of social misfits. They may be called social misfits because they are not in touch with the traditions of their motherland. In this vein, it is in the right direction to incorporate traditions, values and concepts in the school curriculum. The incorporation of traditional art in our school art curriculum will ensure the continuity of the Ghanaian concepts and identity found in the arts. Carvings produced by Foase traditional wood carvers are no exception when talking of the most vibrant and culturally loaded arts. They carry philosophical values in the form of proverbs, stories, historical records and other aesthetic values projected from cultural contexts. This research aims at discussing, analyzing and documenting priceless information gathered from

the carvers of the locality, as they touch on their working practices, the philosophies that have become the bedrock of their work, their market segment, innovations and their future forecasts, to mention but a few. The qualitative method of research was employed. The researcher however dwelt on the critical discourse methodology. The researcher employed interview and observation as the tools of research. Data were also collected from available relevant or related literature based on the topic, in the form of text books, journals, magazines, the internet and other related sources. The purposive sampling technique was used to sample carvers of all ranks. They were twelve in number. The researcher engaged all groups in an interesting and facts driven discourse. The researcher in his effort therefore arrived at some major findings based on objectives and other vital information, yielding new knowledge. These major findings include the fact that the study of Foase wood carving will promote and enhance the teaching of carving related to Ghanaian culture in our schools and colleges, and that the art is a great asset to the export and tourism pillars of the Ghanaian economy. The researcher has also provided useful recommendations in the text after a careful study of the shortcomings with operations at Foase traditional carving sheds and in schools and colleges.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The Asantes have over the years, established a powerful kingdom in the central part of the Gold Coast during the colonial era which is today known as Ghana. They are a wealthy people owing to the abundance of gold. They were reputed to be warriors, mighty and victorious in battle. Their unfailing governance system is worthy of mention as the subjects revered the King (<http://www.ghanaweb.com/homepage/history/pre-colonial.php>, retrieved 2/12/2010)

They have rich cultural values, belief systems, norms and philosophies. These are made manifest in all areas of their livelihood. Art plays an integral part of their existence. Their arts can be broken into two groups –visual and performing arts. Some of their performing art forms are poetry, music and dances. Also among their prominent visual art forms are pottery, weaving, smithing, and carving. There are certain towns in the region that are masters of one visual art form. For example, Ntonsu is known for traditional textile Adinkra printing, Bonwire and Ahwiaa are known for Kente weaving and wood carving respectively.

There are however some towns that produce equally excellent art but not in the lime light as others are. Typical examples of such towns are Foase and Adanwomase which can boast of the production of excellent traditional wood

carvings and Kente cloth, etc. Foase wood carvers produce basically figurative figures, fertility dolls among others and are great masters of creativity in the art. Their finishes are worth mentioning and are a great source of knowledge and inspiration for the teaching and learning of art education in schools and colleges in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Little is known of Foase traditional wood carvers. This situation has had negative implications on the sale of their works as well as creating unemployment among the youth in the area. The relevance of Foase traditional wood carving to Art Education has also not been realized due to the scanty nature of literature. The researcher is therefore set to add to knowledge of Foase traditional wood carving to solve the stated problems.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. Why should the Foase traditional wood carvings be documented?
- ii. What are the peculiar features and components of the Foase traditional wood carving industry?
- iii. What components of Foase traditional wood carvings are relevant to art education?
- iv. To what extent will the Foase traditional wood carving promote and enhance the teaching and learning of art education?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- To find out and document Foase traditional wood carvings as told by the carvers themselves.
- To identify and document the skills, techniques and other technologies useful for art education.
- To find possible ways of integrating skills, techniques and other technologies useful that will enhance art education.

1.5 Delimitation

The geographical scope of the study is Foase Township and more specifically carving sheds in the area.

1.6 Limitations

The researcher encountered a number of challenges in the study. The scarcity of literature directly related to Foase traditional wood carving was one of such challenges. This made the validation of certain personal communication quite a challenge. The other challenge was the reluctance of the carvers to comment on some pieces owing to the fact that they were not conversant with the philosophical underpinnings of those works.

1.7 Research Methodology

The qualitative research methodology was used. However, approaches employed under the qualitative research methodology were the narrative enquiry, and critical discourse analysis. The critical discourse approach was used for meaning-making of oral and written language. According to the Sage

Encyclopedia of qualitative research, it is a theoretical approach and a methodological framework that centers on qualitative linguistic analysis of spoken or written text. This methodology was of importance to the researcher as most of his studies were based on documentation of spoken and sometimes written words that needed to be analyzed. The use of the narrative inquiry methodology was for understanding experience. This methodology was marked by its emphasis on relational engagement between the researcher and the respondents

1.8 Sampling Techniques and Description

The purposive sampling technique was used to identify carvers who were master and other ranks of carvers with great skills, techniques and clear articulation and expression of issues of interest to the researcher

1.9 Research Tools or Instruments

The following instruments were employed: interviews and observation.

1.10 Definition of Terms

Art education - It is the training in the subject matter and educative process pertaining to art

Aesthetics - This deals with questions pertaining to perception and understanding of works of art. It is an attempt to explain explicitly the human behaviours and reactions towards what is perceived in carved objects or works of art.

Indigenous - this is a term that refers to the concepts that pertain or belong to an ethnic group, a region of a country.

Wood carving – It is a process of chipping, chopping and whittling to obtain the desired structure or form.

1.11 Facilities Available

- i. Master carvers
- ii. Experts in wood carving
- iii. Carving sheds at Foase traditional wood carvings
- iv. The internet
- v. The main KNUST library
- vi. The Art Education library
- vii. The UCC Main library.

1.12 Importance of the Study

- 1. The study would serve as literature on Foase traditional wood carving
- 2. The study would give art educators ideas to enhance teaching and learning of art education in schools and colleges.
- 3. The study would increase the knowledge of researchers, historians, and lovers of the art on Foase traditional wood carvers and their carvings, like the Fanti Doll among other figures
- 4. The study would be of help to the tourism industry.

1.13 Organization of the Rest of the Text.

Chapter Two is a commentary on the review of related literature, while chapter three focuses on research methodology. Chapter four deals with the presentation and discussion of findings and chapter five which is the concluding chapter also deals with summary, conclusions and recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Overview

There appears to be a dearth of literature directly related to the topic. However in this chapter, a review has been done on selected works of authors deemed connected directly or indirectly with issues under investigation. The main task has been broken down into sub topics to ensure the researcher adequately touches effectively and paints a well informed picture of his topic of study and its related issues. The sub topics treated are an introspect examination of traditional wood carving in other jurisdictions or cultures, the nature of traditional art and more specific wood carving in Ghana, the relationship between folk art and art in the classroom, and the nature of wood carving in Ghana's art education.

2.2 Traditional Wood Carving Communities

Every community has its peculiar way of life. The way of life of a community encompasses its language, staple foods, norms, structure of authority and art, just to mention but a few. These make up the culture of a community. Art as one of the evidence of culture is a means of expressing complex ideas of the society. Agrig (n.d) states that art contributes to, among other things, the way we view the world and shape social relations. Art, he concludes, is fundamentally a complex form of visual language that is socially structured and historically specific. Some traditional visual art forms include pottery,

painting, textile art, wood carving or sculpture among others. One or more of the forms may be practiced in a given community.

Rudiments in wood carving as a visual art form in the traditional setting may vary from society to society. However, there may be a string or more that runs through two or more use among societies as confirmed by Davidson (1966) in his work “African Kingdoms” where he states that, all through his research, styles of sculpture varied widely among African tribes, however, all shared a common purpose; and that is to express in material form, the mystical spirits and “life force” preached by their unique religion. This phenomenon explains why African arts cannot be put side by side that of the West as they vary in ideology, philosophical underpinnings and mode of delivery. Ensuing is a documentation of what form traditional wood carving takes in selected communities on the continent and in Ghana.

2.1.1 Oku Traditional Wood Carving

Argenti (2002) records that Oku traditional carvers from Cameroun are called *ghel kentshuf*, which literally means people [of the] chisel. Formal apprenticeship is the only way to pass on knowledge of the art, be it technical or cosmological to young men. Accurate reproduction of the master's degree of proficiency was and still is a highly valued end by apprentices in Oku, but mimicry of the master's forms, styles, and finishes is not the apprentice's goal. In this community, women do not carve. According to master carvers, as cited in Argenti (2002) carving was once an occupation restricted to members of the Kwifon society which is the regulatory body within the palace. One of the

functions of this body is to protect the king against assassination attempts by jealous siblings. The body is made up of royal lineage or Mbele members together with commoners. The work of the traditional carvers in the community is linked to the kingdom and the forest, which is the dwelling place of the ancestors that affords the king spiritual legitimacy. The traditional carvers are well organized. So Argenti (2002) indicates that the carvers have a carver king who ideally controls the carvers' activity. The criteria for selection of the carver king is a proven skill or capacity to tap and transform the force or life breath (keyui) where it lies in the forest. The forest which is the resting place of the ancestors, and the life breath or life force of the forest is by the same token the life force of the ancestors. The king therefore rules over his kingdom as the one with the power to tap these forces. Carvers of Oku traditional wood carving circles, produce masks, stools, house posts incised with symbols of royalty, and various other objects of ceremonial use for titled men.

2.2.2 Traditional wood carving in Kenya

According to Brown (1972), wood carving in Kenya is on the low side and not as a greater part of the set up in West Africa and Central Africa but there however exist a wood carving culture. Craftsmen make intricately carved stools, headrests, combs and other artifacts, as well as such objects as food containers, honey barrels, and bee-hives. He records that just like wood carving in all parts of the continent, Kenyan traditional wood carving has religious and philosophical underpinning. In the country medicine men make the most use of traditional wood carvers. The stoppers they use vary according

to the type of medicine held in the container and the illness it is used to treat. Occasionally the medicine men carve their own stoppers, but it is more usual for them to commission a recognized carver. In the latter case the medicine man will advise the carver on what tree to use. The same trees used to make medicines are also used to make the stoppers for their containers; a favorite tree for these purposes is the Mkimwemwe tree. Before a tree is touched to obtain wood for the carving of a stopper or to obtain roots, bark, or leaves for the concoction of medicines, the medicine man must ask the spirit of the tree for permission to cut it. Carved figures are also used by medicine men of the coastal Bantu. Another group of people who make the most use of traditional carvers in Kenyan traditional set up is sorcerers. Carved figures are also used in sorcery, and it is usual for Kamba sorcerers to obtain a pair of carved figures, representing a male and a female, from the Giriama or Digo whose sorcery is considered to be more potent than their own. Such figures are used by the sorcerer to cause death.

2.2.3 Ashanti Traditional Wood Carving

Yet another jurisdiction where art plays an important role in the institution of society is among the Ashantis who are part of a group of people known as the Akans. Akan according to Quarcopome (1997) is a collective term that is applied to the group of related peoples residing in the southern, mostly forested, regions of what are today the republics of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) in West Africa. These include groups such as the Akwapim, Akyem, Anyi, Aowin, Asante, Bono, Denkyira, Fante, Kwahu, Nzima, and Sefwi. Each group has its distinct dialect but shares with other Akan a lingua

franca, called Twi. In addition, the Akan groups have other cultural attributes in common, notably the tracing of descent, inheritance of property, and succession to high political office, all of which are determined by matrilineage. Art plays an important role in the daily lives of this group of people. For them it is not only for the purpose of beauty but an expression of the ideologies and thoughts that reflect their norms, morals, religion and beliefs. Quarcoopome (1997) says, the “arts articulates ideas, probes moral precepts, and memorializes the dead.”(p.135).

Ashanti arose as a complex state polity in the early 18th century. The state for over two hundred (200) years had engaged in battles for territorial enlargement under the authority of sub chiefs and the Asantehene who is the king of the kingdom or as Silver (1980) calls it central authority. But they have a greater authority which is of a supernatural nature; that authority is that from ancestors and “Nyame” - the sky deity.

Among the Ashanti of Ghana, wood carvers are one of the most important artisans. They play such important roles in the religious, political, and other vital sectors of the traditional setup and again according to Silver (1980) enjoy numerous social privileges normally reserved for prominent royal families. The point is reiterated by Rattray (1924) where he states that if not its very origin, the techniques in traditional wood carving owes its bases to religion, because it seems to have its main purpose of satisfying demands of the priestly class, and that explain their carved figures that are in anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms. In Ashanti traditional wood carvers are males and are

ranked according to technical skills and unique privileges. The carvers are well organized with a chief called the “duasenehene” or the chief carver. There are spelt out rules for carvers to follow and in violation of any, the prescribed punishment is issued to that guilty carver. The way of transferring knowledge of the art from generation to generation is by apprenticeship. Carvers according to history originally lived in a special section of the royal palace at Kumasi and as their numbers increased and their direct upkeep became too expensive, in the 19th century it became expedient to create a separate village for them on the outskirts of Kumasi-the royal carving community. This explains why there are a number of carving communities in Ashanti. Some of them today are Ahwiaa and Foase where my study is centred.

The main products of the traditional carvers are regalia. There is emphasis on the use of traditional regalia in the Ashanti Kingdom as they have important functions in politico-religious events. Silver (1980) sees regalia as a material linked to the ancestral past and a concrete way of legitimizing the authority of office holders that goes a long way to emphasize continuity with tradition. The most significant regalia items produced by the carvers are the state stools, traditionally called *nnkonnua* that are used by chiefs and leaders at all levels of the state system for personal and ceremonial use. The patterns carved in the state stool determined the rank of the user. The stools interestingly goes as far as to the world of ancestry where, upon the death of a prominent chief, his favourite stool or *akonnua* is ceremonially blackened and preserved in the sacred stool house of his clan and subsequent chiefs were required to make

regular offerings to their predecessors' stools to ensure ancestral cooperation in the smooth functioning of daily affairs. The stools have therefore become the dwelling places of spirits of the ancestors. The account of Quarcoopome (1997) on the state stools is that they are enormously significant for the Akan and are used in a variety of contexts. He adds that they make up an important part of the furnishings of a household, carry symbolic meanings as icons of ritual power, and act as repositories of the souls of their deceased owners. Other products of the carvers are the combs, bowls, akuaba dolls, and other non-regalia objects which carvers would produce when not engaged in royal commissions.

2.3 Nature of Traditional Wood Carving in Ghana

Under this subtopic, the researcher reviewed literature in the bid to inform his research on the peculiar characteristics of traditional art forms and zeroed down to those peculiarities that pertain to traditional wood carving.

There is the need to define the boundaries of what may be called folk or traditional art. Congdon (1987) talks about forging the definition on the premises of the informative or educational constituent in an art work that reflects the norms and values or ideologies of a particular community. There is also a need to take into consideration according to Condon (1987), the materials and techniques used in production which make up the creative process, the use of the art object, the context of the object, the form of the object where he explains as which art form it is. This criterion of definition is based on a look at object itself. The other way to define an object as a

traditional art form is to gain an in-depth understanding in the intended use of the object in everyday life among members of a community and the artists who are designated to produce such art objects.

Wood carving happens to be one of the traditional or folk art forms in Ghana. Grobel (1970), in his work makes mention of a book titled, "Sculpture in Ghana" by Vincent Kofi, where he states that there are four processes which goes into producing a work of art. He talks of the spirit of inspiration, the concept of form, the application of technique, and the factor of recognizability. "By inspiration Kofi meant the describable force that moves the artist to create, be it his message, his poetry or his emotions. By form in sculpture he talks about the relationship between line, mass and space. Technique is the skill of the artist within the discipline of his medium. The factor of recognizability decides the extent to which the work of art is abstract or representational, whether the work clearly represents to a greater or lesser degree what it is supposed to be, or whether it requires a label.

In the setting of traditional art, however, these processes cannot be the template for production. It might be in fact for this reason, the author followed up by telling readers that these four templates could be the dominant features in West European art where these formal concepts come into play. The traditional artist lays emphasis on another direction; and it is the obsession with poetic and spiritual themes, the philosophical and religious heritage of ages. A peculiar feature of traditional wood carving in Ghana is the ideas for producing the works, where emphasis is placed on the philosophical, religious

and cultural underpinning of the art work. Rattray (1929) reiterates this fact that there is one side which is common to all art in the traditional setting in Ghana, and that he says is the religion in these arts and crafts. He says it runs like a golden thread through one and all, and shows to us materialistic Westerners how so-called primitive people would not dream of divorcing the mystic, the mythical and the spiritual even from their arts and the toil of their crafts. It is simply stated by Ross (2004) that to a larger extent meanings attached to indigenous art forms in Ghana is on philosophical foundations. Rattray (1929), opines that in Ghana, the origin of art in anyway you look can be linked to their religion, as it satisfies especially in wood carvings, the demands of the priestly class where figures in anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms are carved.

The other striking feature of traditional wood carving is the issue of gender. In the production of a particular art, like weaving, pottery, carving just to mention but a few, there is the prescription of which of the sexes to endeavour . Wood carving, like weaving, is the work of men only. Pottery is however done by women. Silver (1980) in his work came to the conclusion that traditional carvers in Ashanti are all male.

Thirdly, traditional artists are deemed important and inevitable members of the societies they live in. According to Silver (1980), carvers enjoy unique rights and prerogatives at the socio- structural level which are reinforced by codes of ethics and competence. Carvers in Ashanti are a marked out group as they play very important roles in the chieftaincy and religious wings of the society.

2.4 Education

Philosophers and great minds such as Ghandhi, Socrates and Dewey have defined education as an effort to tailor philosophies of life. Education as defined it could be taught of as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. Every organized group of people has a way of life. This way of life needs to be passed on from one generation to the other. The peculiar way of life forms the culture of the people and in the better breath the identity of the people. Therefore it is important that in order not for the people to lose their identity, pass it the way of life to the next generation. This is done consciously and sometimes unconsciously. This act of imparting culture is what is known as education.

Tamakloe, Amedahe and Atta (2005) suggest that one could acquire education through formal, non-formal or informal means, where the formal education will be intentional, systematic and well coordinated. It is well coordinated because there are structures put in place known as schools, colleges and institutions. The non-formal education is also intentional form of education and well coordinated but not as rigid as formal education. There is no strict supervision. An example of such education may be adult literacy and the extension service. Informal education is indigenous and the traditional form of education. This form normally takes place in homes where parents, elders, and opinion leaders are the agents of education.

2.5 The Relationship between Folk Art and Art in the Classroom

According to Congdon (1987), folk art should be included in art education curricula. Traditional cultural knowledge according to Berkes (1998) as cited in Bequette (2007) is a cumulative body of knowledge, practices, and belief, evolving by adaptive process and handed down through generations by cultural transmission. The adaptive process of handing down folk art, traditional art or native art can be imparted in the school art curriculum. Bequette (2007) puts it that teaching about native artworks as part of school arts curriculum can serve to pass on traditional ecological knowledge as reechoed by Edusei (1991) who states that the rationale for the indigenous [art] education [is] to transmit accumulated wisdom, knowledge, values, beliefs, and attitudes of the society to its young, a necessary process for maintenance and development of the culture.

Bequette (2007) adds that the teaching of folk or traditional art contextualizes colonialism's influence on traditional and contemporary Native arts practices.

There however seems to be quite a dilemma in Ghanaian education as to how best the content address our cultural values, goals, and physical, economic and all other relevant conditions. In art education, the question is the link between content of our traditional art or folk art and the content of art taught in the formal classroom. For example there has been a time that the design of courses in art necessarily did not take into consideration existing local raw materials but only seemed to make a carbon copy of the western visual art curriculum ideas. Even the choosing and emphasis put of some art forms like drawing and

painting instead of focusing and improving on the traditional knowledge of such art forms as pottery, rattan and bamboo art, basketry and so on.

There is also the case of divorcing what is taught in the art classroom from the philosophical underpinnings of such art in the traditional setup even when they are taught hence placing emphasis on beauty and not philosophy just as the western art terrain. Ross (2004) echoes this point that indigenous and school education systems in Ghana evolved along parallel paths with separate goals. This situation in Ghana, according to Ross is the series of footprints left by colonialism and its associating wings.

2.6 Aesthetic theories and African Aesthetics

Aesthetics, according to the New Encyclopedia (2003) is a term derived from the Greek word *aisthesis* which means sense perception. The term is concerned with the understanding of beauty and particularly in the evaluation of art. Different writers have explained the term in diverse forms, but all connecting to the perception of beauty. Amenuke et al (1993) also discusses aesthetics as the study of science of theory of beauty and that it is related to the sensory organs and their activities. The New Encyclopedia (2003) identifies aesthetics as a branch of philosophy. In the perception of the world through art, as indicated by Ross (1982) aesthetics can be said to closely associated with the philosophy of art.

The perception of beauty differs from one culture to another. Coetzee and Roux (1998), as cited in Sabutey (2009), discusses the distinction between

African and Western Aesthetics. Coetzee and Roux (1998) made mention of a quote by Onyewuenyi (1976) that indicated that *“African aesthetic standards are different from the accepted standards of uniqueness and individuality; that African works of art, be they visual, musical, kinetic or poetic are created as an answer to a problem and serve some practical end. Their discussions also delineate the philosophical foundations of such differences”* (p.396). We therefore talk about African aesthetics based on the African culture or the culture of the work of art’s origin as the art portrays society’s values, morals, norms, history, governance system, and so on. African art as indicated by Onyewienye that African works of art are functional, community oriented and depersonalized, unlike western art that is arbitrary, representative merely of the values and emotions of the artist without reference to the cultural environment and historical reality of the people. The understanding of the theory of aesthesis and African aesthetics is relevant to my study because Foase traditional wood carvers have their own concepts of aesthetics, embodied in their carving that reflects their cultural values.

2.7 Aesthetic education

According to Adu-Agyem (1990), possibly the effective means of developing aesthetic awareness is through sharpening youngsters sensibilities and strengthening their power of self-expression. He continues by indicating that aesthetics entails relating oneself to the environment, therefore it is important for the educator to train the senses of the learner in looking at, responding to, being aware of textures and forms and so on. Aesthetics also he said, may be thought of as non factual, non objective reactions of a person to his

environment. Knowledge of beliefs and value of the environment which take precedence in aesthetics must also be developed by the learner of aesthetics.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

In this chapter, the researcher dwells on such issues as, Research Design, Library Research, Population and the sampling technique used. There is also an account on the administration of research instruments, and the researcher's primary and secondary data.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher adopted the qualitative research methodology, and more specifically dwelt on the critical discourse analysis and narrative enquiry branches of qualitative research methodology. These two methods used for the research according to the Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research (2008), deals with the making of scholarly meaning of oral communication. The use of these methodologies thrives on the researcher's understanding of the language of discourse.

The qualitative method of research according to the Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research (2008) is designed to investigate phenomenon in human elements of a given topic. The methodology, in simple terms captures individual thoughts, feelings or interpretations of meaning and process. It deals with areas of study like education, humanities, sociology, anthropology

just to mention but a few and does not entail the use of figures and calculations to prove a result.

3.3 Characteristics of Qualitative Method

- It implies an on-going analysis of the data.
- Qualitative design incorporates room for description of the role of the researcher as well as description for the researcher's own biases of ideological preference.
- Qualitative design is focused on understanding a given social setting, not necessarily on making prediction about that setting.
- Qualitative design demands that the researcher stays in the setting over time.
- The enquiries occur in natural setting (The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research, 2008)

3.4 Library Research

In order to collect very relevant data for the related literature review, the researcher visited some libraries to achieve the intended purpose. The libraries consulted include:

- KNUST main library-Kumasi
- College of Art and Social Sciences library-KNUST
- Department of General Art Studies library –KNUST

- The University of Cape Coast Library- Cape Coast
- The Ashanti library, Kumasi

3.5 Population for the Study

Sidhu (2003) explained that population is the aggregate or totality of objects or individuals regarding which inferences are to be made in a sampling study. For the purpose of this research, the population under study is traditional woodcarvers at Foase. Their number according to field studies is quite huge. Moreover, there are quite a number who are not in active practice and others geographically out of the reach of the researcher. For this reason, the researcher sampled his respondents

3.5.1 Sampling

The researcher sampled the traditional wood carvers under the following categories: youth carvers, apprentice carvers and master carvers. There were two master carvers, five youth carvers, and five apprentice carvers. The total number of traditional wood carvers was twelve. The researcher used purposive sampling technique.

3.5.2 Purposive Sampling

Morse (2001) wrote on the nature of qualitative evidence in purposive sampling as the deliberate seeking out of participants with particular characteristics, according to the needs of the developing analysis and emerging theory. Purposive sampling technique therefore involves the

researcher making a conscious effort to include groups of respondents who will be an efficient source of data among the lot and excludes those who do not suit the purpose.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments employed by the researcher were interviews and observation

3.6.1 Interview

Cannel and Kahn as cited in Cohen and Manion (1994) states that “An interview occurs when a respondent is asked questions that have been designed to solicit a particular type of information”. The research interview has been defined as two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information. In interview, the investigator gathers data directly from others in face-to-face contact instead of writing the responses; the interviewee gives the needed information in a face-to-face relationship. Interview is unique in that it involves the collection of data through direct verbal interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer. It requires the actual physical proximity of two or more persons and generally requires that the normal channels of communication be open to them.

3.6.1.1 Importance of Interview

- People are usually willing and less hesitant to talk than to write especially on delicate and confident topics.
- It is particularly appropriate when dealing with infants, young children, illiterates those with language difficulties and those with limited intelligence.
- It permits the investigator to follow up leads and take advantage of small clues in complex material where the development is likely to proceed in any direction.

3.6.1.2 Structured and Unstructured Interview

The structured interview is one in which the content and procedures are organized in advance. This means that the sequence and wordings are determined by means of a schedule and the interviewer is left little freedom to make modification. Appendix A is the structured interview guide prepared by the researcher for the study. There was however, the use of non structured interviews. It is a more casual affair. In this study it occurred as follow up questions to interesting and relevant points made by the interviewees. This type of interview complements a structured interview.

3.6.1.3 Conducting an Interview

A good interview is a dynamic interpersonal experience that is carefully planned to accomplish a particular purpose, creating a friendly permissive atmosphere. The key notes is for the researcher to direct or moderate the

conversation in the desire channel, encouraging the respondent to reveal information and motivating him to keep presenting useful facts.

3.6.1.4 Advantages of Interview

- It is especially advantageous over a questionnaire in a sense that percentage of response is likely to be much higher than in the case of questionnaire.
- In interview, the investigation can create a right type of friendly atmosphere which is very conducive for obtaining desired data.
- It is by far the only method used with some categories of persons like children and illiterate persons with limited intelligence and those with abnormal states of mind.

Interview as an instrument in this research created a friendly and lively atmosphere between the researcher and the carvers. The instrument accorded the researcher an opportunity to have a personal relationship with respondents. It also gave room for the unraveling of vital information that would not have been unraveled with any other research instrument.

3.6.2 Observation

Observation involves retrieving information, data or impressions on the field of research with the use of the researcher's senses. These senses may include looking, listening, smelling, feeling and any other in the quest to investigate a phenomenon, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2005). Observation is a

powerful research instrument because it in most cases validates data gathered in an interview. For example, in this study, the researcher observed how the forms respondents (carvers) had talked about in the interview, were carved or finished and for that matter threw more light on what the researcher had already learned.

3.6.2.1 Types of Observation

- Structured and unstructured – the observation is wide and unstructured in the early stage: it get restricted and structured as the investigation proceeds.
- Participant and Non-participant observation – In participant observation, the observer works his way into the group he is to observe so that as a regular member, he is no longer regarded as an outsider against whom the group needs to guide itself. In non-participant observation, the observer stays out of the confines of the group. The researcher in this study employed the non-participant observation and an unstructured observation approach.

3.6.2.2 Validity of the Observation

The aims and objectives of the activity must be known to the observer, otherwise it will be difficult for the observer to identify success or failure due to this reason, an observational guide was prepared to enable the researcher to observe the use of tools and materials, the carving process, finishing processes, among others.

3.7 Types of Data

There are two main types of data. These are primary and secondary data.

3.7.1 Primary Data

Primary data are data that are geared towards the answering of the research questions directly. They are those data that are collected through interviews and observations. The primary data is actually what the researcher dwelt on in the study because the better part of the information needed could not be located in books.

3.7.2 Secondary Data

This included all the related literature that was acquired from books, letters, newspapers, articles and theses. The secondary data served as primary information for the review of related literature.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher prepared an interview guide and made enquiries about a convenient date for the interview session. The interview was then done as the researcher made a digital audio recording and took notes. The researcher also took some pictures on permission.

The researcher also observed as the carvers worked and asked questions about what he saw as and when necessary.

3.9 Data Analysis Plan

The data were assembled, analyzed, the facts interpreted, conclusions drawn and recommendations made in chapters four and five.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the discourse between the researcher and Foase traditional wood carvers and analyses implications of issues to art education. Wood carving is a dominant traditional visual art form practiced among the Ashantis of Ghana. In the Ashanti region, some towns are noted for traditional woodcarving. Notable among these towns is Ahwiaa, which has enjoyed a great deal of exposure to the outside world through works of researchers. Other towns however, which produce equally excellent traditional carvings are not in the limelight. An example of such a town is Foase. On this background, the research presents a clear picture of traditional woodcarving at Foase.

On the 4th of April 2011, the researcher had interaction with the traditional carvers. Issues touched on were along the lines of the history of the art which could also be described as an occupation, tools and materials, methods, products and their philosophies and symbolism, aesthetics dynamics of their operations, their market segment, challenges faced and how they are curbed.

4.2 Overview of Foase

Foase is located about 20km from the heart of Kumasi in the Ashanti region of Ghana. (Fig.4.1). The small town boasts of electricity, portable drinking water, schools, and a bank just to mention a few amenities. It is a peaceful

town with very hospitable inhabitants. Their main occupations are farming and woodcarving. According to an older master carver, Mr. Addai, the carving occupation can be dated back to about two decades ago.

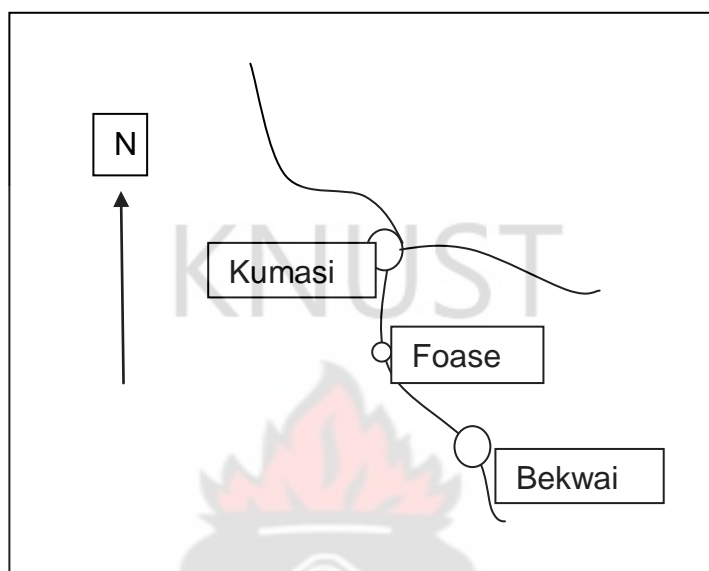


Figure 4.1. Geographical Location of Foase

Source: Google Maps

4.3 History of Foase traditional wood carving

According to the respondents, traditional woodcarving was introduced some twenty six (26) years ago by some elders. Further probing into who the elders were uncovered that one Reverend Gyan Apraku; a native of the town introduced the art which he had learnt. The Reverend, due to the fact that the town had an abundance of the needed raw material- the cedar tree locally known as "sese", believed the newly introduced art form could also be a sustainable occupation (Mr. Addai, personal communication, 04/04/2011)

The art was introduced in the town to equip the youth of the area with employable skills, to avoid them being redundant after their basic school education. The art was therefore crafted into the school extra curricular activities where the students go and learn as apprentices at the carving shed after school or at break times.

One of the products of this apprenticeship, Mr. Kennedy Addai, now a master carver, accounts that they were at the time made to sand and polish the pieces which the master carvers had made. With time however, he added, they were taught how to make wooden crowns and more complicated forms.

Today, the carvers have developed to excellence, the production of figurative sculptures. There are three chief carvers according to the carvers in the town today. Most of the youth in the town are in the wood carving industry. Most of them carve in their homes whereas there are few well established workshops where apprentices are taught by experienced carvers. They are trained to make the traditional Ashanti forms but are sometimes encouraged to incorporate creativity because of the demands of their market (Kwaku, personal communication, 04/04/2011)

The carvers owe the continuity of the art and occupation to constant technical and practical support from corporate bodies like Aid to Artisan Ghana and chief carvers. They are those responsible for the introduction of other species of trees such as the *Alstonia Boonei*, locally called "Nyame dua" and what is

locally known as “Gyenegyene” (*Cedrella Mexicana*) as equally suitable raw materials for their carving.

4.4 Source of Ideas

The carvers mostly take inspiration from master carvers, philosophical ideas and demand or orders from clients. There is also the stereotyping of existing forms that date back to several centuries ago. However, sometimes existing forms are modified slightly into new decorative forms. According to the carvers, inspiration can also be acquired from foreign sculptural forms found at international exhibitions, published in journals, magazines etc.

4.5 Figures Produced

Foase traditional carvers are noted for the production of figurative sculptures and masks that carry philosophical and symbolic meanings and symbolisms. It is interesting that a piece with immeasurable intricate features only talks about one philosophy. Writing on symbolism, Gyekye (1996), accounts that it forms a potent medium of artistic production, expression or appreciation.

4.5.1. Akuaba Dolls (Plate 4.1)

In Foase, the traditional carvers produce the Akuaba doll: a popular traditional carving figure of the Ashantis. Its philosophy according to the carvers is based on a woman named Akua who found it impossible to conceive and so consulted a traditional priest who by way of remedy commissioned a carver to make a miniature doll. She was to carry and treat the figure as though it was

her child. This is where the name came from - Akua's child, which in Twi literally means *Akuaba*. The Akuaba doll of the Ashantis is therefore a figure of fertility.



Plate 4.1 Akuaba doll

The Akuaba dolls are produced today basically for decorative purposes, export trade and tourists. Even though there have been some modifications in the original form, the figure still has the features of a static pose, a disk shaped enlarged head with simple incised decorations and a black stained finish. One modification observed was the introduction of brass on the form as shown in Plate 4.2.



Plate 4.2 Integration of brass on the Akuaba figure

4.5.2 Fanti Doll

The researcher found this to be interesting. It shows the open minded nature and the ability to adopt amongst the Foase traditional woodcarvers. This is because; this excellently produced figure originates from another Akan ethnic group. It originates from the Fantis. It is also a figure of fertility. The carvers have evolved the original features of the Fanti doll to the extent that it looked more decorative than its original magical religious use (Plate 4.3).



Plate 4.3 Fanti doll yet to be finished

4.5.3 Esi Mansa

The carvers also produce a figure called Esi Mansa. This figure, they explained is based on the concept of maternity. The figure depicts a mother breastfeeding her child as shown in Plate 4.4.



Plate 4.4 The Esi Mansa Figure

4.5.4 Masks

They also design and produce masks for decorative purposes.



Plate 4.5 One of such masks at the carving stage

4.3.5 Other works

There are other figures produced, but they originate from outside Ghana's boundaries. They confess they are ideas and forms derived from pictures taken from international exhibitions, magazines and journals. Some figures originate from Senegal and Cameroun among others. The carvers could not comment on such works because it was evident they were ignorant of the philosophical underpinning and the cultural values they carry. The researcher was shown some of these pictures taken at such exhibitions and the actual works that had been produced.



Plate 4.6 Works produced from ideas gathered from exhibitions in magazines and journals etc.

In all the pieces arranged before the researcher, there was a striking touch of creativity. On questioning how come this was the case, they narrated that their prime customers made up of foreigners and museums and exhibition

enthusiasts, are not interested in stereotyped pieces: they always want to see something new even though they insist on the carvers retaining some level of the originality of the traditional form. This, they say compels them to add and take out features to create a unique form.

4.6 The leadership of the carvers

At Foase, there are three known chief carvers. However, one is said to be working in Accra while the other two are not in active service. The carvers say chief carvers are not necessarily people who have carved for a long time, but they are deemed so by their level of excellence and professionalism.

In addition, the carvers in the town have initiated steps to come together to form a co-operative. They have appointed leaders. This co-operative is to promote unity and reinvigorate the traditional carving in the area and make their work more lucrative. They also want to position themselves in the best way to attract financial aids and grants by parties concerned like the government, banks and credit facility operators. Plans are far advanced for the building of a sizable workshop to be stuffed with modern machinery such as cutting machines, sanding machines and so on. The structure will also have an exhibition room.

4.7 Women in Foase traditional carving

In Ashanti, women, according to custom are not allowed to carve. But upon the researcher's visit there were two women at the carving shed. On asking

about this phenomenon, the carvers said, the females are allowed there at the shed. But their prime responsibility was finishing pieces. This is because women have the patience needed to finish a carved piece to excellence. Truly as the researcher observed, they sat relaxed and were sanding and applying pigment on the pieces. The females in the industry are also responsible for the marketing of the works

Their tools are so sharp that they do not entertain females because they believe they have not developed their muscular co-ordination to the extent they can avoid hazards associated with the use of the sharp chisels, cutlass and adze. They also said that even if given the chance the females themselves were scared of the tools.



Plate 4.7 A woman working at the carving shed

4.8 Peculiarities of the works of Foase traditional wood carvers.

The carvers account that the unity form and stools are common among Ahwiaa traditional carvings and Aburi carvers are noted for the production of drums. But Foase, they say, is noted for the production of masks. It is quite unfortunate that at the times of observation, there were no finished mask on exhibition. However, Plate 4.5 is an example of an unfinished mask. Intricately shaped figures and antique finishes are also peculiarities of Foase traditional carved figures. Examples of antique finishes can be seen on Plate 4.9. Plate 4.6 also shows intricately carved figures. Another peculiarity and innovation worthy of mention is the integration of brass sheets in some forms as shown in Plate 4.8.



Plate 4.8: The brass worker fixing brass on the Akuaba figure



Plate 4.9: The antique finished Akuaba figure

4.9 Apprenticeship

Apprentices are young men who have enrolled at wood carving sheds to learn the occupation. They understudy a more experienced carver.

Mr. Addai, a master carver said apprentice training is practical in nature. He said they first learn finishing and then start carving simple figures and then graduate into carving more complicated forms. He continued by saying in his shed, he charges an apprentice according to the number of months or years the individual wishes to learn. The fee is paid to cater for the provision of the learner's lunch and the time that the master spends on the learner at the expense of his busy work. He says it slows down his pace of work because he has to supervise the work of the apprentice as well as work on his orders (Mr. Addai, personal communication, 04/04/2011)

The master carver has noticed that all his apprentices came from the outskirts of the town and that it seemed the youth of the Foase Township are not interested in the occupation.

4.10 Problems Identified by the Carvers

Foase traditional wood carvers like any other human organization is faced with certain challenges. The challenges are enumerated below.

4.10.1. Financing

The basic problem faced by the carvers was identified to be financing. They narrated that the nature of their work disqualifies them from benefiting from a loan facility. This is because it will be very impossible to pay back the loans within the stipulated time. The carvers made mention of one of those loan facilities which required that they commence repayment two weeks after they had claimed the facility. They said in the same two weeks, they have to go and fell the tree, work on the timber, season the timber, carve the forms, and finish the pieces and then market the pieces before it becomes possible to start paying the loans: and this process could not be achieved in two weeks, less to start paying back the loan. They wish they had a long term loan or a soft loan from the government of Ghana to enable them improve their work.

4.10.2 Marketing

Another problem is the marketing of their products. They relate this problem to the bad nature of the road leading to the town which repels most of the foreigners from coming into contact with them and the non existence of show rooms or exhibition rooms. They say because of this, when foreigners visit other known carving communities in Kumasi with a picture of a figure better produced by Foase traditional wood carvers, the carvers there, dash down to Foase themselves and buy the works at cheaper prices and sell to the foreigners at exorbitant prices.

This, they said, hampers the progress of the occupation at Foase and makes the occupation less and less attractive for the youth. This is the cause of their migration.

They confess that they make money but not what they deserve, taking into consideration the risks involved and the work load involved in producing the figures.

4.10.3 The gradual depletion of raw materials

There is also the problem of a gradual depletion of the trees used for carving. According to the official website of the Ghana Forestry Commission, increases in population and the need to earn money from exports has put pressure on Ghana's forests which are limited in extent. Over the years as they cut the trees efforts to replace them are not well established. This problem they said has made their work more difficult because sometimes they have to go

very deep to find the trees that were once in abundance and sometimes even have to go out of the town to buy the trees.

The head way for this situation as the carvers reiterated was for them in collaboration with the forestry officials; have a rigorous tree planting campaign to salvage the situation.

4.11 Methods of Production/ Main Processes

The production of pieces basically in most cases follows the same process irrespective of the form. The processes are felling the tree, seasoning the timber, cutting them into sizable blocks, cutting out the form from the piece, making intricate features of the form, fixing integrating materials if needed, and finishing. These processes are accounted further in the following write up.

4.11.1 Materials

In Foase, the tree species for their carving are found in the carver's range. They go into the vegetation and cut them with a machine. The trees species they use are *Alstonia Boonei*, locally called "Nyame Dua", *Hollarrhena Wulfsbergil* which is locally called "sese" and *Cedrela Mexicana* which is locally known as "Gyenegyene".

"Nyame dua" is soft, light weight and not durable. They are quickly affected by shrinkage while drying. They are usually used for akua'mma and other figures at Foase. "Gyenegyene" (*Cedrela Mexicana*) also is reddish in colour and has an odour like that of onions, hence its local name. This specie is quite

soft and resistant to pest attack because of its bad odour. It also resists termite attacks. It takes finishes well. “Sese” is also fairly soft with straight grains and free from knots and bumps. It is preferred by most of the carvers. It has an excellent ability to take smooth finishes. It is also known to be durable.

4.11.2 Preparation of Wood for Carving

After the trees have been cut, the carvers season the wood. Seasoning is a controlled process of reducing the moisture content of the timber so that it is suitable for the environment and the intended use. The process is done to

- Reduce the case of shrinkage
- Reduce the tendency for warping or splitting.
- Make the timber lighter and stronger
- Reduce wood parasite and fungi attacks because the sap which is lost in seasoning is the food for these organisms.

Additionally, timber with high moisture content takes finishes like paint and varnish poorly. In Foase, the carvers season the wood naturally. By this, they pack the timber to allow evaporation of the moisture content. They sometimes also use it fresh, when they are pressed with time.

4.11.3 Cutting out the form of the pieces from the timber

The tool used for this process is the cutlass. The carvers have a mental picture of what they are about to produce. They have developed the art so well that

they do not need to make sketches on paper or on the material-the timber. As they cut to the researcher's amazement, a form emerged.

Care however, they said has to be taken in the striking of the cutlass so as to avoid accidents. It must be mentioned that this process takes constant practice for one to be perfect. Plate 4.11 further explains the process as a master carver works on blocks of timber.





4.11 A master carver cutting out a form from a block of timber

4.11.4 Perfecting the form and making intricate cuts on the form

After the cutlass has been used to carve out the skeletal form from the block of timber, the carvers now fall on the use of the adze. The adze is used to further enhance the achievement of all details of the form. It is used to bring out the rounded areas of the pieces. The chisel is also used to enhance the emergence of the most intricate cuts of the piece. The chisel also comes in handy when there has to be a hole running through one side of a figure to the other.

The carvers also have a sharp short knife with a long wooden handle. They use this tool to smoothen the cuts of the cutlass, adze and chisels. It represents the last carving process before the use of the sandpaper. This is the first step towards finishing. Plates 4.12- 4.15 are tools used in this process



Plate 4.12 adzes



Plate 4.13 Carving knives



Plate 4.14 sharpening stone



Plate 4.15 Chisels and gouges



Plate 4.16 A wooden mallet

The tools have their names in vernacular. They are

1. Akuma for the adze or axe.
2. Sekan'mma which is a set of small strong knives.
3. Kekabog which is the sharpening stone
4. Fefa-sekan it is used for smoothening. Its blade is curved backward a little.
5. Tutu tokuro which are gouges used to bore holes in the wood.
6. Abosobaa is the mallet used in sticking the heads of chisels

The plates 4.17 and 4.18 show the use of the adze and the short knife





Plate 4.17 The adze is used right after the form has been cut out of the block of timber with a cutlass



Plate 4.18 The carver then uses a short knife with a long wooden handle to round angular parts and smoothen cuts

4.11.5 Finishing

After the form has been achieved perfectly, the work is given to the female counterparts to apply finishes. They use sandpapers of different grades from coarse to fine. The process takes quite some time and energy.

After sanding to the desired finish there is the application of pigment. The carvers said, recently, they use 'store paints'. That is to say emulsion paint. The main colours they use for their works are red and black and sometimes white. They sometimes use black shoe polish as well to achieve black stain.

Originally, the carvers fell on earth colours. They use white kaolin for white, sooth for black and red mud for a reddish effect. To make the earthly colours fix well on the works, they use PVA glue commonly called carpenter's glue or white glue. After it has been applied on the piece, it is allowed to dry, after which emery paper is rubbed on the painted piece to a state of excellent smoothness.

However there is another kind of finish noted among the Foase traditional wood carvers and this is antique finish. Antique finishing is a method of finishing pieces to create an impression of a dirty, damaged and aged surface. With this kind of finish, the carvers narrate they originally employed the use of cola nut. This, they account involves the carver chewing cola nut and spitting it all over the work. A master carver admits that, not all carvers of today can use the method. Interestingly he said if the opportunity is given to the young carvers to use this kind of finish they will end up smearing the entire piece with mere saliva. He said it demands a high knowledge of the act and a long time of experience. They sometimes also sprinkle cobwebs on the

work, or apply sooth on the surface depending on what impression the carver wishes to make. In fact, they look around the environment for anything that will enhance the effect they want.

Plate 4.19 and 4.20 are some pictures of tools and materials needed for finishing.



Plate 4.19 brush



Plate 4.20 sandpapers

The researcher observed an apprentice finishing an Akuaba doll as shown in Plate 4.21.





Plate 4.21 A cloth being used to burnish a piece

4.12 Aesthetic Sensibility among Carvers

The older carvers have a more heightened aesthetic sensibility, in that they talked intelligently about some of the works that they have produced. For example they were able to explain the aphorisms, philosophies, symbolisms, history and the original use of the Akuaba figure and other objects. However, apprentice and younger carvers had little or no understanding of the philosophical, cultural values and so on underpinnings most of the carved pieces. They had evidently not been taught and as a result only smiled and confessed they came to meet their elders and fathers carving those objects but they did not tell them what they meant.

4.13 Criticism and Judgment among the Carvers

In Foase, master carvers are critics. They pass judgment on figures produced based on the manner of presentation of features on the figures and finishing and its relevance to the culture of the area and Asante. They also look out for the judicious use of material and the technique employed by the carver. They also criticize pieces based on the function of the carved pieces.

4.14 Implications for visual art education

Traditional woodcarving at Foase is a great source of aesthetic education among others which can enhance teaching and learning of wood carving in schools and colleges.

Education that is related to culture plays the roles of conservation and a creative function in education: conservation in that, education will ensure techniques, philosophies, values, accumulated knowledge and technologies and all other aspects of the art is passed on from one generation to another. Art, a component of culture, according to Read (1958), should be the basis of education. Art education therefore creates a platform for innovation and new trends in traditional art forms because students will have studied and acquired creative and artistic knowledge and science and technology for the arts advancement. Additionally, art embodies a larger scope of subjects on the curriculum, including history, economics, and business to mention but a few. In a nutshell, art according to Adu-Agyem (1990) can be a medium through which all other subjects can be learnt.

Traditional wood carving according to Adu-Agyem (1990) contains records of achievements of the past, since the values and beliefs of the people of Ghana are uniquely manifested in the art forms they produce. It is therefore a fact that an appreciation and critical examination according to Adu-Agyem (1990) could lead to a greater understanding of the culture of the past and present and ways of maintaining the existing culture.

The prime implication of traditional wood carving on art education is affording students the opportunity to personally experience the expression of cultural ideas and a deep appreciation of his or her cultural heritage.

In the following text, the researcher will discuss Foase traditional Woodcarving in the context of its relevance to art education based on the major findings of the study.

4.14.1 Field Studies

First of all, woodcarving should be encouraged in art education and emphasis put on concepts that relate to our culture as Ghanaians. Emphasis should be placed on the philosophies that identify us as Ghanaians in the carved pieces our students produce. To have imparted effectively philosophies associated with traditional carving, there has to be more emphasized need for the organization of field trips to such places as Foase.

This additionally, gives learners the opportunity to observe at first hand, techniques, values, tools materials and the technology involved in traditional wood carving. This becomes an experiential and grounded concrete practice setting of learning (Blume et al, 2008).

Students must not only be organized for such field studies that will give them art experience but also must be encouraged to observe carefully and apply critical thinking. By this according to Blume et al (2008) they are developing the intellectual and reasoning skill needed for the art of wood carving.

There is the need for students in the production of wood carving to be in touch with practitioners in the field in order to make our Ghanaian art education relevant or more culturally based. This is easily achieved when students are exposed to Ghanaian philosophies and aesthetics of woodcarving and its relevance to national development which forms the core reason for education.

The good thing is, Foase traditional woodcarvers are abreast with the philosophical underpinnings, aesthetics, grounded and experienced in the art

and also find joy talking about their art. They therefore qualify to be the practical libraries for woodcarving students in schools and colleges.

4.14.2 The Planting of Trees

In the course of the research, it became evident that woodcarving thrives on the availability of raw materials. The prime raw material is soft wood as mentioned earlier. For this reason, schools that offer courses in woodcarving should make conscious efforts to inculcate in their students the culture of planting their material- soft wood species. There should be a rigorous planting campaign instituted by such schools who offer the course.

The schools should liaise with the forestry commission and other relevant bodies to make the soft wood specie planting campaign achievable.

4.14.3 Implications on the process of carving in schools

Procedures used at Foase traditional wood carving forms an excellent blueprint of what students need to know to develop the skill, talent and profession of wood carving. The traditional carvers possess excellence in creativity.

Teachers however, are encouraged to spend more time in the workshop supervising practical assignments. Steps should be taken by schools that offer woodcarving, but do not have a well furnished workshop to provide such facility. The researcher makes this submission because the practical learning sessions at the workshop is the only means by which practical skill of the

learners are developed. So does the adage go, “practice makes a man perfect”. It will also be a step in the right direction to engage the service of such traditional carvers in the classroom situation with students in order to impart practical knowledge to students.

Finally, issues of Foase traditional woodcarving will help students:

1. Acquire ideas about the wood carvers and their works
2. Know the cultural heritage of Foase
3. Identify various types of carved figures and objects like stools, masks, etc and their uses
4. Gain knowledge about tools and materials involved in the production of carved objects.
5. Understand the philosophical underpinnings of the carved objects and the method of carving.
6. Learn to produce similarly carved products and other pieces from the bank of individual ideas of life.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

This chapter provides a summary of the entire research work including findings which have been carried out. It is followed by conclusion and recommendations.

5.2 Summary

The main objectives of the research were:

- To find out and document Foase traditional wood carvings as told by the carvers themselves.
- To identify and document the skills, techniques and other technologies useful for art education.
- To find possible ways of integrating skills, techniques and other technologies useful that will enhance art education.

The population of the study was limited to 15 carvers under various ranks or hierarchy. To achieve an accurate presentation of the population, the purposive sampling method was adopted and used. The research methodologies employed by the researcher were the narrative enquiry, and critical discourse analysis. The researcher also used observation and interview as his research instruments.

5.3 Principal Findings

The major findings of the study are listed below:

- i. It is clear that the nature of the work of Foase traditional wood carvers has loads of educative components especially for visual art education in Ghana. Some of the educative components are techniques used in carving, knowledge of the culture of Asante and Foase among others.
- ii. The carving community is less known by a large session of visual art students and lovers of the art, because literature on the community is scanty and not at the disposal of the visual art students.
- iii. The forms produces express the rich cultural philosophies, heritage and aesthetics of Ashanti.
- iv. The art was introduced in Foase about twenty six years ago by an elder named as Reverend Apraku.
- v. The carvers exhibit excellence in creativity in their carving techniques, intricate cuts and finishing.

5.4 Conclusions

The works produced by Foase traditional wood carvers are rooted in philosophies which originate from norms, cultural values and aphorisms. The quality of works of the carvers is by no means inferior to the works of other carvers from renowned towns like Ahwiaa. Their operations are of utmost relevance to art education.

The study was a success owing to the willingness of the traditional carvers to give the researcher valuable data for the study. The researcher believes the

study tells the story of the Foase traditional wood carvers. In fact, their last words were a request to the researcher. They wanted their story to be told by his scholarly documentation. It is the hope of the researcher that this documentation will be studied by all stakeholders in the promotion of the art, and also become a reference point for the transmission of culture through carving.

5.5 Recommendations

Having undertaken a thorough study on Foase traditional wood carving, it is deemed necessary to present some useful recommendation, which will help in improving the art among the traditional carvers while enhancing and encouraging its teaching and learning in schools and colleges within the country. These suggestions are of relevance to the government, curriculum planners in the ministry of education, the tourism sector and all other parties responsible for the preservation of the Ghanaian cultural heritage.

1. Art educators should fuse in the concepts of creativity, the crave for excellence and constant practice among other admirable traits unraveled in the study in teaching wood carving in schools and colleges. The concepts found on Foase traditional wood carvings do not only reflect the qualities of Foase traditional wood carvers but also reflect cultural philosophies and aestheticism, the form of history, aphorisms, morality, ethics, proverbs and events among others, for intellectual and social development of the learner. Their works therefore can be used as instructional materials to enhance learning.

2. Art educators should embark on research into traditional wood carving in small towns and villages. This, the research believes will create a pool of knowledge relating to cultural diversity with respect to woodcarving in the country.
3. Efforts should be made by corporate bodies and the government of Ghana to provide financial aid to enable the carvers to furnish workshops with state of the art machines needed for the furtherance of their work. It appeared evidently that the traditional carvers lacked modern technology needed to make their work more time and energy efficient. All they use now are cutlasses, adzes, chisels, knives and sandpapers and other simple implements. They produce excellent pieces, nevertheless. However, the researcher believes the carvers can break away from the ancient way of manufacturing and embrace modern technology that creates the avenue for production on a larger scale. This situation could be the reason for the discouragement among the youth especially those who have acquired visual art skills in the second and tertiary levels from developing careers in the profession.
4. Art educators should encourage their students to develop ideas for their art projects from Ghanaian cultural philosophies to ensure the development of a sense of belonging and a pride in associating with the uniqueness of Ghanaian cultural philosophies.

5. Finally, the Ghana Tourist Board and all other agencies responsible for tourism in the country should put Foase on the tourist map and advertise the town duly because the researcher believes this is a town that can sell Ghana's rich culture effectively, taking into consideration the works that are produced and the carvers' ability to talk intelligently about what they produce.



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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

1. What are the traditional art forms known to the area
2. What is the history of the traditional carving in Foase
3. What are the criteria for selecting a master carvers in the area
4. How is the process of apprenticeship like among Foase traditional wood carvers
5. What are the peculiarities of Foase wood carvings
6. What are sources the innovations that have taken place over time
7. The market segment of the Foase traditional wood carvings
8. The future projections of Foase traditional wood carving
9. What are the needs and challenges faced by the carvers