

**THE *HOMOWO* FESTIVAL IN ACCRA: ITS ARTISTIC AND OTHER
CULTURAL ASPECTS**

KNUST
BY

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B.A ART (HONS)

A dissertation submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Kwame Nkrumah
University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

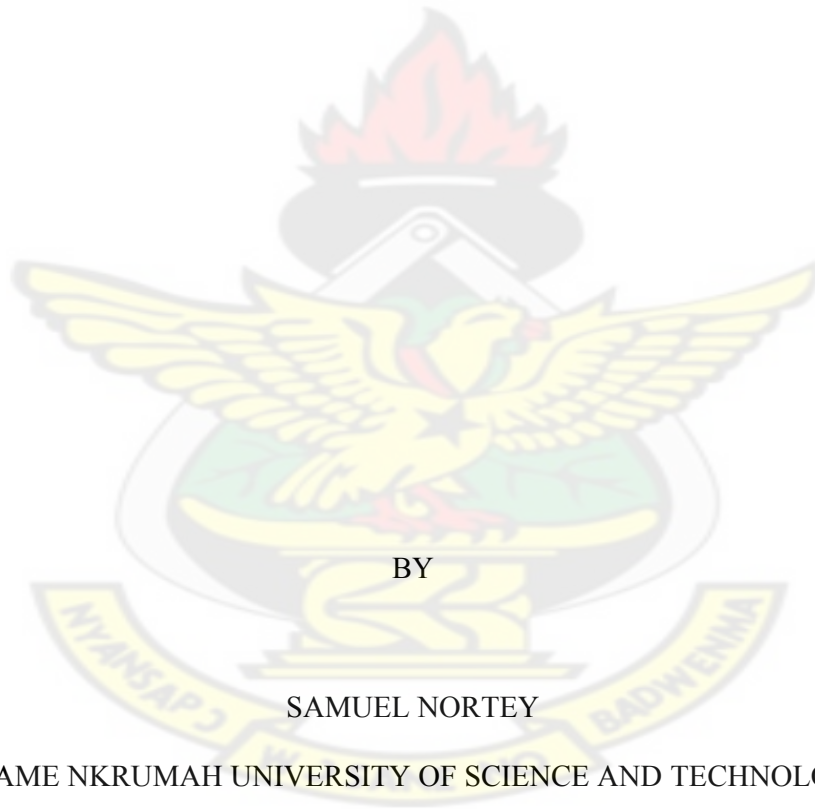
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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FEBRUARY, 2009

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the award of Doctor of Philosophy in African Art and Culture and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains neither material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving wife Mrs. Gloria Nortey, my son Jason Nii Kofi Noi Nortey and my entire family.

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To God be the glory. Great things He has done. I am so grateful to the Almighty God for how far He has brought me. All praise and thanks to God for keeping me in His Grace, guiding me when confounded and liberating me from all poor health.

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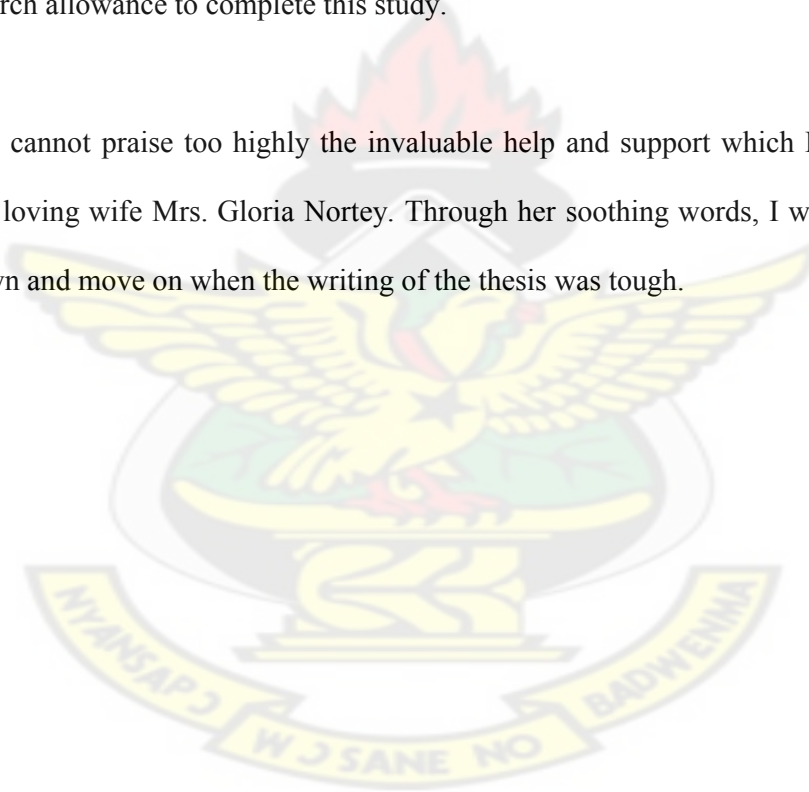


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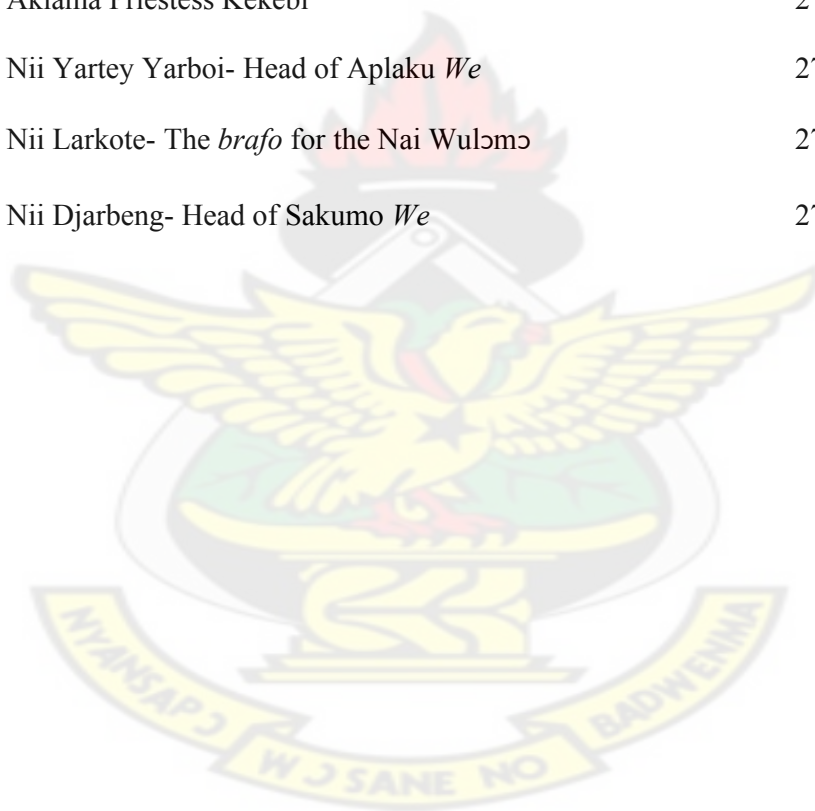
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ABSTRACT

The prime motivation of this research stems from the fact that the artistic and other cultural aspects of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival are almost completely overlooked when it comes to the analysis and appreciation of the festival. This situation therefore creates a fertile ground for the study of the celebration and the artistic and other cultural aspects of the festival to be brought to light. Furthermore, the festival is annually celebrated in pomp and pageantry as it embodies various forms of art, it has shown a remarkable capacity for survival in spite of socio-cultural influences. During its celebration the arts of the people are displayed, however, the youth or most people who participate, observe and read about the festival may not know the philosophies of the various rites and also the significance of the arts and other cultural values involved in the celebration of the festival.

Since the origin of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is actually based on oral tradition, it paves way for critical interviews and in-depth observation of the celebration. This resulted in the use of the descriptive methods of research for the thesis. Data was collected through observation and from respondents through the distribution of questionnaire. Eighty respondents were interviewed.

The celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival involves the entire Ga ethnic group in Accra and involves a great deal of arts. The arts are actively and inseparably interwoven in the festival. Environmental Arts, Performing Arts, Body Arts and Verbal Arts play a predominant role in the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. In this light, the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival can be regarded as a means of unifying the arts of

the Ga people, because it is the occasion whereby the citizens have the opportunity to display their art in all forms and shades.

Although the celebration of the festival is of religious significance, there are other cultural components that are established during and after the celebration. There are the social aspects of the celebration, the political aspects, the economic aspects and finally the festival serving as a medicine to the celebrants.

The researcher recommends that future researchers of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival should direct their research to the artistic and other cultural aspects of the festival. Nevertheless, with regards to the celebration and the philosophies behind the celebrations, there are some other aspects of information to be unearthed.

In conclusion, the celebration is an enjoyable one and involves a great deal of art which is enveloped with other cultural aspects of the festival. That is, though the festival is a conglomeration of numerous aspects of the culture of the Ga people, it is preponderantly artistic.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

This thesis mainly gives an account of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival of the Ga Mashie in Accra and critically discusses the artistic and other cultural aspects of the celebration. It critically assesses the significance and the importance of the arts and the other cultural aspects during the celebration of this august festival. In this regard, the thesis gives an account of the celebration, investigates the importance of the festival and outlines its artistic and other cultural aspects.

The celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival by the Ga involves a great deal of art and other cultural aspects. These artistic aspects are a whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, religious, psychological and emotional features that characterize the entire traditional area during the celebrations. The celebration of the festival includes all the modes of life, value systems and beliefs and it is the artistic and other cultural aspects that serve as a vehicle for this festival to achieve its focal objective. This assertion directly finds expression in the following statement made by Cole and Ross (1977)

Festivals are perhaps the country's most significant richest art forms. These ritually based, multimedia, socio-political events have sometimes been called a unified work of art.

The above assertion portrays that the celebration of the festival embodies a lot of artistic creations and other cultural aspects. These artistic creations and other cultural aspects

help the celebrants and observers to understand the significance of the celebration of the festival.

The *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival like any other festival possesses an educational, social and religious character and its celebration serves the function of transmitting traditional knowledge within the ethnic group. The *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is a religious one and it binds the Ga traditional areas into a unit as it brings scattered families and authorities together.

According to Opoku (1972:52) the word *Hɔmɔwɔ* actually means making fun of hunger. The Ga oral traditional history describes a time when the rain stopped and fishing in the sea was not fetching much yield. A deadly famine spread through southern Accra plains, the home of the Ga and most people lost their lives. After persistent petitions to their Maker, food became plentiful, the people were so happy that they celebrated it with a festival that hoots at hunger.

The second version of the festival, according to Opoku, *Hɔmɔwɔ* was derived from the Jewish Passover. This second version is based on the use of unleavened cornmeal for the ritual food just as the Jews do during the Passover celebration, application of red clay to the doorposts as the Jews did with the blood of sheep in Egypt, and the hurried and communal manner in which the food is eaten by both the Ga and the Jews on their festive occasions.

In this chapter, we shall discuss the statement of purpose, statement of the problem, outline the objectives and state the reasons for writing the thesis. The chapter furthermore shows the hypothesis, the importance of the study, statement of assumption, delimitation, limitations, research methodology, facilities available, organization of the thesis and ethnographic account of the Ga which includes their religion. The chapter shall also show abbreviations and their meanings in the thesis and also definition of terms because the understanding of the terms is subservient to the comprehension of the thesis.

Statement of Purpose

This thesis is to inform and educate people on the importance of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival in Accra and to enable them realize the artistic and other cultural values which carry the festival to achieve its main objective. Furthermore, this thesis shall confirm and also demystify certain conceptions and bring out the philosophies and ideas behind the various rites that characterize the celebration of the festival.

Statement of the Problem

Festivals embody various forms of art and other cultural aspects and the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival, which is celebrated by the Ga people of Accra, is no exception. The researcher has come to realise the fact that the artistic and other cultural aspects of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival are almost completely overlooked when it comes to the analysis and appreciation of the festival. These situations therefore create a fertile ground for the

study of the celebration and the artistic and other cultural aspects of the festival to be brought to light.

Furthermore, in Accra the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is annually celebrated with pomp and pageantry as it embodies various forms of art, it has shown a remarkable capacity for survival in spite of socio-cultural influences. During its celebration, the arts of the people are displayed, however, the youth or most people who participate, observe and read about the festival may not know the significance of the arts and other cultural values involved in the celebration of the festival.

Therefore this thesis is set to investigate the importance of the celebration, critically analyse the arts involved in the celebration, the role of the arts and their significance in the celebration. Furthermore, this thesis will bring to light how the celebration of the festival establishes other cultural values such as the political, social, medicinal, economic and religious aspects of the Ga people.

Objectives of the Study

1. To give an account of the celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ* and study the people's beliefs of the festival
2. To study the artistic and other cultural aspects such as the political, social, medicinal, economic and religious values of the celebration of the festival.
3. To find out how some of the arts can be developed to enhance the future celebration of the festival, taking into consideration its current trend.

Reasons for Writing

The researcher's reasons for writing stem from the fact that the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival embodies a great deal of art and other cultural aspects which are not well acknowledged, and which writers on the festival seem to ignore, although these aspects of the festivals are what make the celebration most significant in scholarly circles.

Hypothesis

The *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival embodies a great deal of some aspects of art which are important and significant to its celebration and the celebration of the festival is associated with a number of other cultural aspects.

Importance of the Study

This thesis is a contribution to the documentation of artistic and cultural heritage of festivals in Ghana. The thesis will furthermore enhance the sense of cultural awareness and promote cultural growth of Ghanaians. The study will be of help to Sociologists, Art Historians, Anthropologists, Educationists, Artists and other Scholars, the Ghana Tourist Board, Cultural Institutions and the general public as they read the thesis to gain in-depth knowledge about the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. Finally, the results of this thesis will fuel further research into the artistic and other cultural aspects of various festivals celebrated in Ghana and Africa as a whole.

Statement of Assumption

It is assumed that this thesis will show an interesting connection of the Ga in Accra with their annual *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival in which the arts and other cultural aspects manifest themselves in the celebration. It is also assumed that the artistic creations and other cultural aspects carry the celebration to achieve its main objective, which is the unification of the ethnic group.

Delimitation (Scope of the study)

This is limited to the seven quarters of Ga Mashie people in Accra who have celebrated the *Hɔmɔwɔ* from the fourteenth-century to the present. The seven quarters of Ga Mashie are Gbese, Sempe, Ngleshie, Otublohum, Asere, Abola and Akanmaiadzen. However, brief mentioning has been made in comparison to other ethnic groups that celebrate similar festivals.

Limitations

The data gathered from the field were personal views of the researcher's informants. Most of the respondents were more willing to talk than to answer the questionnaire probably, because most of them are illiterates. There were also difficulties for some of the respondents and informants to back their information with sufficient facts. The data gathered were mostly of oral traditions. Another problem encountered was the contradicting information from informants. For this reason, two or three informants had to be interviewed in order to have the right information.

Research Methodology

The researcher did field study during the celebration of the festival with the aid of digital camera, still camera, sketches, questionnaire etc. The field research served as the researcher's source of primary data whilst the information from literature served as the secondary data.

Furthermore questionnaire were distributed to respondents and interviews conducted with the appropriate people connected with rites of the festival, for example, the chiefs, the priests and priestesses of Ga Mashie. Moreover, the researcher adopted the historical, descriptive, narrative and interpretive methods in processing his data. The review of pertinent literature from books, journal articles, brochures, conference papers which served as a secondary source of data to the researcher.

Facilities Available

There were facilities available to the researcher. Among them were chiefs' palaces and shrines of the deities and divinities of the Ga traditional area. The various *Wulɔmei* (priests) and *Wɔyei* (priestesses) palaces, libraries such as the Balme Library of the University of Ghana, Legon, the Institute of African Studies Library, Legon, the George Padmore Library, Accra, the Centre for National Culture Library, Accra, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Main Library, Kumasi, the College of Art Library, Kumasi, the search engines of Internet Cafés in Accra and Kumasi and also the *Hɔmɔwɔ* ceremonial grounds, were the places from which the researcher compiled the data for writing this thesis.

Definition of Terms

The following words arranged on the left column have been defined because the understanding of them is much subservient to the comprehension of this thesis.

Aesthetics	-	The formal study of art, especially with the relation to beauty
Ancestor	-	The forerunners of a person or area thought to be directly descended.
Art	-	Anything understood through its function, usefulness and its role in the daily life of the people made by man.
Art form	-	An expression of an artistic creativity.
Artefact	-	A man-made object, example an art work.
Body Arts	-	Art works such as beads and jewelleries seen on the body.
Culture	-	The way of life of a people. For example their way of dressing, philosophies, language, arts, morality etc.
Creativity	-	The ability to design and develop new and original ideas especially in an artistic way.
Festival	-	A day in which feasting and merry- making of a particular ethnic group occur.
Indigenous	-	Concepts and ideas that pertain to an ethnic group, a region or country before the advent of foreign influences.
Invocation	-	A prayer calling on the Almighty God, the deities and Ancestors for a purpose.
Lifestyle	-	A person's way of life or the things a group of people normally do.

Paraphernalia	-	They are objects such as spokesmen's staffs, crowns, drums, ornaments, costumes etc. associated with royal ceremonies.
Performing Arts-		Art forms perceived by our senses of hearing, and seeing. Music, dance and drama are forms of performing art.
Purification	-	Washing and cleansing to make pure.
Sacrifice	-	Offerings involving blood made to God, deities and ancestors.
Scarification	-	They are small cuts made by using sharp instruments on an area of the skin as decorative or identification purposes.
Stratified Random Sampling	-	Small proportion of a population randomly selected or chosen for interviews and analysis to ascertain what the rest is or should be like.
Stratification	-	The distribution of population of the same characteristics.
Symbol	-	Anything that represents another thing usually in an animal form. It usually represents a group, an idea or social status.
Symbolism	-	The meanings enshrined in artefacts.
Veneration	-	The act of paying homage to the lesser gods and ancestors.
Verbal Arts	-	Spoken arts such as poetry, lyrics, idioms, proverbs, etc.
Visual Arts	-	These are art works that can be physically seen or perceived by touching.

Abbreviations

Co.	-	Company
Etc.	-	<i>et cetera</i>
FM	-	Frequency modulation

J. H. S -	Junior High School
KNUST	- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
Ltd. -	Limited liability
n.d -	No date of publication
n.p -	No place of publication
n.pag. -	No page number
no. -	Number
S.H.S -	Senior High School
U.E.W -	University of Education, Winneba
U.C.C -	University of Cape Coast
UG -	University of Ghana, Legon
Vol. -	Volume

Organization of the thesis

This research has a philosophy which runs through the thesis. The philosophy is that the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is art and that the arts can be the glue to the unification of the ethnic group and Ghana as a whole. The thesis is designed in six chapters. The first chapter presents the central idea of the thesis to the reader and it has been designed to inform the reader about the content of the book and to arouse the interest of the reader. Chapter One furthermore gives the background knowledge of the study and the scope of the study.

Chapter Two of this thesis discusses the review of related literature. It reviews what have been written about the topic and the vacuum to be filled. This is very important so as not to ignorantly reproduce someone's work or reinvent the wheel.

Chapter Three discusses how the entire research was carried out and the parameters for the sampling methods. Chapter Four deals with fieldwork, observation and critical analysis of the celebration of the festival. In this vein, it gives a vivid account of the various forms of arts that play various roles in the celebration of the festival. Chapter five is devoted to the artistic appraisal and other cultural aspects of the festival and the Ga cultural heritage. Meaning, it gives an artistic appraisal of the festival and brings out the importance of Body Arts, Performing Arts, Environmental Arts and Verbal Arts in the festival which are enveloped with other cultural aspects namely the political, social, economic, religious, medicinal and the philosophical views behind the celebration of the festival. It must be noted that all these chapters have their summary of discussions at the end of each chapter.

Chapter Six does a thorough discussion of the research and brings out its new findings. It furthermore examines how to develop the arts to enhance its future celebration. The chapter in addition discusses and validates the hypothesis of the study and makes beneficial recommendations. There are also appendixes and bibliography and photographs of some custodians of the various rites although not part of the chapter.

Ethnographic account

Gas occupy part of the south-eastern corner of Ghana, known as the Accra Plains excluding the Volta Delta. The land lies between the Akwapim- Togo range in the north rising over 304 metres, sloping gradually in the south –western direction to its lowest elevation of 91metres at the Guinea coast.

Accra, the home of the Ga is important for its traditional position, agricultural wealth and has traditional cultural activities, the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival celebrated annually draws people from all walks of life in the country and abroad. Corn is the staple crop of the people and grown in the traditional area. Gas are predominantly farmers and fishermen and this is due to their vast land they have in the nearby villages and their geographical location near the sea.

According to Henderson-Quartey (2001: 22), the early Ga had to contend with the geographical surroundings to produce food for family consumption. Farming, hunting and fishing on which the success of their settlements depended would be greatly controlled by the environment and partly by their skill and contemporary technology. In agriculture, stone tools gave way to iron hoes, thus larger and permanent farmsteads grew up. In the same manner, the social and political structures including religion were shaped by the manner in which the Ga responded to the demands made on their lives by the natural surroundings. The economic occupations and the practices which developed in response to environmental forces tended to become the basis for most aspects of the culture.

This affirmation by Henderson-Quartey is substantiated by Firth (1964: 40-41), who enumerated four ways of environmental role in determining human culture which supports the basis of analysis above. According to Firth, in the first place,

The environment in general obviously sets broad limits to the possibilities of human life...In the second place, any specific environment forces to some degree a material way of living upon the people subjected to it. Thirdly, the environment, while setting the broad limits to human achievement, provides materials for the satisfaction of needs and want. Fourthly, the environment leads to mere subtle adaptations in cultural life.

The vegetation is mostly orchard and tall grassland. The monotony of the plains is broken by the Shai Hills in the north-east, and by the Legon, Okaikwei and Weija hills in the south-east. The striking feature of the landscape is the formation of lagoons on the stretch of the sea coast. The rivers which drain the land in the wet season cause the mouths of the valleys to be blocked along the sea by sand bars to form numerous lagoons. Thus from the east to the west we find the following lagoons:

- a. The Ga lagoon after Kpong
- b. The *Sakumo onukpa* lagoon of Tema
- c. The *Sango* lagoon after Nungua
- d. The Kpeshi lagoon of La
- e. The *Klɔte* lagoon of Osu
- f. The *Kɔɔle* lagoon of Accra
- g. The *Sakumo fio* lagoon towards Boteano

The Accra plains tend to be arid for many months in the year. The rainfall may turn into floods and destroy crops or may be scanty and retard the growth of farm plants. Thus within the climatic conditions, the people in this region came to recognize six seasons of the year suitable for economic activity. The *Ga* divide the seasons as follows:

- a. *Maawe* Cold season from early August to the first half of September.
- b. *Gbo* Rainy season from the last half of September to December
- c. *Aharabata* Harmattan cold season. (Mid December- February)
- d. *Otso kilikili*,
Ofleo, Ofeo kwe Hot season with dry winds and minor rains. (Late February to April).
- e. *Agbeona, Gbeona* Rainy season from May to July. The peak rainfall occurs in June.
- f. *Alemele* Cold and dry season with little sunshine. (Starts late July to August).

As stated already, the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is celebrated in Accra by the mentioned Ga quarters and for the purpose of this thesis, emphasis has been placed on the celebration by the people of Ga Mashie. Since the origins of the Ga community in Accra antedate historical records, precise knowledge of the initial settlement may never be known. Nevertheless, folk tales and oral traditions told by people of the olden days about the origin of the Ga require critical evaluation. For instance, it is the view of many people that the Ga came from the sea and others say they came from Ille Ife in Nigeria. With the issue regarding this, the Nai Wulɔmɔ Nuumo Tete II who is the highest Priest of the Ga Traditional area expressed great concern. He said that, foreign researchers coming up

against the Ga expression “*Wodze nshɔmli*”, (we came from the sea) made literal translation of it. This, the Nai Wulɔmɔ maintained, should not have been so. The expression connotes a deeper meaning than what is being put across. He furthermore expressed that the Ga are foreigners from a land beyond the sea. This is probably similar in meaning to the English word overseas.

Wherever the Ga might have come from, they came and settled in the southern parts of what is now known as the country Ghana. The Ga were led by Ayikushie, the first Ga chief. He acquired his name to ensure equitable oral tradition cutting across the history of the Ga. His first name was Ayi and the other, Kushi, having reference to the village in Egypt where the Israelites were in bondage. This also brings to mind “*Ahimegbe*” which is pronounced “*Ayigbe*” in short. Ayi was a Ga who stole the Ga stool to Togo and stayed and married there.

The Ga are said to have arrived in batches or groupings to their present settlements. The first batch was the people of Nungua who landed early in the morning. This led to the adoption of the Nungua emblem which is the *Adowa* (antelope), which explains how fast their forefathers were. Other groups too are said to have landed that same day somewhere around the evening. These people are the Ga Mashie groups; the main study area of this thesis. They were a bit more relaxed than the people of Nungua. Therefore, as a result, the elephant (*shuɔ*) was chosen as the emblem for the Ga Mashie group. The demarcation between the people of Nungua and the Ga Mashie group is the street just after the Victoriaborg Printing Press of the Ghana Publishing Corporation in Accra. Ga

Mashie encompasses seven quarters namely Asere, Abola, Sempe, Otublohum, Akanmaidzen, Ngleshie and Gbese. Plates 1 and 2 show the emblem of two powerful priestly family of the Ga Mashie people, the Nai and Sakumo *We*.



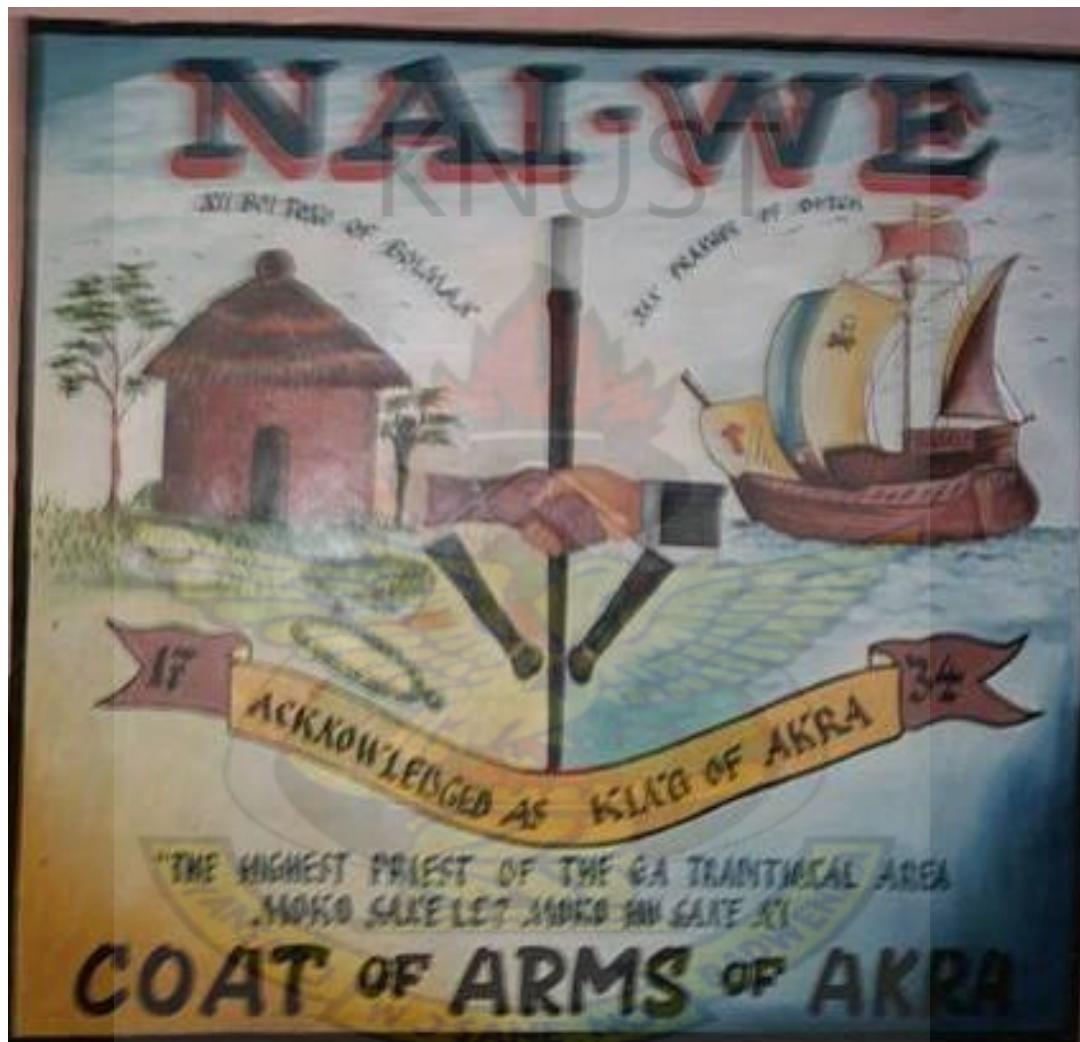


Plate 1: Emblem of the Nai Wulomo's palace

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 2: Emblem of the Sakumo *We*

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

The Religion of the People

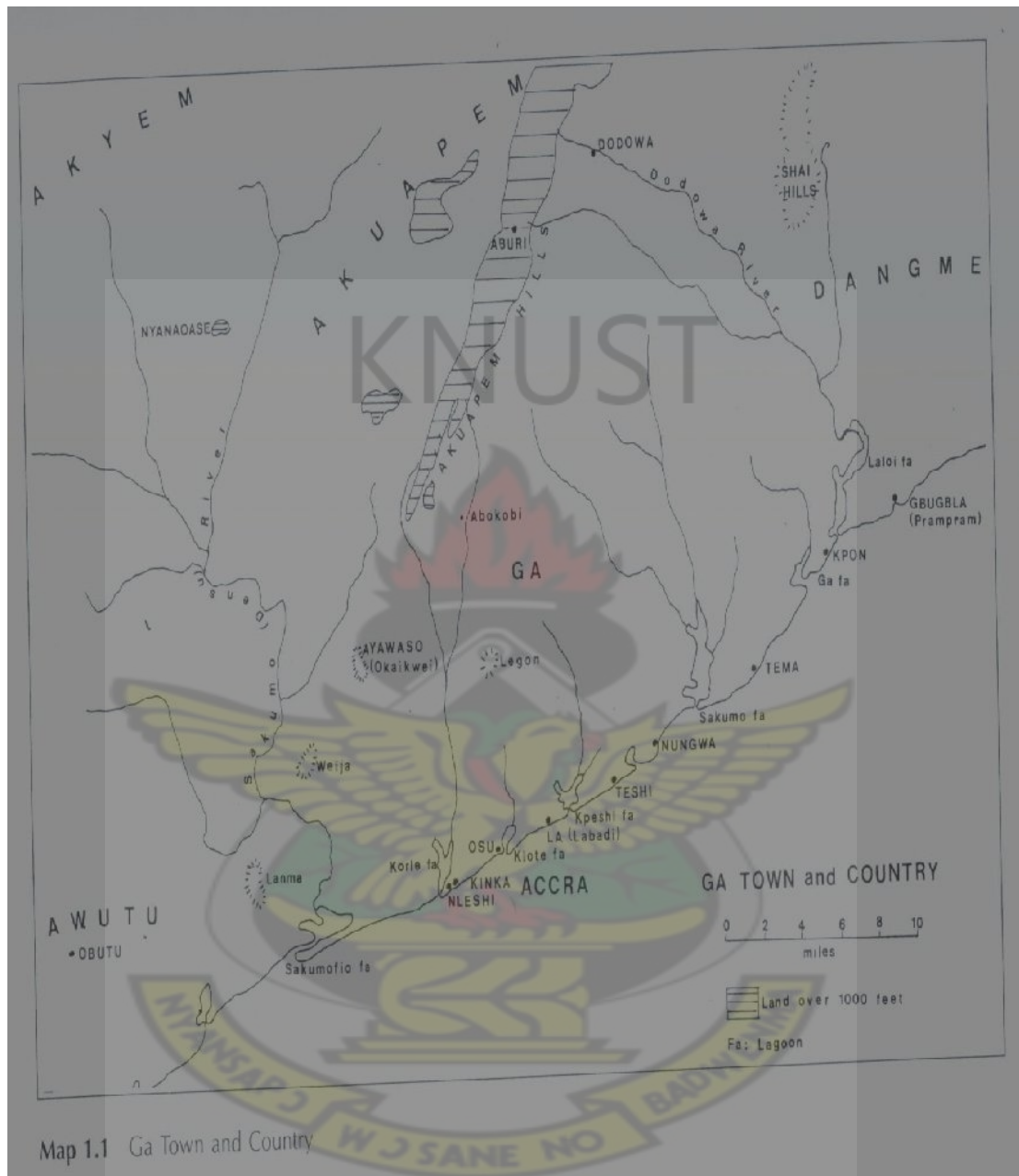
Religion has been the form of belief which has created a pivot around which the Ga revolve. Before the advent of the Europeans and the introduction of Christianity and other foreign forms of religion into the country, the Ga were practising their traditional form of religion through which the people believably contacted and still contact or worship their creator, in order to better their life, because in their traditional belief, the welfare of mankind depends on worshipping and obeying or revering God and other benevolent spirits. This therefore, has generated a strong belief within the people that, “Man must seek his spiritual obligations and their fulfilment first and his physical welfare and needs would be met” and despite the fact that there is the widespread of “foreign” religions in the Ga area, the traditional religion still lives on. This, it is believed may be attributed to the people’s strong belief in the potency of the traditional religion and the rate at which the people’s spiritual and material problems are being solved.

Ga have philosophical and cosmological beliefs. In the first instance, the belief in God who is known in different local names such *Ataa Naa Nyonmɔ*, *Tsɛ Ofe* just to mention a few and He is recognized as the creator of the world by the Ga people. The Ga also believe in ancestral spirits and they regard ancestors as next to God in that the ancestors play an indispensable role in all their traditional affairs and are accorded reverence and high esteem. They believe that after death, the departed ones enter into a spiritual realm where life is continued in the same way as life led on the earth. That is why the Ga

sprinkle the festive food for the ancestors to return to the earth to eat during the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival.

The religion of the Ga furthermore revolve on supernatural entities or lesser deities who are said to draw their powers essentially from God. They are believed to reward or punish men with mishaps, disease or even death. It is widely believed that the gods exhibit certain aspects of the power of the Supreme Being who made them for specific duties. The divinities have therefore, their areas of competence and may be called upon or consulted in time of need. Some of these deities or supernatural forces are associated with the natural phenomena or the environment such as trees, rivers, mountains and rocks.





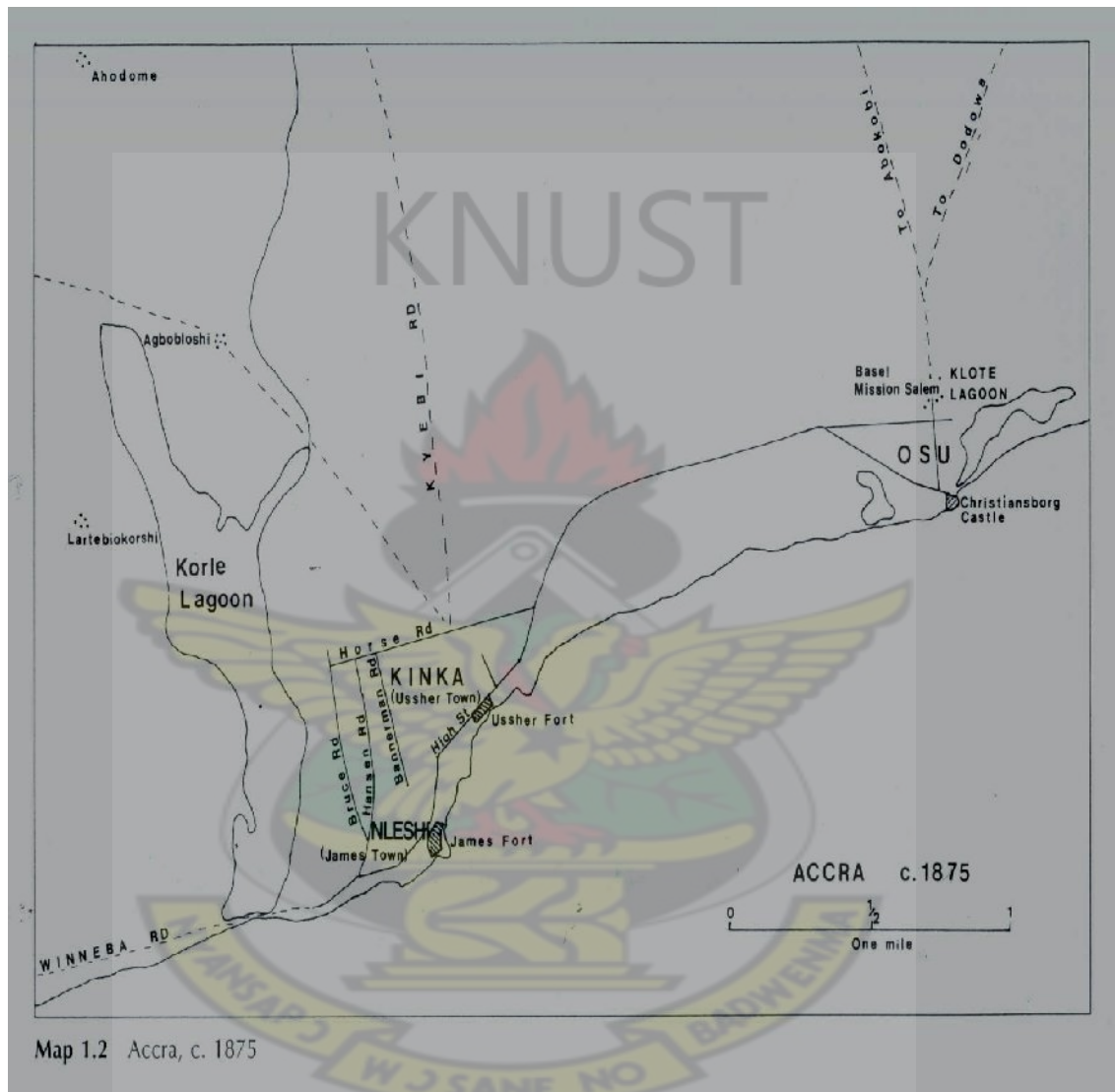
Map 1: The Ga town.

Courtesy: Marion Kilson



Map 2: The location of the Ga.

Courtesy: Marion Kilson



Map 3: Some lagoons and quarter of the Ga.

Courtesy: Marion Kilson

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF SELECTED RELATED LITERATURE

Rationale for writing the Literature Review

In writing a thesis of this nature, the review of selected related literature cannot be ruled out, since it helps the present researcher to know what previous writers have already covered, the vacuum left for the present researcher to cover, and the techniques, as well as the right vocabulary needed for accomplishing this work. In this regard, the researcher tends to acquire the skill to discuss, analyse and solve pertinent problems. The review also helps him to compare and contrast his data with those of previous writers to enhance the quality of his work. The comparison and contrast serve as a unifier of the literature review and the present researcher's data. In view of this unity, the literature review becomes relevant to this thesis and does not remain isolated

To facilitate the review of related literature, the chapter critically discusses what previous writers have recorded on the origin of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration, the activities involved in the celebrations, the arts of the celebration. Furthermore, there shall be a summary of discussion.

The origin of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival

Various authors have written on the origin of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. For instance Quartey Papafio (1919: n.pag.) writes that *Hɔmɔwɔ* is associated with the migration of Gas and reveals their agricultural success in their new settlement. According to Quartey Papafio, Ga oral tradition indicates a famine period that broke out among the people during their

migration to the present day Accra. They were urged by the famine to embark on massive food production exercises which eventually resulted in a bumper harvest and hence the celebration of the festival.

According to Opoku (1972:52), the exact time the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival came to be with the Ga is unknown. However Ga mythology offers two versions of the origin of the festival. One of the oral traditions give a clue that very long ago, famine broke out among the Ga and killed many among them during their travels to where they live at present. At a later season when they had a bumper harvest, the people literally jeered and hooted at hunger that had plagued them. In the second version according to Opoku, *Hɔmɔwɔ* is derived from the Jewish Passover. This is based on the use of unleavened cornmeal for the ritual food, the application of red clay to the doorposts and the hurried and communal manner in which the food is eaten; and this is really observed in the celebration as the Ga traditionally eat the festive food *kpokpoi* in a communal and hurried manner.

Nii Ammah (1982: 2) has also taken note of the origin of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival, and on account of cultural similarities, he has shown that Gas are related to Jews. To him, it can be assumed that the journey of the Ga from the East might have taken them across the arid sands of the Sahara Desert. Over the vast stretch of barren dry land, the incidence of famine logically cannot be ruled out. The famine, which might have been severe and protracted, led to the institutionalisation of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival of the Ga.

With regards to the institutionalization of the festival, Nii Ammah (1982:2) lays bare that the festival, as provided by oral tradition indicates the Ga migration from Nigeria, Benin, Ife and Ilorin, they had a little bit of corn and palm oil left over from their travel over the sea. When they first landed, they fished from the sea and prepared the ground corn with the oil into *kpokpoi*, made soup with the fish from the sea, and had their first meal after landing. They gave some of their food to their deities for guiding and guarding them safely. It is therefore in remembrance of this period, during which they were feeding on the remnants of what they brought along and to thank their gods for feeding them and landing safely, that the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival was institutionalised. Although the explanations from Opoku (1972) and Nii Ammah have slight differences, there is the element of a famine period in both accounts during the migration of Gas to their present settlement. They overcame this hunger and celebrated it with a festival annually.

The festival called *Hɔmɔwɔ*, which is the corrupted form of the Ga word *Hɔmɔ yi wamɔ* reportedly began in the life of the Ga people centuries ago, however there is no recorded evidence to support the facts of where and when the unfortunate incident of famine occurred. Nii Ammah (1982:1) quotes Field as saying that the Ga arrived from Benin in the sixteenth century, but according to Nii Ammah, the date fourteenth century, however, appears to be more accurate. According to him, the Dutch map of the Gold Coast in 1629 shows that the Ga people were then fully settled with their *mantsɛmɛi* (heads of towns). He additionally says that, if the Ga came in the sixteenth century, they

could not have developed so fast from small settlements to such high-level political organizations within that short period.

As the priests formerly exercised absolute power of government, so had the chief priest of the Ga exercised his supreme power as a ruler and head of state over the Ga in the past. Nii Ammah (1982:4) points out that through vicissitudes of belligerency and accidents of history, the Ga priests were divested of the absolute power they exercised over the years, and chiefs, termed *Mantsɛmei* replaced the priests as heads of state. Reference to Ga priests as traditional custodians of Ga stool lands clarifies their former status as rulers or *Mantsɛmei* today, which by Ga interpretation means ‘land owners’. This is one reason why in Land Tenure system disputes the Ga priest becomes the final authority on the validity of claim to ownership.

The *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is celebrated in Accra by the Ga Mashie people with pomp and pageantry. The Ga Mashie people are made up of seven quarters. According to Kilson (1974:7) the Ga attribute the founding of the seven quarters to the immigrant communities and in part to the fission of established units. According to tradition, the true Ga settled in the Asere quarter. Political disputes within the Asere led to the establishment of Gbese, Sempe and Akumadze quarters. The three other quarters, however, were founded by other immigrants: Otublohum by Akwamu, Abola by Fantis, Ngleshie by some Nigerians.

Salm and Falola (2002:151) are of the view that most festivals are celebrated as soon as the staple crop of the ethnic group is harvested and it is a form of thanksgiving to express gratitude for a successful agricultural season. Salm and Falola cite that the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is celebrated just after the rainy season and when the staple corn has been harvested. Having finished harvesting, the priests and chiefs play the most important roles by leading the rituals of purification and dedication. Priests are the intermediaries with gods, while chiefs are the link to ancestral leaders.

The celebration of the festival

The celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival involves pre-celebration activities before the actual celebration on a Saturday in August. Quarcoo (2000:55) and Amartey (1991:162) state that the tilling of the land called *shibaa* is the first customary activity which marks the commencement of this harvest festival. The customary rite begins on the first or second Monday of the month of May and ends on the Tuesday of the week after. Each *wulɔmɛi* (priests) have sacred fields which the priests allow to fallow before clearing for the *nmaadumɔ* (sowing rite). In the researcher's view, this customary rite involves a great deal of art considering the implements used in the clearing and sowing of the crop, the body arts such as the special costume worn by the various priests, the beads around their ankles and wrists. Moreover, the pouring of libation which forms an integral part of the activity is in itself very artistic since the prayers are said in a poetic manner to invoke the spirits to their mediums.

Nii Ammah (1982:6) has laid bare the customary sowing rite of corn, called *nmaadumɔ* which marks the commencement of the Ga calendar year. When the Ga first settled, they sowed the surplus corn that they brought. Hence this sowing rite of the millet is a remembrance of their first sowing on an unfamiliar but similar soil. The sowing is done from one clan to the other under the supervision of the chief priest, who is the caretaker of the religious, social and economic beliefs.

Opoku (1970:52), Nii Ammah (1982) and Attah Fosu (2001:2) have taken notice of the rite that follows the customary sowing of the corn. The writers lay bare that, there is a thirty day period ban on drumming and noise making after the last priest has observed the customary sowing rite. According to these writers, the ban on drumming on noise making which throws the entire traditional area in absolute silence and boredom is lifted thirty days later with a ceremony by the priests and the Gbese Mantse. Nketia (1977) has recorded a similar ban on drumming and mourning in other ethnic groups festival celebration such as the Cape Coast *Fetu* festival and the *Odwira* festival of the Akwapim. The inference could be drawn from the foregone analysis that the essence of suspending such important social functions which involve the active use of drumming is to help give full scope to performing arts such as drumming and dancing on the activities that characterize the celebration of the festival.

The celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is a feasting one and for this reason food should be in abundance. Djagbletey (1972:37) has taken notice of the original crop for the *Nmaadumɔ* rite (sowing of the corn). She lays bare the fact that the original crop which

was used however could not be intensively cultivated on the plains because of the weather conditions. This made the people change over from the millet to corn or maize. The gods, however, demanded the use of the original grains for their use. From the foregoing statements from Nii Ammah and Djagbletey, the inference could be drawn that millet is likely to be the crop that was originally sown hence the name *nmaa* which means millet but the corn is easy to cultivate and also the staple food of Gas.

Attah- Fosu (2001:3), Nii Ammah (1982: 8-9) and Opoku (1970:53) have all laid bare the arrival of the *Soobii* (Thursday people). All these writers wrote that the *Hɔmɔɔ* week is devoted to the celebration of a particular custom as a feature of the festival. On Thursday one of such days in the *Hɔmɔɔ* week, villagers from outlying villages customarily converge in the city at Nkpono, a traditional spot. According to Nii Ammah, the *soobii* (Thursday people) are welcomed into the city by their relatives, friends and acquaintances. All the head loads they carry are covered with plain white cloths indicative of victory over famine as well as intense joy and merriment because of the plenteous harvest. The whole Ga Mashie area is thrown into a colourful atmosphere with pomp and pageantry amid drumming, singing and dancing. The merrymaking persists throughout the night till the dawn of Friday.

The *Hɔmɔɔ* festivals are of historical and commemorative significance which remind Gas of their origin. Perbi (1999:33) has taken notice of the historical and commemorative significance of the La (wrongly called Labadi) during the *Hɔmɔɔ* celebration. Perbi said there is a spiritual ritual performed in which the traditional priest

throws corn to a certain group of people, who have taken a kneeling position to catch the corn. According to Perbi, (1999:33), the people were originally descendants of slaves. During the period of slavery, slaves in the shrine were required to play this role. This ceremony has become part of the ritual and it would seem that continuing practice serves to remind them of their origins.

Nii Ammah (1982:15) again makes exposition on the etymology of the festal food known as *kpokpoi*. He said the word *kpokpoi* stands for a whole or a complete meeting of members of a clan or family and hence the meaning denotes the real objective of the festival, that is, an occasion of harmony or unity, a convention for counting each member of a household, dead or alive. He furthermore added that it is a form of census and anybody absent is conspicuously noticed and that this aspect of Ga culture corresponds with the Holy Bible account of the Jews returning to their father's house to be counted.

During the actual *Hɔmɔwɔ* day, a great feast is held. Salm, and Falola (2002:112) have taken notice that on that day, the ritual food *kpekpei* (*kpokpoi*), a corn flour dish is served with palm soup. The authors furthermore stated that the women begin the preparation of the festive food long before sunrise because everything must be finished by noon in order to perform the sprinkling rituals. The festive food is made from steamed, unleavened corn dough that is pounded in a mortar. According to the authors, the festive food is salted and mixed with palm oil and always served with soup in an earthenware pot. The house owners do the sprinkling of the festive food on the entrances

of the house to show respect to the souls of the departed ancestors and the chiefs also usually accompanied by lively drumming and dancing, walk around sprinkling it in the public areas under their jurisdiction.

The celebration of the festival also brings oneness and there is no distinction of class or status. Opoku (1972:56) writes that the eating of the festive food involves scrambling over fish or meat with father or son begging each other for a morsel or fish. The women also share in the fun as they cheer and applaud the smartness of the youth as they overtake the older folk in the struggle. From this statement, it is safe to assert that one needs to be really fast to get a better part of the food and although the older folks are the providers of the money for the meal, they all need to scramble for the food especially the fish or meat. This comes to establish the social appraisal of the festival where the celebrants are reminded that they are of one common stock.

Customary greetings are also observed on Sunday, a day after the festival celebration. Opoku (1972:56) and Nii Ammah (1982:20) have made the same observation of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival greetings after the actual festival day. Both writers are of the view that the celebrants seize the opportunity to give hearty shakes of hands tinged with a feeling of mutual respect and hospitality. Sufficient drinkables are lavishly provided by the fathers-in-law so as to crown the height of enjoyment. However, in Opoku's account, he added that there is the singing of songs by the youth to their elders, and the songs could be complimentary or derogatory, but everybody takes it in the spirit of the festive season whether praises or insults.

The arts of *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival

The prime motivation in undertaking this literature review stems from the fact that the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival of the Ga embodies a great deal of art and is associated with a number of other cultural aspects in which Gas dramatize their way of life in terms of their artistic, religious and other cultural phenomena during the celebration of the festival.

In this thesis what is said to be artistic should be viewed from the functionality of the art work being discussed. Works of art in the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival are religious and symbolic. Indeed the celebration involves a great deal of art. The artefacts in the celebration must be viewed from the external manifestations of the art works have on the celebrants. In line with this, Sesonske (1965) says, ‘Art is the external manifestation, by means of lines, colours, movements, sounds or words of emotion felt by man’.

To portray the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival in Ghana, one writer called Cole (1977), stated under the heading *The arts of festivals in Ghana*, as being full of art. He was furthermore of the view that, “The arts serve as a vehicle which carry the celebration to achieve its main objective”. The inference could be drawn that the objective of the festivals is to unite the celebrants.

The artistic aspects of festivals cannot be over - emphasized. They help observers to know about the culture of the people in question and help to appreciate the indigenous culture, with some of its interpretation. It is important to analyse and understand the role

of art in festivals and with this both the creator and the beholder are equally important, as they need one another's attention as far as interpretation and analysis of the arts are concerned. Maquet argues along the same line:

In fact, the search of the meaning of a particular art object is almost always expressed in terms of the artist's intentions. Our everyday discourse about the visual art implies that art works convey messages from artists to beholders and that a main concern is to decipher the message hidden in the object.

It is evidently clear from the above statement that the art works of the celebration of the festival seem to portray something to the celebrants. If the functionality and symbolism of the artefacts are understood by the celebrants, its uses would be meaningful to them. To fully comprehend an artefact, one must be able to understand its social, political, religious and even economic reasons for producing these works.

The main forms of oral traditions are myths, legends and songs which are artistic. The festival songs as well as poetic words that accompany the pouring of libation and proverbs could be regarded as reliable sources of information to reconstruct the past history. Some of the songs are regarded as mechanisms for adjusting social behaviour or for maintaining social order because they are songs of insult sung to lampoon evildoers and social deviants. This, according to Nketia (1977), in the traditions of some areas, form part of the worship of the gods, who have ordained that once a year a special festival lasting a whole week, the worshippers have to get rid of all the ill feelings that

they have been habouring during the past years through songs. This wonderful provision is given to the celebrants of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival to air all their grievances.

This airing of grievances is also seen in the celebration of *Apoo* festival. Asihene (1980) account that the airing of grievances allows the common people to publicly sing out the shortcomings, faults and villainies of their superiors who have incurred their displeasure. This also finds expression in Johnson (1983) version of the Ajumako-Ba Akwambo festival songs, which are satirical, allusions to historical events, and offences of citizens have the effect of adjusting social behaviour in the traditional area.

Another form of art associated with the celebration of the festival is clothing. Kemevor (2004: 323) writing on this, has noted that during the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration, the sub-chiefs' clothes have no reflection on their position. They wear just any clothes of a considerable beauty. However, he observed that rich silk, brocade velvets and velveteen are the common ones. The writer furthermore added that, it is the Ga *Mantsɛ* (chief) who dresses in a way that makes him outstanding and distinct from the sub-chiefs. His dressing is prominent. The chiefs' clothes are some of the artistic objects, which are displayed during these festive occasions. Among the chiefs' clothes are the woven *kente* and printed fabrics of different colours, velvets and special cloths.

Opoku (1970:55) has emphasized the songs sung during the festival celebration and has observed that in most of the Ga songs, the young uniformed batches of celebrants recount all manner of deeds and accidents. In his view, the songs may be complimentary

and others derogatory, nevertheless, everybody takes it in the spirit of the season. He added that during the occasion, well behaved and disciplined ones are rebuked from the chiefs to the lowest person in the traditional area.

Kemevor (2004:115) again has taken note of the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival and has made an exposition that the festival lacks the conscious visual emphasis as of most Akan festivals. Among the Ga, the ritual process seems to receive greater stress than formalized display and such activity seems random and spontaneous. According to Kemevor (2004:115), Ga processions for example, lay more stress on measured pace, rhythmic repetition and hierarchy than Akwapim, Ashanti (Asante), Dagaaba or Fanti processions.

Kulɔ (pot), associated with the gods, shrines and indigenous Ga religious men is used during the celebration. This pottery bears sacred herbs of the gods. *Kulɔ* is occasionally carried by the priest and priestesses and the sacred content sprinkled on the people for long life and general cleansing of infirmities. According to Djagbletey (1972:37) the priest of the *kɔɔle* lagoon god, carries this *kulɔ* during his turn of the *nmaadumɔ* rite. Djagbletey states that the priest is seen to wear a ceremonial long white robe and an attendant carries the pot of sacred herbs and water which the priest sprinkles with a bunch of *noi* fibres for sanctification and religious purposes.

The saying of solemn artistic prayers which occur simultaneously with the libation, is an important feature in the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. According to Nii Ammah

(1982:16) the following words are recited in the pouring of libation prior to the sprinkling of the festal food

On this Saturday
Of our Grandfathers and Grandmothers
We thank thee O God
That we are alive
To participate in this celebration
May we enjoy the fruit of *Gbo*
And the products of *Gbo-ena*
Let good things abound

It could be deduced that Gas give reverence and thank the Almighty God for sustaining and protection throughout the year. They humbly ask for blessings and also to enjoy the fruit of their labour. In addition, the people during prayers do not forget about their ancestors who died famishing during the famine period. All these highlight the fact that, the celebration of the festival is a religious one.

Another important art which is prominent in the celebration of the festival is dancing. Nii Ammah (1982) throws light on the principal traditional dance of the occasion, known as the *oshi joo*. *Kro-ko-to- We* is reputed as the traditional abode for the preservation of the *oshi* stone, the symbol of the *oshi* dance. There are two drums played during the dance and the blending of rhythmic tunes from the two provides music for the *oshi* dance. The dancers, who on this particular occasion attire themselves in shabby, tattered jute bags or sack cloths, perform and respond rhythmically to the *oshi* dance. The height of enjoyment is reached when the performers dance, jump and sing the chorus

Oshi O, oshi onye, oshi,

Tsutsu afi le eba ekonn,

Oshi O, oshi otse, oshi,

Agbene oshi le eba ekonn,

Oshi O, oshi onye oshi.

English version

You left, left your mother, you left

The old year is in again

You left, left your father, you left

Yes *Oshi* dance is in again

You left, left your mother, you left

All these songs and dances come to compliment the artistic nature of the festival which to the present researcher fuels the success of the celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ*.

Summary of Discussion

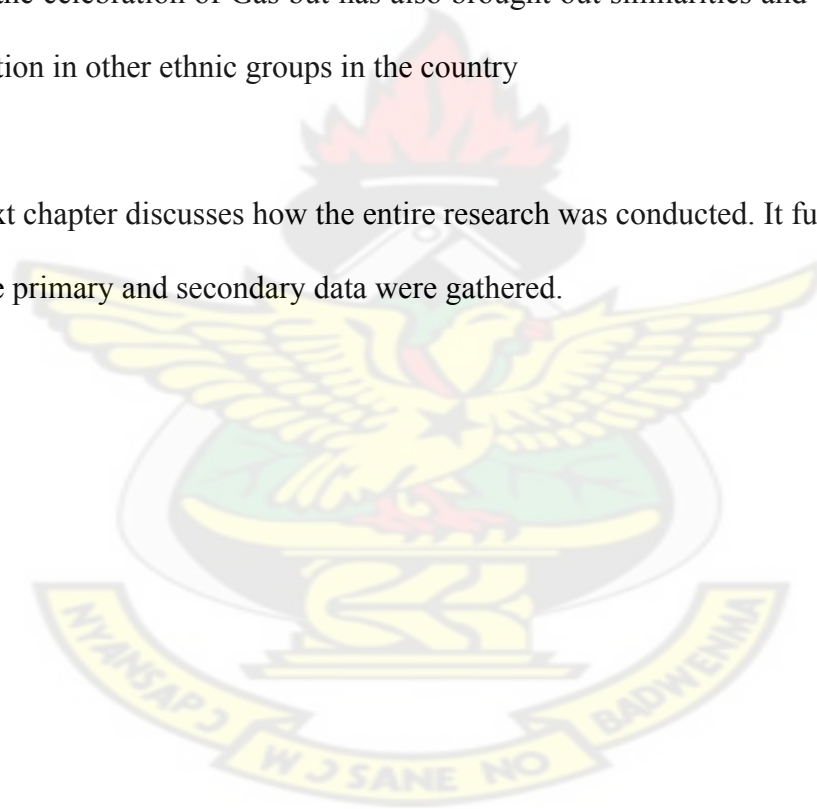
The review of related literature has led to the fact that the arts are prominent in the festival although the writers have ignored to appreciate them. The foregoing study has made explicit how Gas came to celebrate the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival annually to hoot at the famine that once plagued their forefathers.

The role of the arts in the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival cannot be over-emphasized although previous writers probably did not know or were not aware that the arts (Performing, Body, Verbal and Environmental) characterizing them, are the mirror

reflecting the traditions and beliefs and the religious concept of the people and the arts serve as a vehicle for the festival to drive home its objective.

The review of related literature has shown an interesting connection between the celebration and the arts and how the arts permeate the festival even during the pre-celebration activities because of the special costumes and beads worn. All these arts are neglected when it comes to the analysis and appreciation of the festival. It has not only shown the celebration of Gas but has also brought out similarities and differences of the celebration in other ethnic groups in the country

The next chapter discusses how the entire research was conducted. It furthermore reveals how the primary and secondary data were gathered.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The third chapter shows how the entire research was conducted. It deals with the various techniques employed to gather the necessary data in order to contribute effectively to the evaluation of knowledge in the artistic and other cultural aspects of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival and other festivals in Ghana as a whole.

The methodology has been helpful to the present researcher because it has enabled him to effectively elicit the necessary data for the accomplishment of the thesis. It has also helped him to do the necessary analyses and discussions of the data. The methodology has enabled him to arrive at informed conclusions, test and validate his hypothesis, and has finally assisted him to offer beneficial recommendations.

Research Design

The research design allows the researcher to meet the purpose of the research. Thus, the research design refers to the overall plan employed by the researcher to obtain answers to the research questions and for testing the hypotheses formulated (Agyedu *et al* 2007). Since the study was primarily focused on the description of the observances of the both the rituals and artistic creations of the celebration, the research problem was best answered by a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is a systematic process of describing, analysing and interpreting insights discovered in everyday life (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The various techniques employed in gathering the necessary data were

questionnaire, interview, observation and field notes of the celebration. The origin of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* is actually based on oral tradition and this has paved way for critical interviews with custodians of the various rites, old indigenes of the traditional area and on site observations of the festival. These have resulted in the descriptive, historical and interpretative methods of research employed in writing this thesis. Relevant questionnaire were distributed to respondents to divulge data pertinent to the study.

In most cases, the method of participatory observation was also employed since it appears there was not much written literature on the artistic and cultural aspects of the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. The method of participatory observations in the celebration of the festival paved way for the researcher to fully examine the artistic and other cultural aspects of the festival and comprehend the significance and beliefs of the various activities by the celebrants.

Library Research

In writing a thesis of this nature, library research has been indispensable. This library research was very important as it served as a beneficial source for collecting information. The library research served as the researcher's secondary data. The following libraries were of immense help to the researcher, the Balme Library and the Institute of African Studies Library, all of the University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, the British Council Library, Accra, the George Padmore Library on African Affairs, also in Accra. Furthermore the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Main

and Art College Libraries, Kumasi, the library of the University of Education, Winneba, and the University of Cape Coast library were also indispensable to the researcher.

It was the prime idea of the researcher to initially look out for literature on *Hɔmɔwɔ* which has discussed the artistic and other cultural aspects of the festival, but the researcher later noticed that the artistic aspects of the festival have been superficially discussed in literature. In all, over fifty books and twenty journals, magazines, newspapers, chart brochures and newsletters were read. Furthermore, unpublished theses from undergraduate and graduate students on festivals were read. The various books which specifically discussed the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival and other festivals as topics were used for the related literature. In the course of this library research some officials were formally and informally interviewed to seek further information on the celebration of the festival.

Archival Research

The researcher visited the following archives in Ghana: the National Archives of Ghana in Accra, and the Ga Section of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation also in Accra. The researcher was issued with a “Student research badge” at Ghana Broadcasting Corporation to enable him seek information without hindrance. It was further realized by the researcher that although some of the books had been recorded to be available at the archive of the corporation, they were nowhere to be found on the shelves and even the ones found were torn. Yet the little information gathered was very useful to the research.

Informal interviews were also conducted with the general officials, and the interviews enable the researcher to obtain pertinent information that was included in the thesis.

Population and justification of Sampling

According to Fox (1969:94), the population, the universe, the accepted sample and the data –producing sample are the stages or the elements in the sampling process. In his view, universe stands for all possible respondents or measures of a certain kind. The population was the portion of the universe that was accessible to the researcher. The term population refers to the complete set of individuals (subjects), objects or events having common observable characteristics in which the researcher is interested. Agyedu *et al* (2007: 80).

It was noted upon the information gathered and the number of respondents from the categories of the population, coupled with research time constraints that prompted the researcher to take forty percent of the entire population. The researcher chose forty percent (40%) of the population because Agyedu *et al* (2007: 88) quote Nwana (1992) that if the population is few hundreds, then a forty percent (40%) or more sample size will do for a quality research. This therefore became the targeted and accessible population.

Although the sample was taken from a homogenous population, the various categories differ in one way or the other. In this context, the Nai Wulom, the Sakumo Priest and other priests and priestesses were put into one category since they are custodians of almost all the rites performed during the celebration. The lecturers, research fellows,

senior members and students assimilate and supplement their knowledge for teaching and research work, as well as imparting to their younger generation and for this reason, they were also categorized.

The significance of the above categorization is that it has helped to substantiate the adequacy of the existing literature and unearthed new information relating to the celebration of the festival. It furthermore afforded the interviewees an ample opportunity to give their candid opinion about the festival and how best it could be utilized effectively and efficiently in projecting the cultural heritage of Gas and mother Ghana in general.

The population of the study is important as it gives a vivid and fair account of how the research was conducted. The theory of population is basic to descriptive, analytic and interpretive research. Table one below shows population this research studied, and for this reason it became relevant to study the characteristics of the population. The reason for the selection of the category of population is that Category A comprises the chief priest that is the Nai and Sakumo Wulɔmɔ and other priests and priestesses of the traditional area. They were categorized since they deal with the performing of the various spiritual and ritual activities of the celebration. Category B comprises the chiefs who perform certain relevant duties pertaining to the ancestors in the celebration and the elders who are heads of the various families of the traditional area. The elders are seen as auxiliaries to the chiefs.

Category C are members of learning institutions such as Lecturers, Research Fellows, Teachers of Schools and Colleges, Teaching Assistants, Demonstrators, Undergraduate and Graduate Students. They were all grouped together because they study and assimilate the findings of the researches in order to educate others.

The final category D consists of the senior workers who work at establishments or organizations and have been observing the celebration of the festival for not less than five years. The other members of this category are the senior members in the various palaces of the chiefs and the shrines of the priests. The table below shows the number of the population the researcher interviewed.

Item	Category of Population	No. of Population	Targeted Interviewees
(a)	Category A The chief Priest, Priests and Priestesses	30	20
(b)	Category B Chiefs and Elders	80	20
(c)	Category C Lecturers and Students	90	15
(d)	Category D Senior workers of the palaces and general public	100	25

Table 1: Categorization of population and number of targeted interviewees

The total potential population for the study was 300 aged above 20years.

POPULATION	CATEGORY A – (30) PRIESTS/PRIESTESSES – STRATUM 1			
	CATEGORY B – (80) CHIEFS AND ELDERS – STRATUM 2			
	CATEGORY C – (90) LECTURERS AND STUDENTS – STRATUM 3			
	CATEGORY D – (100) SENIOR WORKERS –STRATUM 4			
EQUALIZATION	A	B	C	D
LEVEL	30	80	90	100
RANDOMIZATION				
LEVEL 40%	12	32	36	40
SAMPLE	A + B + C + D 12 + 32 + 36 + 40			
DATA LEVEL	120 Respondents			

Table 2: Schematic Overview of Stratified Random Sampling Design

As already mentioned, (Agyedu *et al* 2007:88) quote Nwana (1992) that for a population of few hundreds, forty percent will do for a quality research. This technique was therefore employed to select the sample of 120 (40%) of the total population of the respondents. Each stratum is homogenous and the total sample was shared among the four strata of the total population

The table shows the percentage of the respondents in each stratum. The formula to which the percentages were derived has been indicated below the table.

Status	No. of Sample	Percentage (%)
The Chief Priest, Priests and Priestesses	20	16.7
Chiefs and Elders	20	16.7
Lecturers and Students	35	29.1
Senior workers	45	37.5

Table 3: Percentage of sample

The formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Number of Sample}}{\text{Total Number}} \times 100\%$$

Survey Instruments

The survey instruments used for this research work were the observation before and during the celebration of the festival, questionnaire and personal interviews to solicit the data from respondents concerning the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival and its artistic and other cultural aspects.

Questionnaire Design and Validation

A questionnaire was designed (sample in Appendix B) to seek relevant data from the interviewees. Most of the questions were the close-ended type of answering in which the respondents had to score by ticking the answers that were suitable. For this reason, boxes were provided for such scoring.

Having finished with the designing of the questionnaire, it was appropriate to validate the questions so as to render them mistake-free and appropriate to bring forth the necessary information. For this reason, my supervisor Dr. Opamshen Osei Agyeman edited the questionnaire. In addition, Eric Appau Asante, a PhD student of African Art and Culture, KNUST also read through to check typographical mistakes.

Administering of Questionnaire

Exactly one hundred and twenty copies of the questionnaire designed to solicit answers, were self administered to the various categories of the population sample. Nevertheless, four of the copies had to be mailed to respondents due to distance. For this reason, self addressed envelopes were enclosed with the questionnaire to facilitate their mailing back

to the researcher without any financial constraints. The respondents were allowed two weeks to complete the questionnaire after the relevant instructions had been given out as to how questions should be answered. About eighty percent worked within the stipulated time whilst others completed the questionnaire after persistent reminders.

Although this process was tedious and expensive, it was worth it. A percentage of ninety four returned their completed questionnaire, and with the various answers given, the responses gave a clear picture to the researcher about the views of the various categories.

Categories	Prospective Respondents	Questionnaire Returned
Category A	20	20
Category B	20	19
Category C	35	34
Category D	45	43
Total	120	116

Table 4: Number of questionnaire sent and those returned

Interviews Conducted

Agyedu *et al* (2007:104) define research interview as ‘a face-to-face’ meeting between the questioner and a respondent, or an oral presentation of an opinionaire or attitude scale. It was noted by the researcher that during the conducting of the research, the interviews were more rewarding than any of the survey instruments (gathering devices) employed. This was probably due to the fact that the respondents and interviewees were

more willing to talk in order to express themselves than to write. In talking, they get the opportunity to elaborate on their opinions. This assertion by the researcher is also confirmed by Manford (1995:35), that interviews are suitable for some category of people, especially the semi-literate who prefer talking to writing. In addition, it created a fertile ground for the researcher to gain affinity with the respondents. It furthermore afforded the researcher the ability to obtain confidential information vital to the thesis.

Direct interviews conducted were mostly in Ga language especially with the Chief Priest, Priests, Priestesses, Chiefs and some elders in the community. Even in the cases where the interviews could have been in the English language especially with the lecturers and students, it was realized that both parties enjoyed speaking the mother tongue although they intermittently spoke the English language. The interviewees were allowed to talk but were directed by the researcher so as to critically discuss what is really pertinent to the celebration of the festival.

Observation

Observation of the celebration of the festival forms an integral part of this research. It does not only mean being at the ceremonial grounds to see or observe what is happening but it also involves a great store of knowledge and philosophical thinking. This point made, is emphasized by Nisbet (1977:15), who states that observation is not a ‘natural gift’ but a highly skilled activity for which an extensive background knowledge and understanding are required and also a capacity for original thinking and the ability to spot significant events.

The need for observation of the celebration of the festival provided a wonderful opportunity to the researcher to test the veracity of answers and opinions gathered through the questionnaire and interviews. It furthermore gave the researcher the opportunity to physically come into contact with some of the royal regalia, artefacts such as the *tse* (the traditional bowl), and ceremonial drums such as the sacred *Obonu* drum, *fontofrom*, *atumpani* etc., the spokesman's staff and the emblems of the various Ga Mashie quarters.

Most of the observations took place at the Nai *We*, The Sakumo *We*, the Chiefs' Palaces, during processions and on the ceremonial grounds. The Nai *We*, Sakumo *We* and the palaces of the chiefs were the most frequented since almost all the rituals are performed at the said palaces on behalf of all the entire Ga Mashie quarters. These observations were done not only by the use of the eye but also with the aid of a digital camera to take photographs which could help in bringing to light the artistic objects of the festival which previous writers do not seem to have critically analysed. In all these, not all the ceremonies were observed by the researcher since some of the rites were performed indoors. For this reason, an insider had to be relied upon to give accounts of what really happen during these indoor rites.

Because of the researcher's frequent visits to the various palaces of the chiefs, the shrines of the priest and priestesses and the ceremonial grounds, the researcher became an unofficial associate of the various palaces and shrines mentioned.

Summary of Discussion

In digest, the researcher's concern in this chapter has been to show how the entire research was conducted and the rationale for writing the methodology. It is undeniably evident in this chapter that a practical approach has been employed in conducting the research.

Relevant fields of the study have been observed. Very important information in connection with the celebration of the festival has been revealed to the researcher by reliable informants. Among the informants were the chief custodians of the rites Nuumo Tete Afunya the Nai Wulɔmɔ and Nuumo Ogbaami the Sakumo Wɔɔmɔ and some chiefs of the Ga Mashie quarters. Elders of the various palaces of the Ga Mashie quarters were of immense help as they provided in-depth information to the researcher. All the information gathered coupled with the researcher's observation of the celebration served as the primary data as earlier mentioned. The literary sources served as the secondary data.

Chapter four of the research critically discusses the celebration of the festival in which the artistic and other cultural aspects that manifest themselves in the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival are laid bare. The philosophies and significance of the various rites of the festival would also be outlined.

CHAPTER FOUR

FIELDWORK, OBSERVATION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOMOWO FESTIVAL

Overview

The *Homowo* festival is celebrated annually on Saturday by the Ga Mashie with pomp and pageantry. Ga Mashie people comprise the Asere, Sempe, Gbese, Otublohum, Ngleshie, Abola and Akanmaiadzen. The other traditional area that celebrate the *Homowo* festival are the Nungua who celebrate it on Sundays and the Osu, Teshi, La, Gblugbla and Ningo celebrate it on Tuesdays. However, the *Homowo* celebrations by these traditional areas differ slightly. The Ga Mashie is the first to celebrate the festival on Saturdays. Nii Ammah (1982:5) is of the view that the arrival of the Ga people in separate or broken units and at different periods and points accounts for the celebration of the festival on different dates by the various traditional areas of the Ga state.

The researcher's main emphasis of this chapter is not to narrate the celebration of the festival. Its principal focus is to examine the artistic and other cultural aspects of the celebration of the festival. But for one to understand and appreciate the artistic and other cultural aspects of the celebration, it is important to have an insight into the celebration of the festival. It is also necessary for the researcher to point out the philosophies behind each customary activity involved in the celebration since the philosophies help readers to have a greater understanding of the celebration of the festival. Nevertheless, the

artistic creations and other cultural aspects of the celebration would be discussed, which in the researcher's view, carry the celebration to achieve its main objective.

Pre- celebration activities

Art and the tilling of the Land (*Shibaa*)

This tilling of the land (*shibaa*) marks the beginning of the Ga calendar year. In agricultural studies, it is very important to prepare the land for farming before the crops are sown so that the soil would be very fertile for the crops in order to harvest much yield. This customary activity involves a small section of selected people from the various shrines of the priests.

Each of the six principal priests or *Agbabii* of Accra namely Dantu, Korle Klote, Gua, Sakumo, Naide and Nai have sacred fields (*nmaa nmɔ*) which they till on different days for the sowing of guinea corn. It must be known that when the Ga arrived at their present settlement, it was millet that was sown but now it is guinea corn because it was easily cultivated. The tilling of the land heralds the planting of the guinea corn which takes place in the last week of the month of April or early week in the month of May. It is important to note that, these sacred fields belonging to the six principal priests are left to fallow for the following year before it is tilled again and this obviously enrich the soil.

The tilling of the land according to Tumomli Yartey III, head of the *Nai We* family, is to drive away bad spirits who are believed in making sure the corn that would be sown on the sacred field would not germinate. This assertion by Tumomli Yartey III assertion has

been substantiated by Mbiti (1991:135) saying the clearing of fields serves as a way of removing danger and of blessing the use of new fields. Mbiti made exposition on such rituals that it is known on the African continent that there is the belief of innumerable spirits that occupy trees and forests. Where the belief exists, it is thought necessary to perform rituals which among other things will send away the spirits from bushes and trees being cleared to make new fields. If such rituals are not performed, it is feared the people who work on the field may be molested by the spirits or may meet with mysterious spirits.

These writers: Nii Ammah (1982), Amartey (1991) and Quarcoo (2000) have taken cognisance of this rite in their books. All the principal priests participate in this customary rite as follows: Dantu is the first to till the land. He does the tilling on Monday. It is followed by Sakumo on Tuesday, Korle Klottey/ Gbese on Friday, Gua on Saturday, Naide on Sunday and finally by the Nai the next Tuesday. It is also important to note that this succession of the tilling of the land is related to the traditional history of the arrival in batches by the Ga people on different calendar dates. A vigil is kept and solemn prayers are said by the respective priests on their compounds to plead with their deity to bless the land with profuse harvest. However, the researcher is adding that clapping and singing are the main features that characterize the ritual in the priest's palace. The priest and his coterie pray to God and the divinities through the pouring of libation to show gratitude for seeing them through the past years and making supplications to God that He should be their fortress in the coming year before they depart to the sacred field to perform the concluding part of the rite.

This customary rite takes place in the morning of the particular day when each priest has to clear the land. Among the farming implements used in the clearing of the sacred land are machetes, hoes, rakes, baskets and *tsese* (traditional bowl). In the researcher's view, these implements which are used for the clearing and tilling of the land are all works of art. Without these artefacts the clearing of the land would be impossible as the artefacts are the main tools for weeding, uprooting and the turning of the soil. The researcher would like to emphasize that, these implements are made by the Blacksmith, known as applied or practical art and therefore they are artworks. It is also worthy to note that, these implements are not similar to what is seen on the market but are purposely produced for the priests to perform their customary rituals. In this vein, it should be understood through its symbolism and functionality.

However, these artefacts appear to be overlooked by many writers when it comes to the analysis and appreciation of the celebration. In this vein, these artistic aspects that aid the ceremony to achieve its main objective should be appreciated. Another artistic creation that takes place on the sacred fields, are artistic prayers that are recited by the priest and libation poured to win the approval of the deities before the clearing of the field commences. The following prayers are said by the priest whilst pouring the libation

Agoo, agoo, agoo,

Naa Nyɔnmɔ, fai lɛ bo onɔ ni,

Aha nu anɛ, ni bɔ anyɔ,

Koni shikpɔn ajɔ

Ni nmaa akwɛ

Koni ana aha bii kɛ hɔi

Wala ei wala

Wɔmiitse biiawala ke hɔiwala

Afi aya ni afi abanina wɔ

English Version

Make way, Make way, Make way,
God of our Fathers, this pleading is yours
Let the rain fall and dew fall
So that the land be fertile
For the corn to germinate
To feed children and pregnant women
Give life O' life
We seek for life for children and pregnant women
May we live to see another year.

These prayers are said on three consecutive times before the priest does the first digging with the hoe. From this prayer, the inference could be drawn that the Ga call on the Almighty God during their various activities and believe that the God of their forefathers who have seen them through past times when famine plagued them, would give them rain to bless them with abundant food.

Another artistic aspect of this ceremony which the researcher wants to bring to light is the manner in which the celebrants of the occasion file to the sacred land. It gives an artistic dimension because normally people are not restricted to their style of walking but during this occasion it is important for the celebrants to queue in one file to the sacred field and in this in their view bring strength and unity among them. Clapping and singing permeates their procession to the field and the procession is led by the *brafo*

(executioner). Having finished with the ceremony on the land, they file in the same manner to their respective compound, singing to finally conclude the rite.

Art and the sowing of the corn (*nmaadumɔ*)

This is the customary rite of sowing guinea corn that will be used in the preparation of the festal food and it involves a lot of arts. The sowing of the corn takes place two weeks after the consecrated fields have been cleared and made ready for planting. According to Tumomli Yartey III, head of the *Nai We* (family), the actual calculation on the day in which this activity is done by the *Dantu Wulɔmɔ*, a priest from the *Dantu* shrine who is regarded as an expert in the calculation.

As already mentioned, a few of the people are involved in the corn- sowing. They consist of the priests, priestesses and a small number of people from the priests' compound. Nii Yarboi, head of Aplaku family said that the sowing of the crop is a holy activity and requires purification and sanctification of oneself before participating in the activity. Therefore the people involved in this rite are notified earlier and purification rite performed before they embark on performing this activity. Scientifically, the reason for a small number of people partaking in the corn planting could be from the size of the field which measures 8metres by 4.5metres. The Law of Diminishing Returns could affect them if they should be more than enough on the field.

They set off before sunrise to their fields with white outfits and ceremonial hats. There is a beautiful artistic procession in a single file, singing and chanting *Awoo! Awoo! Awoo!*

with the coterie responding to the sound of the priests. They are led by the *brafo* (executioner) who assumes his rightful position in front of the procession as he chants *Agoo, Agoo, Agoo* hence the path would be cleared of human traffic to enable the custodians to perform their duties peacefully. This in another development creates the awareness of the ban on drumming and dancing that would soon follow and that the year is coming to an end. It is also very interesting to note that during this ceremony, drums and horns are not allowed.

During the sowing of the festal crop, anyone who is bereaved or anyone who has planned to bury a dead person is customarily not allowed to enter into the sacred field. He may on the other hand accompany them but to enter the field is not allowed. The ceremony is believed to be a sacred one and anyone who participates in it is forbidden to see a dead person until the ceremony is over. The participants of this rite are also forbidden to have sex prior to the activity. This forbidden act is also observed during any ritual ceremony of the celebration of the festival.

When the researcher questioned about the crop that is used whether it is millet or corn, Nuumo Larte an elder in the *Nai We* did not hesitate to answer that from the very onset when the Ga arrived they initially grew millet as mentioned earlier but during the harvesting it was realized that, corn had also been harvested with the millet. For this reason, corn was also sowed along side with the millet and when harvested it was hung to be dried and planted the next year. The actual crop currently used is guinea corn.

A thirty day ban on drumming and noise making is placed on all Ga traditional areas. Anyone who violates this ban on noise making known in the local language as *kpoofeemɔ* is summoned to the Priest's palace and fined. The people's belief about the ban is that, during this period, the gods of the land need this peaceful and silent atmosphere to pray to their God and ancestors for bountiful blessings of the land and good harvest. Nii Ammah (1982:8) has also taken cognisance of the rite in his book that between the period of the rite of planting and the rite of transplanting, a thirty day ban is strictly imposed on drumming, dancing, or any form of merry-making or any event that might create noise in the city. He furthermore adds that the ban on drumming and dancing and the imposition of silence periods preceding the main celebrations unfortunately leads to unavoidable repetition, which often borders on monotony and boredom.

The thirty day ban on noise making on all Ga traditional area however to the researcher, is thought to give them a serene atmosphere for the gods and ancestors of the land to reflect upon the past years and the new one they are about to enter and psychologically gets their mind set on the festivities. Again it can be explained that celebration of the festival also comes to establish the socio-religious beliefs of the Ga. It is believed that during this serene atmosphere, it provides the opportunity for the chief priest and his people to go into confinement; a necessary embargo is imposed to forestall disorder and commotion.

Furthermore, a visitor to any of the Ga traditional area would feel the stillness and would perhaps become conscious of the sacredness of the pending festivity. According to Nana Yaa Asumadu Sakyi, a daughter of the chief of Kumawu, and a medical student at Okomfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, the people of Kumawu during their *Papa* festival also observe a silence. She said that, forty days before the celebration of the festival, a ban is placed on all sorts of noise making; funerals are postponed until the celebration is over. Singing, wailing processions drumming and dancing are all banned. Nana Yaa furthermore laid bare that the main idea behind this ban is to avoid disruptions and divided attention since everyone from the Kumawu traditional area is obliged to participate in the celebration.

Moreover everybody must be involved with unreserved devotion and dedication. Similarly, the ban on noise making in the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration is expected to prepare the minds and attitudes of the Ga people towards the festival and also create awareness and magnify the importance of the long awaited occasion. There is a similar assertion by Opoku, (1970:14) that during the Akuapem *Odwira* festival celebration, there is the ban placed on all noise-making, singing, drumming and dancing, wailing and all noisy funerals and processions. This is known as *adae butuw* or the “turning over” of the *Adae*.

This customary activity on the sowing of the corn and the ban on noise making is an important part of the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival and despises its numerous conflicts with foreign religions of the traditional area, it is still being observed strictly by

the celebrants of the traditional area. Plates 3 and 4 shows corn growing on sacred farm. The custodians of the rite recess to their compound singing the following words of the song

Adu nmaa,, adu nmaa
Adu nmaa, akpaaa bεlε
Ofoli du nmaa fε
Adu nmaa, adu nmaa,
Adu nmaa, adu nmaa

English Version

Corn has been planted
Corn has been planted,
we do not whistle,
Ofoli has planted all corn
All corn has been planted
Corn has been planted

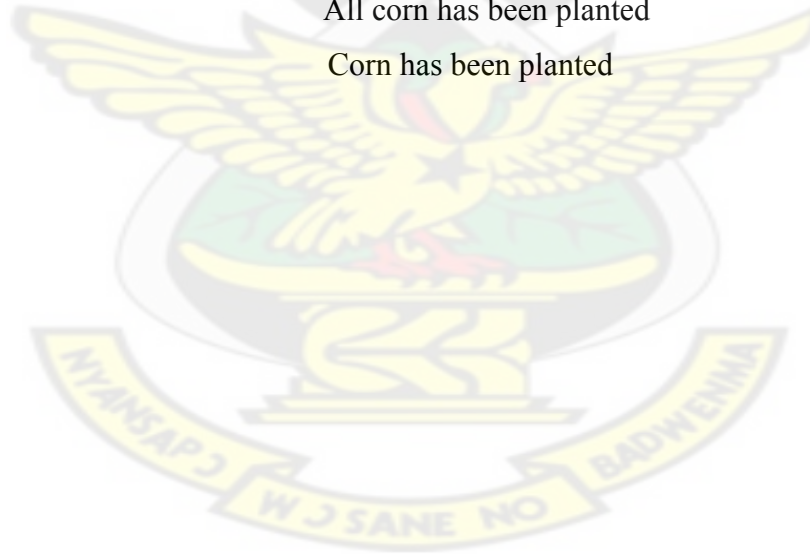




Plate 3: Corn growing on the sacred farm

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 4: Designed cement blocks used to fence the sacred farm

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Art and the harvesting of the corn and the lifting of the ban on drumming and noise making (*Odadaa*)

Thirty days after the corn has been planted, it is customarily harvested from the sacred fields and brought to the respective compounds of the priests. It is interesting to note that the same order employed to clear the sacred fields and sow the guinea corn, is followed during the harvesting of the corn and again this activity involves a great deal of art considering the use of artefacts such as the machetes, hoes, basket, *kulɔ* (pot) and *tsese* (traditional bowl) that is used in conveying the yield to the respective compounds of the priests. Immediately the corn is harvested by the chief priest, the Nai Wulɔmɔ on Tuesday, there is a day's rest period, and on Thursday, the priests and priestesses, chiefs' and elders, heads of organizations, flag bearers of the various political parties of the nation and all celebrants gather at *Odadaa Tso Shishi* the ceremonial ground for the lifting of the ban on drumming and noise making. Nii Larkote, the *brafo* in the *Nai We* (family) said that the lifting of the ban has become necessary since the thirty days silence gives the divinities and the ancestors of the land a serene atmosphere to meditate and bless the people.

Nii Larkote the *brafo* furthermore said that although it is possible for the gods and ancestors of the land to meditate even in noisy atmosphere, yet it is more effective to have a silent atmosphere so as not to lose concentration and it is in the stillness of the thirty day ban on noise making that the Ga believe their mediums can meet their gods and ancestors and hear them speak. Another point made by the informant is that the ban throws the entire traditional area into boredom.

Research into this thirty day ban on drumming and noise making has given the researcher some biblical connotations. The book of Habakkuk 2:20 in the Old Testament state that, “But the Lord is in his Holy Temple, Let all the earth keep silence before him”. This quotation from the scriptures suggests that the Lord sometimes needs silence to have a good reflection. It also suggests that at such a moment, everybody should respect God. Moreover, during the time of Jesus it was read from the Bible that when the hour came, He left his disciples to a quiet place in the garden to pray. This seems to substantiate the view of the Ga who believe that they must be quiet before their maker to pray and meditate for the Lord to provide them with rain and make the land fertile to facilitate a bountiful harvest when the crops are sown. There is another quotation in the Old Testament, Ecclesiastes 3: 7 which read “A time to tear and a time to mend, A time to be silent and a time to speak”

This quotation from the Old Testament also gives the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebrants the reason to observe the ban on noise making. It lays bare the fact that there is time for everything and that they speak to their God and ancestors almost throughout the year and the thirty-day ban serves as the time for them to do the listening. In addition we should understand that the world we live in today is a noisy one. Many people cannot even drive their vehicles without music blaring from their cars, or the beat of the bass vibrating their vehicle. Even many church services are marked more by noise than by quiet reflections. In ancient times the pagans cried out in a noisy frenzy to their idols. In sharp contrast, the wisdom of silence should be noticed because in quiet reverence God may be heard. One point worth mentioning is that, in most cases, when corn is harvested at the time of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival, there is the pouring down of rain. According to the Nai Wulɔmɔ,

the pouring down of rain signifies that the almighty God is pleased with the ceremonial rite. According to him, the way and manner in which the rains fall has certain connotations of the traditional area. If the rain comes down heavily, it washes the whole town of filth, probably symbolising that the whole town is freed from any calamity and the entire townsmen may find favour with the Lord and the lesser gods.

In the other way round, if the rains come down but not heavily and also for a short period, it is believed that there must be something wrong in the traditional area and the chief priest would lead the other priests through prayers to know the cause of this and the necessary rites to be performed. In the case when the rains do not come down, it will be required of every one to sweep his room, gather the rubbish on the streets and throw them into the sea after a special rite has been performed by the priests. There is the belief that when this is done, every misfortune and uncleanness has been gotten rid off and custodians of the land are free from any danger. The researcher is of the view that although psychologically and religiously the custodians of the rites attain peace after this special rite, they are in the other way round polluting the sea and this inadvertently would affect the fishes and at large the consumers.

Again, there is an interesting artistic aspect of the festival which appeared to being overlooked by other writers and observers. The manner in which the custodians of the activity file or queue to the consecrated farm being led by the *brafo* gives it an artistic value. They line up according to rank in which the priests are found to be in the middle of the procession. They walk in a well calculated pace and in a majestic manner. The one leading who is the *brafo* plays an important role as he leads them into singing and

chanting *Agoo! Agoo! Agoo!* which means he is asking for the way to be cleared of human traffic for them to perform their rituals.

When the researcher questioned whether it is possible for the corn to mature within the thirty days, Nuumo Larte, an elder in the *Nai We* said it is significant to note that when the Ga arrived at their present settlement, the first planting of the corn was ripe within thirty days. This has caused the observance of the thirty days but in recent periods the crop is really harvested later and dried by hanging them on the entrance of the Priests' shrines to be used for the planting of the next year's *nmaadumɔ* rite as evident on plate 5 and the preparation of the coming year's festal food by the elderly women in the various residences of the priests.





Plate 5: Corn hung at the entrance of the priest's shrine

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

The celebration of the lifting of the ban on drumming and noise making called *Odadaa* is an august one and it is the day that all chiefs gather at the ceremonial ground for the first time during the pre-celebration activities to mark the end of the silent period called *Kpoofeemɔ*. Also, people from different walks of life gather at the ceremonial ground called *Odadaa Tso Shishi* to witness the ceremony.

This important activity is in two stages namely the performing of the ritual by the Nai Wulɔmɔ and Sakumo Wulɔmɔ and secondly the beating of the drum by the Gbese *Mantsɛ* (chief). The two drums that are beaten during the ceremony are believed to be of

a female and male. According to Nii Tetteh Ahinakwa II, The kingmaker of Gbese, the indigenous name of the sacred drum is Tweneboa (*Entandrophragma*). The indigenous name of the drums which is Tweneboah is not a Ga language but it is the name of the wood that was used in making the drum. The wood Tweneboa (*Entandrophragma*) was preferred because it has very good resonance quality. The sacred drums which are outdoored once a year that is during the lifting of the ban are kept in their shrine at the Gbese *Mantsɛ* royal house. However, the sticks used in beating the sacred drums are kept at *Nyan Abodiamo We* (Royal house of Gbese Jaase) at Swalaba, a suburb in Accra. He furthermore was of the view that both the drums and sticks were once kept at the *Nyan Abodiamo We* but to avoid the carriage of the drums across various streets to the ceremonial grounds, a shrine had to be built for the drums at the *Gbese Mantsɛ We* which is opposite to the ceremonial grounds. The sticks were however kept at the royal house of the *Jaase* and are sent for purification a night before the *odadaa* ceremony.

This assertion by the two informants does not agree totally with what the researcher gathered from another informant who did not want his name to be disclosed. He was of the view that although the sacred drums are kept at the *Gbese We*, the sticks are in the custody of the Paramount Chief, who is the Ga *Mantɛ*. He furthermore added that when the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival started it was the responsibility of the Ga *Mantsɛ* to beat the sacred drum and this was observed on a Wednesday. However, when the Ga were involved in a war with the Anlos in the early stages of their present settlement, when the Ga *Mantɛ* was on the battle field, it coincided with the time when the Ga had to lift the ban on noise making. The whole traditional area was worried because the Ga

Mantsɛ was not around to beat the sacred drum in order to lift the ban on noise making and drumming. A messenger was sent to the Ga *Mantsɛ* at the battle field that the people are worried due to his inability to beat the drum to lift the ban and the messenger returned with the news that the Ga Mantsɛ has given the prerogative to the Gbese Mantsɛ to beat the drum. The messenger however arrived very late in the evening of Wednesday and for this reason caused the celebration of the *odadaa* to be observed on a Thursday.

From the two assertions gathered by the researcher, it could be deduced that it is likely that it was the responsibility of the Ga Paramount chief to beat the sacred drum but had to delegate the power of beating the sacred drum to the Gbese *Mantsɛ* due to his battle with the Anlos. In present celebrations, the sacred drum is kept by the Royal stool house of the *Gbese We*, but the sticks used in beating the drum is claimed to be kept by both the royal houses of the Gbese people and Ga paramount chief. However, it is likely the Ga Chief is the one keeping the original sticks but due to litigations and squabbles had caused the Gbese *We* to do a replica of the sticks which they keep at the *Nyan Abodiamo We*.

The ceremony actually begins in the afternoon at 2 O'clock. All the chiefs arrive in a sequential manner. It is a time to show their grandeur and authority. The chiefs dress in rich cloths which as known already, are art works. They also decorate themselves with beads, rings on their fingers, ornaments of beautiful artefacts around their ankles. The researcher shares the same idea with Cole and Ross (1977:134) that the regalia that

surround and embellish royalty and the institution of chieftaincy are the most visible of arts, designed to publicly proclaim their power and grandeur.

Other artefacts, as noted already, are the emblems that are held by the chief's fore runners. There are various beads displayed by the priests, priestesses and chiefs which are worn over their neck, wrist and ankle. Notably among the chiefs' beads is the *Afili* bead. This is a long white bead worn the chiefs signifies their position and jurisdiction. According to Nii Yarboi Yartey, head of the Aplaku family, the *afili* bead was given to the chiefs by the Nai Wulɔmɔ to identify them as rulers of the various quarters of the traditional area. According to him, when the Ga arrived at the present settlement, the Nai Wulɔmɔ was the only acknowledged ruler of the traditional area. The Ga chief, Asere chief, Gbese and Sempe *Mankralo* were the leaders that were identified with the *afili* bead by the chief priest.

Immediately all the chiefs of the Ga Mashie quarters arrive at the *Odadaa tso shishi*, the ceremonial ground, a messenger is sent to the Nai Wulɔmɔ and Sakumo Wulɔmɔ to formally invite them to grace the occasion and perform the rituals. However, it is the priest of Sakumo who processes first with his entourage to the ceremonial ground and signifies the *Nai We* by the blowing of horn to alert them to follow suit. The Nai Wulɔmɔ together with the priest of Sakumo pray and pour libation for the lifting of the ban in a three demarcated circles at the ceremonial grounds.

Immediately the Sakumo and Nai Wulomo arrive, they send greetings to their “children” in a form of a wave and it is an interesting sight to see the joyous crowd as the jubilant crowd hail them with loyal acclamation and appellations as they welcome them to the ceremonial ground. They afterwards process to the three circles together with other priests, priestesses and heads of the various families to pray and pour libation to the Almighty God, ancestors and divinities as evident on plate eight (8). They stand in the middle of the circle to perform the ritual. The three circles in which they stand and perform this duty is believed to ward off evil spirits and for this reason the priests believe they are protected from evil and bad omen. The special designated for the ritual is very artistic. The three circles are very symbolic and therefore the circles are used universally and the Ga Traditionalist believes that they are protected.

Having finished with the prayers the *Nai* makes way to his seat. It is now the onus of the Gbese *Mantsɛ* to play the sacred *obonu* drum to finally lift the ban on noisemaking and drumming. The Gbese *Mantsɛ* assisted by *Mankralo* simultaneously lift the drum sticks up and down three times before beating the drum. This is repeated three times and on the third beating it is received with applause and cheers from the joyous celebrants. The ban has been lifted and the whole Ga traditional area is thrown into ecstasy amid wild jubilation. Plate nine (9) shows evidence of how the Gbese *Mantsɛ* and the *Mankralo* simultaneously play the drum to lift the ban on drumming and noise making.

It is interesting to note that the sacred *obonu* drums are quickly carried away to their shrine. The sacred drum alleged to be of a male and female are kept in their shrine and

only brought when the ban on noise making and drumming have to be lifted. It is interesting to see older and younger people playing *ampe*, a local game for females. It is usually done by a group of females especially young girls who clap, jump and sing at the same time. In the process of jumping, they move one leg forward in that order to outwit the counterpart. Immediately the ban is lifted, loud sounds pulsating from individual windows are heard and the entire area, make the whole scenario one of absolute jubilation.

The most jubilant seem to be the older men and women who assure themselves that if the year has come and they are still alive, they psychologically get the assurance that their health would be good and they would live to celebrate the next festival. It is an interesting sight to see old men and women jump up and down throwing their hands lackadaisically and dancing to the staccato beats of the drum and shouting *akpa he hawo eee* meaning all our sins have been taken away. This comes to establish the medicinal aspect of the festival since psychologically the celebrants attain peace and feel relieved that all their sins and sicknesses have been carried away; hence they will live to see the end of the coming year.

The celebrants customarily afford the chiefs the honour to dance to the staccato rhythm from the divine drummers before they take their turn. The chiefs lighten up the ceremonial ground with their graceful steps amid cheers from their people. All sorts of games are played amid loud music pulsating from sound systems which are mostly hired by various homes to produce music and others are heard pulsating from individual

windows. Gun shots are also heard and this influences them to believe that the shots come to drive away bad spirits



Plate 6: The sacred drums being carried to the ceremonial ground

Source: Photographed by the researcher



Plate 7: The sacred drums being carried away to their shrine

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 8: Sakumo priest pouring libation during the lifting of the ban ceremony

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 9: Gbese *Mantsɛ* and *Mankralo* beating the sacred drum to lift the ban on drumming and noise making.

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Acquaintances, friends and loved ones gather later at drinking spots and bars to share their dreams together. This also comes to establish the socio cultural aspects of the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival as they get acquainted with each other, economic activities move on since drinking spots realize their highest income during these periods and eventually they would be able to pay their utility bills which the government utilizes to supplement the funds used in providing social amenities such as schools, clinics and community libraries for the traditional area and the nation as a whole.

The celebration of the *odadaa* really involves a great deal of art. The prayers and words that are said in the form of verses by the *Nai Wulɔmɔ* are very poetic and thus an art work. These words accompany the pouring of libation which already said is artistic. This shows the relationship between the art and the religion of the people of the Ga traditional area. Another artistic point worth mentioning is the hierarchical arrangement of power and authority during the procession and sitting arrangements at the ceremonial grounds *odadaa tso shishi*. This gives a form of design which may eventually create order, balance and harmony in the spiritual realm. Emphasis must be placed on order since it moves alongside art which is the primary aim of the artist as he produces an artefact. For this reason any work of art or design without order may cease to be a good work of art or design and this point goes to substantiate the statement made by Macquet (1986:13)

Any artefact [or anything] with aesthetic quality is a tangible symbol standing for the idea of order. This surprising conclusion from our previous analysis is inescapable. If the configuration of forms in any aesthetic object displays an excellent composition, it necessarily symbolizes order, as an idea. Any work revealing a

concern for and achieving visual quality is a statement for order against chaos. Order of course is only one of the signifies of an object. It does not preclude other significations. Nevertheless it will be something outside aesthetic realm.

The above statement makes it true that order may be considered when designing a piece of art. It also holds true about the principles of design. The hierarchical structure of the chiefs' procession creates a form of balance, order and unity. In art, there are the general principles concerning the design of an art piece and these elements of design namely lines, shapes, colours, space, dots, textures and the principles of design namely dominance, contrast, proportion, variety, harmony, rhythm and balance. The procession to the ceremonial ground seems to justify all these elements and principles as evident on plates 10 and 11.

Thus, in reality, analyzing and appreciating a work of art, one may have to assess the work in the context of these elements and principles and if it happens that the artist organised the elements of design and the principles of art well or harmoniously, irrespective of the cultural and social significance attached to the work, the work may be acclaimed to be a good work of art. Against this background, the procession of the chief and his subjects which is viewed from artistic perspective has a great deal to offer in the sphere of art. Also the sitting posture of the chief and his entourage on the ceremonial ground is artistic. The chiefs' are flanked on both sides by sword bearers, flywhisk and hand fan bearers. The hand fan bearers are there to ward off flies from the chief and also

to provide him with good ventilation. The sitting structure of the chiefs is evident on plate 11.



Plate 10: Artistic creation: The Gbese *We* procession to the ceremonial grounds

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 11: A chief at the *odadaa* ceremony. Note the sitting structure and all the artefacts on him and on his subjects

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Art and the purification of the sea (*Nshɔ bulemɔ*)

Purification of the sea known as *nshɔ bulemɔ* is an important rite during the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. It is performed after four weeks of the lifting of the ban on noise making. Nii Ammah (1982: 27, 31) has taken note that there is purification of the sea on Wednesday by La and Teshie people. However this activity in the Ga Mashie area takes place early morning of Tuesday at the shrine of the *Jemawon* (the traditional deity) of the sea who is known as Naa Tɔtrɔɔ. The shrine is seen as a rock and Naa Tɔtrɔɔ is the *jemawon* of the shrine, therefore the people have applied the name to the rock. The ceremony is in two phases namely the washing and cleansing of the shrine and the purification rite.

Before the day of the purification of the sea, the custodians of the rite keep vigil on the Monday night preceding the day the rituals would be performed to consult the *Jemawon* (the traditional deity) to direct them on how to carry out their activities the following morning. This is verified through the pouring of libation and the respective spirit drawn into its medium. Through prayers and pouring of libation an agreement is said to be reached and everything is made ready for the purification the following morning. Some Priestesses from the Ga traditional area and elderly women from the various priests' residences who have reached their menopause are the first to reach the ceremonial grounds early in the morning. Older women are preferred to younger ones because the latter might be in the menstrual period which is considered as unclean. The *Jemawon* Naa Tɔtrɔɔ is situated at the shores of the sea near the Usher Fort Prison known as the *Ga Abola Nshɔ Naa*.

The priestesses and elderly women of the traditional area who have been assigned this duty by the chief priest make their way to the ceremonial grounds to wash and cleanse the shrine of any physical filth. (See plates 12 and 13 for a picture of the cleansing ritual). The shrine is washed and cleansed because my informant, the priestess of the shrine informed the researcher that Naa Tɔtrɔɔ has human attributes just as anyone else and could be seen by her with the naked eyes and may reward or punish men with mishaps, diseases and even death and it is believed Naa Tɔtrɔɔ exhibits certain aspects of the power of the Supreme Being but the shrine is seen as a rock at the shores of the *Ga Abola* sea.

Among the things used in washing and cleansing the shrine are *kotsa* (sponge), *abonua* (*Citrus Aurantiifolia*), perfume, *sawie*, *ayilɔ* (traditional clay), *krɔbɔ* (a sweet smelling paste made of ground leaves) and sea water. Naa Tɔtrɔɔ is washed just like the way human beings are washed. My informants on this occasion were Naa Laile who is one of the priestess of the traditional area, Nyoomobi Tɔtrɔɔ who is the priestess of the deity Naa Tɔtrɔɔ and auntie Laiko who was the elderly person who accompanied them to the ceremonial ground. While washing the shrine, they report all the predicaments and misfortunes of the people within the year to the supposed deity invoked into it. They also thank her for answering their problems the previous year. According to my informants, Naa Tɔtrɔɔ always comes to their aid whenever they report all their problems to her. It is believed to be a reciprocal agreement as they come to wash her and in return she also answers to their call. Having finished with the washing of the shrine, the shrine is smeared with *ayilɔ*, traditional clay, *krɔbɔ* and sprayed with perfume.



Plate 12: The shrine of Naa Tɔtrɔɔ being washed and cleansed by the priestesses

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 13: The shrine of Naa Totroo

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

The second phase of the ceremony begins when the priestesses have finished the cleansing activity and have returned to the *Nai We* to inform the chief priest of the completion of the first phase since he is the overseer of the rite. Before the procession to the shrine of the Naa Tɔtrɔɔ at the Ga Abola sea which is the ceremonial grounds, there is again the pouring of libation to the divinities for protection and guidance to achieve a successful ritual.

The single file procession is led by the *brafo* (executioner) who has *nmastu* (dry palm fruit) in a container with a long chain attached to the container used as an handle. This is lighted and continuously winded by the *brafo* producing smoke whilst leading the procession. This is believed to drive away bad spirits. According to Tumɔmli Yartey III, head of the *Nai We*, *Nmatsu* (dry palm fruit) is used due to the numerous products derived from the palm tree such as broom for sweeping, palm oil, distilleries, mushroom, *akonkron* (cocoon) and also in making of a popular soap in the traditional area known as *nmɛ samina* (palm nut soap). The *brafo* who leads the procession chants *agoo!*, *agoo!*, *agoo!*. The *brafo* leads the *Nai We* (family) and he is noticed by the wearing of a bead called *banka*. The bead which gives authority to the *brafo* (executioner) to perform this august function during this celebration is obviously a work of art. Without this artefact he ceases to be the *brafo* and cannot perform any of the functions associated with the celebration of the festival.

This purification of the sea known as *nshɔ bulemɔ* is very important since over the year, all sorts of filth are believed to have been cast into the sea and the sea is believed to be

desecrated one. It is therefore expedient to carry out this rite to cleanse the sea. It is known that due to the seas desecrations, it rejects dead bodies and releases it to its shores. It is because of this reason that the purification rite is carried out.

The Nai Wulomɔ prays and pours libation in the midst of his coterie, repeatedly shout *Hiao* (meaning may it be so) after every spoken word by him. After the prayers, he offers two white fowls to the sea. He holds the live white fowls one in each hand till they die (See plates 14 and 15). It is a bravery act to see the *Nai* hold the fowls up high till they die mysteriously. According to the Nai Wulomɔ when the fowls die in that manner, it means that Naa Tɔtrɔɔ who is the *Jemawon* of the sea is really happy with the rite that has been performed and the researcher was informed by the priest that the sea deity always receives it with much joy. In a case when the priest realizes that the fowls are still alive after a long period, he brings his hands down and performs the rituals again. He prays on behalf of his people since there might be something wrong. Having finished with his plea, he then lifts the fowls toward the sea and when they finally die, they rejoice believing that their offering has been accepted. The ceremony ends with prayers and thanksgiving amid singing and clapping. The *brafo* initiates the following song and it is responded by the crowd:

Ga

Awo! Awo! Awo!

Agba Ei

Bleku tsɔɔ

Enam awonuu Ei

Esu, Esu

Manyo Manyo

Adeban kpɔtɔɔ

English

Exalted! Exalted! Exalted

Priestly people

Let rain fall to give blessing

Let us have fish, fish

Water, water

Abundant blessings

Plenty of food

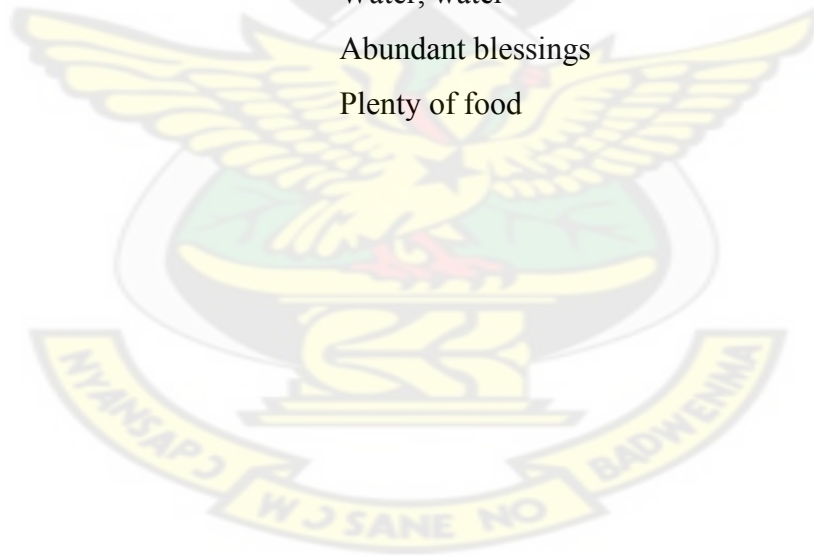




Plate 14: White fowls being offered and believed to purify the sea.

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 15: The fowls die mysteriously and believed to be accepted by the deity

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Having finished this purification rite, the sea is said to open its “gates” and fish is caught in abundance, no wonder fish is even caught at the bank of the shores and not expensive during this season, some are smoked for the preparation of the festal food of the festival and others for economic gains. This according to Onukpa Kpakpo, an experienced fisherman and with a canoe inscription *ka amε hewɔn kulε* (if it had been them), substantiated the assertion by saying they make bountiful harvest after the purification rite has been performed. He furthermore said this bountiful harvest could not have resulted from the ban on fishing which probably allows the fishes to replenish the sea with their offspring but was of the view that the purification rite has an effect on the fishing. Furthermore, every Tuesday in the Ga traditional area there is a ban on fishing, but the catch soon after the purification rite is far more than the usual days. Onukpa Kpakpo was however, quick to say that the catch these days are not bountiful as it used to be years ago. He attributed it to the manner in which the purification of the sea is performed in recent times.

This created a fertile ground for the researcher to interact with some sections of the youth, they were of the view that the custodians of the rituals do not use the right animal for the ritual hence their difficulties in life and the decline in the catching of abundant fishes. This conception about the purification of the sea has been running through the minds of some people of the Ga Traditional area and the entire nation. This was realized through interviews that the researcher conducted among some youth and average age people about this rite. It was their response to the researcher’s question about the way the fowls die supernaturally that we got to know about the misinformation they have had about the purification of the sea. Most of them were of the view that customarily, it is a

cow that is used in the purification of the sea but the elders have ignored the use of this animal in the purification rite. They rather send the blood of the animal to the sea. The youth believe that their predicaments in life have resulted from the failure to use cows for the sacrifice. This view according to the Nai Wulomɔ is untrue and that a cow was used in the purification of the sea but in the present celebration it is two white fowls that are given to the *Jemawon* Naa Tɔtrɔɔ.

The Nai Wulomɔ however explained that when they arrived at their present settlement, it was human beings that were being offered as sacrifices for this ritual. They obviously realised that they were decreasing in number due to the human sacrifices, they consulted their divinities and ancestors to appeal against the use of human beings. They were directed to use cows and after some celebrations, the custodians of the rites realised that the cow gestates for nine months and thereby considered to have some attributes of a human being. The appeal was once again launched to divinities and ancestors against the use of the cow and fowls were directed to be used. This superstition of the youth and even some elderly in the traditional area could be from a bridge between them and their spiritual leaders. It could also be from lack of education and the relevant information about the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival and its ritual activities.

According to Tumomli Yartey III, head of the *Nai We*, the cow is sometimes sacrificed to the sea upon request from the chief fishermen when they experience difficulties in catching fish. Immediately the chief fisherman makes the request to the Nai Wulomɔ, the *Jemawon* Naa Tɔtrɔɔ is consulted by the chief priest and a ritual is performed.

Customarily, a cow is driven through the principal streets of the Ga Traditional area and finally slaughtered at the shrine of the Nai Wulɔmɔ. The carcass is cut into pieces and thrown into the sea. Following the sacrifice, fish is caught in abundance even at the banks of the sea. This in the researcher's view although psychologically the celebrants attain peace after the ritual, economically it is delicious meats that are being wasted and the meat could be used in preparing sumptuous meals for human consumption.

Having finished with the purification rite at the shrine of Naa Tortro, there are some changes that characterize it. The sea becomes full and overflows to its shores. This in the celebrants' belief is a sign of appreciation and gratitude by the deity, gods and divinities of the sea. Scientifically, according to A. A. Amaah, a lecturer and Head of Oceanography Department, University of Ghana, Legon around the time of the performing the ritual, there are strong wind causing the waves to be very high. According to him, if the waves are high, there is the tendency that the sea would overflow beyond its shores and sometimes into various homes that are really close to the shore of the sea. Therefore the overflowing of the sea may not result from the fowl sacrifice.

Art and the arrival of the *soobii* (Thursday people)

Usually in the second or third Saturday in the month of August marks the actual celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. Two days before the Saturday celebration, that is on Thursday, all Ga people living outside the Ga traditional area are customarily expected to come home. Since their return takes place annually on Thursday, they are referred to

(in the Ga language) as *Soobii* (meaning, Thursday people). However, in other traditional areas such as Osu, La, and Teshie where the celebration is observed on Tuesday, the people from the outlying villages arrive on Mondays. Therefore they are known as *jubii* (Monday people).

Opoku (1970:52) writes that on the arrival of the *soo bii*, they converge at a place called Mukpono where they drum, sing and dance hilariously. After some hours of enjoyment, they disperse into their homes where they are given a tumultuous welcome. Every *Soobii* arrives home with a load of harvested crops covered with a white cloths showing the triumph over hunger that had once plagued their forebears and hence a period of intense merry making. However, the researcher's observation during the research shows that a portion of the *Soobii* converges at Kpayaafo and others also gather at Chorkor. This observation by the researcher is substantiated by Nuumo Blafo, Ga Blafo Wulɔmɔ expressed that really when they do come, they converge at Kpayaafo and Chorkor before moving to their various homes.

Nii Ammah (1982:9) has taken note of singing and trudging along the principal streets amid drumming and dancing, sometimes with masquerades and the whole Ga Mashie area is transformed into a colourful ambience with pomp and pageantry. Finally when it is dark, they settle down and meet old friends and start new relationships. This celebration continues until the new dawn of Friday and the theme of the celebration is that of ridiculing hunger, saying that the harvest has been plentiful (*nmaa eyɛ*).

The *soobii* are very important since traditionally, their arrival shows that the harvest has been plentiful and the people are ready for the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration. Furthermore its significance in the celebration is that it promotes the awareness of the festival and through their procession in the city, amid singing and dancing the Ga are reminded to remain united.

Singing, drumming and dancing are what mainly characterize this activity. It must be noted that it is partly through this singing that the *Soobii* promote the awareness of the festival. It has been noticed by the researcher through observations and the comparison with what other writers have written on the arrival of the *Soobii*, that the pomp and pageantry attached to the arrival of the *soobii* has waned but there still lives traces of their arrival each year. The researcher is of the view that it could stem from the fact that the Ga people arrived at their present settlement, they were predominantly farmers and fishermen, but now they occupy various positions in organizations such as the banks, hospitals, schools just to mention a few and at the time of arrival of the *Soobii*, they cannot be available to welcome them to the traditional area. Another reason to the waning activities of the *Soobii* is due to the pursuit of jobs at far distant places. It is the high cost involved in long travelling that discourages some of the *Soobii* to return to their traditional areas to celebrate the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival.

Art and the Twins Yam Festival (*Haaji Yɛ/ɛ Yeli*)

The *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is never complete without the honouring of twins in the traditional families as they consider them as blessings to the family. The rite takes place on Friday

preceding the Ga *Hɔmɔwɔ* on Saturday which the Ga consider as the “birthday” for all twins. The Twin celebration is a yam festival and for this reason yam is the main crop used in preparing food for them. The eating of yam in the twins’ celebration is also seen in the celebration of the *Odwira* festival. *Odwira* in the Akwamu, Akropong, Aburi, Kibi, Asante and other places marks the eating of new yams. It is normally scheduled for August or September just as the celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ* is in August. The Encyclopaedia of Ethics and Religion (1937) points out that, the tribes of Niger celebrate the Yam harvest by a feast to which everyone contributes a fowl. The writers also cite the celebration of the yam harvest of the Yoruba in which all the celebrants partake of the new yam and quantities of vegetable food as an example; whilst Fiji great feasts are said to take place at the time of the presentation of the first fruits of the yams to the ancestral spirits.

The birth of twins is considered to be a great fortune in the Ga culture. But this alleged gift is considered as an abomination elsewhere in Africa such as the Western Yoruba of Benin and those of the eastern part of Ondo. It is considered a sign of bad luck in these places. Nevertheless, the Ga people regard twins as special people associated with spirits and gods. It is usual to give birth to a baby but to give birth to two or more babies is mysterious and when a woman delivers twins successfully, she is congratulated and honoured but if she dies during child birth, she is not given a befitting burial, since the people believe that such a funeral will cause incessant recurrence of dying in childbirth. My informant, who did not want his identity disclosed, said that the celebration of the twins’ yam festival was not part of the initial *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration. He furthermore said

that when the Ga arrived at their present settlement, it was an abomination to give birth to twins. All twins delivered in the traditional area were killed. All Ga residents succumbed to this maltreatment and killing of twins but when the wife of Chief Okaija delivered very bouncing identical twins, he secretly hid the babies because he did not want them killed. According to my informant who did not provide the exact time this happened, said Nii Okaija was full of love and compassion for his twins. For this reason he arranged with one of his subjects to bolt with his twins to the central region of the country to save them from being killed. He sends money periodically for their up keep. After several years, the twins decided to visit their father and it was said that they arrived on Friday, a day before the *Hɔmɔwɔ* Celebration. The striking identity of Nii Okaija's twins was admired by all including the very rulers of the traditional area. After deliberate discussions by the traditional rulers, it was agreed that the killing of twins be abrogated and rather celebrate a yam festival during the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration as a birthday for all twins on Fridays (considered a sacred days for twins) before the Saturday celebration. The crop Yam (*Dioscorea rotundata*) was attached to the celebration since the Ga believe that it takes someone very hardworking to cultivate this crop. It was therefore given to people celebration another year of their birth and that is how yam came to be with the twins festival which was considered as a birthday for all twins.

In this regard, the twin ceremony begins early on Friday morning in all the respective compounds where twins are residing. But the Nai Wulɔmɔ is the first to prepare the concoctions known in the Ga language as *baawoo* before the various houses where

twins reside can take their turn. This is necessary since the onus lies on him to seek permission on behalf of all twins of the traditional area from the gods.

The Nai Wulomɔ dressed in an all white outfit recites prayers with the congregation responding *Hiao!, Hiao!, Hiao!* after which there is a call and response to his singing. Libation is poured and a tuber of yam (*Dioscorea rotundata*) is cut into small pieces and placed at all entry points of the *Nai We* to invoke the spirits for the ceremony to come to their respective mediums. It is to be understood that during these activities, all the forms of the arts characterize this activity. For example, performing arts, in the form of singing, take place. In addition the artistic clapping of hands puts the activity into a beautiful musical atmosphere as they clap in a staccato form meaning short and detached manner. There are also traces of verbal arts in the form of poetic prayers that accompany the libation which the Nai Wulomɔ pours at that time. A visual art is also involved in the ceremony because the twins are ritually cleansed with a concoction contained in a *tsese* (traditional bowl) which, obviously, is a visual art object.

According to the Nai Wulomɔ, the herbs used in the preparation of the twins concoction are seven different kinds namely *ntonme* (*Dracaena Arborea*) *hii abaa*, *nyanyara* (*Momordica charantia*), *adibli*, *adwere* (*Portulaca oleraceae*), *tsalai* and *too lilei*. The botanical names of some of the leaves were determined by the researcher at the Laboratory Department of Theoretical and Applied Biology, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi with assistance from Mr. Alexander Kofi Anning, a Lecturer of the department.

As the chief priest recites some prayers and sings, he carefully mixes the above mentioned leaves with sea water, schnapps and eggs. This *baawoo* (concoction) is also prepared in a *tsese* (traditional bowl). The concoction is believed to induce fertility. Interestingly, in the Ga culture the egg is used to symbolize fertility. Rev. Kwasi Sarpong makes it clear in his book *Ghana In Retrospect: Some aspects of Ghanaian Culture* that a symbolic object which is associated with fecundity and easy labour in Ghanaian culture is the egg of the domestic hen. He furthermore stated that

The egg is laid by the hen with what the Ghanaian considers to be amazing ease; it is therefore made to symbolize easy labour and fecundity. For these reasons the egg is employed time and again for sacrifices, at purificatory rites, as pacification fees as gifts, in thanksgiving after sickness on many occasions.

Having finished the twin rite, the chief priest offers prayers on behalf of the Head of State of Ghana, all war afflicted countries, workers of the state, school children and all persons in the world. He then sacrifices two white fowls by slaughtering them one after the other at the forecourt of his shrine. He afterwards recites poetic prayers and throws the fowls backwards and the manner in which the fowl falls is said to be very significant. The process is repeated if both fowls fall on their bellies which would be a sign of bad omen till at least one of them has to lie on its back. This is done upon an appeal by the *Nai Wulomɔ* to the gods to forgive them of their shortcomings. A goat is also sacrificed in the inner chamber of the shrine for religious and pacification purposes. Later, the blood of the goat is applied to the doorposts of the *Nai We* to ward off evil spirits, and

through this smearing of blood at the various doorposts and entrances, the custodians of the rites get the belief that they are protected.

The chief priest purifies himself with the concoctions made in the *tsese*. He pours some of the concoction into his mouth and spits it out three times. Celebrants come at their own free will from all walks of life to purify themselves and ask for fertility and fecundity. It is believed that when you wash and cleanse yourself with this concoction and you make your requests known, you will be purified and have answers to your request. The flesh of the fowls, the goat and the yam are used to prepare a special meal called *fotoli* which everybody is free to partake. *Fotoli* is believed to be the special meal of the gods. Money in the form of coins is dropped by celebrants who come to purify themselves from the *tsese* to ask for birth and solution to problems. It is therefore an undeniable fact that the celebration indeed involves a lot of art considering the coins which are designed by the artist and which is an example of environmental art.

Between 4:00 and 5:30pm, the peels of the yams that were used in the rituals and in preparing the *fotoli* are gathered into the *tsese*. At the *Nai We*, one of the members volunteer to carry the traditional bowl to the sea side to cast it away on behalf of all twins of the Ga traditional area. The same is done in the other family residences where twins could be found. The twins are also carried shoulder high by the youth as evident on plate 15. As soon as the *tsese* is carried, singing and chanting are what characterize the journey. Another form of art here is the application of clay, powder on the twins which serves as a symbol of victory, purity and joy. These are body arts which make the celebration achieve its main objective. This painting on the face of the twins is evident

on plate 16 which shows twins who have been carried shoulder high during the processions. The paintings on the twins coupled with their being carried shoulder high in the Ga Mashie area portray the importance and honours of the twins.

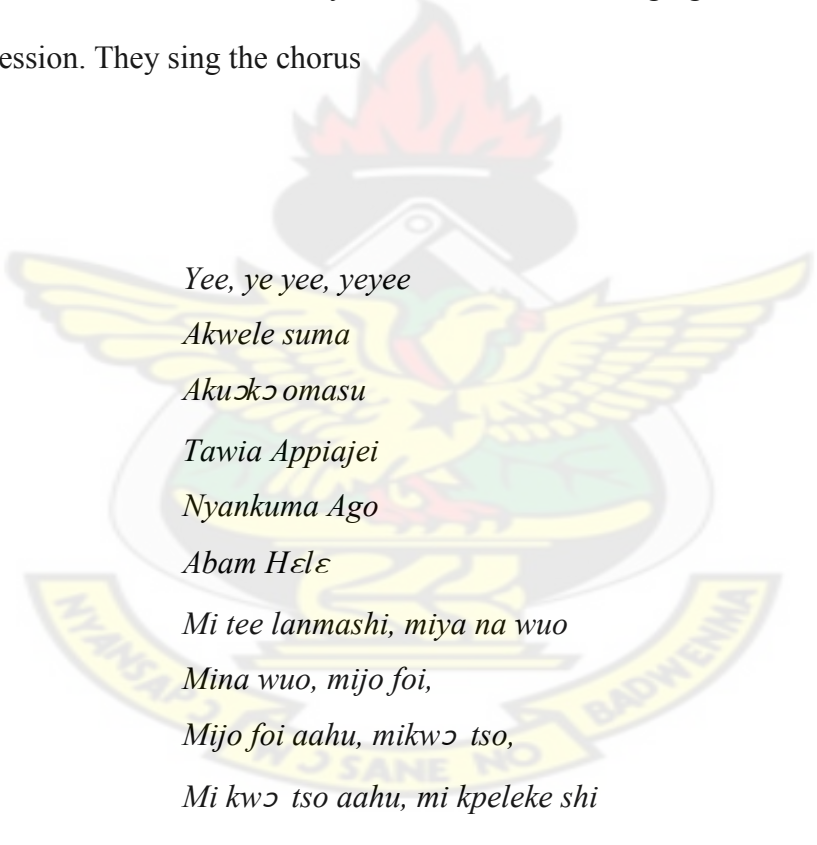
Furthermore an intense drama unfolds when the carriers of the *tsese* seem to be possessed and move in an uncontrollable manner. Singing and chanting are heard from various houses where twins are residing and it is very interesting to see how carriers “come out” from their homes with a large crowd following each respective carrier especially on the Gbese Street.

The climax of this drama is reached when the carriers from different households seem to be wrestling against the *tsese* they are carrying and they sometimes wrestle against other *tsese* carriers. According to Nii Larkote, the *brafo* in the *Nai We*, the herbs that are carried are very powerful and the carriers wrestle against each other to release the tension in them. Plate 17 shows some carriers of the *tsese*, possessed amid a large crowd. The Ga, like other Africans, believe that both animate and inanimate objects have what is called the “vital force” or life force on which human beings depend for daily survival and continuity. Therefore, they believe that the combination of the herbs can influence the carriers of the *tsese* to wrestle with one another. It must be noted that the vital force or life force has two aspects namely the spiritual and the physical, and the physical aspects have been well established by scientists.

God has endowed man with power, intelligence and knowledge to obtain these inanimate and animate for use in curing sicknesses and it is no wonder that the cinchona

tree can treat malaria and *nyanyara* (*Momordica charantia*) one of the herbs for the concoction has also become the panacea for many convulsion diseases. Djagbletey (1972:24) states in her book that some plants are believed to be able to draw out magical powers from the atmosphere and plants of this nature are used for religious and yam festivals. She furthermore writes that the *nyanyara* herb is the official attire of the priestesses. The service of the *nyanyara* is employed by the twins' and the priests and priestesses to increase their natural or individual powers for the task of communication with the astral forces. Immediately the carriers set off, singing and dancing characterize the procession. They sing the chorus

Ga



Yee, ye yee, yeyee
Akwele suma
Akuꝑꝑomasu
Tawia Appiajei
Nyankuma Ago
Abam Hele
Mi tee lanmashi, miya na wuo
Mina wuo, mijo foi,
Mijo foi aahu, mikꝑꝑ tso,
Mi kwꝑꝑ tso aahu, mi kpeleke shi
Mi kpeleke shi Akwele
Mi kpeleke shi Akuꝑꝑ

English

The spirit of Akwele

The spirit of Akuoko

Tawiah Appiajei too

Nyankoma Ago also

and Aban

I went to Lanmashi, and saw a swarm of bees

I run away having seen the swarm of bees

I climbed a tree afterward

After a sometime, I descended from the tree

I descended Akwele

I descended Akuoko

(Akwele, Akuoko are names of female twins. Tawiah, Ago and Abam are names given to siblings born after the birth of twins)



Plate 16: Twins being carried shoulder high during the *haajii yelɛ yeli* procession

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 17: *Tsese* carriers possessed as they head towards the dumping site

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Art and the Ga *Hɔmɔwɔ* Festival

The Ga Mashie *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is celebrated annually on Saturdays with pomp and pageantry, a day after the celebration of the Twins Yam Festival (*Haaji Yelɛ Yeli*). It is incumbent on every household to take part in this celebration because it is believed that during this celebration dead relatives visit their families to partake in the eating of the festal food and offer their blessings. Traditionally, it is the head of the household who must make sure that sufficient money have been made available for the cooking of the festal food by the women. It is customarily expected that the food prepared should be more than enough for the household and some impromptu visitors.

In the family homes of the priests, priestesses and chiefs, the festal food is prepared by elderly women who have reached menopause or are not in their menstrual period. As soon as the food is prepared, it is served in an earthenware pot with its accompaniment, the palm fruit soup. The festal food in the chief priest's palace is prepared with sea water and it is very fascinating to note that the cooks are so experienced in using sea water in cooking this meal that one would not taste an overdose of salt in the food. It is worthy of note that the Nai Wulɔmɔ is one of the spiritual heads of the traditional area since he is the priest of the sea deity. On account of his office he does not take man-made salt which is believed to be polluted and for this reason sea water is used in the preparation of his food. It is only smoked fish and sometimes goat meat that is used in the preparation of the palm fruit soup, the accompaniment of the festal food.

The preparation of the festal food customarily must start early dawn and made ready before the sun rises. It is the duty of the Nai Wulɔmɔ to sprinkle the festive food called *kpokpoi* or *akpitigbijulo* before any chief or household can follow suite, hence, the festal food is made ready earlier for him to perform the rite known as *Nishwamɔ*. The Nai Wulɔmɔ prays on behalf of the country and her leaders, farmers and fishermen, civil servants and private workers, teachers and everybody in Ghana. He afterwards sprinkles the festal food firstly in his residence before he sets out into the surrounding streets such as the Gbese Street to continue with the sprinkling. This sprinkling of the festal food is to show that the Ga people have had enough to eat and hence the sprinkling of the festive food. Another reason for the sprinkling is that during the famine period at the early settlement of the present home of the Ga, most of their ancestors and great grandfathers died famishing, so it is believed that they come home to eat the sprinkled food and also hoot at the hunger that plagued them some time ago. This sprinkling rite is also performed by the various priests of the traditional area.

During this activity, the Nai Wulɔmɔ sprinkles the *kpokpoi/akpitigbijulo* on the ground, into all corners of his buildings, entry and exit points and also on top of any stone or any form of embossment in his residence. It is believed by the celebrants that the surface of a stone or any form of embossment is hot, capable of causing fire and for this reason, the *kpokpoi* or *akpitigbijulo* is sprinkled on it and believed to cool it. There is a lot of drama involved in this sprinkling activity as the priest performs this act with alacrity. Having finished with the sprinkling rite, the Nai Wulɔmɔ gathers with his elders, men and women, children and all en sundry present at the time of the rite to partake in the

Kogbamɔ rite. *Kogbamɔ* is the act of eating communally the festive food hurriedly. When eating, there is no division of the children from the elders but rather everyone eats from the same bowl and this is expected to bring a desired unity and love between the elderly and children in the household. When the Nai Wulɔmɔ ends the sprinkling rite, it is the traditional right of the Gbese *Mantsɛ* (Gbese chief) to sprinkle the festal food right after the Nai. The Gbese *Mantsɛ* does this by sending few of his subjects to the Nai *We* (Nai Wulɔmɔ's residence) to find out whether he has finished with the rite. If the feedback is affirmative, then Gbese chief takes his turn in the sprinkling rite through the Gbese streets to the Usher Fort and to the *Ga Mantsɛ's* doorstep. The *Gbese Mantsɛ* dances three times to announce to the *Ga Mantsɛ* that he has finished with his duty to enable him also take his turn. The Ga chief performs his sprinkling rite and the various heads of family can also do so in their various households. The sprinkling rite is observed before the festal food is served in the various households. It is worth pointing out that the festal food is sprinkled for the spirits of the departed and not for the gods of Gas. The traditional food for the gods is known as *Fotoli*, special food prepared with *nmaa* (millet).

It is expedient for every home to serve anyone who is present at the time of the celebration. This is very important so as not to ignorantly starve the ancestors who may visit their relatives' homes in human form to partake in the festal food. Another point is that for someone to eat and throw some away or waste part of the food is a clear sign of having enough to eat.

The festival food

As already mentioned, the name of the festal food for the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is *Kpokpoi*. Another name for the festal food is *Akpitigbijulo*. *Kpokpoi* comes from two words *kpo* and *kpee*. *Kpo* which means an entire or complete piece of a material and the suffix *kpee*, means a gathering of people. Therefore, the word *kpokpoi* means for a whole or complete meeting of family members or friends. *Akpitigbijulo* which is the other name for the festal food means that we have gotten hold of a good day. The inference could be that the Ga recognize a day when they get the opportunity to gather as one people and therefore there should be merry making.

The main ingredients for the preparation of the festal food is steamed unleavened corn dough, palm oil, smoked fish, okro (*Hibiscus Esculentum*) and water. However as mentioned earlier, at the Nai *We*, sea water is used and not ordinary water to prepare the festal food. The use of unleavened corn dough is cognate to the use of unleavened corn dough in the celebration of the Jewish festival. In the preparation of the unleavened corn dough, the corn is soaked in water for a day (softening the corn) and sent to the corn mill machine for crushing. It is then used on the following day for the preparation of the food. It is prepared in the traditional wooden bowl called *tsese*. The unleavened corn dough is mashed in a mortar with a pestle after which it goes through a process of steaming, it is mixed with okro (*Hibiscus Esculentum*) and palm oil. It is always served with smoked fish and goat meat in a palm fruit soup.

On this important day in Ga traditional area, the role of Verbal and Performing Arts cannot be ruled out. Suitable expressions premeditated to yield desirable results are spoken during prayers and the solemn prayers recited in the pouring of the libation which is a form of verbal art. The chief priest pours the libation in the present of his attendants. One of the elders holds the drink. The chief priest lowers the *putua* in front of the attendant to be filled with the drink. *Putua* is the receptacle in which the drink is poured for the libation. It is the nut of coconut which has been designed as a container. According to the chief priest, the coconut tree is really a blessed tree.

Before one can eat and drink the water in a coconut, one has to take its green or yellowish cover off, then the fibres, followed by the cracking of the nuts before getting access to the drink and food in the nuts. For this reason, the chief priest believes that anything that is put in *putua* becomes holy. During the libation, the attendant pours the liquid into the *putua* (receptacle) three consecutive times. After each pour into the *putua* he pauses till the third one when he stops completely. The notion behind the three times is their belief that people do not offer anything less than three to their loved ones. Plate 18 shows a picture of *putua* and the following page has a sample of the priestly prayer that accompanies the pouring of the libation



Plate 18 *Putua* the receptacle being held by the priest during libation

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Ga

Nmene Hɔɔ

Naamei Hɔɔ, Niimeɪ Hɔɔ

Shidaa aha Nyonmɔ

Akɛ wɔyɛ wala mli

Ni aɸi lɛ anina wɔ

Wɔye Gbo

Wɔye Gboena

Tswa Omanyɛ aba

Hiao

English Version

On this Saturday

Of our Grandfathers, our Grandmothers

Thanks be to God

That we are living

To partake in the year's festival

Let us enjoy the fruits of September

And the fruits of May (the raining season)

Goodwill is what is expected

Hiao

The Festival dance

At 4 O' clock in the afternoon of the Saturday of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration marks the traditional dance of the festival *Oshi maa* and *Oshi Joo*. This traditional dance takes place at the private grounds of the *oshi* Stool House at Modzawe.

Before one can appreciate the *Oshi joo*, it is important to know the history behind this festival dance. According to Nuumo Blafo, a priest of Blafo, the full name of *oshi* is *Sisikwete* which means foundation stone. Due to the difficulty in its pronunciation, *Oshi* became the corrupted form of the word. According to oral traditions of which the researcher was informed by Nii Yarboi Yartey, head of the Aplaku family, during the time spent by the Ga in Israel, a certain woman (whose name was not disclosed to the researcher by the informants as they said it was against custom of the royal family) had twelve children. Ten of the children were obviously human beings, the eleventh was a stool made of Ivory and the top of it was a sword. The twelfth was a complete stone. This story mystified the entire nation for it was beyond their imagination. A meeting was therefore held among the elders to discuss this issue.

At last it was concluded that the stone be thrown into the sea. It was therefore carried into the sea as agreed upon but on their return they saw to their amazement that the stone which they had thrown into the sea had already settled at home. After repeated and persistent actions taken, the stone still remained at home.

A priest possessed with a spirit had the stone preserved as the foundation stone of the Ga people. For this reason, every year during the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival, the *Oshi* dance is performed in honour of *sisikwete*. Nii Ga (Paramount chief of Ga) Nii Asere and Nii Gbese and on the priestly side, Nai Wulɔmɔ, Sakumo Wulɔmɔ, the priest of the Sakumo river god and also the Kɔɔle Wulɔmɔ, the supposed wife of Sakumo are the dignitaries that honour this festival dance.

The dance is performed at a special place called Modjawe, as mentioned earlier. The arena is about 45yards by 40 yards. The surface of the ceremonial ground is rough with stones pointing at the edges. The traditional house of the foundation stone is called *Kro ko to We*. The *oshi* dance is performed at the sound of two special drums called *Kro ko to Mi* and *oshi*. The *Kro ko to Mi* is kept at the *Kro ko to We* and the other drum is kept by the Kɔɔle Wulɔmɔ . Before the dance, a delegation is sent to the house of the Kɔɔle Wulɔmɔ to collect the *oshi* drum. The harmonic and rhythmic blend of tunes from the drums provides the music for the *oshi joo*.

The dances, very slow initially, however, quickly develop into joyfully boisterous and jostling frenzy in which all celebrants may participate. Dancers are allowed to touch anyone be it an elderly person. Also the dancers may dress in tattered clothing, they may also wear the clothing of the opposite sex, and may sing songs ridiculing prominent personalities of their shortcomings. This, in the researcher's view, could be a means of adjusting social and moral turpitude, and when the activity is over, the celebrants might have gotten rid of all the ill feelings that they might be harbouring during the past years.

In short, while the *Hɔmɔwɔ* dance is performed, all customary and social statuses and constraints are in abeyance.

The lyrics of the commonest *Hɔmɔwɔ* dance song are "You jostle your mother; you jostle your father (*oshi onyɛ, oshi otsɛ*). The pinnacle is reached when the performers dance, jump and sing the following song:

Ga

Oshi oo, oshi onyɛ, oshi

Tsutsu afi le eba ekonn.

Oshi oo, oshi Otsɛ, oshi

Agbene oshi le eba ekonn

Oshi oo, oshi onyɛ oshi

English

You jostle, your mother, you jostle

The old year is here again

You jostle, your father, you jostle

Yes the jostling dance is here again

You jostle, you jostle your mother, you jostle'

It is important to note that the Ga *Mantsɛ*, the Gbese *Mantsɛ* and the Asere *Mantsɛ* are the personalities that grace this occasion with their presence and also present gifts to the their priests in recognition of their care for their wellbeing, development and affluence of the whole populace of the Ga traditional area. Normally, they come with logs. Traditionally, logs are source of fire for cooking food and a submission could be made that they are given these logs to help them in the preparation of their daily meals.

Art and the *Hɔmɔwo* greeting (*noowala*)

The *Noowala* is the official greetings on Sunday, a day after the Saturday *Hɔmɔwo* celebration. Various reasons go into why people greet. Greetings in our social system are deemed an important part of moral personality. Anyone who does not greet is declared from the very onset as a disrespectful person.

Early that august Sunday morning, all the various chiefs of the Ga Traditional area visit the various priests and exchange the *Noowala* greetings. The display of beautiful and different types of cloth worn by the traditional chiefs and their body adornments show the grandeur and wealth that characterize this ceremony. It is worthy of note that the *Afili* beads worn by the chiefs depict the authority of these rulers in the Ga traditional area.

During their exchange of the greetings, they talk of the past years, their shortcomings and settle every dispute that is prevailing. During this ceremony, it is traditionally believed that the people forgive one another. It is frequently an interesting sight to observe people in the same residence or from different compounds in the Ga Mashie area exchanging the *Noowala* greetings and felicitous wishes.

It is traditionally incumbent on the head of the nuclear family to travel with his family to visit their fathers-in-law to exchange this wonderful greeting. The children take this opportunity to get to know the tradition and meet their grandparents. Shaking of hands

and embracing each other is the form of greeting and the following words said during the *Noowala* greeting

Ga

*Noowala, Noowala,
Afi naa akpe wɔ,
Gbi kpaanyɔ anina wɔ,
Wɔye Gbo, ni wɔye Gboena,
Wɔfee moomo,
Wɔsɛɛ afi bene wo trashi,
Alɔnte din ko aka fo wo ten,
Afi, aya ni afi aba ekoon
Twa omanyɛ aba
Hiao*

English Version

Good health, Good health,
A new year is here,
We should live to see another eight months,
Let us eat and eat all,
We should be strong and fit,
We should be alive the year to come,
No evil black cat to cross our way,
Let this year go for another to come,
Let only good things abound.
(for each line the response is *Hiao*)

It is interesting to note the phrase of the greetings that “we should live to see another eight months”. The reason for this phrase in the greeting is that although there are twelve months in a calendar year, the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is celebrated in the month of

August but the pre celebration activities start from the last week of April and end with customary rites in September. Four months from September is Christmas, and another four months from Christmas is Easter and some weeks after Easter, the customary rite of digging known as *shibaa* is observed which marks the commencement of another *Hachawach* Festival. For this reason, it is justifiable for them to say that another eight months should meet them since eight months constitute the beginning of another *Hachawach* festival.

Again the phrase ‘no evil black cat should cross our path’ means that “we should not have any kind of misfortune”. Black in this case, signifies misfortune since black clothes are used in mourning and during misfortunes. It is therefore expedient that the people eliminate all sorts of bad fortunes so as to meet the new year with total joy and felicity.

Art and Nai *nmaa yeli*

This ceremonial rite is observed on Tuesday two weeks after the *Hachawach* festival celebration. The *Nai Nmaa Yeli* is the first thanksgiving rite that is observed after the *Hachawach* festival to thank the gods for receiving their sacrifices and for a peaceful and successful celebrations. Although this spirit sacrifices ceremonial rite is a thanksgiving one, the celebrants also take the opportunity to purify themselves and ask for support from their gods.

Early in the morning, the highest priest of the Ga traditional area the Nai Wulomɔ prepares a sacred concoction for the ritual cleansing of all those who wish to be purified. The leaves used in this preparation are *Nyanyara (Momordica Charantia)*, *Tɛnɔbaa* and *Gbo baa*. When these leaves are mixed with water and schnapps, amid recitation of solemn prayers, it is made sanctified for everyone to partake in the purification exercise.

Salvation to Gas and Africans as a whole is the embodiment of philosophical principles of what is called “security, survival, continuity and balance”. They desire security from malevolent spirits, diseases, premature death and all manner of accidents. If there is security, then there will be survival and continuity. In view of this, it was noticed by the researcher that people from all walks of life came to purify themselves and ask for blessings for the coming year.

It is the belief of the people that sicknesses can be healed, and curses and spells can be broken at the shrine of the Nai Wulomɔ with the concoction which has been prepared in a *tsese* (traditional bowl). It is believed that one could be cured of any diseases and attain desired peace if he or she participates in the purification exercise. It is also worthy to note that some foreigners (Europeans, Americans etc.) also partake in the cleansing rite. With regards to the breaking of curse, two leaves are added to the leaves stated earlier in the preparation of the concoction. The two leaves are *Ntonme (Dracaena arborea)* and *Papra baa*.

Later in the day, prayers are said for the Head of State, Ministers, students, and all workers of Ghana. These prayers are said by the Nai Wulɔmɔ and the underlying theme of the prayers is to have oneness, peace and tranquillity in our beloved country Ghana. Prayers are also said for neighbouring and war torn countries. These prayers are said while sprinkling the concoction from the traditional bowl. It is evidently clear that the celebration of the festival is not only beneficial to the celebrants but comes to establish a basic fact that intercessory prayers are said for the entire nation and war afflicted countries are all thought of during the celebrations.

The Nai Wulɔmɔ having finished the rite, throws the traditional bowl and it is believed that the position in which the traditional bowl falls reveals important information to the him. If the bowl capsizes, it means the gods are not happy about the sacrifice and the state of affairs. If this happens, it is his responsibility to invoke the spirits of the gods to reveal what is really wrong, for prayers and rituals to be performed in order to appease them. This is done the same day and the same process is repeated till the desired result is attained. This rite is performed with the view of seeking peace and tranquillity to the Ga people and finding favour with the gods.

As soon as this rite is observed, ceremonial food called *fotoli* is made and served in an earthenware pot. *Fotoli* is corn dough porridge with lumps mixed with pepper and salt to taste. The ceremonial food prepared early in the morning, is sprinkled by the priest on the entrances and exits of his residency including his shrine and at the sea side which is

the final destination of the sprinkling rite. The purpose of the sprinkling of the *fotoli* is to feed the gods who are believed to be present.

Art and Amugi *Nmaa yeli*

This important ceremony is one of the post celebration activities and forms a core part of the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. Amugi *Nmaa Yeli* is celebrated on Tuesday, two weeks after the *Nai Nmaa Yeli*, that is, a month after the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. On this august occasion, the highest priest of the Ga Traditional Area, the *Nai Wulɔmɔ* and his people keep vigil from the eve of Monday to early hours of Tuesday. During the vigil keeping, the priest and his coterie are involved in active clapping amid singing to invoke the *Jemawojii* (traditional deities) to come and reside in its medium and witness the ceremony. This celebration is done in honour of the paramount chief of the Ga traditional area.

The celebration of this ceremony involves a great deal of art just as the other post celebration activities. For example in the observation of this ceremony, two distinguished drums namely the *Krokoto* and *Kpele Mi* (drum) play important roles. They are played during the celebration of the rite.

Again on this occasion, there is the preparation of the concoction in the *tsese* (traditional bowl). Prayers are said to the Almighty Lord and the gods and divinities of the land on behalf of the nation, the Head of State, workers and students. According to Tumomli Yartey III, head of the *Nai We*, the leaves used in the preparation of this concoction are

tenobaa and *gbɔ baa*. The leaves are mixed with sea water and schnapps. *Tɛnɔbaa* is believed to be a pure leaf capable of reversing curses and the breaking of spells.

The preparation of the ceremonial food *fotoli* begins early in the morning. The ceremonial food is prepared with *nmaa* (millet). The *Nai* sprinkles the ceremonial food at every doorstep of his residence and continues to do so outside his abode. He stands in the middle of the street and sprinkles some of the food to the North, South, East and West. In this regard, it is believed that all the gods of the land in every corner have been fed.

Summary of Discussion

The researcher's principal concern in this chapter has been to critically analyse, interpret and bring into focus the importance of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration bringing out the various philosophies behind each rite and activity. The discussions have also shown an interesting connection that the arts and other cultural aspects manifest themselves in the celebrations and more importantly how they help to carry the festival to achieve its objective.

This chapter has shown that the festival is really a celebration of abundance of food and a remembrance of the hardship that really plagued the ancestors of the Ga people. It has shown various interesting pre-*Hɔmɔwɔ* activities before the actual celebration on a Saturday. The pre- *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration activities begin when the land is tilled. The tilling of the land and the planting of the corn involves a great deal of art in the form of

agricultural tools such as machetes, hoes, rakes, dibbles and also the traditional bowl. It has been shown that all these implements are artefacts which are indispensable when it comes to the clearing and tilling of the land.

Furthermore, the discussions have not only been on the abundance of food but also on abundant fertility rites which are also celebrated in honour of twins who are considered a blessing in the Ga Traditional area. But the day before the twins' festival, is the arrival of the *Soo bii* (Thursday people). The arrival of the *Soo bii* throws the whole city into ecstasy and wild jubilation.

An abundance of kindness is the most noticeable aspect of the celebration. New relationships are formed, old friends meet and non Gas are welcomed as family members. Indirectly, the celebration has helped Ghana to maintain one of its largest ethnic groups upheld the same custom and beliefs that the Ga started celebrating centuries ago.

It has also revealed the washing and cleansing rite that takes place at the shrine of Naa Tɔtrɔɔ, seen as a rock at the shores of the Ga Abola Sea. It also shows how the two white fowls are offered at the shrine of the traditional deity of the sea with the notion of purifying the sea. It is believed that there is abundant catch of fish after the rite for the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival.

The chapter has shown that the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival has two aspects- the spiritual and physical. The spiritual side of the festival usually goes with traditional rituals. These rituals happen to centre on the veneration of the ancestors and gods who are believed to inhabit the stools of the chiefs and priests respectively. So through the celebration of the festivals, the people call upon the favours and compassion of the ancestral spirits to meet their physical, social, spiritual and political needs. And it is always the Priests and chiefs who stand as mediators between the people and the ancestral spirits and the gods of the traditional area.

The priests are believed to intercede for his people if they have committed any sins and disloyalty, they plead on the people's behalf for forgiveness and also pacifies the ancestral spirits and the gods. This is done through prayers and the pouring of libation. He appeals to the Supreme Beings, the divinities and the ancestors for blessing, better and prosperous life. The physical aspect of the festival is the celebration of the occasion which involves merry-making, drumming, dancing and vocal music nonetheless not when the ban on drumming and noisemaking has been imposed on the traditional area.

The chapter has also shown that music pervade through almost all the customary rite. Musical instruments and different songs are sung on different customary rite which must be understood by the observer. The researcher shares the same idea with Salm *et al* (2002) that it is important to understand that the instrument used and types of traditional music, but is also crucial to see their function and recognize the dynamic relationship

between the music and the musical environment that is closely tied to the larger social and cultural contexts.

The next chapter does a critical analysis and an appreciation of the artistic and other cultural aspects of the celebration of the festival. The critical discussions involve the Body Arts, Environmental Arts, Verbal Arts and Performing Arts and their various roles in the celebration. The chapter in addition discusses the social, economic, political, medicinal and religious aspects of the celebration of the festival.



CHAPTER FIVE

ARTISTIC APPRAISAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE FESTIVAL

Overview

The previous chapter has shown clearly that the arts are vigorously and inseparably interwoven with the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. This chapter of the thesis forms a very essential part of the research. As already stated in page 3, more often than not, the researcher has come to recognize the fact that the artistic and other cultural aspects of the festival are overlooked when it comes to the analysis and appreciation of the festival. In the light of this oversight, the researcher deems it necessary to discuss the artistic and other cultural aspects of the festival in this chapter which will help fill the vacuum created on the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival and its artistic and cultural aspects.

The fieldwork and observations of the various activities of celebration of the festival have laid bare the fact that behind the various rituals, without the arts the activities of the people might be a failure. This comes to justify the fact that the arts are inseparably interwoven with their cultural heritage. It also comes reiterate the philosophy of the research that the arts can be the glue to the unification of the Ga ethnic group and Ghana as a whole. With respect to the artistic appraisal, this chapter shall discuss the various forms of art namely Body Arts, Verbal Arts, Environmental Arts, Performing Arts and how they play a predominant role in the celebration of the festival in achieving its main objective. The chapter shall furthermore discuss the cultural aspects of the festival and establish the political, social, economic, medicinal, religious aspects.

Body Arts

Body arts are art works applied or worn on the body. This includes costumes, hairstyle, body paintings and markings and the wearing of beads. The Ga celebrate the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival with pomp and pageantry, for this reason, they wear gorgeous costumes and display artistic creations in the form of body artefacts that portray their socio-cultural identity. This is to highlight the fact that the communicative, expressive, aesthetic and symbolic natures of the body arts in the festival to a very large extent, on this occasion, portray the way of life of the celebrants. This section of the chapter critically discusses these body arts that manifest themselves in the celebration.

Hairstyles

Djagbletey (1972:51) has taken note of hairstyle in the Ga society. The writer was of the view that the hairstyle is indicative of the wearer's sex, age and religious denomination. This is not as glaring in the males as in the females. The men have haircuts of diverse styles but the commonest is the low cut with centre parting line which emphasizes the breadth of the face.

Various kinds of hairstyle are seen during the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. Among some kinds of hairstyles seen in the Ga traditional area are crop, plaited, pony, dreadlocks etc. Yet, there are other hairstyles that are seen during the celebration especially worn by the priest, priestesses and the celebrants. Some of the hairstyles are *pesempese*, *akon*, *akukuli*, *gele* and *otu* as shown on plates 18,19,20, and 21.

According to Priestess Aryeh, a priestess of Atukpai the *pesempese* hairstyle is worn by religious novices who have not been initiated as priests and priestesses. The *pesempese* hairstyle is not mostly seen during the festival celebration. The hairstyle is a permanent plaiting without the use of thread and this plaiting is achieved by the use of the white liquid of an egg to achieve this plait like texture of the hair. The hairstyle is furthermore decorated with cowries and coins as offering to their various gods. As mentioned earlier, the *pesempese* hairstyle is worn by people who have been chosen by the gods being trained to become a priest or a priestess.

The *Akukuli* hairstyle is an intricate type which is decorated with feathers. It is made by five partings into tufts. The ends of the various partings are twisted and tucked into the base of the hair to hold firmly. As already mentioned, having finished with the hairstyle, it is decorated with cowries and the tail feathers of a parrot. The significance of the parrot feathers used in decorating the hairstyle is believed by the priestesses are for religious purposes and capable of transmitting cosmic powers.

During the celebration, the hairstyles of the male celebrants are mostly down-cut hairstyle and flashes of *afro* (when the hair is left to over grow without cutting). On the other hand the female celebrants' hairstyles displayed, portray ridges, convolutions, knots, projections and entanglements whilst the ones that are plaited into numerous strands make spiral and interlocking formations. Although these hairstyles are done even in the routines of their daily life, the people place much emphasis on their hairstyle which they believe determine their look. Probably, this is done due to the influx of

visitors, the various hairstyles come to complement their beauty and make them look presentable.

Again, as seen on plate 19, the hairstyle worn by the priestesses are mostly geared towards angularity. It is seen in an obtuse or acute angle, whilst the others are seen in artistic terms standing in vertical, horizontal or diagonal to the base of the heads of the wearer. In designing these hairstyles, the principles of design are again employed here. There is balance in some of the hairstyles in that, the left half of such hairstyles become the precise facsimile of the right one.

Other hairstyles are not proportionate but have been beautifully braided to complement the beauty of the wearer and thus enhance the celebration of the festival.

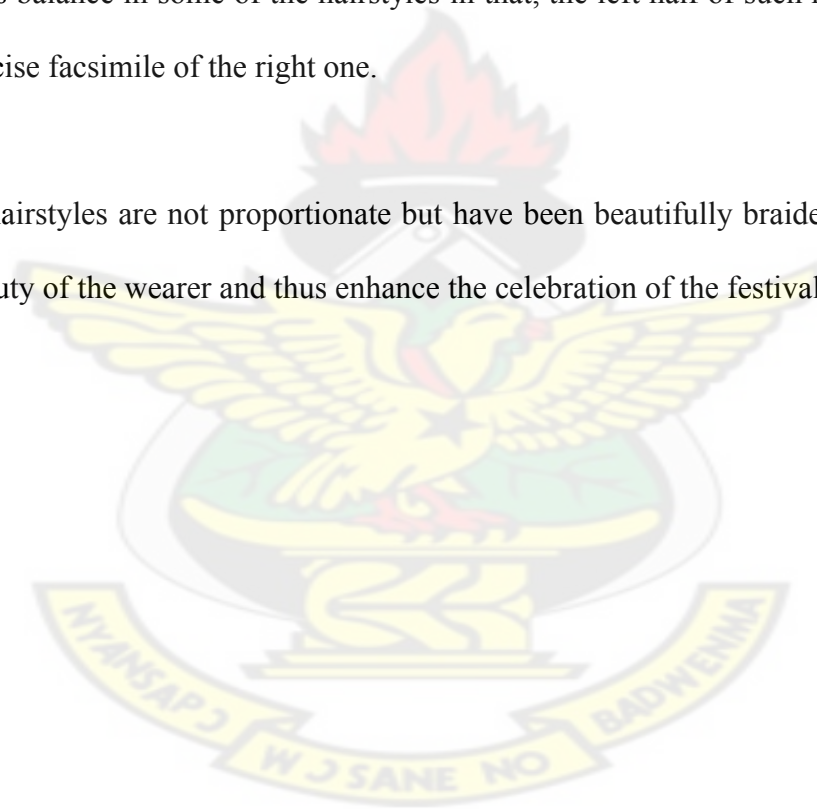




Plate 19: *Gele* hairstyle geared towards angularity

Source: Photograph taken by researcher



Plate 20: A priestess with the *gele* hairstyle and a white ribbon

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 21: A priestess wearing *akukuli* hairstyle. Note the feathers on the hair

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 22: A celebrant with a braided hairstyle for beauty purpose

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Body Decorations and Markings

Body decorations and markings are common features among the priests and priestesses who are celebrants of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. There are diverse reasons for decorating the body and not only for beautifying the body. These body decorations and markings that are found on the celebrants especially the priestesses are done for identification and religious purposes. These body marks and decorations are registered on their faces, legs, backs and arms.

These forms of identification probably could have been transferred from their forefathers who were under slavery and were identified with certain marks by their masters. Furthermore the markings on the faces also could be from marks that were used in preventing a “born to die child” from dying. The wars between tribes also brought into light these marks on the faces in which a mark on the face of a person shows his position and the family in which the person belongs to.

But far from these forms of identification, the marks beautify and enhance the feminine qualities of the priestesses and the celebrants. The body markings and decorations on the priests and priestesses of the Ga traditional area are generally among the artificial modifications used to augment their physical attraction to help distinguish themselves from others. They are made on the priests and priestesses to demonstrate courage and virility during their training as priests and priestesses when such body marks and decorations were considered as significant in their orientation. (See plates 23, 24 and 25)



Plate 23: Body paintings at the back of a priestess

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 24: Body paintings on the arm of a priestess

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 25: Body markings/decorations and beads on priestesses

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Pigments are used in their liquid state for the various body paintings. The pigment in the solid state is reduced to a fluid state by rubbing the pigment on a special stone with a lime juice which is used as the thinner. The lime helps in the fixing of the pigment on the body and it is preferred to water which makes a colloidal solution which never sticks.

The body paintings and markings displayed by the priests and priestesses during the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival whether done to satisfy either religious or social demands are artistic creations. The distribution of motifs of geometric shapes such as spiral lines, rectangles or chains of horizontal and vertical lines as seen in the pictures on different parts of the body of the priests and priestesses stimulate movement of the eyes round the body from the head to the feet, thus creating aesthetic sensations in the eyes of viewers. This implies that the organization of the markings on the bodies help to unite the various parts together as a composition in an art work.

The aesthetic elaboration and organization of the round and spiral lines, coupled with the vertical and horizontal lines on the body of the priestesses produce graceful patterns. (See plates 23, 24 and 25). The colours of the paintings on the body also add extra ornamentation to the complexion. *Krɔbɔ* is the substance used in the paintings on the body which gives different characters to the celebrants. The scent of the *krɔbɔ* (myrrh) coupled with the paintings on the body augment the feelings of fear and awe that people have for priests and priestesses. Djagbletey (1972:70) is of the view that during the

installation and performance of ancestral rituals, *krɔɔ* (myrrh) is used in the establishment of contacts with the ancestors.

Costumes

The costumes of the celebrants of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival, especially that of the priest is highlighted by the point made by the Almighty God as He allegedly prescribed to Moses the robes of the first high priest of the Israelites. And this robe was intended for the carrying out of priestly duties. According to the Old Testament Exodus 28:1 and 2

And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother,
and his sons with him, from among the
children of Israel, that he may minister
unto me in the priests office, even Aaron,
Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aarons son
and thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron
thy brother for glory and for beauty.

It could be realized from this scriptural quotation that probably the priest did not prescribe or it is not their own volition to wear a particular dress. The Nai Wulɔmɔ who is the highest traditional priest of the Ga Traditional area has a special costume known as “*Gan*” which he wears on all religious occasions. The researcher is of the view that the word might have originated from the English word gown. According to the Nai Wulɔmɔ the priestly costume has affinity with God and the divinities.

The costumes of the priests are considered much sanctified to the gods and the entire people of the Ga traditional area. The priest wears his robe and a bead called *banka*. It is

said the *banka* of the Nai Wulomɔ is different from the ones of the other priests. According to the Nai Wulomɔ, the bead he wears on his wrist has three precious stones. The first stone has the blue colour which signifies the sea, the middle stone is a yellow colour signifying wealth derived from the earth. The last but not the least of the precious stones called *silibaa* on his bead is coloured red signifying heaven. Nii Yarboi Yartey, head of the Aplaku family laid bare the fact that the three stones signifying the sea, the earth and the heaven. Therefore if the Nai Wulomɔ is regarded as the sea, then he has affinity with heaven and earth.

Furthermore, the hat worn by the Nai Wulomɔ is known as the *kotofai*. (See plate 26 for the picture of the Nai Wulomɔ and the *kotofai*). The Nai Wulomɔ's specially designed hat has been cut into three hundred and sixty five edges. According to him each edge stands for a day in the calendar year interceding on the behalf of the Ga. The edges are furthermore of seven levels signifying the seven waves of the sea. It might be from this view point of the numerous adornments of the priest, that radiate confidence, faith and assurance which psychologically aid the people during the treatment of sicknesses and during the solution of their peculiar problems. All these adornments on the Nai Wulomɔ and the various priests are believed to provide protection for himself and his people against evil spirits.

Moreover, although the priestly garments connote assurance, confidence and faith for medicinal purposes, their priestly garments also distinguish the priest from other people.

Therefore, the priestly garment makes it easier for a visitor during the celebration of the festival or even afterwards to identify the priest.



Plate 26: The Nai Wulom. Note his gown, *kotofai* and *komi* bead

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

The costumes portray or depict the office and jurisdiction of the priests, Nowadays, most of them prefer to wear *batakari* (smock) for their various activities and these special garments are worn during august occasions such as the celebration of the festival. Priestess Donkor, a priestess in the Ga Mashie quarters was of the view that while wearing a *batakari*, it is much easier to dance and dramatize whatever the gods might be

telling you and when performing a whirling dance, the smock revolves beautifully around her as if she is about to fly.

All the costumes and dresses of various kinds displayed during the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival bring into focus stupendous artistic creation. Apart from the priests, priestesses and the chiefs and elders of the Ga area, the celebrants make sure the sew dresses of various styles to enhance their look and appear presentable. The wearing of different costume throws the entire ceremonial grounds into a combination of colourful costumes which distribute visual illusions, enhancing the artistic qualities of the celebration. Among the colours mostly seen on these celebrations are white which is mostly worn by the priest and priestesses, chiefs and elders. The other celebrants are seen with a conglomeration of multi-coloured dresses such as red, green, yellow and blue. The unconscious blend of these costume colours depicts rhythmic beauty and the effect is intensified by the white colour of the costumes which are mostly worn by the custodians of the rite, especially during the lifting of the ban to reflect more light.

Furthermore, some of the chiefs are seen in rich *Kente* cloths. These *kente* cloths are characterized by intricate tiny rhythms of colour in the form of geometric shapes which are very pleasing to the eye.

The Ga priestesses are respected in the traditional area and they play an important role in the celebration of the festival. They are given reverence perhaps because they are believed to be “married” to the *Jemawonjii* (traditional deities). It is the art objects such

as the beads, body paintings, the hairstyle and *nmleti* the “broomlike” object and *aye tso* (witch stick) they hold in their hands distinguish them as priestesses. Plate 27 shows a priestess holding *nmleti* and the witch stick which is believed to be used for spiritual healing. Furthermore, the hairstyles of the priestesses are of different kinds namely *akukuli*, *gele*, *akɔn* and *otu*. The *akɔn* is the uncombed type of hairstyle. The hairstyle is left to grow uncombed and the hair is very light. The other hairstyle which is *gele* is seen as braided and converges at a point where it is tied. The *akukuli* type of hairstyle is the type which the hairs have been grouped into units.



Plate 27: A priestess holding *nmleti* and the witch stick

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Beads

Although beads are generally sold on the market and could be worn for various reasons, there are certain beads that are worn by certain celebrants of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival to show their position and more importantly enable them perform certain customs that are associated with the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival.

The most seen bead is the *afili* bead which is worn by the priests, priestesses and chiefs of the traditional area and the *afili* bead is worn over the wrists and ankles. The priests and priestesses are seen to wear combination of beads with different colours which they believe help them spiritually in the performance of their various duties during the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. The beads in addition signify their office and protect them from malevolent spirits.

The priestesses of the traditional area during the festival celebration wear five beads on their wrist and two beads on their ankles. (See plate 28). The first bead of the five is called *afili* which signifies her as a priestess of the traditional area. It is indicative of the wearer's social or hierarchical position or rank in the traditional area. It has an off white colour and looks like cowries. It is tied on a rope. The second bead on the wrist is called *fufua*. The *fufua* bead is made up of blue and ash colour and it is believed by the priestess to be for spiritual protection. The third bead on the wrist is called *Tɔnyɔɔ*. This bead is red in colour and it is for immediate self defence from evil spirits.

The fourth and fifth bead on the wrist is *Adε* and *bihii alε nii* respectively. *Adε* bead is yellow and green colour and the latter is light green. These two beads are for magico religious purposes. A sample of these beads is seen on the plate 28 below



Plate 28: A priestess adorn with five beads during the celebration

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

1. *Afili*
2. *Fufua*
3. *Tonyɔɔ*
4. *Adε*
5. *Bihii Alε nii*

Plate 29 also shows another important bead of the Ga that is only worn by priests of the traditional area. The name of the bead is *Kɔmi*. During the celebration, the priests wear this bead and it is believed it is for protective and religious purposes. There is another *nyanyara* bead which is made of the *nyanyara* (*Momordica charantia*) leaf. This leaf is twisted to form a ring and worn over the neck of the priests. The wearer's of this leaf bead believe they are cleansed and made pure by wearing it. The researcher has a biblical explanation to substantiate this point. A prayer said by David in Psalms 51 the verse 7 says,

Purge me with hyssop,
And I shall be clean,
Wash me, and I shall be
white as a snow.

From this Bible quotation, it was believed by David that if he is purged with hyssop, he shall be clean and for this reason, *Nyanyara* (*Momordica charantia*) which is believed to be hyssop would cleanse the priests of all filth and make them pure.

It is interesting to note that the *nyanyara* (*Momordica charantia*) bead and the *kɔmi* bead are worn purposely during the performing of rituals in the celebration of the festival. If these beads really as believed by the priest cleanses, protects and provides them the power to perform the rituals, then it is safe to assert that these art works carry the festival to achieve its main objective.

There are other beads worn on the upper part of the ankle and upper part of the arm. There is also another bead that is worn on only the left of the ankle of priestesses called

Shishε. The bead on the upper arm is called *dade kulɔ*. *Nakutso nii* is the name of the bead worn on the upper part of the ankle. There is also *adiagba* bead which is worn by all heads of family to signify their position in the traditional area. All these beads are worn for protective and religious purposes. The following plate show pictures of the various beads. See plates 30, 31,32,33,34 and 35 of pictures of the various beads.



Plate 29: A priest wearing the *komi* bead and the *nyanyara* bead

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 30: The *Shishε* bead worn only on the left ankle

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 31: *Nakutso nii* bead for protective and religious purposes

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 32: The *Adiagba* bead worn by all heads of family

Sources: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 33: A priestess wearing different types of beads during the festival celebration

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 34: A priestess with *kulɔ* bead. Also note the feather tucked into her hair

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 35: Priestesses decorated with *kulo* beads and various
beads afore mentioned

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Environmental (Visual) Arts

In the preceding segment, the body arts as they manifest in the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival have been brought to light. This section is concerned with the artistic appraisal of the environmental art objects, whose involvement in the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival helps to complement the celebration and it distinctively encompasses the objective and the subjective artistic study of the festival.

These are the visual art objects found in an environmental setting. Examples are the traditional bowl, decorations on out door ceremonies at the ceremonial grounds and musical instruments. Other aspects of regalia which fall under environmental art include stools, chairs, palanquins, ceremonial umbrellas, state swords, spokesman's staves (wrongly called linguist staves) and other creative works of interest.

The celebration of the festival involves a lot of environmental or visual arts. It is this visual art that makes the festival more enjoyable, captivating and more educative. For example, during grand durbars, the chiefs and their entourage become a source of “walking” or “mobile” museums/ exhibitions because they display very colourful traditional costumes, artefacts, dancing skills, uplifting music and inspiring poetic language as the cultural heritage of the Ga people. It is during the celebration of the festivals and other important ceremonies that the artefacts which until that time perceived as static art forms in the various palaces are transformed into kinetic arts. This means the arts become highly functional. For example umbrellas are swirled in rhythmic rotation by the holders while dancing as seen on plate 36. The *tsese* is also carried by a

person in a trance and this helps them to radiate tremendous touch and charm to the festival occasions. The *tsese* (traditional bowl) is said to be in kinetic state since it is always observed to be at the entrance of the various priests and it is seen in motion during the *Haaji Yεε Yeli* procession.



Plate 36: Umbrella being swirled around (Umbrella in motion)

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

The Durbar/Ceremonial Grounds

The ceremonial grounds are the places where the climax of the festival is experienced to the fullest, especially during the celebration of the *odadaa*, *oshi joo* and the actual festival day. It is at the durbar grounds that homage and allegiance are paid to the

traditional chiefs, sub-chiefs, priests and priestesses. The chiefs and their entourage sit on their stools in a crescent shape, with their subjects holding in style, the uncountable royal regalia, for example, the spokesman's staves, flamboyant umbrellas with their proverbial finials, ceremonial swords, horns and beautifully designed drums of various sizes. The colours perceived at the royal quarters are golden, silver, yellowish and whitish, while the spectators and artistes exhibit multi-coloured and contrasting schemes of the primary and secondary within the periphery of the arena or durbar grounds. Even the black hair on the individual heads cannot be excluded.

The ceremonial grounds are pictured around the arena in a rectangular formation. This alone creates the belief that the durbar grounds are filled with the presence and sacredness of God. Within the rectangular formation is also the semi-circular formation of the chief and his entourage. During the festival celebrations, the whole durbar grounds immediately become alive with sudden explosion of people with a variety of coloured dresses moving and dancing in all directions to the tunes of mixture of music from different musical groups and instruments.

In addition, it is seen during the celebration, that the entire festive atmosphere is further accentuated by colourful posters and banners which have details of the programmes being organized by individuals or groups to further enjoy the celebrations in their own style. This takes the form of live bands performance at spots or a drama troupe displaying or dramatizing the socio-cultural life of the people. The banners and posters serve as increasing the awareness of the festival. These are in the form of illustrations and wordings, although the wordings are more than the illustrations. It must be noted

that these banners and posters are works of art and aid in complementing the celebration of the festival.

The ceremonial grounds are sometimes marked with geometric shapes of white colour and it is painted on a black background which brings out the white colour to really stand out. This is seen during the *odadaa* celebration when the three circles are drawn on the streets of *odadaa tso shishi* (the name of the ceremonial grounds) and as already stated the circles are believed to ward off evil spirits. Plate 37 has a picture of the three circles.



Plate 37: The three circles where the lifting of the ban ritual is performed

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

***Tsesse* (The traditional bowl)**

The role of the visual arts in the celebration of the *Həməwə* festival cannot be over emphasized. Throughout the festival, the artistic objects found in the celebration of the festival are all visual artefacts. One important visual arts is the *tseese*, the traditional wooden bowl. This wooden artefact permeates through the celebration. This traditional bowl apart from its aesthetical quality, should also be viewed on symbolic and functionality background. Without the study of its cultural and religious concepts, an observer may not be able to comprehend the whole concept of this artefact and may either ignore its use or miss its function in the celebration. A book entitled *The Aesthetic Experience* written by Jacques Maquet (1986) affirms this argument by saying that

Experiencing is always a mental process, whether it is triggered by an external stimulus or by an idea... what we experience is mental. This conclusion is of crucial importance in our analysis of symbols. When looking at a physical object [visual artefacts] Modrian's grid, the golden light or the porphyry sarcophagus- which is an external stimulus, we have mental experience of what symbolizes order, life, or extremity. Symbols are different from other signs in that they are partly what they stand for. Thus, when mentally apprehending, the beholder is connected with the signified. Beyond intellectual knowledge, the beholder achieves understanding as a result of participating in an experience.

Therefore in appreciating the importance of the *tseese* (traditional bowl) as shown on plate 38, one should not look at its aesthetic qualities but its symbolic and philosophical

use as well. The symbolic and philosophical use of the *tsese* (traditional bowl) during the celebration, made observers and the celebrants really appreciated the *tsese*.



Plate 38: Concoction prepared in *tsese* (traditional bowl)

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Pottery

Various artefacts in the form of pots, earthenware bowls and firewood stoves are seen during the celebration of the festival. It is these forms of artefacts that really aid in the cooking and serving of the festal food during the celebration. According to the Sakumo Wulɔmɔ, pottery is an ancient craft of the Ga Mashie people. He furthermore said it was a job for women due to the benevolence and tenderness of heart they portrayed to others and the men engaged in farming and fishing. Rattray (1927:30) also lay bare that the Asante also do not allow men to practise pottery because it does not require great skills. Although the reasons assigned to why men do not practice pottery is different, the underlying fact is that it is an ancient craft.

In this modern times where the use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas for cooking is common in the traditional area, nevertheless in the traditional homes, the use of *Laatɛ* (Clay firewood stove) is still employed in the cooking of the festival food *Kpokpoi* during the celebration of the festival. This *laatɛ* is made of clay mixed with grog (burnt clay) and shaped into three conical shapes. It is arranged in a form of isosceles triangle and the two equal sides are sealed together. The other side serve as the entrance where the firewoods are packed to provide heat for the cooking of the meal. An evidence of *laatɛ* used in the cooking of the festive food in the traditional homes is seen on Figure one (1)

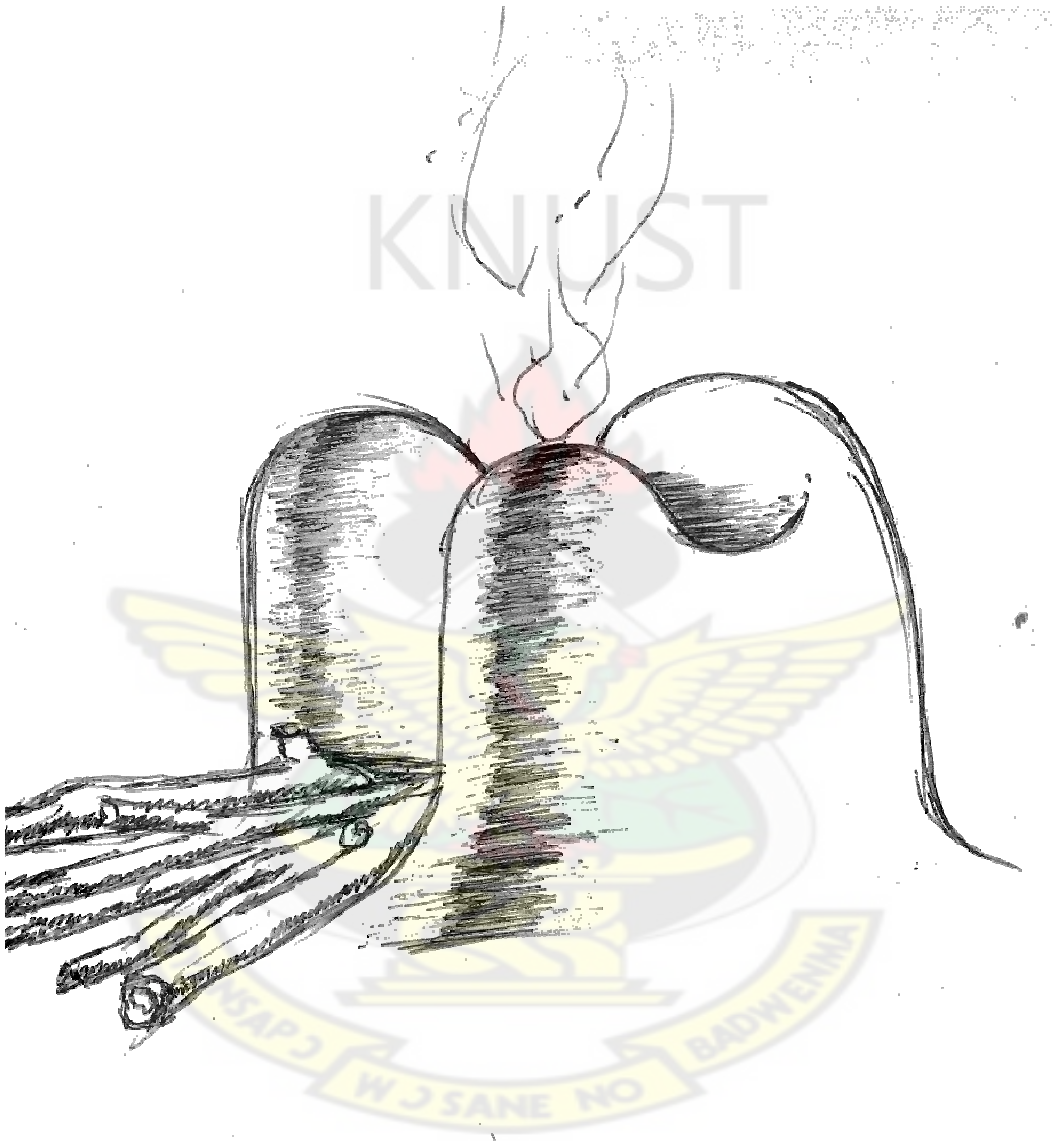


Figure I: The three conical shaped *laate*. Note the entrance for the firewood

Source: Sketched by the researcher

Another pottery artefact as seen on figure 2 used during the cooking of the festal food is the *Aflamuke* which is used for the steaming of the corn dough. The *Aflamuke* in recent times is scarce on the market and this in the researcher's view could stem from the fact that probably because it is only used in the preparation of the festal food. For this reason it is likely the demand for the product would be low. This artefact makes steaming very easy and facilitates the softening of the corn dough. The *aflamuke* has dense but small perforations and when well placed on a cooking pot, the seam created is sealed with clay and palm nut fibres as binding agent to prevent the vapour from escaping.

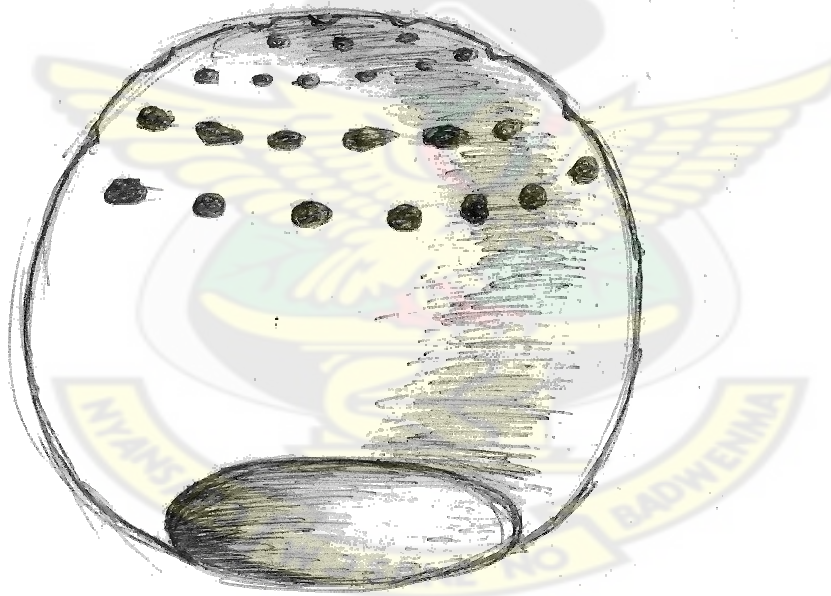


Figure 2: *Aflamuke* for steaming the festive food

Source: Sketched by the researcher

Figure three (3) shows also the *Kukwε* (cooking pot) which is used in the cooking of the festal food. The *Kukwε* is spherical in shape and it is flattened at the base obviously for firmer sitting on the stoves. It is usually smoothly finished and mostly decorated on the outside. It has a short neck with rings and it is attach to a wider lip that extends outwards. Just after the neck is a curvature serving as the belly for cooking a larger amount of food. The cooking pot is an important property of the women of the Ga traditional area for without it, the festal food would not be provided.



Figure 3: *Kukwε* (cooking pot) for cooking the festive food

Source: Sketched by the researcher

Discussions on various forms of pots cannot be complete without the mentioning of *Likɔlikɔ* as seen on figure four (4). According to Tumomli Yartey III, head of the Nai *We*, a visitor would feel welcomed home when served with water upon arrival. *Likɔlikɔ* is used in the serving of water to everyone visiting the various palaces and shrines of the priests and priestesses. Just like the *Kukwɛ*, *likɔlikɔ* is also spherical in shape but without a neck. It is held by both hands and tilted towards the mouth of the beholder.



Figure 4: *Likɔlikɔ* for serving water at the various shrines of priests and priestesses

Source: Sketched by the researcher

Emblems/ Symbols

Kemevor (2004:293) defines symbol as that which is made to stand for something other than itself, because it has qualities that are capable of evoking desired states of mind concerning feelings, ideas and ideals, to the psychological ramifications of which we thereby lead to respond intuitively without being fully able to identify or define them. It could be deduced from this definition that symbols are seen as very important objects in the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. Emblems and symbols are objects carefully chosen to represent a particular idea, group or an individual. They are therefore important in the celebration because they aid in identifying the various Ga Mashie quarters with ease. For instance, the picture on plate 39 shows a deer on the back of an elephant which is the emblem of the entire Ga Mashie people. An elephant is undoubtedly the largest animal in the forest and for a smaller animal, being a deer, to ride on the back of the elephant shows how wise the animal could be. For this reason the Ga Mashie people, are laying bare the fact that, the ruling of people does not only lie in our big a tribe but it also shows how astute, brave and in-depth knowledge the ruler has.

Otublohum, one of the quarters of the Ga Mashie uses the *Sankɔfa* symbol as their emblem as evident on plate 40. The emblem *Sankɔfa* is seen as a bird with a long neck looking back and it signifies that one should not forget one's past. The symbol of the Otublohum people seems to reiterate the fact that, it is a good thing to celebrate the festival and also for the people to remember their ancestors who led the first Gas to their present settlement. Antubam (1963:89) talks on meanings of symbols as

Unlike most people in other parts of the world, Ghanaians have peculiar tendency of attaching meanings and sometimes deep philosophical significance to most of the symbols

Antubam furthermore talks on the significance of the *adinkra* symbols as being another means of serving the important practices of a people thus

The meaning of some of these adinkra symbols can still be understood from their sames and the sayings that are associated with them. To a great extent the strength of a peoples greatness lies in their ability to keep alive in the dark secret of symbolism, the cherished truth and values of their life

All the visual arts seen in the celebration in the form of emblems put the festival into artistic creations and help the celebration to achieve its main objectives. It should be noted that these symbols are seen during any gathering of the celebration and it is held by the forerunner of the chief's procession. The following plates show pictures of emblems of some quarters of the Ga Mashie.



Plate 39: The symbol of the Ga Mashie people in the foreground

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 40: The *Sankofa* symbol of the Otublohum (at the right side of the forefront)

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 41: The symbol of the Gbese people being held by the fore runner

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Umbrellas

The use of umbrellas in the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival cannot be over-stated. It is seen in full motion during processions and at durbar grounds. According to the New Encyclopaedia Britannica, (Vol. 26: 876), the use of umbrellas are said to serve as a symbol of the vault of Heaven in India and China and similarly, the embellishment of the structure and the conceptual aggrandizement seen on the umbrellas of the various chiefs does not only signify the rulers' jurisdiction and position, but help to complement the artistic creations associated with the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival.

Before the advent of Europeans to Ghana, the chiefs at that period had their forms of umbrellas. They were in the form of broad leaves such as the leaves of plantain and cocoyam. These broad leaves were hoisted on sticks and used to protect the chiefs and elders from the scorching sun. It is said that those forms of umbrellas were very effective just that there was the need to replace the leaves after being dry. What is seen in the present celebration of the festival are the flat-dome shape umbrellas and these are mainly made of wood and metal. They are mainly and regularly curved into dome shape. Again, this later development is hoisted on a pole serving as an armature. There is the pivotal network of supporting sticks which converge and gives strength to the umbrella. The wooden structure is then covered with a decorative silk cloth as seen on plate 42.



Plate 42: An umbrella at the ceremonial ground

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Verbal Arts

Artistic Prayers and Poetry

Appropriate words designed to yield desirable results are spoken during the celebration of the festival and although the spoken words are probably observed without much attention, it is through these poetic prayers, sacrifices and libation that lyrical expressions of preconscious knowledge are created. They are verbal arts and are used to flatter the spirits, compose encomiums and sound the praise names of the spirits to influence them to respond to the requests of devotees.

The importance of verbal arts in the form of poetic prayers during the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival cannot be over emphasized. The verbal arts portray a high quality of the people's culture. For example, it is a delight to hear the custodians of the rites making use of proverbs and idioms to show beauty of expression and maturity. Moreover, by the use of such verbal arts, long stories or long sentences are cut very short and easily kept in memory. During the festive period, before any of the activities characterizing the celebration of the festival is performed, pouring of libation accompanied by artistic prayers in the form of Verbal Arts takes place. It could be concluded that it is partly through the verbal arts that the spirits of the land are "manipulated". It is through the arts that the spirits are drawn to their mediums and to help make the celebration a success.

It can then be emphasized that within the interest and admiration of the Ga culture, verbal arts work hand in hand with the rites and activities and are thought to have the

power to attract the benevolent spirits and repel bad omens that wish to taunt the image of the festival or spoil the joy of its celebration. For this reason, the Nai and Sakumo Wulɔmɔ and other priests and priestesses are believed to have an effective communication with his gods to prevent any unpleasant situations. It must be said that the pouring of libation, in this thesis, is the act of pouring of distilleries or water out on an altar or the ground. It is not pouring of the libation *per se* which is art but the dramatic act in pouring the liquid makes it artistic.

The pouring of libation weaves through the entire celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival as it serves as a form of communication or a vehicle of re-union between the living and their ancestors. Unlike Christians and Muslims who communicate to their God through prayer only, the custodians of the celebration pray to God and their ancestors through the pouring of libation and prayer.

Libation consists of pouring of some type of drink such as schnapps. It could be water, palm wine or the choicest of imported liquor on the ground and invoking God, divinities and the spirits of the dead ‘to have a drink’ for several reasons. Libation is a cultural institution among many ethnic groups in Ghana and Africa as a whole. It forms an integral and an almost ever-present part of several ceremonies especially in indigenous festivals.

The performance of this libation underlines a basic belief namely the re-union between the dead and the living because in the Akan, Ewe, Fanti and the Ga folklore the dead are

superior to and possess greater powers than the living. Ladzagla (1980:138) looks at the whole concepts of libations performance and is of the view that libation in the African peculiar is a means of coming into contact with the spiritual world.

Archbishop Dr. Peter Sarpong, contributing to an article in *Insight and Opinion*, Vol. 3. No. 1, 1984 said, ‘the purpose of libation’, at least originally, was to feed the spirits so that finding favour with the living, they might bless them with whatever they asked for or needed. It is crystal clear that in all forms of libation, God is the focal point.

It has been noted above that prayers accompany the pouring of libation during the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. According to the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, a prayer is an “expression of a desire cast in the form of a request”. The chief priest of the Ga traditional area believes that the prayers influence some force or power conceived as supernatural. The prayers signify a spiritual communion and are usually said with reverence and petition. The prayers said by the Nai Wulɔmɔ are specially chosen words, thought to be capable of winning the admiration of the spirits. Another artistic way is the manner in which the prayer is said. The various priests of the traditional area during the prayers, sometimes pauses as if in a position of receiving an answer to a request, then suddenly utters some words, slows down and speeds up with some appellations which embellish the utterances. These rise and fall phenomena of the prayers make the utterances very artistic and the whole activity a drama indeed. Plate 43 shows evident of a priest pouring libation during the celebration



Plate 43: The act of artistic prayers and libation by the priest of Sakumo

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Performing Arts

Overview

This section of this very important chapter deals with or gives an account of performing arts as they manifest in the celebration of the festival. This entails intensely the objective and the subjective aspects of the artistic appraisal of drumming, dancing and music as well as other dramatic rudiments caught up in the festival, taking into consideration the activities that mark the phases of the entire celebration.

Music

Music permeates the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. It forms an intrinsic facet of the medicinal aspect of the festival. It also forms an introductory experience of the remedial preambles and the entire curative activities. Music is probably as old as the human race and we know from art and other evidence that it existed in ancient Egypt, Israel, Greece and Rome. The Cambridge International Dictionary of English defines music as a pattern of sound made by musical instruments or singing or a combination of both, intended to give pleasure to the music makers and people listening to it.

All ceremonies in the celebration of the festival are believed to be in connection with supernatural protective spirits and these activities largely employ music as it is through the music that the benevolent spirits are thought to be drawn to their mediums to perform their duties. Since sounds are made by musical instruments, singing or a combination of both is music, it could be said that the artistic manner in which the

retinue of the chief priest clap their hands in response to his prayers is music and thus an art work.

According to Nii Larkote the *brafo* in *Nai We* (the chief Priest palace), the clapping signifies that “May it be so” which is probably equivalent to “Amen” that Christians say in response to their prayers. This form of clapping is however different from the well known one where the palms of both hands are struck together to produce a sound. In this case, the palm of the left hand is opened upward with the fingers bent inside to make a fist, and the palm of the right hand is used to strike the fisted left hand, thus producing a very soft sound. This brings into bold focus outstanding artistic creations. It must be safe to assert that without the singing, clapping, dancing and infact the making of music, the entire celebration would be monotonous and unattractive.

Apart from the singing and clapping that permeate the celebration, there is also music produced from instruments such as the *fontofrom* and the *atupani* (talking drums) beaten to give the staccato rhythms for the chiefs to dance whenever the ban on noise making is lifted. *No no* (gong), rattles and the castanet are also employed in producing music during the celebration. The *no no* and the castanet are used as the time signatures which determines the number of beats and the tempo of the song. They are also used as an accompanying instrument. The gong is made to play an unchangeable rhythm, maintaining a steady metronome throughout the entire performance since a mistake on its part would inadvertently cause the dancers some difficulties in articulating their gestures.

All these instruments when dexterously played and harmoniously blended; produce a melodious music which is enjoyed by all the celebrants. It is a delight to hear the castanet beater initiating the music with the sound ko!ko!,ko! ko!,ko!ko, in a six eight time signature and the rattle shaker joins in the same time signature as tsa!, tsa!, tsa!,tsa!, tsa!, and when the divine drummers fuse in, the whole arena is thrown into ecstasy and everyone swept off his feet. One important feature of the music produced is the manner in which the music makers play in a short and detached manner which is said to be in staccato. It is very interesting to see these music makers applying crescendo and diminuendo effects to their music to bring out the feelings inside them. These dynamics enhance their production and thus create a good work of art.

The music produced would be understood if one really understood the importance of these religious celebrations. Kamien (1998:59), argues along the same line as

Music is not created in a vacuum. To fully understand the style of a composition, one has to be aware of its function in society. Is a piece meant to provide entertainment in an aristocrat castle, a concert hall, a middle class home? Is it designed to accompany singing, dancing, religious rites or drama. Musical style is shaped by political, economic, social and intellectual.

From this point by Kamien, it could be deduced that one has to be aware of the music that is being produced and its significance, to whom it is made and why it is being produced. Hitherto to this discussion, it could be seen that it is not only the application of singing and drumming that makes the music really artistic; it is a combination of the

quality of the words or libretto produced, the quality of the voice, the dexterity of the drummers and the desired harmony that the music achieves which in effect draws the benevolent spirits into its medium, and which inspires connoisseurs to categorize it as a great work of art.

During the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration, it is realized that the songs produced by the celebrants are the call and response form of singing. It is also known as the cantor-chorus style of singing and these styles of singing permeate any other African societies. In the Ga culture, the *lalatsɛ* (the leader of the songs) is referred to as the cantor. This cantor-chorus style of singing is heard in the performing of the various rites in the various priests and Notation 2 shows an example of such songs where the *lalatsɛ* initiates the song by singing *awo!*, *awo! awo!* (exalted, exalted, exalted), and the crowd also respond *awo! awo! awo!*. Nevertheless, during the *haaji yɛɛ yeli* (Twins yam festival), the cantor-chorus style of singing is not employed but rather the song starts with a chord and ends also with a chord and this is evident on Notation 1 on the next page.

Johnson (1993:267) has also taken cognisance of this artistic feature that characterise the songs in the Ajumako-Ba Akwambo festival. Thus almost all the songs that manifest in the Ajumako-Ba Akwambo festival are built on short melodic units sung in repetition or sequence and generally utilise the basic formula of cantor and choir; soloists' lead and group responds. Repetition manifests in many of the songs and some incorporate both regular and irregular pattern of repetition and these help create variations in the song.

YE YE YE

(TWINS YAM FESTIVAL SONG)

arranged by the researcher

Piano

♩ = 80

1

3 2

♩ = 80

9

AWO! AWO! AWO!

(EXALTED! EXALTED! EXALTED!)

Arranged by the Researcher

Piano

A - wo A - wo A - wo A - wo A - gba ei O-ble-ku-

7

tsoo. E-nam a-wo nu ei a - wo nu ei E - nam a-wo nu ei a - wo nu ei

12

E - su, E - su, E - nam, E - nam, Ma - nyo, Ma - nyo, A-de-bar kpo-too.....

The above notations were arranged by the researcher and they are two tunes mostly sung during the celebration of the festival. The music software used in the arrangement of the notation is Finale. The notations have been edited by Rev. Samuel Kojo Enninful, Lecturer and Director of the Centre for Cultural and African Studies, KNUST. The words below is the English version of notation 2

Exalted! Exalted! Exalted!
Priestly People
Let rain fall to give blessing
Let us have to have fish, water
Abundant blessing
Plenty of food

Musical Instruments

Musical instruments generally serve multi-faceted or diverse roles in the *Hwachaw* festival. The musical instruments are categorized under the following:

These are the percussive drums struck with a stick or the hand which emits sound by the vibration of their stretched membranes. Examples are *Atumpani*, *Fontomfrom*, etc. This is to demonstrate the fact that they share the fundamental feature of having a stretched animal skin as the sounding medium and are struck with either hands or artistic wooden sticks. During the lifting of the ban (*odadaa*) the drummers display their various drums of a striking feature in the arrangement according to the size and the pitch and rhythm the drums produce. To show stability and power, the divine drummers support their drums on props or wooden boards as evident on plate 44. The support on props furthermore affords them the room for a free flowing drumming with much dexterity.

The *atumpani* drum played during the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration is paired believed to be a male and female and are played together. They are associated with royalty. To the left of the drummer is the male drum and to the right of the drummer is the female drum. The pair of drums which is tilted at an angle of 45 degrees and the two are played skilfully to produce music to the joyous celebrants who in turn dance gracefully to the music being provided. They are played with artistically shaped sticks.



Plate 44: Drums supported by boards and tilted at an angle of 45 degrees

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

During the celebrations on the ceremonial grounds where music is provided by the drummers, one cannot rule out idiophones which are vibrated to produce sounds. The nature of the objects because they are solid and elastic help yield sounds without requiring strings or stretched membranes. They are musical instruments mostly made of metals. Others are made of gourds with beads woven around them. They include castanets, rattles and the like. Idiophones such as the castanets and rattles are used as time keepers and the tempo of the music really lies on its playing. Although these idiophones are relatively easy to play, they are the instruments that really give the music its taste.

There are also aerophones that are played during the celebration. The blowing of horns although limited in the celebration of the festival is heard during the lifting of the ban on drumming and noise making ceremony. The horn is blown during the procession of the Sakumo Priest and his retinue to signal to the *Nai We* to also process to the ceremonial grounds. The horns are made from the tusk of the elephant (Ivory). It could be noticed that when the horn blower blows his instrument, to the observer the sound could be meaningless but to the other custodians of the rites, it is a vital message that is being transmitted. This comes to establish the importance of horn blowing for communication, Sarpong (1990: 12) also comments that horns can also be used to praise, to adulate, to glorify and enhance one's ego.

Dance

Oparebea (1994:19) is of the opinion that dances serve as a medium of communication and always convey an idea to the beholder. This idea could be joy, sorrow, hatred, love,

happiness etc. Dance cannot be ruled out of the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. Through the dance forms or movements, the celebrants of the festival express their moral and social behaviour expected of the members of the traditional area. This is to draw attention to the fact that some of the most important events in the traditional area are expressed through these dance forms in remarkable gestures thus enhancing their meanings and significance. The dance in the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival celebration is performed either by a group of performers or individuals.

The importance attached to the dance does not lie only in the joy it provides, for the release of emotions stimulated by music but also used as a social and artistic medium of communication. The dances seen in the celebration convey thoughts or matters of personal or social importance through the choice of movements, postures and facial expression. By these, the chief, priests, priestesses, elders and the people demonstrate their social unity, co-operation and friendship. All these are expressed through the choice of appropriate symbolic gestures.

The chiefs of the various quarters under the Ga Mashie dance to the staccato beats of the drums and the Ga paramount chief dances making artistic gesticulations pointing both hands to the left, right, upward and downward directions after which the left hand and right are brought towards the chest signifying the fact that all the people of Ga Mashie traditional area are under his supreme jurisdiction. They continue to dance to the music provided by the drummers by making quick steps, manipulation of the hands and neck to the music being provided before his subjects. Sarpong (1974:123) was of the view that

when there is music, it is accompanied by bodily movements like beautiful footwork, gestures, manipulation of neck, raising of the eyebrows, pouting of the lips, pliability of the torso, shaking of the lower part of the trunk etc. According to him all these movements add a lot to the aesthetic aspects of dancing.

Again, during the *odadaa* (lifting of the ban on drumming and noise making) celebration, the older women having heard the sound of the sacred drum, shout *akpa he hawo!* They make intricate artistic strides with their waists, arms and legs in hailing the lifting of the ban. They sing and dance simultaneously making strutting and bobbing up and down movements whilst exhibiting dance movements that entail swinging of the arms and legs. Moreover, the dances displayed by both the older men and women go with the rhythm from the divine drummers. As if it has been a well dressed rehearsal between them and the music makers, they are able to interpret the percussive patterns of the sounds through their graceful steps, postures, gestures and articulations. Also during the *oshi joo* as pointed out before, the dances quickly develop into joyful boisterous jostling dances in which anyone may participate, anyone is permitted to touch his or her neighbour, people may wear the clothing of the opposite sex, and people may sing songs ridiculing prominent personalities of their shortcomings. In short, as noted already while the *Homawo* dance is performed, all customary social statuses and constraints are in abeyance.

Drama

Drama pervades many of the activities of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival celebration, and is an essential part of the festivities. It does not become separated from the celebration but serves as a necessary contribution to its fulfilment. The purification rites, the tilling of the land and the various processions which portray the cultural life of the celebrants serve as occasions for dramatic scenes. In this vein, certain activities which are part of the day to day lives of the celebrants as well as some historic events are dramatized to the fullest.

The *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival establishes a great deal of drama but it must be noted that unlike other drama troupes who rehearse their scenes, the drama in this celebration is of a natural flair. Perhaps since it is done annually, the celebrants have acquired the dexterity for it.

Drama in the celebration of the festival seems to play a great remedial role. During times of the festival when people come to purify themselves from the *tsese* (traditional bowl), it is this drama that appears to infuse some elements of faith and confidence into the patients. During a visit to the shrine of Priestess Donkor, the researcher saw a girl who was mentally sick, and had been brought there by her family members to be cured so that all of them would be able to celebrate the festival with the usual pomp and pageantry. During the interaction with the family members, the researcher realized that they had a sigh of relief when the quasi dramatic display of the priestess probably had a psychological effect on them. They were of the view that the girl would be well since the

priestess in one of her dramatic dances seemed to be apprehending and destroying the fearsome witches. From this observance made by them, their fears appeared to have been alleviated and they seemed to have become confident that their sister would be cured and they would joyfully participate in the festivity without any setbacks.

The celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival indeed has dramatic scenes. One should not cast one's mind far back as to witnessing a drama by a drama troupe such as *Obra* and *Osofo Dadzie* but the manner in which the chiefs' messenger sent information to the people at the market places or the community centres is drama of a first class. Especially, during the sprinkling of the festive food, it is the duty of the *Nai Wulɔmɔ* to perform the sprinkling rite before the chiefs can perform their duties. For this reason, a lot of drama is unfolded as the *Gbese Mantsɛ* enquires from the *Nai We* in order to carry on with his duty.

Cultural Aspects

Overview

Indeed the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival in Accra involves a great deal of cultural aspects in all forms and shades. Culture which is the way of life of a particular tribe involves their economic, social and political lifestyle. It furthermore involves their philosophies, medicinal and beliefs of their way of life.

The second segment of this chapter is devoted to the cultural appraisal of the celebration of the festival and intends to analyse and interpret the data to establish the political, social, economic, medicinal aspects as well as the beliefs or philosophies associated with the celebration of the festival.

Social aspects of the festival

Indeed the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival of the Ga involves a great deal of cultural aspects and one of the cultural components is the social phenomenon. Festivals, as important institutions provide recurrent opportunities for communal re-creation and social revival. If creation is a special province of God, it is in recreation that men revitalize God's creation so that it does not become ancient history but a present reality. This phase of the chapter five is to discuss social aspects as they manifest in the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival.

One can say that the celebration of the entire festival connotes a social environment. It is social in the sense that it is an occasion when members of a group formally or informally meet to enjoy themselves, or a period when people meet and spend time together.

One major factor that makes the celebration unequivocally social is the *Noowala Hamɔ* (Give life greetings). This *Noowala* greetings (give life greeting) as already discussed is observed on Sunday, a day after the Saturday festival celebration. Greetings in our social system are deemed an important part of moral and social phenomena. Anyone who does not greet is declared from the very onset as not socially and morally brought up well.

Although the *Noowala Hamɔ* ceremony is observed on Sunday, a day after the Saturday *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration, throughout the festive season, it is customarily required of everyone to greet “*Afi oo, Afi*” (a new year, a new year) with the response “*Afi aya ni banina wɔ*” meaning we should live to see the next year.

Early that Sunday morning, all the Paramount chiefs of the Ga Traditional Area make use of this occasion to visit the Highest Priest, the Nai Wulɔmɔ and exchange the *Noowala* greetings with him. The festival at this peak achieves an important aim as it brings all the *Mantɛmɛi* (chiefs) to the *Nai's We* (palace). It is possible that the *Mantɛmɛi* could be very busy during the year performing their duties and this occasion provides them the opportunity to see one another and discuss issues pertaining to the development of the traditional area and the entire nation of Ghana. It furthermore provides the opportunity for the children to meet their fathers and this promotes family reunion.

During their exchange of the greetings, they talk of the past years, their shortcomings and settle every dispute that is prevailing. It should be clear that during this ceremony, it is traditionally expected that every one give up any grievances or quarrel he or she has with the relatives, friends or neighbours. It is frequently an interesting sight to observe people in the same residence or from different compounds in the Ga traditional areas exchanging the *Noowala* greetings and felicitous wishes. What more could create such a social environment? Indeed, it could be understood that one of the main objectives of the celebration of the festival is to unite the entire people of the area, and obviously, the

noowala prepares the ground for this to become achievable. However, it is difficult to tell whether it is hundred per cent achievable or not.

On this *noowala* (give life greetings) occasion, it is traditionally incumbent on the head of the nuclear family to travel with his family to visit their fathers in law to exchange greetings. The children also take this opportunity to know the tradition and meet their grandparents other family members. Shaking of hands and embracing one another is the form of greeting and the following words said during the *Noowala* greeting

Ga

*Noowala, Noowala,
Afi naa akpe wɔ,
Gbi kpaanyɔ anina wɔ,
Wɔye Gbo, ni wɔye Gboena,
Wɔfee moomo,
Wɔsɛɛ afi bene wo trashi,
Alɔnte din ko aka fo wo ten,
Afi, aya ni afi aba ekoon
Twa omanyɛ aba
Hiao*

English

Good health, Good health,
A new year is here,
We should live to see another eight months,
Let us eat and eat all,
We should be strong and fit,
We should be alive the year to come,
No evil black cat to cross our way,

Let this year go for another to come,
Let only good things abound.

(for each line the response is Hiao)

As already discussed in chapter four, during the greetings it is said that we should live to see another eight months. The reason for this phrase of the greeting is that the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is celebrated in August but the pre celebration activities start from the last week of April and end with customary rites in September. Four months from September is Christmas, and another four months from Christmas is Easter and some few weeks after Easter, the customary rite of digging known as *shibaa* is observed which marks the commencement of another *Hɔmɔwɔ* Festival. For this reason, it is justifiable for them to say that another eight months should meet them since eight months constitute the beginning of another celebration year.

Notwithstanding the pomp and pageantry attached to the festive greetings to put the festival into a social atmosphere, the arrival of the *soo bii* (Thursday people) could also be justified as one of the socio cultural aspects of the festival. Customarily every custodian of the Ga traditional area is required to go home and participate in the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festivities as it has been the tradition of every Jew to travel back home for census. The Ga practise the patrilineal type of inheritance where everyone is required to live closer to his Father's house. But due to work schedule and the seeking of greener pastures, it has been difficult for Gas to live in or around their fathers' houses, really some members of the Ga traditional area travel away from the Ga traditional area to other cities or outlying villages where they settle to work. This gives the festival a social

dimension as it provides an opportunity customarily for every family to meet other families as they travel back home to join in the celebration of the festival.

The celebrants, who travel to other cities or outlying villages for various reasons, start new families, and this opportune time allows them to bring their wives and children back home to meet their extended families. It is therefore significant that all custodians of the Ga state travel home and participate in the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festivities.

The traditional spot where the *Soobii* (Thursday people) converge before they are welcomed into the city is called *kpayaafɔ* and *Chorkor*. And as pointed out already, the *Soobii* are given tumultuous reception in every home and this puts the whole town into a joyous festive mood. On Thursday of the week of the festival, marks the day in which the Ga people from the outlying villages and cities converge into the city to participate in the festival, thus, the appellation *Soobii* meaning Thursday people. It is worthy to note that the *Soobii* do not just return to the father's home but also arrive with their harvested crops of all kinds. These harvested crops are carried and covered with plain white cloths showing the triumph over hunger that had plagued them before the intense merry making.

They sing and trudge along the principal streets amid drumming and dancing sometimes with masquerades and the whole Ga Mashie area is transformed into a colourful ambiance with pomp and pageantry. Finally when it is dark, they settle down at recreational spots and meet old friends, get up to date with new friends and start new

relationships. The celebrants make merry and sing to welcome the new dawn of Friday and the theme of their songs is that of ridiculing hunger and saying that the harvest has been plentiful (*nmaa eyε*).

The *Hɔmɔwɔ* central theme, the celebration and renewal of the Ga community, rest manifestly upon a paradox. That is most notably, the celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ* affirms the principles of social differentiation while denying social difference. In addition, while *Hɔmɔwɔ* is the quintessential celebration of Ga ethnic identity, it has adapted to changing social conditions.

Furthermore, another important point which connotes a social fabric of the festival is that *Hɔmɔwɔ* occurs within a period when ordinary activities of day to day life, from gaining a living to engaging in interpersonal animosities, are suspended. In this period, *Hɔmɔwɔ* ritual actions both articulate and deny the basic social differences out of which the fabric of Ga culture and society are constructed.

On the one hand, ritual actions distinguish between and ascribe differential social values to the living and the dead, village dwellers and town dwellers, secular office and sacred office, affinity and consanguinity, the youth and the aged, female and male. On the other hand, as noted earlier differences in rank and status are denied and cast aside in the communal eating of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festal food called *Kpokpoi* or *Akpitigbijulɔ*. Also during the boisterous jostling of the *Hɔmɔwɔ oshi* dance, and the greetings all social

class are put aside. In *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration as in so many rituals of communal celebration the social fabric is renewed.

Economic appraisal of the festival

The Ga ethnic group although not being the largest ethnic group in Ghana has contributed immensely to the unification of the southern regions and the economic state of the country through its annual celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. This has been possible due to its natural resources and maintenance of culture.

This is exemplified through the growing of the crop that is used for preparing the festal food called *kpokpoi* or *akpitigbijulɔ* to which reference has already been made. It should be recalled that the main theme of the festival is to make fun of hunger that once plagued Gas and for this reason the Ga traditional area rejoices that they no longer have to endure those hard times their ancestors went through.

The economic value of the celebration of this august festival is realized in the farming and selling of the corn for the preparation of the festive food and other ingredients such as tomatoes, pepper, okra (*Hibiscus Esculentum*), smoked fish and palm nuts. All these ingredients are used in the preparation of the festive food. The responsibility lies on the head of the family to provide money for the celebration and with this responsibility he is left with two choices. He either has to farm to produce the crop or buy it from the market. The researcher was informed by some celebrants who live in the nearby villages that they prefer to grow the crop on their farms to buying it from the market at an

exorbitant price. The farmers in the outlying villages in the traditional area most often grow on a large scale and sell some of the produce to the people in the city.

Nonetheless, some also present it as a gift to their in-laws and loved ones. However, growing of corn is not left to only Ga farmers or people farming on Ga lands but farmers across the length and breadth of the country Ghana. The celebration of the festival encourages the farmers to produce more of the festal ingredients for the celebrants and other citizens of the country. Thus the economic dimension of the country is elevated through the abundance of the various crops.

The production of the crops on a larger scale boosts the economy of the country taking into the consideration the demand for them on the market and the foreign exchange that is gained as in the exportation of the crop for celebration of the festival, in that those living outside the country who were not able to travel to their respective compounds for the celebration get the opportunity to buy the crops, so that they can also prepare their own *kpokpoi* and partake in the celebration. In this dimension the crop is processed into corn dough and then exported to other countries, the reason being that, the celebrants may not have access to a corn mill to process the festive crop.

Since the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival entails a lot of merry making, there is a high propensity to spend and obviously low propensity to save during the celebration. Most celebrants put in a lot of money to prepare the festive food. Most of them seem to have saved towards the celebration but since one cannot tell the number of visitors one

would receive, one has to budget for miscellaneous since the number of visitors cannot be determined due to the trend of celebration. Most celebrants overspend mostly in the buying of drinks and travelling around. The high propensity to spend leads to high withdrawal of money from their accounts in the banks. This high propensity to spend during the celebration leaves most of the celebrants bankrupt. This invariably affects their finances in terms of education for their children and wards and the payment of utility bills.

Another economic activity is the buying of new clothing during this occasion. The fondest of this act are the women who buy printed wax products from industries such as Akosombo Textile Limited and Ghana Textile Prints. In this present celebration, traditional materials made of interesting and intrinsic designs are seen to be worn by most celebrants and observers. Again, celebrants do a thorough cleaning in their various homes by bringing out all unwanted items that have been kept in the various household. They furthermore buy various colours of paints to paint their houses and decorate their homes with new curtains and flowers.

The celebration of the festival also brings about seasonal employment in the micro economy in the Ga traditional area. This is noted clearly on the *Haaji Yɛɛ Yeli* (Twins' Yam Festival) day when the leaves for the preparation of *baawoo* (concoction) are sold at the market especially at the *Salaga* Market in Accra as evident on plate 45.

The researcher bought some of the various leaves as said earlier to enable him look out for the botanical names at the Department of Theoretical and Applied Biology laboratory, KNUST. These leaves are sold very early in the morning by market sellers who initially sell different commodities at their stalls. However, a few take this opportunity to make some little money which obviously they spend during this merry making occasion. Additionally, other celebrants look out for firewood which they sell to other households for the preparation of the festive food.



Plate 45: An economic activity: the sale of the various leaves at the Salaga market for the twins festival

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Political aspects of the festival

Our everyday lifestyle is said to involve a lot of politics and just as this assertion is true the celebration takes a political dimension. The celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival provides an amazing opportunity for the people of Ga Mashie to get acquainted with their various chiefs, elders and the priesthood. It is to be remembered that Ga Mashie has seven quarters namely Asere, Otublohum, Gbese, Sempe, Ngleshie, Abola and Akanmaiadzen and during the celebration of the *odadaa* all these paramount chiefs gather to lift the ban on noise making. It is very much possible most of the people from these quarters do not even know their various chiefs and more to it the symbols or emblems that identify them as a particular quarter under a recognized chief. The occasion therefore provides an amazing chance to get to know your traditional ruler, thereby according him the due reverence.

Politically, the celebration of the festival gives the chiefs the opportunity to show their power and grandeur. Speeches are heard from the chiefs to their subjects concerning the welfare of the people and development of the traditional area. During the celebration, the chiefs publicly discuss their plans for the year, critically talk about their shortcomings and encourage collective decision making. It provides the opportunity for the people to lavish their leaders with praise and also to lampoon insults which are not considered as disrespectful acts.

Furthermore, through these collective decisions making, the chief and elders are able to amalgamate the entire traditional area and their great traditional cultural heritage is

resounded to their hearing and understanding. Misconceptions are likely to be cleared and a spirit of unity and one accord is instilled in them to help keep the tradition alive.

In addition, government officials grace the occasion by visiting the residencies of the various chiefs and the Chief Priest to offer goodwill messages to the celebrants. During the lifting of the ban ceremony known as *odadaa*, the political parties are invited to the ceremonial grounds to grace the occasion. Notably among the parties are the two leading political parties in the country namely New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC). It is interesting to note that although there is a strong rivalry between the followers of these two political parties, differences are put aside during the celebration. However, soon after the celebration, the celebrants go back to their strong political debates.

Politically, the celebration of the festival provides an opportunity for some families of the traditional area as they utilize the arrival of other members to choose and install a new *Weku nukpa* (family head). In the case, where the family head has already been chosen, the festival serves as the official time for his investiture.

The festival as a medicine

The medicinal value of the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival cannot be over emphasized. Generally, everybody would look for a cure whenever he or she does not feel well. There are various kinds of sicknesses and therefore, various forms of treatment. Everywhere in the world and for this matter the Ga traditional area, people necessarily experience stress and tensions in their lives arising from a variety of

psychosomatic and biosocial sources and having diverse social and physiological consequences.

In contemporary cases, in the Ga traditional area, traditional healers rely on both physical and spiritual concepts to diagnose illnesses and treat their patients. But during the celebration the healing process is based upon the belief one has. One would have to state whatever one's complaints and sicknesses are and would be expected to receive healing according to one's level of belief. Ga traditional healers believe that certain diseases which are supernaturally induced are more difficult to cure than purely physical sicknesses and that the supernatural ailment cannot be treated by western medicine. For this reason it must be noted that during each time of the celebration, the medicine for curing all sorts of illness is made available in the traditional bowl called *tsese*. These are mainly leaves which are not pounded or grounded but are mixed with sea water and some distilled spirits. The leaves are *Aboloo baa*, *Kɔkɔdene baa*, *Ntonme* (*Dracaena Arborea*) and *Osubaa* that are mixed with sea water, eggs and Schnapps.

This medicinal or therapeutic aspect of the festival could be deduced and based on a high level of belief since interviews with some patients suggest that it is their level of belief that makes them whole. There is also the belief during the *Odadaa* ceremony when the Gbese *Mantsɛ* beats the sacred drum on three consecutive times and in each round all the people shout *akpa he hawo eee.*, *Akpa he hawɔ eee* which literally means our sins and illnesses have been carried away and we are free forever. The most jubilant are the older men and women who assure themselves that if this year has come and they

are still alive, then there is an assurance that their health will be good and they will live to celebrate the next festival. It is an awesome sight to see as old men and women jump up and down throwing their hands lackadaisically and dance to the staccato beats of the drum and shouting *akpa he haw eee*.

Another medicinal aspect of this important celebration is the culture that results from the clean up activities and the practice of personal hygiene. There are usually clean up activities in the homes and communities to free the choked gutters which have been serving as breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The female anopheles mosquitoes are the carriers of plasmodium which causes malaria. Through the celebration and the clean up exercise, the people remind themselves of healthy living habits and if these habits are cultivated and promoted, everything being equal, good health, strength and vitality to work would be instilled in the celebrants to provide the necessary quality services to the nation. And if this strength is provided, there would be security, survival and continuity of their traditional culture and moreover the people will appreciably cut down the cost of their hospital charges.

The celebrants furthermore scrub their various houses, remove cobwebs, change their torn window and door nets, bring out all their belongings and discard those that are not needed. In doing this the celebrants get rid of stale air and make way for good circulation of air in their rooms. This breathing of good air helps their lungs to be in good condition

Also due to the influx of visitors, at least everyone makes it a point to look presentable and attractive. Children bath, shave their unkempt hair and dress up in their fine clothes during the celebration ready to be sent on errands distributing the festive food to their relatives and loved ones. It is a common sight to see the children and on few occasion adults with baskets, carrying the food to their various destinations and they do that with much delight since they get some little change and gifts in return.

The mere sight of the priests, chiefs and all the artefacts seen on and around them create a free state of mind for the celebrants. For example the concoction in the *tsese* (traditional bowl) believed to provide answers to their problems imbues into them a sense of joy and hope that may cure their illnesses. Also, by the sight of the priest and the artefacts, the people get the assurance of the presence of their protective deity. This assurance may prevent them from getting psychosomatic and psychological illnesses.

The swirling of umbrellas, the carrying of chiefs by the subjects during the celebration and the graceful dance by both the chiefs and the people could be seen as a great form of exercise. Perhaps due to the busy schedule and daily routines of the people, there is a possibility that one may ignore the act of exercising the body, thus, these swirling of umbrellas, carrying of chiefs, the vigorous processions that follow the *tsese* carriers during the twins' yam celebration, the *oshi joo* dance also serves as exercises for the celebrants. The celebrants sweat profusely during these activities and they burn excessive fats from their bodies. The swirling of umbrellas, the dances, the carrying of chiefs etc. also strengthen the bones and joints. These activities is seen by the researcher

as great forms of exercise help in the circulation of blood in the veins and arteries and help prevent heart and cardiac illnesses.

Religious aspects of the festival

In fact, the entire celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival has religious inclinations. It is a religious festival which embraces other cultural aspects. The calculation of the festival which is done by the *Dantu wulɔmɔ* is religious. This traditional festival deals with both spiritual and physical factors which determine and characterize the significance and values of the festival. The religious or spiritual factor forms the core of the entire celebrations.

The various activities involved in the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival can broadly be divided into two components which are easily discernible or perceived by an intelligent and active observer as they assume varying degrees of elaboration during the celebrations. These are the religious aspects, consisting of rites and rituals, and the recreational component, comprising singing, drumming, dancing and merry making. Both aspects are carefully arranged to do away with interference with each other. Anyway, two or more can take place simultaneously.

Another religious aspect of the festival is the sowing of the corn and the ban on drumming and noise making and the observance of the imposition. The ban on noise-making and drumming become a religious aspect of the celebration since the celebrants' believe that it is in the stillness of the thirty-day ban on noise making that they can

“meet” their God and “hear” him speak. The custodians of the rite are of the view that, the world they live in now is marked by noisy activities, and even the Church services are marked more by noise than quiet reflections, it is therefore expedient to have a quiet time in your life to have a good reflection.

The religious aspects mostly happen at homes, stool houses, sacred grooves, the shrines of gods and river banks. They are often performed by selected groups which are often appointed by the priest in charge. For instance, one becomes a member of a group which performs the esoteric rituals of festivals by virtue of one’s kinship ties, rank, office or other predetermined factors. For this reason, the secrecy and mysticism that envelope the rituals give rise to awe and even fear among members of the communities who are exempted from them. This is to give solemn outlook to the otherwise gay and joyous activities of the festivals. In contrast to the rituals, the recreational activities are occasionally interspersed with dramatization and artistic display

Again, the sprinkling of the festal food in the traditional area to feed the ancestors is another religious aspect of the celebration. The sprinkling of the festal food (*kpokpoi*) is a way of showing reverence to their ancestors who brought them to their present settlement. They believe the ancestors are always interceding on their behalf. Again Asihene (2004:15) says the ancestors serve as intermediaries between God and the living. It is therefore easy to understand the importance of the ancestors and the reverence that is attached to them. The basic belief has been the source and strength of community structure, with individuals responsible to the elders who in turn are

responsible to the chief. The chief together with his counsellors of state are answerable to the One and Supreme God through the intercession of the ancestors.

Summary of Discussion

This chapter has shown that Body Arts, Environmental Arts, Performing Arts and Verbal Arts play an important role in the celebration of the festival as the various art forms provide essential knowledge of the cultural heritage of the celebrants.

The role of the arts in the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival cannot be over-emphasized although previous writers probably did not know or were not aware that it is the arts (Performing, Body, Verbal and Environmental) characterizing them, are the mirror reflecting the traditions and beliefs and the religious concept of the people and the arts serving as a vehicle for the festival to drive home its objective.

This chapter has shown an interesting connection between the celebration and the arts and how the arts permeate through the festival even during the pre- celebration activities because of the special costumes, beads worn and other artefacts. All these arts have been overlooked when it comes to the analysis and appreciation of the festival. It has not only shown the celebration by the Ga Mashie but has also brought out the significances of the various artefacts displaced during the performing of the various rites involved in the celebration. This chapter has shown remarkably the costumes of the chief priest without which he cannot perform his duties as such. The chiefs and their subjects also adorn

themselves with beads and artefacts such as umbrellas, swords and all these come to show the grandeur of the chiefs.

The chapter has also shown that the celebrants show reverence to the Almighty God during their pouring of libation as *Ataa Naa Nyonmɔ* and also their various divinities and deities. All these reverence to their mediums come to connote the religious aspect of the festival.

On the ceremonial grounds, the celebrants are seen to swirl their umbrellas, carry their chiefs and dance gracefully to the music being provided. This serves as a form of exercise to the celebrants and when they sweat profusely in these activities, they burn excessive fats from their bodies and these forms of exercises help in the good circulation of blood in their arteries and veins. The clean up exercises in the traditional area remind the celebrants of the practise of good hygiene.

Politically, the chiefs' show their grandeur and authority. They publicly discuss their visions for the traditional area and critically evaluate their previous achievements. They also critically talk about the shortcomings and rally their people for collective decisions. The celebrants also lavish their leaders with praise and respectfully lampoon their leaders with insults. Furthermore, government officials also grace the occasion.

One of the objectives of the celebration is to unite the entire people of the traditional area. This chapter has laid bare that during the celebrations, the celebrants talk of their

past years, their shortcomings and settle their various disputes. Another social dimension the festival provides is that some Gas travel back home to rejoin their family members.

The celebration brings about brisk trading and seasonal employment. A lot of buying and drinking at spots and this increases the economic activities of the festival. The final chapter of the thesis does discussion of findings and upon that offer beneficial recommendations.



CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

In the preceding chapter, the Body Arts, Environmental Arts, Performing and Verbal Arts have been examined. Furthermore, the other cultural aspects established during the celebration of the festival have been laid bare. However, there is the need to critically examine the arts and other cultural aspects of the celebration and suggest how the arts and the other cultural aspects can be improved to enhance the celebration in these modern times and the future.

This chapter therefore does much discussion on the celebration of the festival, its artistic and other cultural aspects, the new findings of this research and also tests and validates the hypothesis of the thesis. The chapter furthermore gives a conclusion of the thesis and follows with some relevant recommendations.

Discussion

The celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ* is obviously the quintessential Ga harvest festival. All people who consider themselves as Gas participate in *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival except those who have attached themselves to exclusionary Christian sects. Significantly, the festal food of *Hɔmɔwɔ* is prepared with corn, the staple of Gas diet. *Hɔmɔwɔ* has adapted variously to changes in the Ga society: villagers entering the towns to celebrate the feast in their ancestral seaside homes may come by lorries and cars as well as by foot and often wear identical clothes cut from the same imported fabric. Schnapps has replaced rum as the

principal libation liquor; some Gas celebrate the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival not in their ancestral town dwellings but in their new inhabited homes. Thus, while for some Gas, the holy days of *Hɔmɔwɔ* have become the holidays for celebrating *Hɔmɔwɔ*, for others the holy day retains the ties between living and dead family members. Furthermore, due to the influx of charismatic churches and the embracement of other religious faiths, the Ga religious aspects of the celebration of the festival have been adulterated.

For this reason, is it likely that the celebration of this august festival of Gas would cease in the near future? This question is difficult to answer. However, the celebration is likely to cease due to the emergence of Christianity and other religious faiths preaching against most of the ritual activities involved in the celebration of the festival, such as the ban on noise-making, drumming and dancing. If the people of the traditional area continue to strengthen and embrace their faith in the new found religion, it is likely they would withdraw their involvement in the celebration. Moreover, when people are educated in schools and are enlightened on technological advances, it is likely most of them would minimise their enthusiasm in the celebration of the festival.

On the other hand, it is not likely the celebration of the festival would ever cease looking at how the various priests and traditionalists adhere to the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration. To the chief priest, priests, priestesses, chiefs and elders of the traditional area, the celebration of the festival serves as time of reaffirming their faith in the divinities and ancestors. It is also a time that they hoot at the hunger that once plagued their ancestors and assures the ancestors that they have not been forgotten. To some of the priests and priestesses, it is a

time to show their loyalty to their deities at their various shrines. Moreover, the kind of pomp and pageantry associated with the celebration coupled with the psychological peace that reigns during the celebrations, seem to give the assurance that the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival would never cease.

The body paintings and markings displayed by the priests and priestesses during the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival portray the festival as an artistic creation. The distribution of motifs of geometric shapes such as spiral lines, rectangles or chains of horizontal and vertical lines as seen in the pictures on different parts of the body of the priests and priestesses, stimulate movement of the eyes round the body from the head to the feet, thus creating aesthetic sensations in the eyes of the observers and celebrants. This implies that the organization of the markings on the bodies helps to unite the various parts together as a composition in an art work.

The aesthetic elaboration and organization of the round and spiral lines, coupled with the vertical and horizontal lines on the body of the priestesses produce graceful patterns. The colours of the paintings such as the blend of white, blue, yellow and green on the body of the celebrants also add extra ornamentation to their complexion. There are other body markings which are permanent on the bodies of the celebrants in the form of scarifications and incisions found on the cheeks, shoulders and arms and although these markings might be for protective, identification and religious purposes, they enhance the beauty of the wearers during the festival and other occasions.

The priestly costume of Nai Wulɔmɔ is believed by him to have affinity with God and the divinities. The costumes of the priests are considered much sanctified to the gods and the entire people of the Ga traditional area. The bead he wears known as *banka* has three precious stones tied on a rope. The first stone of the bead has the blue colour which signifies the sea, the middle stone is yellow signifying money or wealth derived from the earth, the last of the precious stones on the bead, called *silibaa*, red signifies heaven. Therefore if the Nai Wulɔmɔ is regarded to have affinity with heaven and earth then the celebrants have a reason to have assurance in the chief priest and this has helped them in the solution to their problems and the curing of their illnesses.

Furthermore, the hat worn by the Nai Wulɔmɔ is known as *kotofai*. It is a specially designed hat that has been cut into three hundred and sixty five edges. From the foregoing statement, my submission is that if the edges stand for the days in the calendar year in which intercessions are made on behalf the Ga as claimed by the chief priest, then the researcher is of the same opinion as Kaufman (1966:26) that the arts may be a vehicle for social comment, embodying the virtues and the defects of society, a collective symbol of a society, or they may be an individual avenue and visions as well as the physical state of people. They serve as emblems of the past, as percussions of the future, and as the vivid, yet spiritual projection of the present.

The costumes portray or depict the office and jurisdiction of the priests and priestesses. Nonetheless, during the festival, the priests and priestesses do not wear their usual white costumes which the priestesses normally tie around their busts and the straight white

gowns worn by the priests. Rather, they wear *batakari* (smock) at their various shrines. It is because when they wear smocks, it is much easier for them to dance and dramatize whatever the deities might be telling them and when they perform a whirling dance, the smocks revolve beautifully around them as if they are about to fly.

All the costumes and dresses of various kinds displayed during the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival bring into focus stupendous artistic creations. The wearing of different costumes throws the entire ceremonial grounds into a combination of colourful costumes which distribute visual illusions, enhancing the artistic qualities of the celebration. Some celebrants and spectators wear provocative dresses to the ceremonial grounds which inadvertently sway the minds of observers. Decent dresses which are attractive are also worn.

Among the colours mostly seen on these celebrations is white which is mainly worn by the priests and priestesses, chiefs and elders. The other celebrants are seen with a conglomeration of multi-coloured dresses such as red, green, yellow and blue. The blend of these costume colours depicts rhythmic beauty and the effect is intensified by the white colour of the costumes found on the bodies of the custodians of the rites, especially during the outdoor festival ceremonies such as the lifting of the ban at the *odadaa tso shishi*. Furthermore, some of the chiefs are seen in rich *Kente* cloths. These *kente* cloths are characterized by intricate tiny rhythms of colour in the form of geometric shapes which are very pleasing to the eye.

Singing, drumming and dancing permeate the entire celebration. It is even safe to assert that without singing, drumming and dancing, the celebration becomes boring and unattractive. During the lifting of the ban on noise making known as *Odadaa*, the Ga Obonu drummers play their instruments with great panache. This could be seen in their facial expressions as the drummers hook their drums with their legs and employ their palms for the beating of the drums. The performers and the celebrants dance gracefully to the music being produced by the musicians. What is seen in the present celebration is that apart from the music produced by the drummers, other celebrants provide music through their sound systems and dance to the latest hip hops and hi-lives. The youth seen at the ceremonial grounds although enjoy the traditional music by the drummers, they are seen to be much interested in the hip hops and hi-life type of music rather than the traditional music performed by the drummers. On the other hand, foreigners especially white people participating in the celebration enjoy the traditional music being produced. The interest of the youth in such foreign music could be attributed to the fact that the youth are nurtured from the very onset in a surrounding where the hip hops and hi-lives are more vibrant than that of the traditional music.

All over Africa including Ghana, people have attached some importance to festivals and the Ga people consider the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration as major turning points in their lives. The researcher agrees with Ammah (1982: VI) that close studies of some of these festivals reveal that behind this glee and enthusiasm, the arts (Visual, Performing, Body and Verbal) characterizing them, are the mirror reflecting the traditions and beliefs and

the religious concept of the people. This is undoubtedly the most significant and unchangeable aspect of the festival.

The entire drama displayed by the celebrants portray their symbolic and religious beliefs for the renewal of their sense of security, survival, balance and continuity with the past, thereby strengthening their relationship with their ancestors and divinities. This is seen through the pouring of libation and the reciting of poetic words to invoke the benevolent divinities to possess their mediums and express their gratitude to ancestors. The lyrics that accompany the pouring of libation, the proverbs said to shorten long sentences and the appellations sound during the celebrations all increase the artistic dimension of the festival.

Adegbola (1983:150) has put forward three features and beliefs about festivals. He states that a careful study of festivals reveals some common features and beliefs. Furthermore the book states that, there is first and foremost, the belief in life after death and in the nearness of ancestors to their living descendants. Secondly, through festivals, the people remember their past leaders and ask for their help and protection. Thirdly, the festivals are used to purify the whole society so that the people can enter into the New Year with confidence and hope. The inference could be drawn that the celebration of the *Hmwo* festival incorporates the sprinkling of *kpokpoi* or *akpitigbijulo* for the ancestors to spiritually eat since there is the belief that they died during the time of famine. They might be hungry and thus the need for them to be fed.

The ban on drumming and noise making in the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration creates the awareness of the festival as it attracts the attention of the people and Asihene (1980) also supports Nketia's assertion on his further study that lays bare the official ban imposed on drumming and mourning before the commencement of the Cape Coast *Fetu* festival. The inference that can be drawn from the foregone analysis is that the essence of suspending such important social functions which involve the active use of drumming and dancing is to help give full vigour to music and dancing on the festival days. Amposah (1975) on the other hand makes a description of the *Adae Butuw* (turning over the Adae) as an occasion when the custodians of the Akuapem state impose a ban on drumming, dancing and mourning. A similar practice finds expression in Agovi's (1977) version of the *Kundum*. According to Agovi, the ban imposed on drumming and blowing of horns as well as anything which involves the use of musical instruments before the celebration of the *Kundum* is to prevent the legendary *Afakye* of the Ahantas from inflicting them with diseases.

The very onset when the ban is placed on noise making, drumming and dancing, the attention of the general public is drawn through the announcements in News papers, radios and televisions. The Ghana Police Service and the rulers of the traditional area come together to ensure that the ban on noise- making, drumming and dancing for thirty days is strictly observed by residents and visitors in the traditional area. The Frequency Modulation (FM) Stations mostly in Accra, however, are the most heard broadcasters of the outdoor ceremonies. Notably among the FM Stations are Obonu FM and the Ghana

Broadcasting Corporation Radio 2. Also, students, researchers and tourists take the opportunity to observe the celebration of the festival to write their theses and articles.

Innovations and advantages of the festival

There have been new innovations adapted by the Ga traditional area during the celebration of the festival, which were apparently not within the scope of the celebration when viewed against the past ones. For instance, Unilever Ghana organises food competitions where the competitors who are obviously celebrants of the festival are given a time frame to prepare local delicacies using the Royco cube one of their products as the spice for the meal. This is done on the Gbese Street adjacent to the *Odadaa Tso shishi*, the ceremonial ground where the lifting of the ban is performed. There are handsome rewards and lots of consolation prizes such as royco products and T- Shirts to serve as souvenirs for the competitors. Another innovation is a tension *Hɔmɔwɔ* Cup football match between the two rival football clubs in Accra, namely, Accra Hearts of Oak with the slogan “Never say die until the bones are rotten” and Accra Great Olympics “The wonder club of Ghana”. This innovation further serves as forms of entertainment, accentuating the joy of the celebration.

Medicinally, before and during the celebration of the festival, the celebrants engage in serious clean up exercises both in their homes and their surroundings in the traditional area. When the celebrants engage in communal labour, during the celebration, they remind themselves of one cultural identity and people with a common goal. Through interactions with their elders during the communal labour, they acquire a sound and

clearer understanding of their rich culture. They furthermore remind themselves of the need for healthy living and the practice of good hygiene in the traditional area.

Family reunions are established during the celebration. Since families come together during the festival, disputes and misunderstandings between family members and other families are settled and cleared. Marriages that are on the verge of being dissolved are often strengthened. The youth and the unmarried celebrants during the celebration start new relationships with the idea of nurturing these relationships into marriages.

A close study of the activities of *Hɔmɔwɔ* reveals spiritual, artistic and other cultural aspects which actually determine and characterize the significance and values of the festivals. Under the spiritual factor of the festival are religious activities which are the core of the entire celebrations. The spiritual factor of the festival stems out of the traditional beliefs which the traditionalists uphold and cling to. These beliefs have some implications which the celebrants believe partly determine their survival. The other cultural aspects deal with the social, political, economic and the artistic dimensions of the celebration.

For the above reasons, the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is a time for purification, sanctification and resuscitation of their tradition. In order for the people to re-affirm their belief in ancestral veneration, prayers and desirable words are said to invoke the benevolent spirits into their respective mediums, the pouring of libation at the various shrines of deities such as Naa Tɔtrɔɔ and the sprinkling of the festive food for the

ancestors. Libation is also poured to propitiate the spirits of the royal ancestors. The Nai Wulom is seen to spearhead almost everything and serves as a mediator between his people and the ancestors. The festival provides him the opportunity to intercede for his people and to ask for good fortune, blessings and progress for the traditional area. In other words, the purification rituals are believed to raise the spiritual status of the traditional area. The above mentioned significance pertaining to the spiritual aspect of *Homow* festival in a way reveals the people's dedication, enthusiasm and zeal which they exhibit during this august traditional celebration, despite the influx of foreign religions on the local soil.

With regards to family members travelling back for the celebration, refurbishments or construction of buildings in the traditional area are quickly carried out. Indigenes working outside the town travel home. It is therefore likely that accommodation for these family members would not be enough. The problem of accommodation prompts some families to build new houses to accommodate other family members. Other family members are seen to build extensions to the existing ones. Apparently, if these buildings are erected, it would meet modern architecture standards which enhance the beauty of the traditional area.

The celebration also serves as a mechanism for adjusting social behaviour. The celebrants perhaps get rid of all the ill feelings of their rulers through songs. This act finds expression in Asihene's (1980) account of the *Apoo* festival in which the lampooning liberty allows the common people to publicly "sing out" the shortcomings,

faults and villainies of their superiors who have incurred their displeasure so that their superiors would reform. This also has a parallelism with Johnson's (1993) version of the *Ajumako- Ba Akwambɔ* festival songs, which are satirical, allusions to historical events, and offences of citizens which have the effect of adjusting social behaviour.

Disadvantages of the festival

However, there are disadvantages associated with the celebration of the festival. Due to the outburst of joy associated with the celebrations, some celebrants who come from outside the traditional area overspend on their budget. Some are seen to sell off some of their belongings such as clothings and jewellery to enable them travel back. Other celebrants who are flown into the country by airlines sometimes have to extend their airline ticket dates. There are penalties involved in the extension of tickets and this is among other disadvantages associated with the celebration.

The ban on noise making, drumming and dancing result in the postponement of funeral arrangements for the dead ones. This means that if a person dies around the time the ban is imposed, the family members have to wait till the ban is lifted before they can perform the funeral rites. The family therefore would be required to pay huge amounts as mortuary fees due to the long period of keeping the corpse at the mortuary.

Furthermore, the whole traditional area is thrown into boredom due to the ban on drumming and noise making. Drinking spots, discotheques and other places where people go for entertainment are seen to be quiet and dull and businesses slow down.

Even in the various church services, the usual drumming and dancing that characterize the services become dead and the congregation go home with less joy and fulfilments. Another point is that, scientifically, those who have psychosomatic illnesses, and who may obtain healing through drumming, singing and dancing, are denied such healing during the ban on such activities.

Another disadvantage of the celebration of the festival is that it brings about prostitution in the traditional area during the festive season. The joy and merry making attached to the celebration of the festival provide the opportunity to the celebrants to start new relationships which sometimes end in sexual acts. Some celebrants sometimes overdrink and end up in sexual acts which may lead to the spreading of sexually transmitted diseases including the deadly Acquired Immune Syndrome (AIDS). It could on the other hand result in unwanted pregnancies. The female celebrants, who later realize that they are pregnant, may become single parents since they may not be sure of the particular males who impregnated them. Under such a circumstance, the supposed husbands would not be available to take responsibility of the pregnancy.

Miscellaneous discussions

Politically, the festival is the time for the Ga citizens and outsiders to renew their individual loyalty and allegiance to their honourable and charismatic leaders. The young ones who do not know their chiefs have the opportunity to know them. This occasion creates a suitable chance for the chiefs to exhibit their powers and supremacy to their subjects in the form of speeches, dancing, etc. It also gives the chief a long awaited time to unify the whole populace and to remind them of their great heritage pertaining to their

traditional culture. All the chiefs within the jurisdiction are rallied for collective decisions about the welfare of the Ga traditional area.

Economically some celebrants enjoy economic gains when the pre festal sales by merchants, traders and food sellers, attract huge profits from the people preparing feverishly for the celebration. Due to the large influx of visitors and the indigenes living outside the traditional area, there is a tremendous increase in food consumption during the festival period. Farmers in the hinterland and fishermen at the coast sell their foodstuffs to make money for the celebration and the payment of other utilities. These normally increase the income of the farmers in the area and may help to improve their standard of living.

The various priests, priestesses and chiefs use art forms as their media of expression such as the pouring of libation as far as the ceremony for the ancestors and the deities is concerned. In the course of the festival, a great opportunity is created for the chiefs' to exhibit their splendid regalia and other artefacts such as stools, drums, ornamented state swords, flamboyant umbrellas and palanquins. This exhibition of the chiefs' regalia, however, is also a timely period for the people to have at a glance at almost all the art forms belonging to the chiefs, the priests and priestesses of the Ga traditional area.

Pertaining to the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration, the artefacts which are seen as static art forms in the palace as mentioned earlier, are transferred into 'kinetic art' during the festival. In other words, the art works are seen in motion, as Robert Thompson (1974: XII) puts it.

This really means the art works are seen in their full functions. For example, umbrellas are raised and swirled in dance, state swords, stools and chairs are orderly carried in procession. The palanquins are ridden by chiefs, talking drums such as the *fontofrom* drums sound praises, narrating history and announcing proverbs and wise sayings. These visual arts coupled with the performing arts like dances and poetry recitals are realized in their full performance. In this light, the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival can be regarded as a means of unifying the arts of the people of the Ga, because it is the occasion whereby the citizens have the opportunity to display their art in all forms and shades.

Apart from the artistic qualities and excellence portrayed by the artefacts, the symbolism inherent in them serves as a written document where historical facts pertaining or relating to the social, political, religious, philosophical and medicinal beliefs and values of the people are kept for posterity. This would help the incoming generation to know more about the history of their forefathers.

Finally, a question could be raised, that is, is the celebration of the festival still useful to the traditional area? The answer is affirmative. It is of course more important in the present times and the researcher shares the same idea with Opoku (1970:6) that at a time when the need for the money is forcing the Ga to leave the traditional area in pursuit of greener pastures, the celebration of the festivals offers them the opportunity to travel back home to renew old ties and share in the rich cultural heritage.

Development of the Arts

Although the arts involved in the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival give the celebration an artistic dimension fuelling the success of the festival , some of the various arts could be developed or thoroughly transformed to enhance the celebration of the festival.

The visual or environmental arts seen in the celebration of the festival such as the *tsese* (traditional bowl) and the ceremonial grounds could portray artistic designs that should aim at addressing indiscipline and also reminding the people of the need to live peacefully and harmoniously with one another. For example, the designs could be two people embracing each other to remind the people that there is strength in unity. Other designs could depict people working on farms or various workplaces to remind the people that it is through hard work that the celebrants can save to enjoy the future celebration of the festival.

Another environmental art that need to be developed to enhance the future celebration of the festival is the various royal houses of the various chiefs of the Ga Mashie quarters which serves as ceremonial grounds for some of the rites of the festival. It must be noticed that the population of the traditional area has increased tremendously and thus, the turn out at the various ceremonies is overwhelming growing causing the celebrants and spectators alike no breathing space and enough leg room. If the necessary rites could be performed to obtain new royal houses or the existing ones could be developed to enhance the future celebration of the festival.

Another area where the arts could be developed is the music and dance of the festival. The traditional musicians of the chiefs could be sent to institutions that support the maintenance and development of Ghanaian Music such as the School of Performing Arts, University Of Ghana, Legon and the Cultural centres to acquire more theoretical background to the practical knowledge already obtained by them. When this is done, they would improve upon the various dance forms and their graceful steps would be more meaningful to observers. In addition, the musicians could also be taught how to read and interpret musical notes. If they master the theory of music, they would be able to arrange descants and beautifully harmonize the songs to enhance the celebration of the festival.

Body decorations and markings are common features among the priests and priestesses during the celebration of the festival. Although these body decorations are applied beautifully on the body for identification and religious purposes, a few additions and modifications could enhance the future celebration of the festival. Even though the colours of the pigment used in the body decorations are generally lighter or brighter in colour with the aim of uplifting the joy and enthusiasms of observers and spectators, in addition to the use of lighter or brighter colours, warm colours could also be incorporated in the decorations since warm colours are generally stimulating. If this is done by the celebrants, the observers and spectators would be enthused, ecstatic and remain active during the entire celebration due to the colour schemes of the pigment being applied on the body.

Again, the pigments applied on the bodies of the various priests and priestesses are sometimes indiscriminately done as seen on the various photographs. If the pigments could be moderately done, it would reduce the repulsiveness of the pigments which sometimes tend to drive away observers and spectators from the wearers.

Finally, since the thesis has shown that the arts play a predominant role in the celebration, there should be no doubt that the development of the above discussed art forms would enhance the future celebration of this august festival.

New Findings

Although the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival has been narrated by writers such as Opoku, Nii Ammah and others, these writers have neglected the arts and the other cultural aspects that elevate the celebration of the festival. Also, the previous writers have largely neglected the philosophies that emanate from, or are associated with the festival. It is in these areas that the present thesis has made the greatest or major contribution to the growth of knowledge, beside the wealth of new information concerning the ritual activities has been revealed by this thesis.

Regarding the major findings or contribution to knowledge, this thesis has shown the significance of each of the three stones attached to the bead (*banka*) worn by the Nai Wulɔmɔ in which the three precious stones have three different colours, blue, yellow and red. The blue precious stone of the bead signifies the sea, the yellow known as *shika*

signifies the wealth gained from the earth and the red stone signifies heaven. The Nai Wulɔmɔ is said to have affinity with earth and heaven.

This thesis has also revealed that some religious and protective beads, which also signify the office of the priests, priestesses, chiefs and elders, are worn by these rulers. Some of the beads, as shown already in the chapters are *Afili*, *Adɛ*, *fufua*, *adiagba*, *shishɛ*, *tɔnyɔɔ*. The other beads are *kɔmi*, *kɔndɔ*, *dade kulɔ*, *nakutso nii* and all these beads are for religious and protective purposes. This work has further indicated that *nmlɛti*, the broom-like object held by the priestess, is used for spiritual healing.

This thesis has also revealed the receptacle used in the pouring of libation. *Putua* is a nut of a coconut designed into a container in which the drink is poured for the libation. Another major finding is the *kotofai* (hat) worn by the Nai Wulɔmɔ, which as shown already is related with the three hundred and sixty-five days or the calendar year and the edges also stands for the seven waves of the sea.

Evidently, the thesis has examined the role of music in the celebration of the festival and has arranged a notation of two songs as shown already. This in the researcher's view would compliment the understanding of the research. Furthermore, any reader with musical inclinations, would not only read the words of the song written in this thesis, but would also sing along with the help of the notation.

The thesis has also shown the shrine of Naa Tɔtrɔɔ seen as a rock at the Abola sea. It has also shown the sacred farm of the *Nai We* where the customary sowing of the corn is observed. Another finding concerns the various types of leaves used for concoction utilized on the festive occasions. The leaves botanical names of the various leaves have also been provided.

Another major finding is the significance of the rites performed during the celebration of the festival. The research has explicitly indicated how the twins' yam festival came to be associated with the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. In addition, this thesis has revealed that the beating of the sacred drum for lifting of the ban on noise making was previously the duty of the paramount chief of the Ga people, but it has now become the responsibility of the Gbese Mantse.

In terms of the cultural aspects of the festival, this thesis, has come out with a great deal of new findings and consequently laid bare the social, economic, political, medicinal and religious aspects of the celebration of the festival. These findings obviously include the significance and philosophies of the festival. And of course, the thesis has immensely contributed to the growth of knowledge.

Conclusions

It is evident from the information gathered in this thesis that the researcher has given an account of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival in Accra and has examined its artistic and other cultural aspects. The festival on the whole has been realized to give psychological peace to the

celebrants and therefore should be maintained. The arts and cultural aspects which have been the major findings as realized in this thesis are subservient to the promotion of the festival and without them, the celebration might be a failure. It is therefore obvious that the arts are paramount in the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival and they are more than likely to remain bound with the festival for eternity, because without them the festival does not achieve its main objectives.

One of the objectives of this research work is to give an account of the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. The chapter four of this thesis has brought out the significances and philosophies behind the various activities that characterize the celebration. The thesis has not only touched on the main celebration but also examined the various rites and pre-celebration activities of the celebration.

The second objective of the research is to study the other cultural aspects of the festival. This has been explicitly studied and has become clear that the festival serves as a medicine to the celebrants. In addition most of the rituals are backed with religious underlying factor. The festival also boosts economic activities whilst the various chiefs also show their authority and grandeur. Socially, the people remind themselves to remain united.

On the development of the Arts to enhance future celebrations which is the third objective of the thesis, suggestions have been made by the researcher on how a few of the arts could be developed to enhance the future celebration of the festival.

This research work is a contribution to the documentation of artistic and cultural aspects of the festivals in Ghana. It has in addition enhanced the sense of cultural awareness and this thesis would be published to promote the cultural growth among the Ga. The researcher would take painstaking effort in discussing the results of the study to the people. The study also serves as a reference for sociologists, anthropologists, art historians, educationists, artists and research fellows. Without this research work, it is likely that the artistic and other cultural aspects of the festival might not be brought to light to the extent shown in this thesis.

The celebration is an enjoyable one and involves a great deal of art which pervade other cultural aspects of the festival. That is, though the festival is a conglomeration of numerous aspects of the culture of the Ga people, it is preponderantly artistic.

Test of the Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this thesis is: “The *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival embodies a great deal of art which are important and significant to its celebration and the celebration of the festival is associated with a number of other cultural aspects.” This hypothesis has vividly been demonstrated in the various chapters of this thesis which shows that, art, among the various aspects of the Ga culture, is the most significant phenomenon that fuels the success of *Hɔmɔwɔ*.

In line with the hypothesis, the fourth, fifth and six chapters of this thesis evidently show that the various Ga arts are pervasive in the other aspects of the Ga culture that feature in

the *Homowo* celebration, and that, without the arts, it would absolutely be impossible to celebrate the festival. In other words, without the arts, no one would know that any celebration is taking place. In view of the high importance of art in the festival, it is apparent that all the chapters of this thesis have made some statements about the role of art in the celebration of the festival.

Furthermore, the fifth and six chapters of the thesis have shown that the celebration of the festival is with other cultural aspects. Discussions from the various chapters have shown that the celebration of the festival is medicinal to the celebrants. It has also shown that the celebration of the festival provide seasonal employment to the traditional area. Politically, the festival serves as the time for the various chiefs to showcase their wealth and grandeur and religiously, the people call on their creator and divinities and observe the sprinkling rite believed to feed the ancestors.

It could be seen from the information gathered that really without the arts which are with other cultural aspects, the objectives of the festival would not be achieved and the celebrants may not have the desired satisfaction. In the light of the statistics shown on Table 5 coupled with the results from the researcher's field work, it is safe to conclude that the hypothesis of the thesis has been proven.

Table 5: Answers to validate the hypothesis

No.	Question	No. of Yes Respondents	No. of No Respondents	% of Yes Respondents	% of No Respondents
12	Is there any special costume worn by the priests and priestesses?	110	6	94.8	5.2
13	Does your festival involve drumming and dancing?	116	0	100	0
14	Do the artefacts play a major role for the festival to achieve its main objectives?	86	30	74.1	25.9
16	What do you think makes the festival lovely, interesting and enjoyable?	108	8	93.1	6.9
18	What do you think makes the festival boring?	114	2	98.3	1.7
23	Do the people call on their creator and divinities?	116	0	100	0

25	Does the festival involve the sprinkling of the festive food?	116	0	100	0
26	Does the celebration of the festival involve some form of exercising?	112	4	96.5	3.5
27	Do celebrants arrange clean up exercises?	100	16	86.2	13.8
29	Do you think the festival brings about foreign exchange into the country	112	4	96.5	3.5
30	Do you do a lot of buying during the festive season?	108	8	93.1	6.9
35	Are your chiefs involved in the festival	114	2	98.27	1.73
36	Do you meet other family members?	116	0	100	0
37	Do you make new friends during the celebration?	100	16	86.20	13.80

Recommendations

It is highly recommended by the researcher that the youth be encouraged to develop interest in the traditional festival, since this is likely to create greater unity and develop better conditions of love amongst the citizens of the traditional area. This could be done when the elders and custodians of the various rites carefully explain the philosophies behind the ceremonial rites. They can visit schools and colleges to have seminars with them, thereby creating a rapport between themselves. When this is done, it may create greater unity because during the festival, the people of the traditional area become conscious of the fact that they have one cultural identity. Moreover, at such a time, they are all drawn together by the celebration to receive advice and inspiration. The encouragement would come if the gap between the elders and the people is bridged and the youth are involved in the decision making of the celebration of the festival.

The elders should teach the younger generation to have greater respect for, and uphold the institution of chieftaincy which, in the traditional setting, is the symbol of unity and progress of the Ga ethnic group. Furthermore, the elders ought to educate the youth about the courageous and selfless temperaments of the ancestors, since those are likely to urge the adolescents to emulate their predecessors. The teachings could be in the organisation of quarterly symposia for the people of the traditional area. Air time could be sought from the Frequency Modulation (FM) stations for the teachings of their rich culture.

During the conducting of the research, the researcher went through thick and thin before gaining some rapport with the custodian of the rites. It is therefore suggested that the

custodians of the various rites should allow those who would like to carry out more researches on the festival and its artistic aspects to do so in order to further educate people on the importance of the celebration. Furthermore, the researcher finds parallelism in Nii Ammah's (1982: V) expression that the difficulty of obtaining rational and convincing explanations of some of the observances and the varied and often conflicting interpretations one comes across underline the urgency of recording and preserving accounts of our traditional festival like the recording done in this thesis. Time is rapidly blurring the accuracy and authenticity of the oral tradition on which the research worker heavily depends. It is highly recommended that the celebration of this august festival be documented and the posterity of our culture preserved before more inroads of rapid scientific and technological advances and other foreign cultural influences blur the celebrations.

The surroundings of the *baawoo* (concoctions) in the *tsese* (traditional bowl) should be kept clean. Sometimes, traces of the blood of the goats and fowls slaughtered for the concoction are seen on the ground where the *tsese* is placed. The rims of the *tsese* are seen of blood and the leaves used in the concoction are also seen to be falling off the traditional bowl. There is no doubt that during the preparation of the concoction, there is the likelihood that some blood would be spilled and some leaves littered around the surrounding of the rite, nevertheless, the surroundings could be cleaned of such filth to compliment the dignified nature of the celebration of the festival.

Another form of environmental arts that need to be looked at is the use of banners, posters, and notices which organisers utilize in advertising their entertainment

programmes. This colourful, mostly text and with little illustrative posters and notices are indiscriminately pasted on walls, trees, buildings and on the streets. After the celebrations, the posters and notices litter the traditional area choking up the gutters which prevent free flow of water. The choked gutters later, serve as a breeding place for mosquitoes which apparently infect them with malaria. It is therefore suggested that soon after the celebrations, the posters be removed and burnt.

Again it is recommended that the teaching of Ga culture be intensified in the Primary, Junior, Senior High Schools and the Tertiary Institutions to promote and give a clear and better understanding and knowledge of the Ga rich cultural heritage. Moreover, to preserve our cultural heritage, it is recommended that the study of our culture should be made a mandatory subject in the Junior and Senior High schools. At the tertiary level where students are specializing in their chosen fields, the study of festivals should be made an elective course and one should not graduate from the tertiary institutions without a course in festivals. In addition, the art of drumming and dancing should be taught at the various institutional levels so that the youth would be able to fully comprehend drum language and also the meanings of the various traditional dancing techniques

In addition this, thesis on the artistic and other cultural aspects of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival would be published by the researcher and made available in all school libraries, community libraries and public libraries so that the general public would be educated on this aspect of the celebration.

With regard to the artistic aspects of the celebration that have been brought to light, the researcher recommends that replicas of the various artefacts of the priests, priestesses and chiefs that are seen during the celebration should be made available in the museums and galleries in Ghana. When this is done, the people of the traditional area and other ethnic groups would learn and understand the rich culture of the Ga people. It will furthermore afford the people to know the role of the various artefacts and their significance in the celebration.

It is highly suggested to the youth to draw closer to the authorities in the traditional area to inquire more about their cultural heritage. They should furthermore involve themselves in the activities of the celebration. Apart from involving themselves in the clean up activities, they should go to the various palaces and residences of the chiefs and priests to find out the philosophies and significances of the various rites that characterize the celebration.

Politically, it is suggested by the researcher that the chiefs of the traditional area during the durbars, should take the opportunity to address the issue of indiscipline in the area. It is now a common sight to see babies abandoned at riversides and in gutters, teenage pregnancies have become a fashion, indiscriminate urination and disposal of refuse are common phenomena, just to mention a few. All these acts of indiscipline in the traditional area, if critically addressed by the chiefs, would reduce the rate of these acts.

Economically, the researcher suggests that the celebrants should be circumspect with their spending during the celebration of the festival, although there is high propensity to

spend. The celebrants must bear in mind that, there would be utility bills to settle, school fees to be paid and other miscellaneous expenses and thus, overspending during the celebrations would not put them in good financial standings. In addition, it is recommended that the kind of urge and enthusiasm to work displayed by the people of the traditional area to make some money in order to really enjoy the celebration of the festival should be carried into the non- festive seasons. When this is done by the people, it would not only enhance their future celebration of the festival, but uplift their living standards.

Medicinally, the researcher suggests that the custodians of the various activities should more frequently encourage the practice of personal hygiene which is seen during the celebration. The clean up activities in the homes and other places to free the choked gutters which have been serving as breeding grounds for mosquitoes should be done more frequent. When this effort by the celebrants is redoubled and extended through to the non celebration periods, it would noticeably reduce their visits to the clinics and hospitals.

Religiously, the researcher suggests that for the sake of peaceful celebration, the leaders of the church and other religious bodies should observe the thirty day ban on drumming and noise making. To the researcher, if this is done, there would be no need for conflicts between the traditionalists and the other religious bodies.

Finally, future researchers of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival should direct their researches to the artistic and other cultural aspects of the festival. Nevertheless, with regards to the celebration and the philosophies behind the celebrations, there are a lot of information to be unearthed. If all these recommendations are not taken for granted, there would be no doubt that the Ga cultural heritage would be preserved for posterity and the celebration of the festival would transcend time and would be celebrated with much pomp and pageantry.



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GLOSSARY

<i>Aboloo baa</i>	A kind of leave for the preparation of the twins yam concoction
<i>Adibli</i>	One of the leaves used for the preparation of concoction for purification on all occasions
<i>Shibaa</i>	The customary tilling of the consecrated farm
<i>Agbabii</i>	The six principal priest of the Ga traditional area
<i>Nmaanmɔ</i>	The consecrated farm
<i>Nmaadumɔ</i>	The customary planting of the corn on the consecrated
<i>brafo</i>	The executioner of the priests
<i>Kpoofeemɔ</i>	The thirty days period when the ban is imposed on Noise-making
<i>Odadaa</i>	The customary ceremony where the ban is lifted on Noise-making
<i>Mantsɛ</i>	A chief of the Ga traditional area
<i>Nshɔ bulemɔ</i>	The customary ceremony when the sea is purified
<i>Jemawon</i>	The traditional deity of the world
<i>Naa Tɔtrɔ</i>	The shrine of the sea deity seen as a rock at the Ga Abola sea
<i>Kotsa</i>	A traditional sponge used for bathing
<i>Ayilɔ</i>	A kind of traditional clay
<i>Abonua</i>	Lime

<i>Krɔbo</i>	A sweet smelling substance used for body markings
<i>Banka</i>	A type of beads worn by the priests and the obrafo (Executioner)
<i>Soobii</i>	Traditional celebrants who arrive on Thursday from outlying Villages
<i>Haaji Yɛɛ Yeli</i>	The twins' yam festival
<i>Baawoo</i>	Preparation of leaves, drinks and others for rituals
<i>Kɔkɔdene baa</i>	One of the leaves for the preparation of concoctions
<i>Nai We</i>	The residence of the Chief priest of the Ga Traditional area
<i>Nyaranyara</i>	A kind of leaf for the preparation of the Twins yam concoction
<i>Ntɔnme</i>	One of the leaves used in the preparation of the Twins' yam concoction
<i>Osubaa</i>	A kind of leaf used in the preparation of concoction for Twins Yam festival
<i>Adwere</i>	A kind of leaf used for the preparation of concoction for purification on all occasions
<i>Tsalai</i>	One of the leaves use in the preparation of concoction for purification on all occasions
<i>Lilɛi</i>	One of the leaves for the preparation of concoction for purification on all occasions



<i>Fotoli</i>	A special meal for the gods
<i>Kpokpoi/Akpitigbijulo</i>	The traditional festive food for the <i>Hɔmɔwɔ</i> celebration
<i>Nishwamɔ</i>	The sprinkling of the festive food in the traditional area
<i>Nmaa</i>	Millet
<i>Kogbamɔ</i>	The act of communal eating of the festive food
<i>Oshi joo/Oshi maa</i>	The traditional dance of the celebration
<i>Kro ko to mi</i>	The traditional drum for the <i>oshi</i> dance
<i>Wulɔmɔ</i>	A priest
<i>Noowala</i>	The traditional <i>Hɔmɔwɔ</i> greeting on Sunday after the <i>Hɔmɔwɔ</i> celebration
<i>Kotofai</i>	The hat of the <i>Nai Wulɔmɔ</i>
<i>Silibaa</i>	The first stone of the <i>Nai Wulɔmɔ</i> beads signifying heaven
<i>Putua</i>	The coconut cup used as a receptacle in pouring during the pouring of libation

APPENDIX A

CUSTODIANS OF THE RITES INTERVIEWED

Name of Informant	Status	Educational Background	Age (Years)	Date	Remarks
Nuumo Tete Afunya	The Nai Wulomɔ	Illiterate	74	May 2005/June 2007	Very friendly
Nuumo Ogbaami	Sakumo Wulomɔ	Illiterate	69	June 2006/June 2008	Resource-ful
Aklama Priestess Kekebi	Priestess of Ga Mashie	Illiterate	69	June 2006	Strict and straight forward
Nuumo Blafo III	Ga Blafo Wulomɔ	Literate	40	May 2005-June 2008	Very re-sourceful
Asafoatse Okpoti III	Asere Rep. to Nai <i>We</i>	Literate	69	May 2005- June 2008	Resource-ful
Nii Yarlai Quaye	Osu Yartey family Rep.	Literate	63	June 2007	Resource-ful
Nii Ayibonte II	Gbese Mantse (Chief)	Literate	54	June 2007	Very re-sourceful

Nii Tetteh Ahinakwa	King Maker	Literate	91	June 2007	Very Resource- ful
Nii Adama Thompson Jnr.	Executive Sec. (Gbese)	Literate	39	June 2007/2008	Resource- ful
Okaile Welbeck	Jaase Family	Illiterate	43	June 2008	Resource- ful
Atukpai Aryeh	Priestess of Atukpai	Illiterate	40	June 2008	Resource- ful
Nii Djarbeng	Head of Sakumo We	Literate	40	June 2007	Resource- ful
Nii Yartey Yarboi	Head of Aplaku family	Illiterate	40	May 2005-June 2008	Resource- ful
A.A Ammah	Lecturer, UG, Legon	Literate	52	July 2005	Resource- ful
Nuumo Larkote	Brafo	Illiterate	32	May 2005/ June 2008	Very re- sourceful
Tumomli Yartey III	Head of Nai We (family)	Illiterate	74	May 2005/June 2008	Very resource- ful

APPENDIX B

A SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

THE *HOMOWO* FESTIVAL IN ACCRA: ITS ARTISTIC AND OTHER

CULTURAL ASPECTS.

Department of General Art Studies

African Art and Culture Section

KNUST- Kumasi.

5th September, 2004

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am a PhD student of the African Art and Culture section of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. I am researching into the above topic. I would be very grateful if you could give your candid answers or opinion to these questions.

Thank you very much

Yours Faithfully,

Samuel Nortey

Personal Details

- a. Name of respondent
- b. Occupation
- c. Position
- d. Age

What is the name of the Ga annual festival?

- 1. What does it mean?
- 2. Do you know why the festival is celebrated?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes, why?

- 3. How long have you participated in the celebration of this festival?

a. 0 – 5 years ☐

b. 6 – 10 years ☐

c. 11 – 15 years ☐

d. 20 and above ☐

4. Do you play any major role in the festival?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes, indicate below

a. Mere participant ☐

b. Custodians ☐

c. Dignitary ☐

d. Spectator ☐

e. Other roles ☐

6. What do other ethnic groups think about your festival?

a. Excellent ☐

b. Very Good ☐

c. Good ☐

d. Not Good ☐

e. Specify other ☐

7. Have you learnt anything from the festival?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes, state

8. Which area in the festival interests you most?

a. Artefacts ☐

b. Music ☐

c. Dance ☐

d. Cultural displays ☐

e. All of the above ☐

f. None of the above ☐

9. What type of items are exhibited during the festival celebration?

a. Artefacts ☐

b. Food Items ☐

c. All of the above ☐

d. None of the above ☐

10. Do you wish that the traditional area continues with the celebration of the festival?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

Why?

11. Should the youth learn about the festival?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

Why?

12. Is there any special dress or costume used by women or men in the festival?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

State the art forms used during the festival.

.....

13. Does your festival involve;

Drumming and Dancing?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

Rituals?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

14. Do the artworks play a major role for the festival celebration to achieve its main objectives?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

15. Has the festival improved the following?

a. Development of the town

Yes ☐

No ☐

b. Education

Yes ☐

No ☐

c. Economic Conditions

Yes ☐

No ☐

d. Sanitary Conditions

Yes ☐

No ☐

e. Re-union

Yes ☐

No ☐

16. What do you think makes the festival interesting, lively and enjoyable?

a. Artefacts ☐

b. Drumming and Dancing ☐

c. Rituals ☐

d. All of the above ☐

e. None of the above ☐

17. What do you think make the festival boring?

a. The ban on noise making ☐

b. The rituals ☐

c. All of the above ☐

d. None of the above ☐

18. Would you like to learn more about your ethnic festival?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes which aspect?

a. The historical background ☐

b. Artistic values ☐

c. The meanings of artefacts ☐

d. The rituals ☐

e. Music, Dance, and Drama ☐

19. Do you consider it appropriate for people to be trained towards the celebration of the festival?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

20. Have you noticed any aspect of the festival that needs improvement?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes, in what area?

Religious Aspects

21. Does the festival involve rituals?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

22. Does your festival involve the ban on drumming and noise making?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes, do you observe this ban?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

23. Do the people call on their creator and divinities?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

24. How do they call on their creator and divinities?

a. Prayers ☐

b. Libation ☐

c. Singing ☐

d. All of the Above ☐

e. None of the above ☐

25. Does the festival involve the sprinkling of festive food?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes, what is the purpose of the sprinkling rite observed?

To,

a. Feed the Divinities ☐

b. Feed the Ancestors ☐

c. Feed the chiefs ☐

d. Show Abundance ☐

e. All of the above ☐

Medicinal Aspect

26. Does the celebration of the festival involve some form of exercising?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes, in what form?

a. Carrying of chiefs ☐

b. Digging ☐

c. Processions ☐

d. Dancing ☐

e. Drumming ☐

f. All of the Above ☐

27. Do you arrange clean up exercise?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes, why do you arrange such activities?

a. To free choked gutters ☐

b. To get rid of rubbish ☐

28. Do you personally organize clean up exercise in your own home?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

Economic Aspect

29. Do you think the festival brings about foreign exchange into the country?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes, how?

.....

.....

.....

30. Do you do a lot of buying during the festive season?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes , what do you buy?

.....

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31. In your opinion, which of the following make the best economic gain during the festival?

a. The Food Vendors ☐

b. The Taxi Drivers ☐

c. The Restaurant/ *Chop bar* Operators ☐

d. Farmers ☐

e. The general Merchants ☐

32. Do you think the festival has had any economic impact in the traditional area?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes, how?

.....

.....

Political Aspect

33. Do you come from any of the Ga Mashie quarters?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes, which of these quarters?

a. Gbese ☐

b. Asere ☐

c. Sempe ☐

d. Ngleshie ☐

e. Abola ☐

f. Akamaidzen ☐

g. Otublohum ☐

34. Do you know the name of your chief?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If Yes, what is his name?

35. Are your chiefs involved in the celebration of the festival?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

Social Aspect

36. Does the festival provide opportunity for you to meet other family members?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

36. Do you make new friends during the celebration?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

Any Suggestions?

.....

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX C

NAI WE CALENDER-2005

ACTIVITY	DATE
ABELE FOO	FRIDAY, 3 RD JUNE, 20005
PURIFICATION OF THE SEA	TUESDAY, 19 TH JULY, 2005
TWIN FESTIVAL	FRIDAY, 5 TH AUGUST, 2005
GA HƆMƆWƆ	SATURDAY, 6 TH AUGUST, 2005
NAI NMAA YELI	TUESDAY, 16 TH AUGUST, 2005
NAI OKPLOKPAMO	TUESDAY, 23 RD AUGUST, 2005
AMUGI NMAA YELI	TUESDAY, 30 TH AUGUST, 2005
AFIYEA NMAA YELI	FRIDAY, 2 ND SEPTEMBER, 2005
OSEKAN NMAA YELI	SUNDAY, 4 TH SEPTEMBER, 2005
ADEKYANI	MONDAY, 5 TH SEPTEMBER, 2005
HOLIDAY	TUESDAY, 6 TH SEPTEMBER, 2005

APPENDIX D

PICTURES OF SOME CUSTODIANS OF THE FESTIVAL



Plate 46: Nuumo Tete Afunya II: The Nai Wulomo

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 47: Nuomo Ogbami: The Sakumo priest pouring libation

Source Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 48: Nii Tetteh Ahinakwa. The Kingmaker of the Gbese quarters

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 49: Nii Ayibonte II: The then Gbese Chief

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 50: Nii Yarlai Quaye- Osu Yartey family Representative. to the Nai *We*
Source Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 51: Asafoatse Okpoti III- Asere representative to the Nai *We*

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 52: Nuumo Blafo III- Ga Blafo Wulomo

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 53: Aklama Priestess Kekebi

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 54: Nii Yartey Yarboi- Head of Aplaku *We*

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 55: Nii Larkote- The *brafo* of the Nai Wulomo

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher



Plate 56: Nii Djarbeng- Head of Sakumo *We* (family)

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher