

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF  
EDINA ASAFO COMPANY POSTS

BY

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## CERTIFICATION

THIS CERTIFIES THAT THE DISSERTATION IS THE CANDIDATE'S  
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## ABSTRACT

TITLE : CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EDINA *ASAFO* COMPANY POSTS.

NAME: SAMUEL ADENTWI BENTUM, B.A. (ART) HONS,  
M.F.A. (PAINTING AND SCULPTURE)

This dissertation is the cultural manifestation of the technical study conducted by the researcher. The main objective of investigating whether in line with modern socio-political and socio-economic development of Edina traditional area, the Edina people has affected the relevance of Edina *Asafo* was critically appreciated.

The research looked into how the Edina *Asafo* Posts have influenced the modernization and urbanization of the Edina community. It also seeks to find out how the *Asafo* Posts have affected the Psyche of the Edina people as well as the political, religious, social, medical, economics, entertainment and educational (moral) standard of the people.

This research is therefore to help attract and promote both local and foreign tourism in the Edina traditional area, and thereby help create income for the socio-economic development of the people, Edina and Ghana.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This research work is towards an anthropological study and interpretation of the nature and functions of Edina *Asafo* Companies and their Posts in the socio-cultural life of the people, where these institutions and their monuments feature prominently in their annual calendar.

The early visual art traditions of the Edina people, especially the *Asafo* Companies consist of Architectural forms, sculptures, paintings, graphical symbols, documentation of events and thoughts.

The Edina *Asafo* visual arts express both the traditions and aspirations of the textiles, flags, mascots and others which were used as the basis for their soul and being of the Edina people, for what they experienced in the past and what is considered desirable for the present and the future. Certainly the arts give visual meanings to those ideas and thoughts that pervade the representation of the *Asafo* forms and concepts that showcased the highly spiritual and artistic inspirations of the traditional artists. Content and form and the essentials of the deep meaning of the functions of these posts can be identified through the concepts of form, colour, technique and the factors of their exquisite proportions.

### **Ethnographic Background**

The people of Edina are of Negroid origin and have certain racial types that intersperse it. They are found on the west coast of Africa south of the Sahara. Intermarriages have given to distinctive local types. Edina is made up of dark-shade-skin people with wooly hair, broad noses and protruding mouths.



There is a sizeable minority of light or fair skinned people (mulattoes that are a high-breed of the Europeans and the Edina indigenes). These mulattoes, usually have near curly or straight hair, and have thin lips and narrow noses. There is also a considerable proportion of another breed of people that is the three-quarter-cast indigenes. These are off-springs of the mulattoes and indigenes. Though they are light-skinned, they possess greater indigenes features.

The structure of the Edina people seems plummy, bulky and at times well built. They are averagely strong and active in both in the mind and physique. They have a high fertility rate that is comparable to that of other people of forest zone. Both polygamy and monogamy types of marriage are practised by the Edina people.

Traditionally, fishing, fish mongering and trading are the indigenous vocations of the indigenes, although crop agriculture reigns high in their outskirts.

As the first town to have contact with Europeans, it gained popularity among other towns especially during their industrial session and period. This propelled trade, knowledge and skills among the indigenes of Edina. Although, Edina existed as a cosmopolitan town, most of its fisher folks occasionally emmigrated to neighbouring town for fishing expedition.

Nevertheless Edina traditional area always existed as an attractive place.

European life styles, meals, religion as well as fashion kept them at home. Introduction of Western education and the rapid spread of Colonial administration over other towns contributed to the exodus of the elite indigenes into neighbouring towns. The people of Edina are found in all parts of Ghana where official white colour jobs exist.



As a vibrant town with all its freedoms, several associations are in operation. Notable of this is the *Asafo* Companies that exist to see to the socio-political running of the township.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The *Asafo* Companies and their Posts in Edina do not seem to perform active functions in the culture and in the development of the community as they used to be.

The aesthetic aspects of the Posts appear not to be appreciated by those who favour modernization and urbanization, for this reason such people are gradually disassociating themselves from the culture.

It is therefore crucial to study the cultural significance of the Edina *Asafo* Companies in order to unearth the cultural and aesthetic aspects of the Posts.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the research are; to investigate the role of the *Asafo* Posts in Edina culture.

To examine the belief systems associated with the *Asafo* Companies and Posts of the Edina.

To find out how modernization and urbanization has affected the *Asafo* Company Posts and vice versa.

To investigate whether in modern socio-economic developments, the Posts are still relevant to the people.

## **Hypothesis**

The *Asafo* Company Posts are no longer relevant to the Edina culture, neither are they important in the urbanization and modern development of the traditional area, also the Posts are not aesthetically worthwhile, due to the lost of touch with original significance which was the basis for the creation of the company post.

## **Assumptions**

The information on the cultural base for the creation of the *Asafo* Posts are still available with knowledgeable people who could be contacted for the data.

## **Delimitation**

The research is limited to the historical overview of the *Asafo* Companies and their Posts in the Edina traditional area.

The study also focuses on the *Asafo* Companies, their origin, composition, cultural activities and responsibilities.

The study was also limited to Edina *Asafo* Company Posts in relation to urbanization, modernization, social and infrastructural upliftment.

## **Importance of the Study**

The study plays a distinctive role in providing beneficial information to Writers and Scholars: Historians, Anthropologist and Ethnographers.

The findings of this research would also be important to the Edina people.

The study would serve as a foundation to future research of the *Asafo* Company Posts of the Edina people.

### **Theoretical Framework for the Research**

The theoretical framework employed by this thesis centres on the fact that, presently, the *Asafo* Company Posts of the Edina people have little recognition in terms of their socio-cultural and aesthetic significance of the development of Edina.

The general theme upon which this exploratory and analytical paper is built is a revisit to the Edina culture in order to sift its values for the socioeconomic development of the town.

### **Research Methodology**

The methodology reflects the descriptive, analytic, interpretive and formative approaches of research design. As the study focused on the description of the *Asafo* Company Posts, the research problem was best answered by a Qualitative research approach.

Library research played an enormous role in the completion of the study.

The following libraries were visited to collect information necessary to set out the theoretical framework of the research:

- Ghana Library Board, Western Regional Library, Sekondi.
- Takoradi Polytechnic Library, Takoradi.
- KNUST Libraries, Kumasi.
- University of Cape Coast Library, Cape Coast.
- Balme Library, University of Ghana, Accra.

- Institute of African Studies Library, University of Ghana, Accra.
- National Archives, Sekondi and Cape Coast.

The population studied in this research was categorized into two; Target and Accessible population. Target Population were indigenes of Edina, Inhabitants of Edina, People of Fante origin and People of Asante origin. Accessible Population was *Asafo* Leaders, *Asafo* Members, Opinion Leaders and Officials of the Komenda, Edina, Eguafo, Abrim District Assembly.

The purposive sampling technique was adopted because the researcher was aware of the very group that could offer the necessary and appropriate information to facilitate the research work. The researcher employed the homogeneous type because the respondents were *Asafo* people.

Data collection was done through personal observation of the philosophies underlining the various activities of the company posts.

Both questionnaire and structured and unstructured interviews were used in collecting data from respondents and interviewees.

The administering of questionnaire to divulge information coupled with the researcher's interviews with the respondents and direct observation made, they served as a source of collecting the primary data for the study.

On the other hand, data collected from literary sources such as books, journal articles, etc served as the source of the secondary data which was presented and analysed.

### **Organization of Chapters**

The first chapter deals with introduction of the research. The introduction shows the statement of the problem, objectives of the study,



importance of the study, assumptions, a hypothesis, reasons for writing, scope of the research, theoretical framework of the research, methodology and the ethnographic background information that are related to the subject of research. The second chapter review related literature pertaining to the subject matter at hand. It compare and contrast information obtained from the field with that of the literary material such as: Traditional African Art and Architecture, Edina Architecture before European adventure on the coast of West Africa, Edina *Asafo* Architecture (Posts) and its arts; Edina *Asafo* Architecture and World Architecture: a Comparative study and Edina *Asafo* Post; a source of social and infrastructural development. The third chapter emphasizes on the methodology embarked upon in the research work.

Chapter Four will cover the History and background of Edina. These include the Early Times of Edina, Edina State Constitution and Civic Solidarity. The chapter also considers the *Edinaman* oath, the *Ebusua* (clan) Inheritance issues and Land Tenure systems. The festival of the Edina people which are;

- Election and installation of Edina Omanhen
- Process of confinement of Edina Omanhen
- Be Enya Da (Benya Bakatue)
- Edina Bronya (New Year)

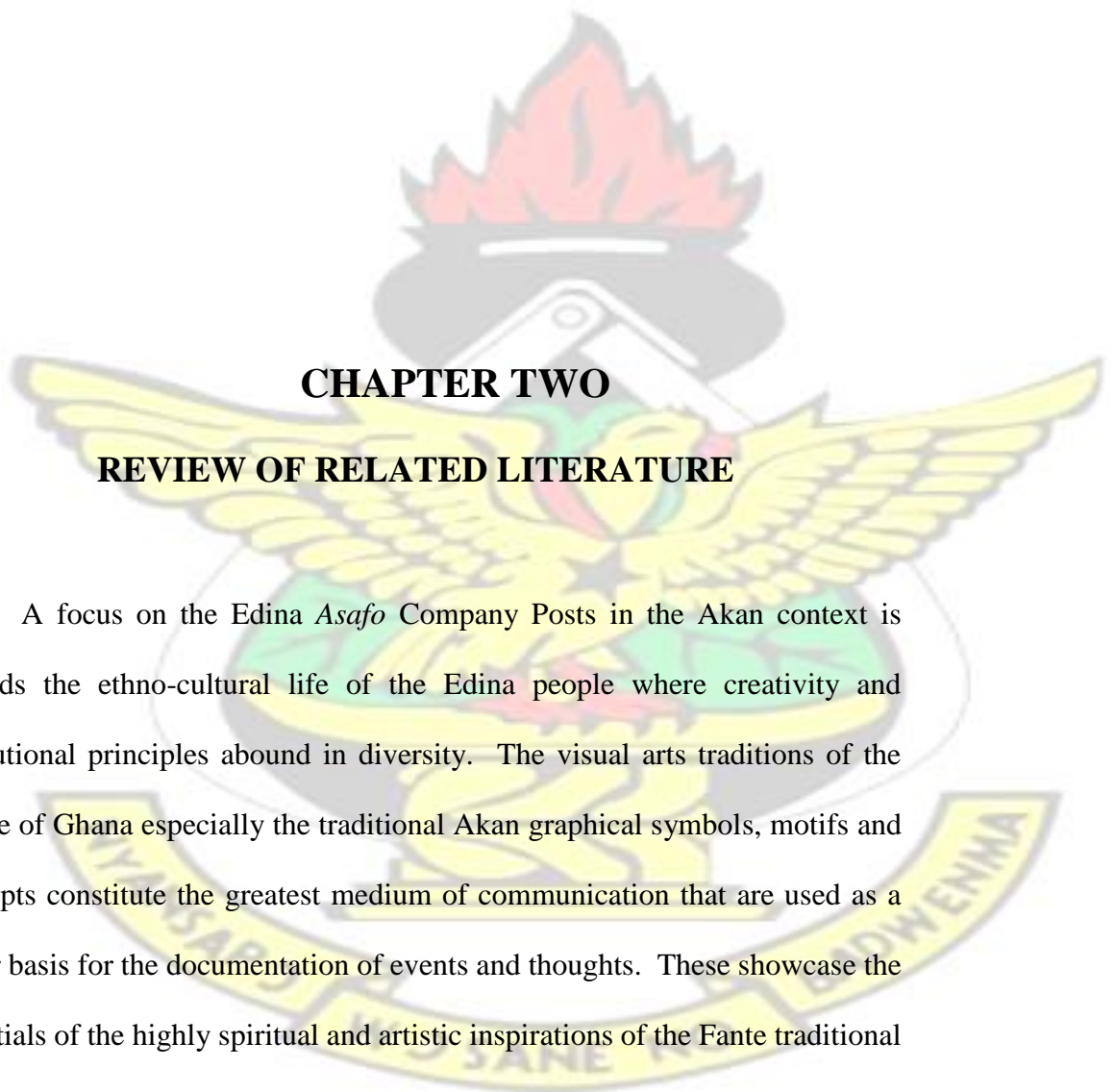
The Religious and Educational systems in Edina, European Adventure on Edina, Edina and Asante Friendship. The background History and Functions of Edina *Asafo* Companies and Edina *Asafo* Companies and European influence.



Chapter Five made a critical and analytical assessment of *Edina Asafo* Company Posts in terms of their aesthetic value in response to their recognition for today's and tomorrow's cultural development. The thesis illustrates how the foundation of *Edina Asafo* Posts are laid. A description of the *Edina Asafo* Posts in terms of their Architectural and Architectonic concepts will be made. A critical description of *Edina Asafo* Posts in relation to their sculpture and colour concepts was looked at. A philosophical and conceptual context of the *Edina Asafo* Posts in relations to their artistic interpretations was considered. The religious concepts and purposes of the *Edina Asafo* Posts in respect to their usage and influences over the people and the community were considered.

Chapter Six is made up of General discussions, Analysis and Findings on pertinent issues relating to *Edina Asafo* Companies and their Posts. Suggestions and Recommendations on *Edina Asafo* Posts in relations to modernity, urbanization, tourism, formal education and societal continuity were established. Comparison between Findings and Literature Review was put across. Test of the Hypothesis, Summary of the thesis, Conclusion, Glossary and Bibliography conclude the thesis.

# KNUST



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

A focus on the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts in the Akan context is towards the ethno-cultural life of the Edina people where creativity and institutional principles abound in diversity. The visual arts traditions of the people of Ghana especially the traditional Akan graphical symbols, motifs and concepts constitute the greatest medium of communication that are used as a major basis for the documentation of events and thoughts. These showcase the essentials of the highly spiritual and artistic inspirations of the Fante traditional art and artists. These proverbial messages are well communicated through the various *Posuban* that contains the soul of the *Asafo* Companies and that of the Edina traditional area.

History of art and architecture spans a vast period beginning as early as twenty-five thousand years before the birth of Christ and continues to the present. Images of man, animals, plants and other man-made objects as well as graphical representations formed some of the early art works of mankind. The Akans of Africa cannot be exempted from such revelations. Very little of the earlier works of the Akans have survived, primarily due to the perishable materials (plants, wood, fiber, cloth, clay etc) that were largely employed. It may be possible that their extinction could be largely due to their intensive use in ceremonies (religions and secular) and daily life. Perhaps, poor environmental management contributed to the depletion of these valuable arts and architecture. The Akan people have culture that projects their language, religion, beliefs, politics, economics and social systems and possibly ways of going about their activities and actions. Their arts and architecture produced are based on intentions and results of their achievements.

Painting, modeling in clay, woodcarving, stonework, and lately cement sculpture form a greater portion of their architecture decorations that generally serve a function. According to Nana Kweku Awotwe (Principal Field informant, Ekuw Esounhen, Akyekuwduhen and Apofohen of Edina Traditional Area)) “the belief in mystical potency of certain person’s objects and spirits and that of shrines aids the creativity of the Akans, hence, the *Posuban* and shrine houses of the Fantes and Asantes respectively”.

Modernity and the influx of the Europeans and the Arabians during the fifteenth century saw dramatic introduction of more permanent materials that stood the test of time. Also various arts and architectural styles such as Forts, Castles, Mosques and Churches, might have influenced the trend and perception of indigenous styles and taste. The return of African slaves from the New World

and African elites in the nineteenth century confirmed the huge influence that Western and Arabian concepts and forms had over the indigenes. In spite of all these interjunctions, the shrines of the indigenes still maintained their Africaness, uniqueness and functionality.

The *Asafo* Companies of Edina as a socio-cultural and political institution have the *Posuban* that serves as their fortification. Historians, Anthropologist and others refer to these architectural edifices as *Asafo* Company (military) Posts. These edifices are virtually seen as the Company's shrines where certain religious rites are performed for their elders and shrines. Nana Kweku Awotwe said that it is usually mentioned that "*Eman si ho na Posuban tsim*", that is there is no Akan town without a *Posuban*, is a confirmation of the spiritual significance of these Company Posts. The Edina *Asafo* Company's Posts treat the minds of the people to their cultural and artistic importance. They are monumental, colourful and quite imposing, not to mention their artful rendition.

Turkson,(1978) state's that "*history provides evidence between ancestral homes and that society.*" His statement provides a strong evidence of the *Posuban* of the *Asafo* Companies as a major call point through which the leaders and members meet to communicate with their elders and founders of the Companies and the town. The *Posuban* becomes the main core of spiritual vibrancy of the *Asafo* Companies. It is true that the *Asafo*'s religious functions provide for the town the greatest force of their being and existence. The spiritual authority of the *Asafo* Companies depended on the creation of the *Asafo Posuban* that symbolizes the soul of the various Fante towns. In these Company Posts are the shrines of the *Asafo* shrines, their altars and certain relics used for certain religious and secular ceremonies. *Asafo* Posts usually have an open



space allocated as a meeting hall for its faithful. DeGraft Johnson,(1932) mentions “these *Asafo* Company as ‘*Etsikuw*’ as pertained in the Akan speaking towns. He identifies them as essentially a warrior organization.” Chukwekere (1970) sees “these *Asafo* Companies as socio-cultural institutions.” Datta, and Potter, both proclaimed that “the *Asafo* Companies as organized military bands of indigenous society.” It is amenable that various scholars have had varied perceptions and understanding towards these honourable institutions that have endless existence to life. Almost all the Fante towns both of the coast and of the inland have *Asafo* institutions that perform social, political, military, religious, educative, entertaining, and vocational and other vital functions. *Asafo* also called ‘*Estikuw*’ means the body of men. *Asafo* derives it’s name from derivatives such as ‘*sa*’; war and ‘*fo*’; people. It is empirical to note that these egalitarian institutions draw their formation from the ‘*Ebusua*’ system where various clans grouped to form a socio-cultural body that sought to the provision of certain needed function such as protection of women, children, the vulnerable and the town as well. Chukwekere attests to these facts in this work on the Fante towns. The elders of these clans led their people in the various wars. Therefore the need to organize these forces became a necessity for the Fante towns. Christensen (1954) perceived that:

these *Asafo* groups as emerging from a lineage system of the Akan people. To him, these military institutions projected specific principle such as defense and social order. He addressed the elders of the *Ebusua* as the Leaders of these institutions.

This may hold some truth since all members of the various units were enlisted from their paternal lineage.



Possible derivation could be made of the origin of the existence of these *Asafo* Companies. A group sees the very origin of these Companies as an indigenous development that culminated from the Fante and Asante factions that existed. This may be true since the major function of these groups was to defend and protect the property and pride of the Companies and their towns. Writers like Annobil and Ekuban (1982) suggest that “*the origin of the Fante Asafo Companies is a purely local initiative motivated by the need to assist one another and possibly provide recreation to the community*”. Ellis (1887) supports the early observation and argues that “*Asafo is an ancient tradition among Akan Fantes.*” Arhin, also puts up an argument that “*the Asafo of the Fante had its root from the armed retainers during the era of the slave trade*”. Wartenberg, in Datta, and Porter, trace the origin of the Fante *Asafo* to the Fante - Asante wars that were fought around the early period of the eighteenth century. This was the period when the Dutch assisted the Fantes to raise an army against the Asantes. Wartenberg,(1950) also said that:

the very origin of these groups are from Asebu, an inland Fante town which experienced a heavy attack from the Ashanti. He further said that this group was introduced to Edina by Oberimba Asem a local soldier as a sociocultural institution.

The group formed in Edina later witnessed splinter groups numbering up to seven and later to ten with their contact with the Europeans. It is noted that the number seven still stands or holds as the eligible figure approved of the *Asafo* Companies as the ultimate number typical of the Fante towns. Edina has three additional groups that were said to have affiliation with some of the first seven units. A school of thought has it that, the *Asafo* Companies came into existence

as a result of the European presence on the Gold Coast now Ghana. The evidence is that the Europeans rather sought to equip the *Asafo* groups so as to protect them from rival attack and other warriors. Wartemberg, and Arhin, both hold the view that the origin of the *Asafo* Companies of the Fantes was a result of the European activities on the Coast. Arhin, emphasized that “*the inter town and inter state wars were alien to the Fantes before the advent of the European.*” This may be adjoined or tied up to some schools of thought who share the opinion that the slave raiders instituted the *Asafo* Companies of the Fantes so as to empower them to arrest people and sell them to the Europeans who also sold them to the New World to provide labour.

Datta, and Porter reports of Arhin, that the slave raiders promoted the establishment of these socio-cultural groups. To them Arhins view was that the slave masters and merchants provided able-bodied men with military support to enable them to provide and protect slaves drawn from the inland towns to the coast for transit to their next destination. The *Asafo* also resorted to protecting the Europeans from rival merchants and other slave raiders. One may question the very authenticity of these facts about the Europeans establishing something that is quite foreign to them. Assabill, (1980) in his contribution suggested that, the evidence provided by Wartengberg, has a degree of falsehood. He said that, the *Asafo* Companies were not instituted for protecting Europeans as well as raiding slaves for their Western merchants. He supported his argument by referring to Datta, and Porter, who strongly dismissed Arhin’s statements to its logical conclusions. To Datta, and

Porter, though:

the presence of the Europeans on the Gold Coast influenced these *Asafo* Companies remarkably, their existence and functions were as a result of providing the

indigenes with security and social services rather than a support to the European fraternity.

Labi (2003) recounts that *“in order to control trade in gold and slaves, the Europeans sometimes hired the Fante Asafo Companies to fight on their behalf or along side against troops representing rival countries trading on the coast.”* It is clear that the *Asafo* Companies existed with the Fantes before the European arrived on the shore during the fifteenth century. Kwamina Essilfie (Supi, Akyem *Asafo* No. 2 Company, 1969 -1989) approves of these in his unpublished papers, that their ancestors instituted these *Asafo* Companies as political and military groups meant to protect especially the weak. To Kwamina Essilfie, (1980) *“the Asafo Companies were for the indigenes benefit but not as a support to foreign partners”* He goes on to say that, as a result of the Fante - Asante wars of which the people of Edina were heavily involved in the battle. The able-bodied men of the towns were all organized with the assistance of the Dutch into military groupings which also became known as the *Asafo* Companies. These Companies were formed for the defense of civic interest. According to Kwamina Essilfie, all able-bodied men originally organized into a comprehensive military force called Wombir. The group was destined to be the guardians of the right of the state (town). He stated also that the *Asafo* organization originated from Asebu whence it was introduced to Edina by Oberema Asem.

Annan-Prah (2005) recounted that:

during the course of Edina history during the Dutch presence, there arose the need to form a indigenous defence force for Edina was the result of the wars with the Fantes, during which wars the Edina people were allies of the Asantes against the Fantes. Secondly, there was the necessity for the Dutch to protect their interest Edina town from attacks of other European rivals interested in both the



gold and slave trades. The Dutch had, therefore, stationed garrisons of their own Dutch soldiers in the following military batteries. St George's castle, fort Coenraadsburg (Fort St, Jago) and erstwhile forts Schomerus, Batenstein Java de veer and Nagtles. During these, times, the indigenous military, known as *ASAFO* was already known among other Fante States. Oberema Asem introduces *Asafo* into Edina town and its villages were conscripted into Edina. With the assistance of the Dutch, able-bodied men of Edina town and its villages were conscripted into the *Asafo*. At first, the whole indigenous military force of Edina was known as wombir (Boase Wombir). Apart from its primary role as a civil defence force for Eduna traditional area, the *Asafo* became the guardians of the rights of the state of Edina, and come together to elect the chief of Edina. Further, the *Asafo* had other civic responsibilities as helping with sanitation, internal security and providing communal labour force.

Wombir was later regrouped into several units according to the localities. Their individual strength was about 1500 to 2500. Young men are enlisted to these *Asafo* Companies according to where their fathers belong. Women's roles in these *Asafo* Companies are ceremonial. Kwamina Essilfie also said that the last group also known as Akrampafo were not an *Asafo* but Very Burghers or Home guards and formed the body of Militia. This group he identified as the mulatto descendants of the White settlers. Kwamina Essilfie said that the Dutch government supervised an annual military rendezvous that were participated in the various *Asafo* groupings in exhibition of their strength, martial skills, and equipment. This was popularly known as '*Esuom*'. This submission by Kwamina Essilfie could be half true in that before the advent of the Europeans the Edina people used to organize themselves into groups to perform certain civil responsibilities and recreational activities. Hence, search parties, defense of property and life and the provision of entertainment at funerals, out-doorings and others, were part of the Asemkrom's responsibilities and that of the splinter groups. These were not of European influence and origin.

It is therefore acceptable that these institutions were later influenced by their Western friends through many forms such as gifts social supports and fishing and farming implements and technical assistance. Kwamina Essilfie said that, *“the Asafo acted as the oil of the vehicles through which the customs and traditions of the Edina people were established and advanced.”*

The systematic formalization of the *Asafo* Company among the Fantes is a clear exhibition of the philosophy of the Akans that is towards the lending of a supportive arm to a needy, *‘Nsa yinnfa guar benkum’*; meaning we help one another. Sogolo,(1993) said that:

in Africa the peculiar organic structure of the total culture of which rules and principle are as intergral part does not seem to place on the individuals the demand for critical reflection. To Sogolo the various elements of culture seem to blend in harmony such that they pose no conflict in the minds of the individual.

Perhaps the systematic structure of the various *Asafo* Companies of the Fanteland might have had different purposes. *Asafo* Companies stood for the same purpose irrespective of their location or size. It is said that, though, different groups of Europeans occupied different Fante towns at a particular period, yet the *Asafo* of these Fante towns stood for the same purpose. It cannot be disputed that the presence of the European galvanized the establishment of certain *Asafo* Companies in Edina. Notable of these is the Akrampafo *Asafo* which is the group made up of the offshoots of the relationship between the indigenes and the Europeans; the mulattoes and the Brofo Nkowa *Asafo* which are the resident work force at the castle. The Maworefo *Asafo*, which provides security for indigenes traders and guarded the shore against local invaders were the emerging groups that were created via the European effort and influence. Datta, and Porter, in their exercise to arrive at the very origin of these socio-



military institutions revealed that, *in the 1650's there existed a body of men popularly known as 'Manceroes'.* Those men were known to have some military prowess along the coast where they existed. To Datta and Porter, these manceroes could be likened to the *Asafo* people.

One could agree with Wartenberg, Datta and Porter, Labi and Assabill that the formation of the various *Asafo* Companies was a clear result of the provision of socio-military function for the spiritual and physical balance of the society. Edina *Asafo* Companies that trace their roots from Asebu are equally associated with the same functions. Mark Aaba, (Supi, Ankobea *Asafo* No.1 Company, Edina in April, 2005) asserted that “*Edina Asafo is a indigenous initiative but fully supported by the Europeans.*” This may be true of their inclusion of the images of Adam and Eve, a biblical figure painted in European skin colour in the Wombir *Posuban*. Indeed Wartenberg and Feinberg attested to this discourse. Fynn,(1972) supported these former authors through an oral tradition, stating that, “*the Portuguese provided the Edina Asafo groups with guns, gunpowder and others to fight their enemies who were the Dutch.*” It is speculative that the *Asafo* Companies turned their back to the Dutch therefore giving way for the Dutch victory over the Portuguese.

Kwamina Essilfie emphatically said that the first *Asafo* group of Edina popularly known as Wombir was as a result of an indigenes of Asebu who sought exile in Edina and formed a drumming group that was known as Asemkromfo. This group “Wombir” had splinter groups such as Abesefo and Alatanmanfo. He further stated that:

In the early part of the eighteenth century more *Asafo* groups have been out doored making them ten in all. These were namely: Ankobeafo (No.1), Akyemfo (No.2), Akyem Nkodwofo (No.3), Wombirfo (No.4), Abesefo (No.5),

Alatamanfo (No.6), Enyampafo (No.7), Brofo Nkwafo (No.8), Maworefo (No.9), Akrapafo (No.10).

Annan-Prah (Director Edina Cultural Heritage, Management Programme, Edina in June, 2005) also said that:

The Nkwafo, Brofonkwa (servants of the Europeans), Akrapafo (Vry Burgers or Home guards made up of the descendants of white settlers) and Maworefo have all been fused into other groups. An *Asafo* contingent comprises a commander called *Supi*, captains called *Asafohenfo*, standard bearer, an *Odomankoma Kyerema* or a drummer or a bugle, a priest called *Asafo Komfo* with *Asafo* suman or juju.

The Fante *Asafo* Companies legitimize seven as a sacred number, hence the adage '*Asafo be esuon*' meaning seven *Asafo* Companies. De-Graft Johnson, emphasized that '*Esuon ekyir enyi ba*'; meaning no other person is recognized as important after a seventh born, hence the later three splinter groups of Edina *Asafo* not gaining the needed recognition numerically. Mark Essilfie, (Supi, Akyem *Asafo* No. Company, Edina. in June 2005) reiterated that:

the *Asafo* Companies of Edina unlike those of the other Fanteland have certain peculiar responsibilities. Edina people do not have a royal family from whom the heir is selected to succeed a dead or destooled Chief. The Enyampa *Asafo* selects a successor from the descendants of the former Omanhen. This perhaps makes the succession to the throne cut across the Ebusua. A paramount Chief must hail from the Enyampa (royal) *Asafo*. The selected Enyampafo *Asafo* member is presented to the rest of the *Asafo* Companies for approval pending installation as Omanhen.

While Mark Essilfie recounts that, Edina has no Queen mother who selects or appoints a heir to the throne in accordance with their ancestors as done in Asante and other Akan communities. This phenomenon which is nonAkan and is only synonymous to the people of Edina. In effect, it is clear that the Enyampa *Asafo* Company performs the role of the queen mother and that of the

kingmakers. Mark Aaba supported these facts by stating that no woman ascends the throne of Omanhen in Edina, and that, a rise to the throne is only through Patrilinear inheritance which is also a principle underlying the membership to the royal lineage of the people of Edina. Labi,(2003) mention in his article that *“the Asafo Companies had known the genealogies of the royal families and chooses the right heir to the stool when there is vacancy. They are the kingmakers.”* This contribution is only true to the Enyampafo Asafo of the Edina Asafo Companies. This may not hold for other Fante towns where queen mothers exist to make kings or kingmakers from Electoral College to select an Omanhen from a royal family. Assabill,(1980) recounts the process by which the various Edina Asafo Companies obtained their numerical identification. He recalls that, the Governor made a sudden call of the various Asafo Companies to the Saint George Castle of Edina, the seat of the colonial government. By their arrival these Companies, were given numbers for easy identification. A bugle was selected for number one, a horn for number two and a whistle for number three. The Ankobeafo arrived first to pick the bugle to become Asafo Number One. The Akyemfo arrived second to pick the horn to become Asafo Number Two. The Akyem Nkodwofo picked the whistle for Asafo Number Three. The rest of the Companies followed as such Wombir number four, Abese as number five, Alatamanfo as number six and Enyampafo the royal Asafo Company as number seven. The rest were Brofo Nkowa, Maworefo and Akrampafo.

Assabill further recounted the source of the names of the Edina Asafo Companies. He expressed that:

certain peculiar behavioural attitudes of these Companies might have contributed to their current names. He said, the Wombir Asafo formally the Asamkromfo Asafo were



decision-making partners of the Enyampa *Asafo*. Enyampa *Asafo* noticed that the pioneer *Asafo* groups were leaking vital decisions to the society even upon oath. Per investigation the Enyampa found out that the Wombir *Asafo* were traitors. This gained them their name. Wombirfo is a derivation of “wo wom bi” literally meaning leakers of secrets. The Nkodwo were noted for their critical scrutiny of certain vital informations that were made bare to them by informants. The Nkodwofo *Asafo* are noted to be judicious and extremely rigid in their acceptance of issues and allegations, hence their name Nkodwofo. The Akyem *Asafo*, was the group that was credited with the doubting people. Like, Thomas in the Bible, this group would challenge every issue that they laid eyes on. They were noticed as the Company that one finds difficult to convince. It is said that ‘se edze asem ko hoa, ebe kyerem abire’, thus meaning one would have it extremely difficult to convince them to accept issues. The Ankobea *Asafo* is the home guard of Edinaman. They guard the frontiers of the town. They were the stationed *Asafo* Company of the town. They never undertake expedition or attacks even in time of wars.

Assabill further mentions that:

the Akrampafo *Asafo* are the noble people of Edinaman. They are the ‘offshoots’ of the marriage between the Europeans’ and the *Edinafo*. These are the mulattoes, the Europeans descendants. The Maworefo *Asafo* was the stationed workforce at the castle. They were duty bound to collect seashells from the shore and process them into lime for various purposes. Assabill stated that, the Maworefo group, may have been organized by the affluent and the wealthy merchants. According to Assabill, the Alatamanfo were guards whose duties were to protect the Edina female traders from other coastal raiders of the Fante land. They are also responsible for the protection of the boundaries of Edina from local aggression. He further said that the Enyampafo *Asafo* were the descendants of the original founders of Edina. They are the noblemen who live in the neighbourhood of the king (Omanhen). They are the kingmakers. The Abesefo *Asafo* is peaceful, just and had the patience of investigating matters arising. They were known to give fair judgement on issues. Their name was carved from the Fante word; ‘wo fifi asem mu’, literally meaning critical investigators of issues. The Brofomba or Brofo Nkowafo was originally the descendant of the Europeans or the servants and housekeepers of the Europeans.



Assabill is noted to have obtained this information from the late Master Koomson, a retired school teacher based in Edina and had a strong interest and knowledge in '*Asafoism*'. An interaction with Annan-Prah, confirmed that some of these issues had been outlined by Assabill. He approved of the numbering as stated by Assabill. He also emphasized that the Company names were as a result of their activity or character. Upon enquiry, it was established that, Master Koomson passed away some couple of years ago. This hampered the verification of the authenticity of Assabill's information. Nevertheless, Quayson, (Tour Guide and Researcher of Edina *Asafo*) attested to the fact that the sources of the names of the various *Asafo* groups were true. Quayson, had this to say:

some of the names were corrupted through pronunciation and the passage of time. He also said that, the Akyemfo were doubters of information and fact and this earned them their name. He stated that the Abese *Asafo* were peaceful and patient to issues as they arose they embarrassed all people especially their dealing with Europeans.

Hence the incorporation of the image of a sailing boat as part of their Company Posts of the Abese *Asafo* Company. He also said the Wombir *Asafo* were the originators of Edina *Asafo* Companies hence their name Boase Wombir. Asmah, (Supi of Wombir *Asafo* No.4 Company, Edina in May 2005) did not deviate from these facts when he had to comment on the stories leading to the naming of the Edina *Asafo* Companies. He emphasized that the Company upon which he heads was said to be the originator of Edina *Asafo* Companies: Boase Wombir as the name implies he said, history states that they once informed other companies about certain decisions by the Enyampa *Asafo* which they found to be very unpleasant to the *Edinaman* this made them to be branded as traitors hence their name Wombir. Kobina Ackon, (Safohen, Akyem *Asafo*

No. 2 Company, Edina on July 2005) said this about the naming of the Akyem Asafo Company that the Company members were persistent in knowing the exact meaning and purpose of issues before aligning with their propounders. Therefore it became necessary for them to be labeled as their name implies.

A stride into the Company Posts of the Asafo of the Fantes establishes them as the spiritual and physical fortifications of the Fante. These Posts are environmental edifices that serve as the abodes of the Asafo shrines and the spirits of their elders. They possibly serve as the storehouses of the Asafo military wears, regalia, flags, drums and other art pieces. The Company Posts also serve as the converging point or the rallying centres for the Asafo entirety. The Posuban acts as the headquarters of every Asafo Company. It may contain in it a hall that serves as a conference room for Asafo officials. The Company Posts, by their sense of reason of usage become provoked to act according to the wishes of and aspiration of the company elders and members.

Edusei,(1981) acknowledged these Company Posts as *“the most conspicuous of the Asafo artifacts and that they are regarded as the abodes of the Asafo abosom or heavy medicine and possibly shrines “*. Labi,(2003) admits’ that *“the Company Post means any post, earth work or other erections set apart for the display of emblems or flags, or to mark a place of meeting of such Company”*. Edusei,(1981) states that *“all religious ceremonies including libation, invocations, sacrifices, cleansing and propitiatory rites together with all secular actions take place at the Posuban”*. It is obvious that these shrine houses are the points where all activities of the Asafo groups originate and extinguish. Through the lenses of The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,(1988) one views the Company Posts as generally shrines said to concentrate a holy place

for miraculous character or for their association with the life of the founders, shrine, and saints of the cult. It continues that their importance is usually said to be proportionate to the antiquity of their traditions and associations with cult origin and regulates these cultural edifices into nonentities in response to modern architectural norms and history. These *Asafo Posuban* could be likened to the Basilica in the Vatican City where the spiritual and the political seat of the Papacy reign supreme.

Eghan,(1993) disputes the assertion that these Company Posts have no place in the architectural history books. It behoves that, some of these Posts are self-documenting with dates written on them, thereby giving an insight into the history of a community and even to the point of indicating the benefactors, cost of construction, names of architects and artist as in the case of Ajumako-Ba Tuafo *Asafo Posuban*. For records purposes one could testify that, the periods within which these structures were commemorated, the sponsors of the Posts, the engineers and artists as well as the owners of these Posts could be noticed on these buildings. One could not resist but to agree with Eghan that history is not found alone in books but also taken orally or visually through the physical structures themselves. Possibly, earlier generations could tell tales about the *Asafo Companies* or identify them with specific events of the part or by object of display and their interpretations.

Cole, and Ross,(1977) asserted that, “*the Posubans of the Akans have little connection with the indigenous architecture of the people.*” This view may hold half-truth since Swithenbank,(1969) in his collection, Asante Shrine Houses, vividly recounted certain similar structures with almost the same features and facilities as that of the cement built *Posuban* of the Fantes. Bowdich, published on several Akan buildings including the Asante Shrine



Houses and the shrine on the Asantehene's palace. Owing to the belief in the link between the living and the dead, shrine houses were the most venerated and they still stand to the test of time as one of the architectural landmarks. One cannot dispute the fact that the permanent material such as cement and metal roofing sheets might have had a considerable effect on this modern African architecture. It is obvious that these permanent materials were of European origin. The *Asafo* Companies therefore resorted to their use due to the quest for permanence with the housing of the abodes of their shrines and spirits. Also these materials could stand the stress of *Asafo* battles and want of destruction of property and life.

Recourse into the origin of *Asafo* shrine (*Posuban*) reveals a medicine mound surrounded by a fence. Edusei, (1981) submits that, *Posuban* was made up of a picket-like fence of raffia palm branches erected around a tree to give the appearance of being wrapped in a sheath of wood and that, the preferred tree could be *Odum*, *Odanta*, *Onyina* and others due to their supposed spiritual potency. He further said that an artificial medicine mounds were placed at the base of the sheath. This is popularly called '*esiw*'. The *esiw* is fixed with a metal shaft pierced through a tortoise back.. Asmah of Wombir *Asafo* of Edina reckons that, their ancestors made medicine mounds near the Benya Stream and fenced it with palm branches. This served as their town shrine. The area is known as *Esiwudu*. Cole and Ross, (1977) treats the origin of the *Asafo Posuban* as a simple medicine mounds and a tree with a cane fence around it. They mentioned that the origin of the *Posuban* could be traced into the year 1880 when firstly, a wall or a fence was put up around a tree under which the spiritual mount is placed. They give account of a later development where *Asafo* designs are painted or modeled on the walls of the *Posuban*. The earlier submission of



Cole and Ross, were not different from what have been reported by previous writers. Edusei, upholds a similar view on his account of the origin of the 'Posuban'. He proceeds to say that *Posuban* as the name stands is a corrupted form of 'Pia-Suban'. Here, *Pia*' means a room or a hall and *Su* mean character or look-alike while *ban* means fence, protection or fortification

It is evident that the *Posuban* might have graduated in structural development from raffia fence to wall fence, and to a room and possibly into monumental edifices that house various apartments intended for various functions. Labi recounts that *Asafo Posuban* of today are built in sandcrete in the form of one and two or multi-storey buildings, painted in bright colour and distinctly different from traditional rectangular houses with thatch or aluminum roofs. Labi could not hesitate to agree with Edusei and others that, the *Posuban* in its traditional form is a fenced tree and that by the close of the nineteenth century, the *Asafo* Posts had transformed its features to look like the Forts and Castles that stood on the coast of Ghana. Labi sees the *Posuban* as a host to other *Asafo* artworks like flags, emblems, drums and more. He also sees it as the conveying point and the pivot of *Asafo* activities. These submissions by Labi, are quiet undeniable except that the monuments do not take a direct derivative from the Forts and Castles of the Europeans. Aggrey (1979) recounts that "*the progression of the Posuban might have taken the form of a living space built to fit what wealth is residing in.*" May be it was to give the shrines and ancestors a befitting abode. Supi Aggrey attests to the fact that "*the living room also known as 'Pia' gave birth to the new name; Pia-Suban which later became Posuban.*" Currently, the *Asafo* Company Posts are called *Posuban* and that all the previous names do not hold any more. In the Fante dialect '*ban*' means a wall and '*Aban*' stands for the Fort or Castle from which the colonial authority

exercised its power. *Posuban* therefore stands as the fortress or the strength and seat of the *Asafo* Company.

Edusei, affirms that:

there are three types of *Posuban* in Cape Coast; the original fenced tree type but without a medicine mound and the fenced tree with the mound. The second is the cement- plastered wall surrounding a medicine mound raised on a dais. The latter is the 'Pia' type, where a room is constructed over an altar and a medicine mound.

He said, in addition, that, the Nkum No.4 Company shrine is made up of a sand-crete wall surrounding a tree and three medicine mounds, and that the group has a three-roomed structure that is used to house the Companies art forms and armaments. The structure is termed as a storehouse but not a Company Post. Edusei reported that at the time of his research Cape Coast had no two-storey or three-storey monumental *Posuban*. A visit to Cape Coast reveals that till date the area cannot boast of any *Asafo* Company Post that is comparable to that of the four significant Company Posts of Edina *Asafo* Company. Yet the various simple types found in Cape Coast showcase the feeling of monumentality, colour and texture. During Fetu *Afahye* the various Company Posts are beautifully painted with the Company colours, motifs and mythical messages. Notable of items displayed on or around the *Posuban* are animals, human figures, plants and some natural objects. Clocks, canon balls, guns and *Asafo* insignia are prominently displayed too. Perhaps these items and images are exhibited to stress on the strength and might of the *Asafo* Companies in their wisdom and conquest. The imagery and symbols put up reflect the history and culture of the *Asafo* Company. The Brofonkowa *Asafo* No. 5 of Cape Coast has the inscription 'we built the castle' in front of their Company Post thus signifying that their forefathers laboured for the construction of the Cape Coast

Castle. Jarig Bakker (2000) reports that Mankessim *Asafo* Post is an elaborate concrete shrine that originated as storage house for arms, and Company regalia of which the actual site is quite ancient but its present form is probably post-independence.

Possibly, the beginning of the twentieth century galvanized the massive in pour of double and multi-storey Company Posts. Quayson reports that:

in the 1960's, the economy of Ghana was buoyant and there was a lot of money in the system. The indigenes had the sense of belonging to show their culture physically. With the introduction of the African Personality and the promulgation of the African culture by Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah and others compelled some wealthy indigenes to produce this cultural street furniture that has come to add to the history of the people. This had a long way of exhibiting the cultures physical form by employing methods of construction as a medium of documentary.

This is an evidence of the very physical and structural messages that are told in these Company Posts that Cole and Ross highlight on:

the proliferation of the large and elaborate *Asafo* monuments along the coast of Ghana that had sculptural ideas consisting of soldiers in traditional war apparel or European uniforms along side *Asafo* Officials, medicine carriers, female warriors and leaders as well as policemen. Lions, leopards, eagles and other animals with whose ferocity the *Asafo* Companies identify were portrayed. These developments might have started within the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Edina prides itself with four massive Company Posts that are ascribed to four out of the ten *Asafo* Companies. One will not be wrong in stating that these

Company Posts look very colossal and monumental. The designs have a fusion of natural and artificial objects alongside reality and spiritual mythologies. Each Company has an identity representing and interpreting its chosen forms and colours. A typical example of these is the Abese *Asafo*

Company Post that combines the form of a ship and a house. This may



portray the very relationship that the Company had with its European partners in terms of might and power. The ship also called 'Man of war' is a symbol of might and power as far as the battle of the takeover of the Gold Coast (Edina) was concerned. One cannot compare the enormous craftsmanship pitched against the construction and finishing offered this Post.

Cole and Ross in their exercise were quick in stating that the *Posuban* of the Fantes were a mere representation of the Forts and Castles found along the West coastline.<sup>50</sup> Labi, also submitted that by the end of the nineteenth century the *Asafo* had transformed the *Posuban*, appropriating features from European Forts and Castles along the coast. Clearly, these submissions are not exact for the Post of the Abese *Asafo* Company of Edina has no trace of a Fort or a Castle. This is the ingenuity of the indigenous artist or group depicting a set of thoughts contextually. Cole, Ross, and Labi, in their attempt to underestimate the ingenuity of the indigenous people made certain errors by identifying the *Asafo* Company Posts with these of the Forts and Castles. African architecture certainly abounds in projections, recessions, pilasteries, beams and domes making them look like the Forts and Castles. It is important to admit that the physical presence of these Forts and Castles inspired the indigenous artists. Perhaps they viewed them as symbols of strength and power; therefore one could not limit the creators of these new elaborate Company Posts as a direct duplication of these foreign structures.

Preston,(1915) asserted that:

the *Asafo* artist incorporated into their new structures some of the architectural members of the European Forts and Castles, and that these which were chosen, were randomly placed to create new discourse that were devoid of the originality of the forts and castles.



He further stated that, even though the indigenes were capable of raising castles and forts, they did not desire to do so. In his view, the *Asafo* were in for images that symbolize style, elements and features that symbolize strength, power and militarism. If creativity meant reinvention, additions and perceptions then the new dimension of the *Posuban* has *Asafo* originality and ingenuity. If the Modern art of the European of which Picasso and the rest were spearheads was judged as original works of Europeans, then the *Asafo Posuban* of the Fantes qualifies as such. Modern art of the Western World was inspired by their contact with the African plastic art forms that were seized, purchased or exchanged and transported to the West as evidence of uncivilized world. Swithenbank, (1969) mentioned that, the building plan of Bawjwiasi Shrine shows the usual four buildings set round the 'gyase' or the court with a rear door leading to the Chief's house. It has a larger room at the rear where important visitors could wait for their audience with the shrine. This picture paints various projections and recessions from all sides making the piece assume massive and elaborate pose. Swithenbank, (1969) spoke about the Abirim Shrine that has a rough ladder that leads up to an attic. The attic which has a floor of mud laid over rough planks supported by beams, the end of which run through the longitudinal walls and are on the courtyard side, faced with a decorative facial board. This mud building, that is almost a twostorey boasts of pilasters and beams that hold it to shape. This was a typical Akan initiative that had no European hand. May be one could admit that creativity evolved with all races and all continents at the same time but publicity might have made some more popular than others. The Akan might have nurtured his own ideas and executed them perfectly before the Europeans set foot on our shores. One may not slip if he makes mention of the presence and huge influence that the plastic art of the Negro's

have had on the Western artistic development and architectural members. The raised shrine dais and the superimposed loft above the shrine apartment of the Abirim Shrine desires a lot, not to mention the superfluous geometrically design screens (balesters) and the ornamented dais on which the shrine of Teno Abenamu Subunu rested. Rattray (1955) stated that:

original thatch and the European made sheeting's that gave protection to the building the Abirim Shrine had three of its original four building standing and that the frontage still maintained its original decorations which covered the whole of the wall surface from ground to eaves. He made mention of the re-roofing of the shrine with shingles at the time of his enquiring, confirming intermediate development between them.

The quest for permanence and prolonging of the life span of these indigenous Akan architecture and revealed the inclusion of European materials in Asante Shrine house. They introduced permanent roofing materials and techniques that could protect the building and reduce labour.

Asante architecture is amongst the few works that are quiet complex in context and concepts. Nnamdi, (1954) said:

it would be difficult to understand Ashanti architecture especially the designs and decorations on the walls of their Shrine Houses without taking a look at the meanings that inspired them. To the Ashantes, there is a direct connection between materialism, ancestral-worship and the house in which the shrines and effigies of the ancestors are located. These factors come together to form the mystical festival that the Ashanti celebrate annually.

Nnamdi and Rattray may be saying the same thing. Nnamdi, emphasized that construction of shrine houses were done communally using local materials, however, their contact with the Western world saw the introduction of Aluminum sheets as a replacement to traditional thatched ones. Nnamdi, recounted that, some of the shrine houses of the Asantes have part of them being

a single storey whilst others are two storey with the façade elaborately decorated directly on the walls. This confirms Swithenbank's exercise on the Asante architecture. Nnamdi, further attested that Edina, an embryonic town in Ghana was a transfer of Asante ethnic group and a casual grouping of certain settled people that evolved into ethnic spiritual and military center which was associated with Company leaders, priests and Chiefs. He further stated that Edina is an ancient town which is associated with the veneration of Chiefs and ancestors. It may be true that the *Asafo Posuban* of today may have some link with the Asante Shrine House since the people of Edina are of Asante origin. The Edina *Posuban* has an angular architectural feature. In addition, the *Posuban* is a shrine house and also has an apartment allocated abode of their deities. A portion of the *Posuban* is used as the office of the *Asafo* priest. Other factors such as the Asante link with the North territories and possibly the Ghana Empire could be associated with some of the successes behind these cultural edifices of the Edina people since the people of Edina incorporated northern apparel (Batakari), power animals (horses) in their *Asafo* Posts. One cannot also refuse to acknowledge that the sojourned Asante to Edina might have found certain indigenous Fante at Edina traditional area.

A strike into the Asante architecture brings up the issue of their relations with zones up the Sub-Sahara. Prussin, (1969) said that, until the first decade of the twentieth century the British influence and control extended only to the northern edge of the rain forest: - Asante and Brong-Ahafo country. She further stated that despite subsequent token effort to control it, Northern Ghana largely escaped the influence of Western Europe and Christianity for it had none of the economic attractions that might have stimulated colonial penetration and organization.



The range of variations in the degree of synthesis and adoption of Northern cultural element by the indigenous Asante-Akan people physically expressed in their architectural forms, decorative media and village morphology, which suggest the internal richness to be found in what is normally considered a single culture area an area usually characterized by a similar physical environment and similar pattern of social and economic organization. As a result of trade across the Sahara, Arab traders, rulers and common people traveled down to the forest areas – Asante and Brong-Ahafo to trade in goods and services. The city of Djenne in Timbuktu had its arts and architecture affecting that of the Asantes. These medieval empires of West Africa used only wood and clay to construct their buildings. Islam had converted most of the African monarchs as such portions of their Mosques have been used as burial places which served as links between their ancestors and Allah. Most of the buildings had poetic sculptures that made them look like natural element growing out of vegetable like plants. They portray pillars with large buttresses, which naturally adopt the functions of ancestral figures whose indwelling spirits are believed to be guarding the Shrines of worship. These buildings which are constructed in huge and tall structure that take their source from Egypt might have influenced the Asante Shrine Houses and possibly Edina's *Asafo Posuban*. It is evident that since works of ancient Egypt are authentic works of Africans and as it is alleged, most Ghanaian Akans are origins of ancient Egypt who passed through the ancient empires of Ghana, Mali and Sudan, then their shrine houses are African.

The contemporary Company Posts of the Fantes are built to assume solidity, massiveness and stability. Unlike the ancient types that were the fenced tree, which also had their foliage casting dark shadows underneath, these



days they are brighter, colourful and prominent. At annual festivals, they are offered coats of bright and gay paints making them to stand out from the crowded buildings standing by. Special emphases are laid on the images, objects and architectural members of thoughts. The *Posuban* of our day maintains a feature that holds the Companies as flagpoles and flags. As a military institution the flags are hoisted to give identity and prominence to the Companies and also serve as means of communicating message of might and achievement to the society at large. The flagpoles therefore become an important feature in the collection of the *Asafo* Companies. In Edina the remaining six of the *Asafo* Companies who do not have the *Posuban* as at now rather prefer having the flagpoles as the mark of their base of existence. A Company's flagpole or posts is as important as the *Posuban*. It marks the point of contacts and the very base of the existence of the *Asafo* Company in question. As Cole and Ross see them, the flagpoles and posts are like the architectural elaboration on the European Forts and Castles.

Amongst the various art forms used by the Fante *Asafo* Companies, the *Asafo* flags have gained the most popularity. The flags are used to identify the Companies and communicate *Asafo* messages. They exhibit the strength and might of the Companies. They are also used to perform martial dances during town festivals and *Asafo* activities. The *Asafo* flags were used as a medium of establishing and maintaining friendship. They were also used to stage defiance and war. The *Asafo* flags and banners were made from fabrics. Most of the flag makers employed the method of appliqué and appliqué plus drawing and painting. In recent times some of the flags have their design, motifs and messages drawn or painted on them with the use of inks or paints.

Text and image configuration formed the major basis of the flag production.

These flags and banners were the souls and spirits of *Asafo* militarism. Members swore their lives to guard and protect their Company's flags and banners against capture by rival groups. Their major messages included that of their war history, success records, achievements, strength, power, colour pattern and culture. The *Asafo* Companies embraced some of the European military acts such as carrying of flags during parades and marchings, saluting of flags, display of colour pattern and guarding of the flags. Barbot, (1732) talks of the Fante Martials who use to carry European flags to battle as a sign of their allegiance to them. While Labi, (2002) reports that:

the colonial master in 1919 exchanged pleasantries with the Fante Chiefs by giving them the flag of the Union Jack as a sign of friendship and good relationship between them, and especially their contribution toward establishment of peace in Gold Coast.

The above mentioned writers actuate the role flags played between the Europeans and the indigenes as a symbol of hope, loyalty and peace.

*Asafo* Companies in their quest to honour their leaders usually commissioned a taylor to make for them a flag that could depict the ambitions and aspirations of a leader. Leaders who were endowed financially could commission flags to be produced for them as signs of their contribution to the Companies. Labi, (2002) stated that flags that were used or commissioned by or for leaders when they were alive, and that bear their image(s) become memorial objects or contact points or as shrines for them when deceased.

These become religious objects that are used to venerate the deceased leaders. These flags are kept as sacred objects and not used for secular functions but for religious only. Therefore some *Asafo* flags and banners gain a high religious recognition in the *Asafo* culture. The various *Asafo* Companies built a large collection of flags and banners from various commissions made through their

leaders, wealthy members and individuals as gifts and contributions to the growth of the Companies. The growth in the acquisition of flags and banners had increased tremendously and flag language had taken varied dimensions. Porter, (1970) through Labi, reports that, during the 1803 conflict with British traders, Cape Coast indigenes hoisted 'flags of defiance' as a protest for what was their right. These flags might have taken the form of democratic instruments, which were used to express doubts and ill-feeling about colonial activities and measures. The late eighteenth century saw another dimension of use of the *Asafo* flags and banners. At this period the flags became instruments of riot and conflict. As an effective means of speaking publicly, images and text found in flags have assumed a stronger proverbial trend. *Asafo* Companies would commission flags of certain language pattern that could provoke or insult or inflict emotional pain on rivals. Companies could ignite passion and even conflict and wars leading to loss of property and life. As egotist as these flags could be, they stood at the other end of the colonial system, rules and regulations which were an albatross to local initiative. Labi, elucidates that the history of these Companies and the competitive conditions under which they existed promoted the creation of themes to challenge and insult one another as part of their competitiveness. He emphasizes that the situation at that period demanded from them the ability to create and also transcend proverbs, symbols and actions and make meanings out of them so one could respond effectively and responsibly through artistic creations and thoughts. These usually reflected displeasure, retaliation, disrespect, seizure of art works including *Asafo* flags by rival groups, riots and fighting among the Companies. It also led to defiance of traditional norms and regulation as well as Colonial legislations and bye-laws. Flags and other art forms were seized or banned by the Colonial powers that



were in the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Companies and or their members were dragged to court and fines and imprisonments imposed on them. This was to cut rioting, abuse of creativity and destruction of peace, properties and lives. Sarbah, (1897) recount of a situation in Cape Coast where a riot between the Intsin and Bentsir *Asafo* Companies resulted in court action in 1859. Here in the case: The Queen verses the captains of Intsin and Bensir, a British intervention in *Asafo* art conflict, the Judge ruled that “the court requires that all the Companies of the town shall, within one month send into the Fort such flags as they wish to use in future for the approval of the Governor, who if he disapproved, will substitute some other in its place, and the patterns and colours of all that may be approved will be registered in the secretary’s office in the Fort Coenraadsburg, and the exhibition of any other flag by any Company will be rendered and proclaimed to be utterly unlawful, subjecting the persons doing so to heavy penalties. In the mean time the use of any new flag or flags not now in use are hereby strictly prohibited.

Sarbah, (1897) also emphasizes that, in time past the language of the *Asafo* flags and their corresponding flag performances were the cause of rioting and loss of human life. As much as possible the Colonial powers tried controlling the use of flags in fomenting riots and conflict among the Companies. Measures such as fines and imprisonment were slapped on such offenders through the criminal code of 1892. These include guilt of felony, guilt of misdemeanor and guilt of public disturbance. These met a lot of resistance from the *Asafo* Companies who were the very members of the community. Charges preferred against certain culprits could not materialize due to fear of later retribution from the very communities who also may perceive them as traitors. Communal solidarity and the significance of these ethno-cultural



societies wielded a lot of resistance to the compliance of these instruments of peace and tranquility.

The *Asafo* culture and its spirit of militarism made it impossible for the Colonial partners to put cold stones on their activities. Annual ceremonies and certain religious and secular functions required that art forms be employed. This created a discreet re-enforcement of the *Asafo* flag culture to the latter. There came the need to create new flags and banner to meet certain specific functions and activities. Examples of these were flags used to commemorate the installation of new leaders, victories, and successes that emerged from annual competitions. Since *Asafo* history could be written through their flags culture making *Asafo* history became unstoppable. *Asafo* flags continued to be multiplied as *Asafo* achievement evolved. In events that certain important flags have been taken over by the colonial masters, there was the need to have their replicas made. This was to forestall the wheeling of their activities to the fullest. As a creative institution, members created new proverbial arts that reminded them of their commitment to their groups and their need to pledge their loyalty to their course of direction and ambitions. So far as the *Asafo* groups were alive and were encountering certain situations and events, production of flags as a major source of documentation could not be brought to a halt. It is said that, ‘the graveyard is the only richest place where people have their unfulfilled talents and dreams kept’. A living organization like the *Asafo* Companies will never cease creating art forms as far as their ban could not be enforced.

Seizure and ban on certain themes as well as the control of the production of the *Asafo* flags led to a decline in the creative edge of the Edina people. The implementation of certain ordinances and bye-laws hampered creativity among the *Asafo* flag artists since very little discretion was put at their disposal in

creating authentic *Asafo* art forms that were necessary to address situations. Insistences were made on artists to conform to registered designs that were less provocative and abusive. The colonial officials had the final responsibility of determining what was fit for use by the *Asafo* Companies even though they were non factors of these envious groups. This led to censorship of *Asafo* art forms and regulated what was appropriate for ceremonies since permission had to be sought before items were put to use by the indigenes. Penalties imposed by way of fines and imprisonment created a panic in the artists and the sponsors of art forms. Artists and their sponsors could be arrested, fined or imprisoned. This led to a reduction in the production of art and led to the loss of income. Economic hardship became the order of the period since production of provocative and abusive arts became liable to fines and imprisonment. Ingenuity and originality were therefore compromised. Artists had to do carbon copies of works already done or done for other groups. These promoted further conflict since it was the tradition of *Asafo* Companies to guard jealously their flag themes and colours from other group's usage. Duplication of one's flag meant provocation and possible arrest or seizure by the original owner. A study of document from the National Archives in Accra, Ghana emphasises that duplication of a flag of the Ankobea *Asafo* of Munford's flag by the Kyirem *Asafo* resulted in a riot that led to the death of three Ankobea members and two Kyirem members during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Apart from the fact that *Asafo* artists were virtually reduced to copist, artists seeking for fame from the society became an issue. Artist had to work undercover like the days of the persecution of Christians when they had to preach in the Catacomb since their creative exposure could land them in trouble. Hence, it became clear that ordinance suppressed both the creators and the creations of the Fantes. Supi

Kwamina Essilfie through Wartemburg said that the Portuguese and the Dutch government contributed immensely to the war-like spirits of the Edina people. This is because if any misunderstanding arose between any two Companies, the *Supi's* of these Companies concerned will go to the castle and seek permission to settle the dispute on the battle field. This will be granted when each Company pays seven pound declaration that they had both agreed to settle the dispute as such. It is alleged that the European parties could seek amusement from such battle that took off amongst the *Asafo* grouping as a result of misunderstanding and test of strength. Supi Kwaku Gyata through Supi Kwamina Essilfie said that the Akyem *Asafo* No.2 of Edina on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 1969, a Tuesday the under mentioned *Asafo* flags were registered at the Ahenfie in the presence of;

1. The state secretary - Mr. Cornelius
2. Nana Apaa Essilfie - Mr. Aaba
3. Nana Kuman Baidoo - Mr Sackey
4. Nana Effua Amissah - Nana Effua  
Amissah
5. Nana Entaa Nua Mensah - Mr Essel Kobina
6. Oman Kyiami - Kwiku Tawiah
7. No.1 *Asafo* Company - Supi Kwaku Mlor
8. No.2 *Asafo* Company - Supi K Essilfie
9. No.3 *Asafo* Company - Supi Kobina  
Mensah
10. No.4 *Asafo* Company - Supi Kow Kai
11. No.4 *Asafo* Company - Sadohin Kwesi  
Bentum

- |                               |   |                        |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| 12. No.4 <i>Asafo</i> Company | - | Safohin Abodar         |
| 13. No.4 <i>Asafo</i> Company | - | Safohin Kweku Bosomtwi |
| 14. No.5 <i>Asafo</i> Company | - | Supi Kofi              |
| Kakraba                       |   |                        |
| 15. No.6 <i>Asafo</i> Company | - | Supi Kojo Mensah       |
| 16. No.7 <i>Asafo</i> Company | - | Supi Kwamina Mensah    |

### **ASAFO FLAGS**

1. Swapim
2. Eagle and Eaglets
3. Idua-a Oyedzin Na Onyi Busuwi Da
4. Enim Hina Bodom Insanba, Kako Dzi On Dio Nsaba Da
5. Enen Ara Yenka Hon Du
6. Wara Nyim De Sofui – Sofu Oye Nyen Ene Adzi Wonsa Akaka
7. Biawu-A- Wagya Wantum Wawii Ewu Si Ibutum a wii
8. Akwantsiniw.

In spite of the indigenes resistance to the long arm of the Law, the Laws succeeded in creating some peace among the *Asafo* Companies. The provocative and proverbial arts gave way to certain innovations. Social issues such as honouring the dignified and the elite took the centre stage of the new *Asafo* flag promotion. Certain political leaders, religious leaders and local authorities were prominent in the new creations. Medals and other military insignia obtained from Colonial officials as commemorative objects were showcased as the new language of the Fante communicative art. Prior to the attainment of Ghana's independence flags of the Colonial Master, British flags and also the Union Jack featured prominently in most of the *Asafo* flags. These



new creations were done in conjunction with certain proverbial symbols that stressed on the might of the individual *Asafo* Companies that commissioned them. Mark Essilfie talked of flags made for the Edina Akyem *Asafo* Company that had the British flag placed on the top left corner. This flag contained the picture of some indigenous people shaking hands with a European; thus signifying a treaty, they had. The negotiation between Nana Kwamina Ansa and Don Diego d' Azambuya at Buja Patase a place where the Akyem *Asafo* Company Post stands today. He said similar flags were created to show their allegiance in the British as well as the good relations that existed between them. Such flags were usually made to commemorate the supports that the *Asafo* Company might have obtained from their European partners in the form of monetary rewards and gifts. The early days of the attainment of independence saw the introduction of the new identity; the Ghanaian state flag and state emblems, state anthem and state slogans became part of the various *Asafo* flag language. These *Asafo* Companies boldly displayed the new Ghana flag on the top left corners of their Company flags. The Colonial masters have relinquished part of their powers to the indigenes, therefore their control on the *Asafo* art forms and activities have diminished. The *Asafo* Companies therefore resorted to the pledging of their support and allegiance to the new Ghanaian authority. This culminated in the incorporation of this new State identity as part of their new creations. These were quiet accommodative to all the *Asafo* Companies. The new Ghanaian colours adopted by the State: Red, Gold and Green laid horizontally with the Black Star in the middle of the Gold became a dominant motif that could be incorporated in any Company's art forms. These became a National identity that proceeded over all community and group identity. Therefore, as an adoptable state artform, all groups could use them without any

particular group claiming the patent right of it. These injected the sense of oneness, togetherness and freedom amongst all men and groups and riots and conflicts were put to rest honourably.

The introduction of the neo-politics in the Gold Coast saw the *Asafo* military institutions playing a central role in the early Colonial administration. This was particularly with the implementation of Colonial policies and trade. In this new dispensation the Chiefs became the instrument of the Colonial machinery especially in the enforcement of the colonial aspirations as well as development trends. They were like the Political Ministers of today. Since the Chiefs also worked through the various *Asafo* Companies, just like the District machinery of our day, these two were used by the Colonial Officials in governing the indigenes. The *Asafo* system was found to be very effective in the dissemination of information and their implementation. The *Asafo* groups were recognized as the true clans of the communities, therefore an *Asafo* leader was a leader of the people. The *Asafo* leaders were in direct touch with the masses as well as the custodians of the towns. This made the colonial officers perceive the *Asafo* Companies as the operational instruments of work that could not be compromised as far as the town administration was concerned. Much attention and concentration were offered these Company officials. Datta and Porter are quoted to have said that, during the Colonial rule *Asafo Supifo* received more allowances than the *Omanhen* of Edina.” This attitude from the colonial official may be due to some observation made, that pointed out that, the *Supifo* had a better command over their members and that they wielded an expedient method of delivering information and organizing their men to undertake certain functions deemed necessary by the Colonial officials than the Chiefs. Of course the Chiefs were viewed as sacred and that they were not

expected to communicate directly to their subjects and viceversa. Invariably the *Supifo* and *Asafohenfo* did the command chain communication. These may be the factors that warranted the Colonial officials to rely heavily on the *Asafo* Companies for political and social services.

However, by the time the network of Colonial administration was put finally together, there had been a dramatic shift of political landscape. The *Asafo* supremacy appeared to be in retreat giving way to Colonial Police Service and Regular Army, which wielded state powers to arrest and detain. Of course, one cannot ignore the numerous *Asafo* factions that lead to disorder and death. The new Colonial forces were better equipped to assist in Colonial administration and justice. One could argue to the latter that, drastic measures were fashioned to make the *Asafo* Companies loose their military and social cohesion. This was done through the massive introduction of education to only faithfuls of Christianity, this led to the branding of *Asafo* activities as evil and barbaric and the enlistment of non-Akans into Colonial Police Force. These did a lot in undermining the activities of the *Asafo* Companies and also made them loose their focus. The numerous arrests by the indigenes in the Colonial police service created a division among the indigenes. Although in Edina the Alatan *Asafo* were detailed to provide security for the female traders of Edina as well as policing the frontiers of town, but these functions had become the responsibility of the new Colonial authority.

The introduction of these state forces could not deal with the definitive erosion of the *Asafo* institutions and their socio-religious authoritarianism, nor on the other hand deal with the inexorable march towards civilization. They could not deal with what appears in retrospect to be less clear-out and more open-ended state of transition located ambiguously within the issues of tradition



and the prospect of civilization. Attempts at making the indigenes civilized, Christian-based indigene elites were employed to facilitate the running of the colonial machinery. These African-elites who have tasted western education and flavours had also received a new identity which was not completely western. Their expertise in diverse disciplines was geared towards the aspirations of the colonial authorities rather than the indigenes. However, by the time the network of the Colonial system had come to perfection, it was obvious that we were witnessing a shift in the terrain of the faith of the people. Christianity was at its peak on the coastline. Perhaps there was a summary dismissal of the traditional religion which might be rooted in the lives of the indigenes. Christianity was seen as a civilized religion as opposed to the traditional African religion which was deemed fetish, crude, barbaric, full of human sacrifices, ignorance and very superstitious. It may be possible to say that just as Islam was able to thrive well in the sub-Saharan region due to the practice of polygamy and conquest, the success of the early Christian practice on the coast could be associated with the indigenes' belief in communicating with the Almighty God through forms and images, the very practice they termed fetish. These images and forms were only the receptacles of spirits of the ancestors and shrines of the land. Supi Kwamina Essilfie talks of the first relics of the saint of the Portuguese Catholic Church in Edina, St. Anthony who was later adopted as an Oman shrine and now called '*Nana Antona*' of the Edina people. The church that housed the effigy of Saint Anthony was adopted and renamed the '*Antona Buw*'. These shrines now serve very important religious points during Edina '*Bakatue*' festival and during the installation of a new Edina Omanhen. The contributions made in the form of church dues and cash offertory could be usual practices for the elite or converts (Christians), because



the indigenous religion of the Edina people provided a platform for its supplicants to offer cash and material offertory as “sacrifice” to the shrines for protection of life and property, a principle which is today termed as insurance in the social world. The quest of ones belonging to one’s roots has made the *Asafo* Companies to still survive. Most of their religious activities might be compromised or not. While the introduction of colonization and civilization has irrigated greed and self-centeredness among the indigenes of the Fante land, they equally bring to bear uneven patterns and forms of socialism and communism on the land both in the towns and in the country. In the past, we have learnt, the *Asafo* system of Edina had less difficulty than today in resolving corporate and social problems. There is the need of a mutual relationship to rekindle the spirit of voluntarism and patriotism among the indigenes of Edina both at home and outside. The rejuvenation of these instruments of progress could form a major basis for oneness in the Edina traditional area.

An argument could be raised against the democratization of these *Asafo* institutions which once became the instrument of violence and in several respect their problematic relationship within the Fante towns and within modern forms of organized force that constituted the Fante traditional area. As stated by Labi, the *Asafo* military institution became a source of worry to the needed peace within the Fante towns. They were virtually at each other’s throat as a result of their arts becoming a major source of conflict and dispute for generations. Numerous conflicts, destruction of property and death occurred due to sheer misunderstanding and strive for power and superiority. This led to the banning and confiscation of their art works. The very enviable collections of art forms that constitute the ethno-cultural background of the Edina *Asafo* history, politics, education, health, entertainment and communicative language still

stand to the test of time. They have the propensity to inform and educate both the present and the unborn generations about the tennets of the *Asafo* spiritism and the development of man and the society. Undoubtedly the *Asafo* Companies have several influences for good in a discipline community. They are the trustees of the Edina traditional area and could be organized to take over civil duties such as Sanitation, Street and road-policing duties, transport improvement and others as their share of the responsibilities devolving on a well-organized state. *Asafo*, a well organized warrior group whose members won for themselves the spirits of conquest, development and progress and attracted the arm of the European as auxiliary soldiers has today been reduced to playing functions such as enstooling and destooling of Chiefs, celebration of festivals and occasionally providing communal activities to the town. Their arts especially the Company Posts still stand to speak volumes about their cultural importance to all mankind

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to outline the methods adopted by the researcher in undertaking and pursuing the research. The research includes research methodology and these are data collection that was done through interviews, interaction and data collations through library research to acquire the necessary information for the research piece. Observation and reflections from the physical structures formed part of the research work.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

As the study focused on the description of the *Asafo* Company Posts, the research problem was best answered by a Qualitative research approach. The methodology was very beneficial to the research as it shows how the research was able to gather the data necessary for the study and also to come at an informed conclusion, and in addition offer beneficial recommendations

## LIBRARY RESEARCH

Library research played an enormous role in the completion of the study. The following libraries were visited to collect information necessary to set out the theoretical framework of the research:

- Ghana Library Board, Western Regional Library, Sekondi.
- Takoradi Polytechnic Library, Takoradi.
- KNUST Libraries, Kumasi.
- University of Cape Coast Library, Cape Coast.
- Balme Library, University of Ghana, Accra.
- Institute of African Studies Library, University of Ghana, Accra.
- National Archives, Sekondi and Cape Coast.

## POPULATION STUDIED

The population studied in this research was categorized into two; Target and Accessible population.

- Target Population; Indigenes of Edina, Inhabitants of Edina, People of Fante origin and People of Asante origin.
- Accessible Population; *Asafo* Leaders, *Asafo* Members, Opinion

Leaders and Officials of the Komenda, Edina, Eguafo, Abrim District Assembly.

## **PURPOSIVE SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

The research was directed towards the acquisition of specific information that dwelled on the *Asafo* Companies and their Posts in relation to their choice of colour, form, images, and symbols. The purposive sampling technique was adopted because the researcher was aware of the very group that could offer the necessary and appropriate information to facilitate the research. The researcher employed the homogeneous type because the respondents were *Asafo* people.

## **INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION**

The main instruments used were;

- Observation
- Interview

Data collection was done through personal observation of the philosophies underlining the various activities of the Company Posts. Both questionnaire and structured and unstructured interviews were used in collecting data from respondents and interviewees.

## **TYPES OF DATA**

### **Primary Data**

Data were collected through the following;

- Interviews
- Field survey



- Direct observation

The administering of questionnaire to divulge information coupled with the researcher's interviews with the respondents and direct observation made, they served as a source of collecting the primary data for the study.

### **Secondary Data**

Data collected from literary sources such as books, journal articles, brochures, and unpublished theses served as the source of the secondary data which was presented and analysed.

## **INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED**

The researcher perceived the interview technique to be very important for this research. Interviews played a central role in the whole process of the research work. Consequently, it had a great potential to affect the survey cost and determined the quality of the research. The researcher pursued the task of conducting the interviewing single handed. This was to avoid the occurrence of variance in responsiveness (results) from different interviews. Groves et al (2004) attest that; *“interview plays several essential roles in surveys and that they help respondents to perform their roles effectively”*

The interviewees included the principal officers of the various *Asafo* Companies; these were the *Etsekuwduhene* or *Ekuewessounhene*, the *Supifo* of the *Asafo* Companies, the various *Asafohenefo* (*Safohenfo*) and *Asafo Akyerebafo* and the numerous *Asafo* members and faithfuls both at home and elsewhere performing diverse functions and roles for the development of the country Ghana. These persons included both the lettered and unlettered. The interview took the form of personal interaction and sometimes by phone. Most of the interviews were done through vernacular and later transcribed into

English. Audio recording devices such as tape recorders and digital voice recorder were used to capture the interviews, interactions and conversations. This made it possible for playback and cross- checking. It provided a way of collating information with less stress, since usually people speak more quickly than a researcher can write, so although it is often possible to make notes, catching verbatim quotes is more difficult.

The recorded information provides evidence of date of interviewing, time of interview and persons interviewed. Martin, (2002) recounts that *“as a researcher the best way to document your interview is to keep records such as date of interview, name of interviewee, name of interviewer, how the interview was conducted, details of the interviewee, the purpose of the interview and the conduct of the interview”*. In this research work, the researcher pursued the interview alone but required the services of technical assistants in the pursuance of the audio and visual recordings.

## **DIRECT OBSERVATION**

To arrive at a concluding end about the effective and efficient adaptation of aesthetic values on cultural issues, the research discussion hinged on the indigenes concerned. “Direct observation” and “Participatory” approached, commonly used by Anthropologist and Historians in community surveys were embarked upon. Direct observation is an efficient approach since what people accept as a physical change is sometimes viewed with a tint. A gradual change observed by Aestheticians makes a whole academic revelation. Direct observation therefore becomes the most efficient method of revealing physical changes on edifices.

Cyber publication was another area that a critical search was made in the subject of research. Information was carefully compared, contrasted and cross-checked with what pertained on the field (research findings) even though very little had been said on the said topic. This also included the review of literature belonging to experts who have contributed to the answering of some questions in some aspects of the identified problem.

Reflection is one important research technique embraced for this research work. Reflection which philosophically means an act of cognitive investigation based on the social life of the Edina people and the inorganic nature of the materials used for the *Asafo* edifices to draw specific conclusions. Reflection, where it is active and is exercised by highly organized systems possessing an independent force of reaction reveal creativity, anticipative, and transformative activity of man at the highest. Though the facts around these environmental artefacts are highly physical, issues concerning their aesthetics consideration are highly dependent on the cognitive deliberation of the human mind. These involve an emotional condition arising in the process of aesthetic perception of reality or work of art. Environmental aesthetics which materializes the aesthetic feeling in physical forms is effective means of either ideological or emotional education. In effect having been captured in the researcher technique, reflection is meant to be a source of human joy and inspiration

## **FIELD SURVEY**

The area under study was initially defined and determined to ascertain the physical and socio-cultural variables on which data could be obtained or required. A preliminary survey was made to verify and cross-check data on the

existence, placement and location of the various *Asafo* Posts and *Asafo* Poles and the extent of human and environmental effects on them.

Questions were posed in relation to the socio-religious activities of the ethnic people, the attitude of the people as regards the state of affairs of *Asafo* Companies and their Posts and the possible socio-political and cultural dynamics that affect the traditional area positively or negatively.

Through interactions and discussions with community leaders, *Asafo* leaders and members, it was possible to understand and recognize and appreciate some of the less straight forward, very technical but significant socio-cultural issues of relevance to achieving the research objectives.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF EDINA AND EDINA ASAFO COMPANIES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Edina, a maritime town, has fishing as the principal occupation of her indigenes. It has a minimal crop agricultural activity practiced by the villages that are stretched on its boundaries. It also has a degree of industrialization of which salt production takes prominence. Edina which in the ancient periods existed as a state is now one of the historical and prominent towns in the Central Region of Ghana. Edina lies about two kilometers east of Cape Coast, which is the capital of Central region. Cape Coast was once the capital town of the then Gold Coast, now Ghana. The inhabitants of Edina and its satellite villages are Fante speaking people who proudly make no claim to Fante origin. These



people have a strong cultural practice and the concept of *Asafo* system is one that cannot be kept unspoken.

Though, the traditional state, Edina, is not totally Fante in Linguistics, the mother tongue and language of the Edina people as much as possible is a mixture of Fante and Twi. Social structures which pervade the Fante communities have strong links with Edina traditional area, examples of which are marriage, birth, death and inheritance patterns, land tenure system, educational, medical and religious systems. The political, constitutional development, social obligations, organization, the undertaking of traditional festivals, the *Asafo* Companies and their formations and their headquarters, also known as the Company Posts, were of prime importance to the researcher and to this thesis. This thesis enquires into Edina's contact with the Europeans (French, Portuguese, Dutch and British) and the impact or influence of the Europeans on the formation and operations of the Edina *Asafo* Companies, their Posts as well as the then Edina town.

## **EDINA IN THE PAST**

An endeavour into the immediate past of Edina seems somewhat conceited. Long before Europeans visited the coast of Guinea, Edina, also called Elmina, was acknowledged to be an 'ancient' town with Eguafu as its twin town. An appraisal of the times gone by of its initial people and their process of development through the past years is an observable difficulty. Traditional education has handed down to generations the previously unpublished accounts of the activities of Edina, its association with western civilization which won for her incomparability as a premier European

settlement on the West African coast. The unparalleled patriotism, heroism and concern for its people remained deep-seated treasures that constituted the invaluable tradition of the indigenes.

Wartemberg (1950) recounted that:

El Mina is situated in the Western Province of the Gold Coast, British West Africa on the Seaboard, 8 mile west of Cape Coast Castle, the then provincial headquarters and 44 miles east of Takoradi, the very new harbour and railway terminus. It comprises a group of villages within its vicinity, its area being roughly computed at 400 square meters.

He continued that the exact location of ancient Edina as discovered by the Portuguese in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century was the narrow strip of land extending half a mile long (0.8 kilometer) from the Kokobo rock in westerly direction, and terminating beyond Bantama where the original memorial shrine house (*Posuban*) raised by its founder was supposed to have been erected. Wartemberg concluded that the town developed rapidly throughout the centuries, growing in importance as a centre of the West African trade and the population then was estimated at 25,000 prior to the great conflagration of 1852 which had through immigration, now dwindled to about 15,000 or less.

In the early times, the eastern demarcation of Edina was identified by '*Bosom Buranta*', a shrine worshipped by the Enyampa *Asafo*. The shrine was also called the '*Hen Boboe*'. It is four and half miles (7.5 kilometer) east of Edina town. It was indicated by a row of coconut trees which was specially planted by the people, making them a boundary point between Cape Coast and Edina. The Kakum stream marked the earlier settlement of some refugees from Edina who domiciled in the region. The '*Doko*' (sweet) river as the boundary between Cape Coast and Edina was in connection with the AngloDutch

proposal for an exchange of territories in 1867, when by mutual arrangement the authorities concerned accepted the *Doko* River as the demarcation between the two territories. The western territorial extent covered the gold mine area beyond Abrobi. Wartemberg indicated that Shama and Edina have a common territorial boundary point at '*Powano*', thence a line demarcating Edina territorial boundary is drawn in a north-easterly direction to the boarder of Wassaw territory thence in a south-easterly direction to the coast terminating at '*Hen Boboe*'. The ancestral stool in many of the neighbouring villages have, however, through emigrant infiltration been domiciled by a predominant foreign element who now claim independence, example Kweku Enyibema on Duakor hill, Amamena and Agona.

Kwamina Essilfie, (1980) confirmed the above submission by Wartemberg and stated that Edina was actually made up of the several villages who sought to the main town (Edina) as their paramouncy. Supi Kwamina Essilfie reiterated that:

Edina was probably composed of the several Ebusua (clans), with the principal head that forms the traditional council, and that the criterion for the election to the office of the Omanhen was the competency for leadership, daring strength and bravery. In modern times, the Omanhen presides as the paramount head of the several divisional chiefs or villages constituting the traditional area.

It is acceptable that, by the traditions available, Edina was a fairly organized community prior to the European adventures on the coast and that the earliest adventures found the town in the degree of civilization contrary to their most optimistic prospect.

Edina which is believed to be the founder name of Elmina is a misnomer. That name is a corruption of the Portuguese word; Aldea or Oda meaning a

village. This was probably how the Portuguese referred to the settlement, where their employees repaired after the days work. This was a little distance away from the mines. El Mina was the other Portuguese word that referred to the area. El Mina meant the mines. These Portuguese words became corrupted in usage and assimilation. Aldea is now Edina while El Mina has become Elmina. Both names refer to the same town. In this work Edina will be preferred. Tradition is strong in favour of Amomee being the original name of the town strictly connected with the legend Kwaa Amankwaa, the founder who was the head of a group of emigrant hunters who in description, were in search for drinking water and accidentally discovered the streamlet, exclaimed '*Be Enya*', a Wassaw dialect meaning, I have found or got. Its Fante equivalent is '*Me Enya*'. The streamlet was eventually referred to as '*Anomansa*' which literally means inexhaustible water supply. To commemorate the discovering of this streamlet a hut was erected to honour the deity associated with this discovery. '*Nana Benya*' is the tutelary deity of the Edina people. This hut became sacred in local history as the consecrated abode of a tutelary deity. This deity is celebrated annually in honour of her support for bumper harvest in fishing and farming.

The name Be Enya originally identified as the '*Annwew*' was probably incorrectly applied in later years to the lagoon. The lagoon idiom '*Be Enya netsifi ara nye Annwewdo*' justified this assumption, for the lagoon is saline and could not have given refreshment to the emigrants. '*Annwew*' means never dries and is synonymous with '*Anomansa*'. The suggestion that it is highly probable that the creek at Akotobinsin might be associated with the discovery is not supported by tradition. Wartemberg alluded that:



the Creek must have been an estuary of the Kakum and Surowi streams which empty into the sea at Iture during the rains. Its severance from the Kakum must have been caused by seismic disturbances. It is practically nonexistent today, though trace of its natural course is evident. It is generally believed that the great earthquake which occurred at Lisbon in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was felt in this country and caused superficial changes.

Kwaa Amankwa is acknowledged as the founder of Edina, Elmina or Anomee. Anomansa is otherwise known as Bantoma. Because of the ancestry of Bantomafo as the natural descendants of the founder, they are accorded the right of nominating and electing the Omanhen of Edina. The exercise of this right, however, in the internal affairs of Edina town claimed independently by the people of Bantoma is regarded a later development and much resented. They had, from the earliest times, been considered an integral part of the Enyampa *Asafo* who jointly acted in a consultative procedure. It is considered eminent to civic interests for a section of the town. Bantoma was by common consent, chosen as a place for the security of the state drums during the period of the bombardment of Edina and they have since remained deposited there in safe custody. The co-operation of that section of the Enyampa *Asafo* is therefore essential to re-establish coherency in the unanimity of action.

Wartemberg stated further that the:

Akan speaking people are evidently descendants from the same stock. Diverse incursions must have dissected their unity. They are believed to have formed independent sections of the ancient kingdom of Ghana which decayed through the disruption of its unity. Some of them settled as separate and independent communities in certain parts of Egypt whence they migrated to Central Africa, probably due to the persecution of the Egyptians. Further migrations took place as a result of oppressions and Mohammedan influence. The Adanse Empire or Kingdom

probably emerged and in its days dominated the interior of Asante.

Wartemberg also observed that at that time,

the people in these areas were not known as Asantefo, they were probably an offshoot of the Guan people and the Etsis who broke away from the north as the first emigrants to the Coast. Kwaa Amankwaa who founded Edina, claimed direct blood relationship with the royal Asante stock as one of the three causins who claimed descent from a common progenitor probably prior to the founding of Takyiman. He added that under the leadership of these causins, Sama, Tekyi and Amankwaa, the various communities migrated. Settlements in diverse regions were sporadic. They eventually moved southwards towards the coast, took different directions.

Sama and his group took a westerly trend and founded Yaabew on the Bosom Pra, near Shama. Tekyi and his group founded Eguafo, while Amankwaa proceeded further and founded Edina or Anomee. Amankwaa was reputed to have been a distinguished hunter who for many years settled at Eguafo before founding Anomee which was his hamlet and where he often repaired after a chase. Shama and Eguafo were recognized as sister towns (states).

It is observed from Wartemberg that it is mere conjecture to say in what century the migrations took place probably after the disruption of the Ghana Empire about the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Edina people, from the earliest times, had been acknowledged by other states as offshoots from the Asante stock. The similarity in intonation observable in the spoken language of the two people, identical custom, lamentations and such names as Kwaame, Tekyi, Amankwaa, Tutu and others support this probability. They are a distinct people from the Fantes who claim Tekyiman as their original home, whence they migrated to the coast under Borbor Fantse. The close ties between the Asantes and Fantes are believed to have severed. Tradition is silent as to the causes of the separation which resulted in the emigration of the latter to the coast.

Nana Kwamina Ansa IV (Omanhen of Eguafo Traditional Area, Eguafo, in November 2005) stated that:

Eguafo was a great empire before the creation of the Edina state. Tekyi who is associated with Eguafo was an elderly sibling to Amankwaa the legendary hunter. Eguafo was a popular marketing center for all kinds of traders, especially those who dealt in precious minerals, food stuffs and animal products. Eguafo and Edina share the same appellations '*botweku asankoma kantakranka abrokyere panyin*' for Eguafo and '*botweku asankoma kantakranka abrokyere kaakara*' for Edina. This establishes both towns as being prototypes of Western Europe, a place where Europeans traded most.

Nana Kwamina Ansa IV reiterated that forebearer, Nana Kwamina Ansa I, the first King of Edina was actually the King of Eguafo who also had territorial jurisdiction over Edina due to the relationship that existed between Tekye and Amankwaa. He is the very King who negotiated for the right and benefit of his indigines. In effect Eguafo was said to have dominance over Edina and that expansion quest for power gave Edina its sovereignty, and emphasized that the meal (communion) required for the pacification of the Benya deity is prepared by the chief and people of Eguafo, and that the first catch from the Benya lagoon is given to the deity of Eguafo as appreciation.

Kwamina Ansah, King of Edina during the Portuguese Emissary was the accredited sixth ruler in succession from the founder Kwaa Amankwaa. It is conclusive that Edina people were established on the coast prior to the arrival of the Fante emigrants. Years of isolation could not negate the affinity between the people of Asante and Edina, a relationship which later developed into the Afro-European trade and was cemented by mutual alliance. It was customary for exchange of visits of peoples or representatives of the Asante and Edina thereof to be arranged on their festive occasions. The claim that Edina existed as an organized town at the beginning of the Christian era may be dismissed as



fantasy, although it may be within the province of probability that the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians who were reputed to have explored the West African coast centuries before Christ might have reached its shores and found the locality inhabited, but certainly not by the ancestors of the Anomansafo.

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## THE EDINAMAN'S CONSTITUTION AND CIVIC AUTHORITY

Local governance in the Edina traditional town is conventional in character and constitutes civic cohesion. Local governance, also democratic in structure, has from ancient times followed elementary principles for its successful management. Wartenberg in his submission stated that:

the Edina constitution provides for the *Ohen* (now *Omanhen*) under an elective Monarchial system, as the representative paramount head in whom is vested the Executive and Administrative power. The power originally derived from *Ebusua Mpanyinfo*, and was by mutual consent, delegated to an elected head who eventually became the *Ohen*. His Executive authority was not Autocratic but was qualified by his having to consult the principal head of the *Ebusua*. The Legislative power was vested in the *Oman* (state) that is the people or their representative. The exercise of the rights and privileges of the *Omanhen* is made sacred by the Oath of allegiance taken at his installation and the obligation which binds the hands of the counselors of the states.

Wartenberg also said that:

the officers of the Edina town were composed of the *Kyeame* or spokesman (originally a hereditary office as the mouthpieces between the *Ohen* and the *Oman*). The *Bensuonfo* or *Apamfo* were the seven accredited counselors recognized as personal advisors to the *Ohen* in peace and war. They were normally selected from Rich and Influential classes of the community and were acknowledged as the Fiancées to the *Oman*. *Gyasehen*; was the head of the *Ohen*'s household, *Twafohen*; the head of the Advanced Guard, *Nimfahen* and *Benkumhen*, heads



of the right and left flanks respectively 'Kyidomhen' head of the rear guards. These generally formed the inner circle of the Executive Council of the *Oman*.

Recent development has introduced lots of innovations and certain conventions where some of the successive chiefs had appointed their personal friends, influential financiers and confidants into offices such as Besoumfo, afutufo and others.

Nana Kwuku Awotwe affirmed that:

the *Amanfo* were the personal attendants on the *Ohen*. They included *Abrafo* and *Edumfo* (town executioners), *Esen* (courtiers), *Epitsifo* (Storemen), *suemfo* (palanquin bearers), *Esuonfo* (head state drummers). They were conspicuous by their bulrush hats-emblems of their office and authority and cooperated in the organization and performance of the regal customary rites and acted in state ceremonials. The *Tufuhen* is head of the *Etufu* (infantry). *Besuonfo*, *Supifo*, and other important officers in the state formed the Legislative. The *Ohen* virtually the president but derived his legal authority from this body. His assent to Legislation was given on the advice of the *Besuonfo* and conveyed by *Dawur* (gong gong) to the community by the *Anamfo*.

Nana Kwuku Awotwe confirmed that:

the *Odikuronfo* of the neighbouring villages in order of importance were co-opted in case of emergency. *Be Enya Komfo* (temple priest) was the spiritual mouthpiece of the tutelary deity and the *Oman*. He was assisted in his office by *Akomfo* of Lower degree. *Supifo* were the accredited representative heads of the *Asafo* who jointly and severally had an elected head; *KUW ESUONHEN*, otherwise known as *Tufohen*. The *Tufohen* is a man of responsibility and affluence, commanding respect and reverence from all sections of the community. He relinquishes, on his installation, as Head of the *Asafo*, personal interest in the *Asafo* he belongs. He may be selected from any *Asafo* Company.

Annan-Prah also added that:

Edina is probably the only traditional area that has absolute democratic principle. The totality of the community elects

to confirm a nominee by the *Enyampafo*. Edina practice total separation of state power; Executive, Legislature and Judicial and that the Paramount Chief has no absolute power over the indigenes except through the able leadership of the *Supifo*, divisional chiefs and other appointed members.

The following towns and villages neighbouring Edina compose the Edina traditional area; Semew, Kanka (Dutch Komenda) Ampenye, BrenuAkyinem, Esaaman, Ankwanda, Ataabaadze, Bantoma, Sanka, Amoanda, Kofor, Iture, Bronyibima, Nkontrodo, Amisano, Abee Ewusam, Atrankwa (Atonkwa), Abena, Dwira Akyinem, Nsadwer, Peki, Teterkesem, Mboforaba Akyenem, Ntraanoa, and Ahomtsew. Their chiefs and Odikurofo help in the administration of the Edina traditional area. The Chiefs or accredited representatives from the villages constituted the Edina traditional council, which also sits as village courts and which was later vested the right of Legislation. The Edina Omanhen is the president of the Edina traditional Council. During the reign of the Dutch in Edina, the Akrampafo (Dutch descendants) were recognized as superior and independent class from the indigenes. They formed the Appellate Court and were empowered by the Dutch as sole arbiters in the indigenous administration centers set-up by the Dutch Government. In the jurisdiction of these courts they were considered “Ultra-Vires” so far as indigenous Laws were concerned. They exercised authority over a castle which was generally termed ‘*Bibinyi Kawer*’ (mulatto) and their decision was not subject to appeal.

## EDINAMAN NTAM (TRADITIONAL OATHS)

Oaths (*Ntam*) may be defined as a solemn attestation of an irreverent or careless use of sacred words or names. It is the solemn customary legal impregnation sworn or invoked on a person or bodies of persons to the contrary of a scandalous accusation or allegation. *Oman Ntam* recalled a catastrophe in the history of the Oman. *Asafo Ntam* recalls an incident disastrous in their organization or on warfare and crises. The day on which the incident originally occurred was deified and sacred in local history. The swearing or invocation of an *Ntam* (oath) was not effective unless the indictment was challenged by the person on whom it was sworn or invoked (*obodo*). When this was done, both persons would be arrested by any individual standing by, and taken to the *Ahenfie* or '*Asafo Esewdo*' as '*Daduafo*'. If the matter or issue was otherwise reported by a third party, the Oman or Supi ordered the arrest. The arrest fee (*Apasabode* or *Daduasika*) would be paid by the swearer. A day is fixed for the hearing and the persons concerned arranged or arraigned before the adjudication. The swearing or invocation of *Ntam* involved a severe penalty on the defaulter. *Ntam* sworn on individuals outside Edina was reported home by a representative who received disposal instructions or they would by the order of the Oman or Supi, be required to proceed home for investigation. Ebusua *Ntam* was investigated by the principal heads of the Ebusua (Clans).

There are four (4) major Oman *Ntam* (oaths) recognized in Edina.

1. Buakuma: Edina Man Hyew-1852 or the Event Conflagration (in which the greater part of the town was raged to the ground as a result of an accidental fire from a dwelling house and in which several persons lost their lives).
2. Edina Benada: Fante Federation Invasion of Edina on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May

1868

3. Edina Man Bo: The Bombardment of Edina by the English on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1873.

4. Kobena Egyan Nsu Enyiwa: The deportation of King Kobena Egyan on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1873 by the English Administration.

Wartemberg mentions that it is possible some *Ntam* were in usage prior to these dates, and that other *Ntam* have lost their significance with the passage of time. An *Ntam* when invoked goes to affect the Omanhen's *Nsam Afona*; that is the sword by which the Omanhen rules.

#### **EDINA EBUSUA (CLAN)**

Edina is accredited with four principal Ebusua groups. These groups which were sub divided into seven are said to have originally been inaugurated by the seven daughters of Ekuwa Akon of Timbuktu prior to the disintegration of Timbuktu and immigration of the Akan speaking peoples to their present location. The individual clans had a distinctive totem and bore certain characteristics symbolized by an animal. These clans were responsible for maintenance of indigines institutions and communal obligation in their respective domains in the conduct of funerals and the liquidation of the funerals expenses of deceased members and others. These unique clans have strong fellowship in social matters, and their activities have been handed down from one generation to another.

#### **EBUSUA (CLANS)**



<b>EBUSUA (CLAN)</b>	<b>TOTEM (EMBLEM)</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>
Nsona	Crow – Akonkra	Cunning or witty
Anona	Fox Oso	Patience and Fortitude
Twidan or Aburutu	Parrot – Ekoo or Ewiruo	Strength and Leadership
Akwona	Twi	Pioneering and
Ebiradze	Ram } Eko	Inquisitiveness
Ntwea	Buffalo	Certify
Adwenadze	Dog } Otwea	Vigilance
Efinafo or Aborade	Bodom	Vision or Foresight
	Fish – Adwen	Dexterity or Pomposity
	Dabo	
	Plantain – Boredze	

Nana Awotwe Kweku and Wartemberg recount that the last three of the Edina Ebusua have certainly lost their importance. They are no more in existence. They may probably have been absorbed into the existing clans with whom they bear affinity. As the dynamic social structures, the Ebusua system is the formidable cohesion that binds the integral department of the Edina

community together. Social and economic pressure diversity of circumstance has weakened the vital elements of the Ebusua system and has forced disintegration of certain units. The introduction of several benevolent societies in recent times has also called for the inertia of these great clans. The merger of the various clans of the Ebusua into stronger units makes it possible to generate appreciable funds for relief or payment of *Esiedze* as contribution to funeral expenses.

### **EDINAMAN AND INHERITANCE**

The inheritance in the Edina *Asafo* and Edina royal household have remained conservatively patrilineal for centuries, but as a whole the Edina people practice the matrilineal system. It is undemocratic for a heir to the Edina Omanhen's stool to be selected from maternal line. It is customary to install the Omanhen together with his stool wife (*Abosomyer*), one who is specially chosen by the Edina *Abosom* (deities) and engaged by the *Oman* (traditional area). The male issues from this union, or the male grand children are the acknowledge heirs apparent to the stool.

The nomination of an Omanhen to Edina is the privilege of the Enyampa *Asafo* and restricted to the *Nsona or Anona Ebusua* to the exclusion of the Twidan or Ebiradze clan, which according to the traditional narrative, was the clan from which Kings were originally selected. This opportunity was lost to these clans as a result of a treacherous act of a nephew who was involved in a connivance to assassinate the King. The law of succession by nephews was then abrogated, in favour of sons. In recent past there have been attempts to change the constitution to revert to the original practice under the pretext that instability has marked the administration of the ruling rank from the patrilineal

succession. This has facilitated the act of destoolment, chaos and death among the royal class. An attempt at reversing this process has seen resistance.

## **EDINA FESTIVALS:**

### **ELECTION AND INSTALLATION OF EDINA OMANHEN**

Traditional ceremonial rites of electing and installing, the *Omanhen* of Edina has persisted but with little shift. In recent years there has been a different approach in the ceremony, which has made irregular the installation and invalidated the process for admiration, and traditionally could not be recognized.

The personality of the *Omanhen* is seen sacred by virtue of his office as the paramount chief (head) of the traditional area and the power vested in him by the seventy-seven deities and ancestors of Edina. The prefix ‘*Nana*’ by which he is designated is an official title which commands respect and reverence from his people while the paraphernalia or emblems of the traditional area which consist of the ancient stool, state umbrella, palanquin, sword, staff (ves) bulrush hat, Batakari, state jewels and others are the acknowledge symbols of his stately, royal office and dignity. The authority he exercise is made sacred by the reciprocal covenant in the oath of Loyalty which is administered to and taken by him at his installation and the allegiance and homage paid to him by the *Amanfo* in the name of the Edinaman and its people. The ‘*Omanhen* never dies’ Wartemberg attest to this statement which is explained by the fact that ‘the *Oman Kyeame* (state spokesman) or the *Tufuhen* who is the civil head acts in his stead when he pass away’

After the interment of the corpse of the Omanhen, the Amanfo would make contact with the Enyampa *Asafo* No.7 Company in their consultative capacity as they approved election of a successor. All possible opportunities are subjugated in the nomination and selection of a suitable candidate from any of the privilege royal lineage. The lineage from which the successor is chosen is made to pay the customary fee '*sorkahyir*' to the *Asafo*, the candidate is recommended to and presented before the *Tufuhen* and *Supifo* (*Asafo* superiors) for election to office as *Omanhen*. The *Oman* gives ratification to the election. Arrangements for the new *Omanhen*'s confinements would then be effected and preparation for his installation proceeds.

The *Amanfo* are exclusively in charge during the confinement for the maintenance, convenience and comfort of the newly voted Omanhen, enquiries into his moral conduct were prosecuted and any act of immorality probed, into before his installation.

Nana Kweku Awotwe recounts that, adultery and theft constituted grave moral defect, and of course imprisonment or a criminal charge negates his dignity and invalidated the election. Contentment for any questionable demeanor as may be condemned or appeased is the responsibility of the *Amanfo*; enquiries would then close and a day appointed for the installation of the new *Omanhen*. Preparation for the installation stretches between a period of three to thirteen weeks. Notice is sent to the community through the gonggong beater as to the date of the installation. The installation ceremony starts before dawn. The newly elected Omanhen would first be conducted through these sacred pools in *Bantoma*, *Nkonduamu* and *Atradamu*. These were originally quarry sites where stones were blasted for the construction of building during the Portuguese and Dutch settlements. The Omanhen took his bath there and was cleansed



according to custom by *Nkonduafo* (members of the royal household). He was dressed and adorned with jewellery and beads of his regal office (*Bota, Atobow, Ntweaban, Nsakormadze, Abownkaba*); he was decorated with sandals and head gear tied on his brow. The rites were concluded by the placing of the bulrush hat on his head and a garland of mistletoe, *Mpapan, Nyanya* was placed around his neck. At the rise of the sun, the *Omanhen* was led by members of the royal household and eulogists with arm drums to Dapatam where the *Asafo* and people would have gathered in mass before dawn, then the sacred oaths of office is here administered.

Wartemberg confirms these traditional fact and goes on to say that the *Brafo* or state executioner placed the state sword in the *Omanhen*'s hand and an acclamation made which was responded to by an exiting ovation from the crowd, the *Brafo* paid homage of respect and promised allegiance and immediate service, at beck and call to promote a successful administration. The *Omanhen* rose with a sword in hand moved a pace or two suitably, replied and invoked in the following terms:

*Twerampon Kwame, Asase Efua, Bosompo! nde den e, Nda Yaw'*, meaning; Dependable God, Mother Earth, The sea. Today is Thursday. By the power now vested in me by Almighty God, and the seventy-seven *Abosom* of Edina, I succeed this day to the stool of my ancestors, it is mine by succession, and no power dare arrest it from me. I declare that I am ever ready to answer the call of my people by night and day if not I violate the solemn oath taken this day. For protection, jurisdiction and wisdom, I seek to rule with patience, love and justice without fear or favour and may the shrine (*Abosom*) help me.

Wartemberg made a further submission that the *Omanhen* would then be conducted into the *Ntona Buw* where the statue of St. Anthony, a Portuguese relic had been elevated as a shrine. The religious ceremony was concluded by

the *Komfo* (priest) who was attended by a few privileges sect. The crowd moved from Dapatam and gathered within precinct of the *Ntona Buw*. The *Asafo*, equipped with their relics, war trophies, fiddles, horns bugle and others are in readiness for the processional march. The state drums; *Mpintsim*, *Mbombaa*, *Apreade*, *Kokogyina* accompanied by *Nkontwefo* (horn blowers) played a dignified part while each *Asafo* was led by their standard and talking drums guarded by a squad of *Etufu* by which the *kyerema* exchanged greetings. The *Omanhen* came out of the *Ntona Buw* and stepped directly into the palanquin; he was mounted and presented the second time to the populace who acclaimed him as the *Omanhen*. The volume of shouts of joy and felicity from the crowds could better be imagined than described. At about 10 O'clock am, the procession was led to *Akyekuna Du*, (Abrafo) *Abrempon* and chiefs of the stated. The *Omanhen* escorted by his body guards, *Enyampa Asafo* No.7 Company, winded his way from Bantoma through Edina town amid multi coloured scenes of inexplicable joy and beauty in an ecstasy beyond description. Women waving handkerchiefs, flapping their cloths and stretching them on the ground for the *Omanhen's* palanquin to pass over, while *Nkondurafo*, *Mbaahemba* and *Mbaanananom* having daubed their necks, arms, and breast with white clay, as a symbol of eminence, struck the *mpa* and sing together 'Yeye Abosm mba, Wonka hen, Yeye Abosom mba wonka hen'; meaning we are children of the shrines and non dare trespass over our liberty, with impunity.

The *Amanfo* who are conspicuous in their rush hats, the brafo and the sword and staff bearers encompassed the *Omanhen* while a section of the *Asafo* guards and populace concluded the precession. At every nook and groove recognized as the abode of a deity, the procession broke to pour libations, two

fresh eggs were dropped and *Eto* (Yam mashed in palm oil) was sprinkled around. At the marble stone memorial, the *Asafo* winded their way to Tetermu to await the regal party, which had proceeded to Sybil for libation and rejoined the procession at Tetermu. About two O'clock in the afternoon, the ceremony reached a climax at Tetermu where volley of gunshots were fired during the display of *Asafo* exercises. The procession then moved to Aminsano. The *Omanhen* descended the palanquin and was held in a stooping position. Invocation followed and the procession continued as the ceremony further developed before '*Efie Enyikwa*'; A huge rock in this locality where three crabs of largel size believed to be the 'messengers' appears. The deity would be observed; they either moved or receded to the holes at the approach of the regal procession. This scene is known as '*Kotosua*'. The *Omanhen* approached reverently, took off his sandals while incantation resounded and remained barefooted until the libation closed. The ceremony was rounded off at the next stage '*Ekyiraba*' immediately before the '*Domo Buw*' where the *Omanhen* was seated with his feet resting on the turtle shell. This signified that the installation was completed. The *Amanfo* and people would acclaim for the third time, the right time and lawful *Omanhen*. About four O'clock, the formal oaths of Loyalty to the *Oman* were administered to the taken by *Omanhen* after which the crowd despaired, and the *Omanhen* retired to the *Ahenfie* with the retinue. On the day appointed, the *Tufuhen*, *Supifo*, *Asafohenfo*, *Asafo*, *Odikrofo*, and other chiefs reassembled at *Buw Enyim* or a prepared place in the town for the purpose of paying homage and taking oath of allegiance to the *Omanhen*. This closed the ancient installation ceremony; the omission of any of its essential elements as set out made it irregular or invalid.



Both Kwamina Essilfie and Nana Kweku Awotwe attested to the above submissions but reiterated that certain changes might have occurred as a result of modernization, acculturation or the neglect of certain ancient practices. The culture of the Edina people might have been impacted upon by Western taste, Christianity and other Akan cultures.

Nana Kweku Awotwe mentioned that in recent times, the Omanhen enters the stool room on the 8<sup>th</sup> day after the installation, barefooted with a sheep, which he holds for oblation. The stool which was considered as sacred was not actually sat upon but the Omanhen was lightly set on it three times. It is now customary for the Omanhen to attend sacred service at all the churches, each sunday after his installation. The oath taking by the Omanhen was in every particular revoked when his destoolment was inevitable. Proven charge against his person and office of which he had been guilty and regarded as breaches of constitutional law and discipline such acts as are derogatory to his dignity or exalted position, examples are unlawful departure, irregularity in the exercise of his regal functions or authority, drunkenness, traveling or going out unaccompanied, incurring liabilities for which the Oman disclaimed responsibility, disrespect to *Amanfo*, *Asafo Supifo* or Counselors, the desecration of an oath are violations of his pledge, and disciplinary actions would proceed against him after three consecutive warnings had been conveyed to him, through the Enyampa *Asafo* without the desired effect.

Kwamina Essilfie inferred that in any eventuality, customary law demands public trial (if offer for mediation by the *Abusua* fail or pacification was rejected by the Oman. The *Omanhen*, would be suspended from exercising the duties of his office and would be summoned to appear before the *Akyekum Du* and Oman now state council of chiefs etc) to answer charges preferred. If



found guilty and destoolment seemed inevitable, the paraphernalia and other emblems of the state would be demanded, administered oaths revoked and the Omanhen publicly destooled by incantation and drumming of *Kyereboa*, the ancient enstoolment or destoolment song, while the populace declaimed his administration in wild terms.

Asmah, approved of Nana Kweku Awotwe, Kwamina Essilfie and Wartemberg's account on "the installation of the Edina Omanhen but stated that in recent times due to litigation and disapproval by some sections of the *Supifo* and the *Amanfo*, the elected *Omanhen* is at times rushed through the process just to see the event go through. He mentioned that as a result of such division, section of the *Oman* officials especially those opposed to the rulling *Omanhen* may institute legal procedures to get him removed".<sup>80</sup> In recent times, Edina has been saddled with numerous destoolment problems which has lead to ciaos and death.

#### **PROCESS OF CONFINEMENT OF EDINA OMANHEN (AN ELECTED)**

1. The *Omanhen* elect is brought to Edina and seated at the front of the groove (*Domo Buw Enyim*) after the necessary customary rites have been concluded at Bantoma by the Enyampa No. 7 *Asafo* Company.
2. The Ankobia No.1 and Abese No. 5 *Asafo* Companies act as spokesmen for the ten (10) *Asafo* Companies. They open the function by enquiring from the No. 7 Company, the purpose of their meeting. Based on a suitable respond by the Enyampa No. 7 *Asafo* group, the entire *Asafo* Companies provide the Omanhen elect with a stool name and hand him over to the *Supifo* of No. 1 and No. 5 *Asafo* Companies and they sing the 'Obo nda Esuon'.

3. The Supi of Abesi No. 5 *Asafo* places the Omanhen elect three times on the lap of the Supi of Ankobea No. 1 *Asafo*.
4. The Supi of Ankobea No. 1 *Asafo* introduces the Omanhen elect to the other nine (9) *Asafo* Companies who acclaim him Omanhen by singing the 'Nkyereboa'.
5. The Supi of No. 1 *Asafo* introduces the Omanhen elect to the Divisional Chiefs, sub-Chiefs and Stool holders who acclaim him by singing '*Akumpra Bosom*'.
6. The Supi of No. 1 *Asafo* introduces the Omanhen to the *Adamfo* (priest and priestesses) who also acclaim him Omanhen by singing 'Benya' the great deity of Edina.
7. He then introduces him to the stool Ekofo (fishing folks) who acclaim him *Omanhen* by singing 'Nana Buranta Kesse'.
8. Finally he introduces him to the stool functionaries (*Mbaahembrafo* and *Amanfo*) who acclaim him by singing "*Bosom Kondua*" and he is then ushered into the '*Domo Buw*' grove where the final customary rites are completed, when he is brought out of the grove his personal linguist is appointed by the No. 7 *Asafo*.
9. Important personalities are offered the opportunity to make optional Speeches.
10. The stool functionaries deliver him to the traditional town for confinement and the whole assembly sings the '*Kyereboa*' to bring the function to an end.

**BE ENYA DAY – (BENYA BAKATUE).**

To the people of Edina, Tuesday marks their most historical and important day in their calendar. This is the sacred day dedicated to the tutelary deity '*Be Enya*'. It also commemorate the founding day of the Edina traditional town. This day is observed as a day of rest. Tuesday recalled the day of Edina's engagements with the hostile Fante towns, particularly the Edina-Fante war, which was fought on Tuesday 26 May 1886.

Nana Kweku Awotwe recounts that:

this is the day of great rejoicing in connection with the festival known also as the celebration of the '*Be Enya* Lagoon' and synchronized with the opening harvest and the admission of new crops into the markets. "*Be Enya* day falls on the last Tuesday of the month of June or the first Tuesday of the month of July of each year.

The Edina Be Enya Festival draws home a large member of indigenes of Edina and spectators and dignified people from far and near the town, Edina, to join in the celebration with all the drama. The Be Enya Festival has three main significance, and these are; social, moral and religious. The Festival is commonly known as *Bakatuei*. Wartemberg reiterated that

*Bakatuei* is contradictory in its literal meaning that is:

the opening of the Lagoon' and it appeared as puzzle to many in view of the obvious fact that unlike a stagnant Lagoon which was dug and open out by artificial means when inundated, *Be Enya* Lagoon naturally flowed into the sea. The name *Be Enya* as the Lagoon is called, and as suggested elsewhere was originally identified as the '*Annwew*' Stream. The Lagoon is veritably an arm of the sea and at high tide it seems the sea runs three miles inland to '*Annwerdo*' which is supposed to be the source of '*Be Enya*'. It can be conveniently crossed without the means of canoe. Its bed having silted and become shallow with time, the depth being less than three fathoms at high tide '*Bakatuei*' therefore is only ironically applied and no implements are necessary or employed to affect the opening. The ceremonial rites for the observance of the festival covered a period of six weeks, twenty-one day preparation and twenty-one days' ceremony.



Wartemberg recounts that:

the observation begins with proclamation prohibiting net fishing in the Lagoon during the said period. The *Oman* (township) ordered widows to cleansing rites and purification. The Ankobea *Asafo* whose emblem is the key, which is symbolic, takes the initiative in this important ceremony in the procession to the 'BeEnya' River where they present the bullock to the Amanfo processing the libation. The bullock is offered as a sacrifice to the shrine and slaughtered the following day. Be Enya's sacred password would be communicated and responded to during the libation – '*Dagadu! Nsaaben ?*'

The response being '*Yeye BeEnya mba Hen ara Nkawko*' meaning: Comrades! How do we stand ?, we are *BeEnya*'s Children, pure blooded, there is no stranger amongst us 'the *Aketsewata* arm drum would then be rolled out for the feast of the deities (aboom) to take place. This is known as "*Koroba Bu tuoo*" overturn of the wooden platter (one of the vessels) in the Domo (*BeEnya*) *Buw*'. The ceremony is revoked on the sixth Monday by the Akyemfo (No. 2) *Asafo* whose Emblem is Eagle (*Korpon*). The preliminaries for the observance of the festival then re-opened. Proclamation by '*Dawur*' (gong-gong) forbade the lying-in-state of the dead which must be buried the same day before dusk, wailings, funeral obsequies drumming and all social enjoyment during the period were prescribed as act sacrilege involving [severe fixes]. Fresh herrings or crops would be forbidden in the market. Gross offences of individuals against the moral code during the year and questionable amusement were brought to book, while deeds of gallantry of the ancestors were rehearsed in incantations.

Wartemberg recounts that the moral significance of the festival is often reflected by the vulgarity of the public demonstrations in certain particulars, example *Sosogye* and singing of bold songs led by young fisher-folks with firebrands or torches in irregular procession on the beach each evening for seven days and the retaliation or garnished by women folks with *Mpapan* on the eight day. The reason for this is that immoral offences of the individuals are indirectly offences against the state as a whole and the people have the right to condemn them, and a time they could do so with impunity. The practice which now



appears crude should in the light of experience be depreciated. On each of the three Monday nights preceding the festival, *Akomfo* and the people would assemble before the *Domo Buw* to see the *Akom* play. Oracles would be consulted at this stage, admonition offence for the benefit of individual or society while animal sacrifices would be offered for such appeasement as was believed to be directed by the *Abosom* (shrines).

These exercises culminate the sixth Tuesday when the rites reached a climax.

The celebration takes place in the afternoon proceeded by a feast of several *Akomfo* who invoked the seventy-seven *Abosom* of Edina for health, strength and tranquility during the coming year. The pleasure of the deities is supposed to be made known by indicating certain herbs or plants of magnetic properties.

These are collected and mixed into a portion in the wooden bowl (puesi),

‘eto’ and boiled eggs set aside for the seventy-seven deities. At 4.00p.m the regal procession comprising *Akomfo*, *Asafo*, *Supifo*, Chiefs and other dignitaries in palanquins, *Eguafohene* and *Jukwa* (Denkyera) hene supposed to be present or were represented and the *Omanhene* starts from the ‘*Domo Buw*’ under state umbrellas to the ancient spot on the banks of River Benya (lagoon). Citizens and spectators gather and line up the bank to watch the regal procession in bright attire, costly garment and decorations of all sorts.

Asmah stated that schematics may be going on while a display of sailing boats on the Lagoon and unnumbered fishing canoes and fishermen ready with their nets await the *Omanhene*’s signal. It is really a beautiful sight. The regal procession arrives at ‘*Tutuano*’ where the ceremonies are concluded about 5.30 p.m. The *Omanhen* in the palanquin watches the *Omanfo* perform the rites representing figuratively the drawing of fish from the Lagoon, a short invocation and libation follow the potion obtained in the wooden bowl together

with the swept crumbs of the feast are cast into the Lagoon followed by the first and second cast of the Omanhen's net which was often drawn full with fish. The third throw was followed by three successive gunshots then all net are thrown simultaneously into the Lagoon. The haul of fish is often overwhelming; the interesting part of the occasion is the sensation and delight of the spectators as they watch fish escaping the nets frantically leaping from the lagoon into canoes and vice versa. The rolling of the 'Aketsewata' signifying the lagoon open for general fishing is the prerogative of the Akyemfo No. 2 Asafo. Many groups engaged in Ampe competition, skipping and other social amusements. Diverse feasting and enjoyments follow, dinner parties, ball dancing and pastimes are indulged in. Traditional sacred feast days are observed including yam festivals. New crops are admitted to the markets and harvest increase the joy and felicitation of the Edina people. The celebration continues for seven day and finally closes. *'Nsu Kese bi a otoi, woadan Bosompo, Be Enya aye o! Be Enya aye o! Obi annko o, Obi ammba o, Nana BeEnya oye o! ye aye'*. The effect from above is that the lagoon "Be Enya" yields fish at anytime whether there is scarcity or not.

### **EDINA BRONYA (NEW YEAR)**

The second most significant and important day in the calendar of the Edina people is Thursday. Traditionally this is the day on which the celebrations of the New Year open. It is also a day on which religious and civic ceremonies such as remembering of ancestors and installation of the Omanhen and others are usually held. Wartemberg alludes that:

*Edina Bronya* is observed on the First Thursday of January of each year and is generally observed as '*Nsagu Da*' (libation day), heralded by the firing of guns at early dawn in every quarter of the town. It is the day of remembrance of all souls departed from the earthly life; the dead are therefore commemorated and invoked in an assembly of members of the *Ebusua* (clans), particularly those connected with the ancient stools. They gather together in the ancestral homes, even if in ruins, where the libation and sacrifices take place. For this purpose, non-resident citizens in other towns rush home during that week. The traditional ceremonies preceding the observance of the festival excluded the exhibition of the '*Akete-Kete*' war drum of the Fantes captured by the Alatabamfo Asafo in a public demonstration, a fortnight prior to the celebration, in commemoration of the victory over the Fantes in the 1868 war. On Wednesday, the New Year's Eve, a company of the *Enyampa* (No. 7) Asafo assemble on the south side of the Lagoon '*BeEnya*' the standard bearer dashes into the Lagoon and entrusts their ensign. Several one shots in succession follow each demonstration. This is thrice repeated with the display of three different ensigns. '*Odumnakoma Kyerem*' sends the greetings of the New Year in drum language to the Nine Asafo companies on the north side, wishing them a happy new year – *Afrenhyia pa, Afrenhyia pa, Afe nko mbotohen*. This greeting is repeated to the general community and declares the celebration of the New Year open.

Nana Kweku Awotwe approved of Wartemberg's submission but was quick to mention that:

it was mandatory for indigenes of Edina, both far and near as much as convene at home to join in the jubilation and customary rites at the home of the *Ebusua Panyin* and to pour libation to the dead for their guidance and protection. He inferred that though Christians were granted exemption by their families according to their discretion, some family leaders insist that they partake in the pouring of the libation particularly when such persons have had their fathers joined their ancestors. And that is the day on which friends, and relatives, neighbours and strangers exchange visits and or ate from common pot. Presents are distributed, reciprocal greetings offered and general amusements take place in the whole family structure. That is the period of family reunion and gathering.



The Edina people regard death as a transition or gateway to spiritual existence, a process which is believed to be performed in the spiritual world the same profession or vocation in which they were before their translation into the spiritual world. The unseen are supposed to be in sympathy with the suffering of the living, and also affect the needs and the life of the living with material forms and divine creations. The unseen are believed to make contact with the living occasionally in obscure appearance. Death is classified in three brackets by the Edina tradition as: natural, spiritual and accidental thus; homicides or suicides. Deaths, through the second and third categories were known as ‘*Atofo*’ and libation for these spirits was poured on Friday and Sunday. Due to the unusual nature of their transition, these spirits were believed to haunt about homes, consequently inmates were often frightened until certain customary rites were performed to put a stop to their psychical activities. After the performance of the rites connected with the festival the jubilation continues for seven days and finally closes. Adenkum and Adowa Dances feature very prominently in these celebrations.

## RELIGION

The thesis enquires into Edina’s contact with the Europeans (the French, Portuguese, Dutch and British), and their impact on the religious activities of the Edina people as well as their *Asafo* culture. Kweku Awortwe and Asmah attests that the ancient past of the people of Edina saw a heavy reliance on the Traditional African Religion, a practice which was generally believed to be founded on faith in the Almighty God their creator and fear. It may be true to some extent, since the basis for all religion is the fear of the supernatural. The



researcher therefore confirms the subject of religious beliefs and that of the large majority of the indigenous indigenes of Edinaman.

Traditional African Religion may be described as Spirit Worship basically set under three categories:

- (i) Belief in *Abosom* which are deities are supposed to have their abode in a grove, river, rock and other objects. Their activities are not only confined to their spirits capable of possessing human beings but they indicate their pleasure through a medium known as *Okomfo* or *Komfo*.
- (ii) *Esuman*: Spirits possessed objects of worship set privately in home by individuals for protection or warding of evil spirits or forces. Magical objects such as talisman, charms, amulets and others constitute this category.
- (iii) *Asaman*: These are spirits of the departed that are revered by the living. They may be the spirits of the founders of the town or ancestors of the community. These spirits have their several taboos, invocations, libation and sacrifices which are supposed to be means of rousing their spiritual activities.

The African has the utmost belief and knowledge in the existence of a Supreme Being and universal forces that have been endowed with natural prowess to act as intermediaries between man and the Almighty God, who is the most powerful. These shrines, who are invisible spirits, could be invoked in the service of man. The Edina people believe in the mystical world, and that the spiritual powers that exist in images of the deities could work to their advantage. Tradition has established that the spirit of the ancestors and soul of some Kings professed certain extraordinary experience which made them worthy of reverence and worship. This situation evicted diseases and calamities which

might be bestowed the indigenes. These spiritual powers could be associated with that of the Supreme Being. The Edina people had absolute believe in the existence of the cosmic universe as well as the true existence of the Almighty God and man. This belief established of the true being of the Creator and the created as the partners of the existence of the universe. Mans' quest for the spiritual development of his being and the recognition of His Creator made possible the attempt at manifesting the true appreciation of God as his Creator. Man's existence within the natural powers of this universe is possible for him to seek for protection and survival. It is no wonder the indigenes of Edina inclined to their mode of spirituality and religiosity. Wartemberg inferred that:

since the power in nature is identical with the power of God by which alone all things happen and are determined, it follows that whatsoever man, as part of nature provides himself with to aid and preserve his existence, or whatsoever nature affords him without his help is given solely by divine powers.

This traditional belief has been handed down to generations who have worshipped the deities of their ancestors.

The theme Fetishism, which is generally labelled as the natural religion of the people of Africa, is derived from the Portuguese word 'Feitico' which means toy or dolly. It was originally applied to the ancestral worship from the analogy drawn from the explanation given by the priest who accompanied the Portuguese Emissary to Edina. Wartemberg also said:

in the act of worship and thanksgiving to God for the protection of their lives from the perils of the journey, the King and assembled crowd watching the ceremonies were naturally curious about the form of worship. The Priest, in reply to an enquiry explained that they were worshipping and adoring God and 'in the Monstrance was his hidden presence'. It was the Feitico. The indigenes drew the

inference that the objective of their ancestral worship relatively bore a similar significance and represented the worship of the spirits within and not the blind allegiance to the objects themselves.

It is significant that Sao Jorge d'Elmina was the first place on the West Coast of Africa where the seed of the Christian Church (Roman Catholic) was sown. Converts were made and a Chapel was built for indigenes Christians as they grew in numbers. With the evacuation of the Portuguese, began the deterioration of the veneration until it sank into idolatry. The symbolic meaning of the statues was host; the Chapels were identified with the '*Domo Buw*' in which the '*komfo*' (priest) was confined and onto which the *Abosom* were supposed to descend on festive occasions. The statue of St. Anthony was said to be possessed by a deity '*Ntona*' and served by a priest. It was placed under the care of '*Santa Mariafo*' (St. Mary's band), a priest craft sect also known as '*Asofo*' (priest) who wore a long white gown. Candles were lighted on the death of a member of the '*Asofo*' and the soul was believed to ascend into heaven. Miraculous powers were ascribed to '*Ntona*'. Whereas the relics was represented by a priest, no other priest who was possessed could approach the precincts of '*Ntona*'s' shrine or he was supposed to be instantly dispossessed and which indicated that all other deities were subordinate to '*Ntona*'. Its festival was celebrated annually prior to that of Be Enya, during which the statue was, according to custom, taken out and cleaned; the water used for cleaning was disposal of in the night with ceremony, by a carrier with whom no person may come into contact and for this reason '*Dawur*' (gong-gong) warned the public. The carrier sprinkled the water at the important points in the act of cleansing the town or warding of evil powers. The festival was known as '*Kotobun kese*'. A signal of three guns announced the close of rites.

It is indicative that the presence of the Europeans on the West coast of Africa had a strong downward influence on the indigenous religion of the Edina people. The worship of the Almighty God by the indigenes was purely through minor spirits and deities of the land who were greatly revered by their followers. The introduction of Christian worship sunk into traditional religion and blended with the ancestor veneration. Confession and offertory for offences against the moral codes such as adultery, infidelity, incest, promiscuity, and difficulty in child birth, infertility, chronic diseases, greed, and others were necessary components of the Christian worship. It can be conjectured how the worship of the true God was carried out.

Kwamina Essilfie said:

the people of Edina were so deeply rooted in their traditional beliefs and religion that they remained unshakeable as their faith grew. Although traditional religion in Edina created the belief in witchcraft and superstition, witchcraft among most Edina people it is revealing that the educated elites perceived witchcraft to be a delusion, as it cannot be scientifically approved. The mysteries surrounding witchcraft have so far remained uncertain.

It is evident that medical science revealed that a greater proportion of the infantile mortality rate in the Edina town is ascribed to sorcery. It is however possible that there is something about witchcraft cult which is unintelligible to the ordinary man. Belief in psychic phenomena makes the traditionalist prosecute enquiring at local séance, through a medium, into the unseen world, to ascertain the whys and wherefores of diseases, which baffle medical skill or any extraordinary experience. Generally speaking, illiteracy which predominates, and predisposes superstitious beliefs, constitutes one of the real problems of the township. Witchcraft assumed an opposing role to the introduction of Christianity.



The Akans and notably the people of Edina, however, have an exalted idea of God, and to whom they give the supreme reverence. The indigenes call Him *Onyame* – ‘He who made me’, *Onyamkapon* – the Great Friend, epithets of this divine attributes are *Otumfuo* – Almighty, *Onngiewu* – eternal, *Odomakoma Boadzi* – giver of grace and creator of all substance, *Omaa Ewiana Nsu*; giver of sunshine and rain. The people of Edina acknowledge Gods omnipresence and maintain that Gods’ Great Being dwells in the highest heavens beyond human comprehension, and that the people of Edina are conscious of His universal existence. The people of Edina believe that man is incapable of obtaining any direct communication from Him, except the knowledge of His existence through nature and experience. The formal incantation *Twerampon Kwame*, *Asase Efuwa*, *Bosompo*, refers to the three deities and means Dependable or Unfading God whose day is Saturday, Mother Earth-Friday and the Sea goddess. Wartemberg reiterated that, if it were possible to convert the Edina indigenes to the Christian religion, the Roman Catholic would succeed better than we should, because they already agree in several particulars.

The religious inclination of the indigenes may be summed up that, man is essentially a spiritual being and that Akans and Fantes fundamentally, are religious persons. The fact stands that the introduction of western civilization, and probably, the infusion of secular education and Christianity on the indigenes, brought to bare the spirit of free mindedness and individualism on the part of the indigenes. This led to the freedom of thought and association among the indigenes. Spiritual development among the indigenes assumed prominence as it was realized that the Christian values and influences of modernity on matters relating to indigenous custom were incompatible.

Christianity downplayed on the indigenous religion of the Edina people and managed to associate it with fetishism, idol worshipping and backwardness. The indigenous religion of the indigenees stands as tall as modern religion in the Edina community although Christianity dominates.

## EDUCATION

Concerning the traditional educational system of the Edina people, Wartemberg recounts that the needs of the indigenous in the past were restricted by the limitation of their resources and lack of opportunity. Indigenes were however conscious that the preservation of their physical and moral existence depended on some vocation. Mother Earth was ever ready to yield her increase as the farmer tilled the soil and sowed the seed, the porter moulded clay into the needed receptacle for the home, the smith manufactured tools by process of smelting and smithing, the fisherman was accompanied by the children who shared his experience in the most interesting vocation of fishing and learnt from observation of constellations some of which were named *Mpanpena*, *Fiadoo*, *Aberwa na ba*. Statecraft was identified with the Oman or Ebusua stools. Statesmen and would be counselor went through their course instruction by sitting and studying procedure of arbitration in court until they obtained levels of degrees of knowledge. Lessons on moral and social welfare in the confines of the society formed a system of instruction which was adopted from generation to generation. Certainly, training of state officials and the initiants of the land were made to carry out to high degree of efficiency.

Traditionally, the youth of Edina took lessons of morality, skills acquisition and general upkeep of oneself from their parents and senior members of the society. Transfer of knowledge and skills were handed over

from generation to generation. Although secular education were not in place, apprenticeship through association with the elderly and also the following of the foot steps of older generation made it possible for skills and technology transfer. The society took care of the upbringing of the youth through the organization of initiation programmes, telling of stories and folklore. Edina had the propensity of turning its youth into active and responsible indigenes, and this has kept the technology and science of their ancestors till date.

The advent of the European secular education saw the Portuguese offer scholarship to twelve indiginous boys for training and education in Lisbon Portugal. This initiative was alleged to be the start of the human trade in Africa. The period of the deepening of formal secular education in the Gold Coast is associated to the period of the Dutch Administration in the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Fort St. George, which was an industrial centre and a military depot, was said to have attached a school for the instruction of the Akrampa or mulatto children of the European. The system of education adopted by the colonial Officials was to lay a ban on the full-blooded indigenes of Edina. This principle existed beyond a century of experiment and made it possible for the Dutch descendants to stamp their privilege and advantage over the indigenes.

Wartemberg further stated that the early period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Dutch improved on the method of education. The Dutch Government appointed Mr. and Mrs. De Mils as school Master and Mistress respectively of the Akrampa school and financially assisted the well-to-do classes of the community (Akrapafo) by taking the the people of Edina to Holland for higher education and technical training. “Education for all” became a slogan and a reality. The educational system like that of today was literary rather than vocational and technical. This was due to the demand for clerical support rather

than a drive toward industrialization. Agriculture was clearly silent from the curriculum. It is evident that the political, educational and social development that came along the life of the indigenes in the past was through the guidance of the Akrampa element in all the important towns of the country. More schools were established through the influence of some Akrampa *Asafo*. Standard of Education eventually became improved in Edina.

Annan-Prah agreed with Wartenberg and went on to say that two centuries beyond the European presence primary school and girls convent were opened as free instruction institutions. A number of pupils were registered; some of these were attracted by aesthetic consideration of the form of Catholic Worship. Female education gained much recognition during this period. A teacher training college and a seminary for training Catholic priests was established at Afrabose-Eminisano. Through a petition to this Lordship Bishop Francis Ignatius Hummel and the effort of Mr. Brookman Ammisah, St. Augustine College was open in 1936 on the Edina Cape Coast road by the Catholic Mission. This school accommodated the training college at Emisano. While, the Wesleyan Mission now Methodist Church maintained mixed school, the Catholic Mission kept the Boys school and the convent. In order to cut down the influence of the traditional religion of the indigenes, convents of the Christian Missions were baptized and renamed after Christians and Europeans. Kofi became Coufie or Feeson, Okra – Ocran, Bosom – Godfrey, Kum - Koomson, Wer – Wilson, Kuntu – Blankson, with the prefix of a Christian name. Western education could not be divorced from the Christian religion. Sectarian prides in religious traditions were strictly adhered to. The indigenes appreciated the strength in unity of purpose and recognized the value of Christian education. They realized that all Christians pray to and



acknowledge one source of divine revelation. Christ becomes the centre of faith and God became the Almighty. In spite of the strong dogma which the missions enforced on the people of Edina, the traditional religion and practices still prevail and some converts of the Christian faith might have practiced both religions – Christianity and traditional religion to the later.

It is revealing that the influence of Christian and secular education in Ghana today is hinged on the early association of Edina and her European partners, through whom the light of western modernization and urbanization was brought to the shores of Gold Coast. Although the traditional educational systems have worked so perfectly and effectively to the expectation of the indigenes, the infusion of the western education with the indigenes culture has worked to the best of all intent.

### **EUROPEAN ADVENTURE AND EDINA**

The Europeans contact with the West Coast of Africa South of Sahara was as a result of the Carthaginian and the Phoenicians adventure to “the dark” world from which they managed to stamp their authority over their exploits in knowledge believed to have been concealed by God to mankind. This adventure made it real for different races to know each other. The Carthaginian and the Phoenicians were assumed to be the patrons to the silent trade system that existed between the indigenes and their European friends. Kwamina Essilfie recounts of a situation where their forefather traded their Aggrey beads (bola), pearls, salt and gold for European items. The barter trade adopted by these partners promoted the abundant Gold dust of the indigenes.

This practice created wealth among the indigenes as it also championed the European sedge unto the West Coast of Africa. Gold dust later became the

medium of exchange for European goods until recent times when coins and notes were introduced. This exchange might have facilitated the strong taste for European goods and fashion by the locals and the European constant supply of their interest in Africa. Annan-Prah through Wartemberg established that:

Fort Bastion de France was built as seat of trade. Records sets it that, the French spent about thirty years as the premier settlers of the West Coast of Africa. They settled in Edina from 1383 to 1413. The 15<sup>th</sup> century realized the presence of the Portuguese on the Coast of Edina as the Gold processing centre. Juan de Santaran and Pedro d'Escobra made their sail of discovery between 1469-70 during the reign of Alfonso V. They anchored first in Axim and employed to Edina and other districts. But for thy light skin colour the indigenes perceived they are Angels from God, Heaven and Surface of the Sea; hence the derivation 'Borenyi – arrived from the surface of a sbea and Borekyir – arrived from Europe, now contracted to Borenyi – whiteman and Aboroekyir-Europe-home of the whiteman.

Wartemberg reiterated that:

as the Portuguese encouraged merchants to adventure the West Coast of Africa for gold trade, they also signed a treaty of Commerce with the indigenes. The name Edina is a derivation of a Portugal language 'Oro de la Mina – centre of the gold producing belt and busy maritime traffic. Therefore *del Mina or la Mina* contracted to Edina – the mines. January 1482 saw the leadership of Don Diego d'Azambuja alongside with 600 workmen of all classes and twelve ships full of stores and building material to negotiate settlement on the shore of Edina. Though Portuguese trade had existed decades before, Juan Bernado, a Portuguese trader acted as intermediary between the indigenous King Nana Kwamina Ansa and the King of Portugal.

A historic spot which received the Nana Kwamena Ansa and the Portuguese group later became known as 'Buja Pata Ase' literally "under the d'Azambuja shed". This spot, after the bombardment of Edina, was transferred to a new site and renamed Assembly of No. 2 Asafo – Akyemfo Esewdo. Upon dialogue and persuasion the area covered by the rock 'kokobo' was, by

document, transferred to the King of Portugal for their mission, being building of church, stores, landing for cargo, landing of ships and putting up of strong military resistance for invaders. A fort, Sao Jorge d'Elmina was raised on the kokobo rock. 1486 saw the King of Portugal, Joao II, raise Edina to the dignity of a city. Edina experienced the anchor of the vessel of the great Spanish explorer – Christopher Columbus. He is alleged to have been part of Don Diego d'Azambuja's first trip to Edina and the laying of the foundation stone of the Fort. Edina was the first among the West Coast to experience vocational and technical skills from Portuguese. Bread baking, dressmaking, carpentry, masonry and sculpturing were exposed to them. The indigenes were quick at learning these and other trades such as stone craft and other skilled handicraft from the Portuguese. Both Nana Kweku Awortwe and Wartemberg spoke of the two memorial stone sculptures of King Kwamena Ansa and the wife that were carved and placed in the Fort. And that these sculptures which are known as '*IKum*' exhibited the ingenuity and skill of the indigenes expressed in the traditional Euphorism '*Edina Botwe Eku*'

*'Asamankoma Katakranka, Aborekyir kaakra, eye hu a nnkɔ, ekɔ soa nnmba'* with its interpretation being, '*Edina Botwe eku*' Edina ingenious stone cutters (Sculptors) a reference to their skills in handicraft. The euphony is likened to the expression – '*Botwitwi kɔ*'; swift to rush; that indicate their alertness and fearless actions and bravery that are unique of the Edina indigenes.

Wartemberg further mentioned that Asamankoma the greatest General of Edina was originally one of the famous Wassaw Chiefs who after an unsuccessful attempt at obtaining independence escaped the risk of been executed and sought refuge at Edina. He organized the famous Edina army and



became an instructor of the *Asafo* or indigenes military tactics. He won the appellation '*Katakranka*' which means unwieldy. *Aborekyir kaakra* mean little Europe is in allusion to the numerous Europeans in Edina and the presence of their structures of exquisite designs. It is on record that the Dutch at a time constructed over 1200 stone building in Edina. It is even alleged that at the time the Dutch were leaving the shores of Gold Coast, over 400 stone buildings of permanent residence have been put up. Till date Edina can only boast of less than 30 of such permanent structures. *Eye hu a nnkɔ, ekɔ soa mmba*; this is expression used to show a hostile town, in which cowards dread to enter but return no more due to contrary expectation. Europeans were treated with such liberal hospitality that made them stay in Edina forever. Edina could also mean, "the city of ingenious stone cutters, the home of strong and tough – Asamankoma, the little Europe (Holland) which the cowards shrink to enter and which the daring on entering no longer desires to return. Good relationship existed between the Portuguese and the ndigenes. Gold trade moved to its peak and indigenes became more prosperous. These successes prompted trade rivalry between the European competitors in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Dutch accentuated a better trade opportunities to the Locals inspite of the difficulties in gold mining operations and its persistent fluctuation in market values and prices.

Wartemberg and Kwamina Essilfie reiterated that the Dutch finally won the patronage of the indigenes of Edina after managing to oust the Portuguese. Arms and ammunitions formed part of the Dutch merchandise. Upon the fall of the Portuguese administration, the Portuguese Governor passed a sarcastic statement on the Edina army as they abandoned their masters. This is referred to as the natural characteristics of the Edina man, Edina '*Nkɔnkɔnsa*'.



One can not tell whether '*Nkɔnkɔnsa*' is a Portuguese word. This in Edina dialects means treachery. It was a sign of lack of guarantee and breaches of political freedom on the part of the Portuguese. It is notable that this famous phrase '*Edina de Nkɔnkɔnsa*' is actually an inscription on the frontal tablet of the tower of Fort Sao Jorge. It is a memorial to the Brazilian Governor who led the conquest rather than a reflection of the people of Edina toward the Portuguese.

Of the 150 years of occupancy by the Portuguese, development of the gold trade, building and strengthening Forts and the introduction of industry rose to her highest. Although the political freedom, guaranteed to the indigenes, was undisturbed in the first hundred years of occupation, it received a check in the decades leading to their evacuation. The numerous Portuguese Forts dotted on the coast were enlarged and renamed during the Dutch occupation. These include Christianborg – Accra, Sao Sebastian – Shama, Sao Anthony – Axim, St. Jago – Edina.

Upon the evacuation of the Portuguese, the expatriation of the Portuguese garrison and the surrender of the Fortress of "Sao Jorge", the cultural traces of the Portuguese faded off the minds of the indigenes of Edina. In some respect the Portuguese traces still linger on in the following; Fetish (shrine), Palaver (problem), "*Krataa*" (paper), "*asopatser*" (Sandals or shoes), "*Piccin*" (baby), "*abrobe*" (pineapple) and others form part of the speech of the people of Edina. What probably survived may be described as elements of their religious forms of which the people blended with beliefs in ancestral veneration, deities, other spirits and eventually traditional customs.

## EDINA AND ASANTE FRIENDSHIP

The people of the Edina traditional area are believed to have migrated from the Ghana Empire through the Northern part of the modern day Ghana and then settled at Tekyiman. Tekyiman was then Kingdom from which the Asante Kingdom emerged. The people of Edina later moved down to settle around Bantama a greater settler's area of the former Asante state. The deep interaction and intermarriage between the people of Edina and Asante strengthened their relationship into one unified force hence the support for one another. The people of Edina later moved southward to the costal land of the central region of Ghana then Gold Coast west of Cape Coast. The strong relationship between the people of Edina and people of Asante perhaps developed because they were from one single root or may be cousins or possibly in-laws, wives or husbands. It is not strange that they share similar names such as Amankwa, Ameyaw, Kwabena, and others. They have a similar dialect or language pattern. May be reasons could be assigned to the name of suburbs in Edina such as Bantama and also *Asafo* and Fante Newtown in Kumasi. The latter settlements were predominately Fante speaking people. This may be due to the fact that the Fante or preferably the people of Edina were the first to be introduced to Western education, therefore their proficiency in English Language and Clerical support service as well as methods of merchandising were needed in Kumasi.

The superiority of the Edinafo on vocational and technical skills may be another factor that might have cemented the relationship between these two former great states. It is presumable that these led to the introduction of certain skills like catering, dressmaking, carpentry and others. Mention can be made of the establishment of Mancells Vocational school in Kentenkrono, Kumasi, a

school which the king of Asante – Prempeh I offered a piece of land for. Grammar schools were also dotted in certain locality of Asante to facilitate the learning of clerical skills that were needed for the development of Asante as well as the running of the machinery of the Colonial Administration. Mr. Henry Plange alias Atta Pobe an Edina indigine was made an Ambassador of Asante after the transfer of flag; Dutch to British power overcharge. Mr. Hendrik Vroom also assumed the position of the District Commissioner responsible for the Asante expedition.

Edina's contact with the Asante's and the trace of their umbilical cord to the then Asante kingdom made the king and people of the Asante find it expedient falling on their cousins (Edinafo) who happen to be the first point of contact of the Europeans to provide certain military expertise and materials. The indigenes military wing of the Portuguese might have acquired a high standard of military training. These quasi-military groups laid bare to the Asante their expertise and acted as a rapid machinery for the run over of the Fante states during the Asante-Fante wars of which the peoples of Edina were viewed as traitors to the other Fante towns. Edina provided the Asante with gun powders, guns and other ammunitions as well as military tactics and information that did a lot to make the Asante powerful. The purpose of the Asante in waging these wars on the Fantes was to obtain direct trading link with the Dutch and other Europeans who were living in the Castles built along the coast. These socio-military institutions '*Asafo*', played a formidable role in the history of the Edina people. In the then Asante Kingdom the Chief of *Asafo* a suburb in Kumasi was accepted to be the Chief warrior of the Asante Military Company.

Asante Military Companies are not numbered into units neither do they have military headquarters and edifices associated with them.

## **EDINA ASAFO COMPANIES:**

### **BACKGROUND HISTORY AND FUNCTIONS**

Nana Kweku Awortwe mentioned that long before the Europeans visited the Coast of Guinea, Edina *Asafo* Companies existed as socio-military and political organizations. Although, a survey of the history of its earliest member and process of development throughout those centuries is an obvious difficulty, tradition has however presented for its generation unpublished accounts of this quasi-military organization, its contact with the Asante state and the Western civilization as far as the European settlement on the West Coast of Africa is concerned.

*Asafo*, as the word means is a militant institution established for sociopolitical and military responsibilities of the Edina traditional area. The much less patriotism and heroism of the Edina people remained an indelible treasure and constituted the priceless heritage of its citizens. Having served as reluctant host to European designed trading and slave forts and the garrisons that staffed them, the Edina *Asafo* military organization absorbed and adopted European ideas, motifs and techniques into her artistic culture. Unlike the Akan Kinship which is matrilineal, the *Asafo* membership is patrilineal and the groups are egalitarian even though they have leaders – Commanders, Captains and other officers. All able men and women were enlisted into their fathers' *Asafo* Company. As a result of the numerous ethnic wars that took place along the



coast of Africa, all able men and women of Edina were originally organized into a comprehensive military force. They received some aid from their European masters. These *Asafo* Companies were for the defense of the civic interest of the Edina traditional area and the Europeans as well. The Dutch and the subsequent rulers of Edina provided these *Asafo* Companies with military training and war tactics and these were sometimes employed for the promotion of the slave trade and the search for Gold and other minerals, adventure and exploitations. It is believed that the concept of *Asafo* organization originated from Asebu whence it was introduced to Edina by Oberimba Asem, a war legend. It was established that initially all the able men and women were grouped into a single force known as Wombir. Wombir was ordained to be the guardians of the right of the Edina traditional area. Members of the premier group were regrouped into several units according to their paternal lineage, localities and purpose.

The Edina *Asafo* Companies are as follows.

COMPANY NUMBER	COMPANY NAME
1	Ankobia
2	Akyem
3	Akyem Nkodwo
4	Wombir
5	Abese
6	Alataman

- 7 Enyampa
- 8 Brofo Nkowa
- 9 Mawore
- 10 Akrampa

The Akrampafo unit was formed at a later date as a group that represented the mulatto descendants of the white settlers. They were not actually *Asafo* inclined but home guards to their European lineage. Individual strength of the groups except that of the Akrampafo was beyond 1500. But today, the numerical strength of the individual Companies have dwindled considerably. Each Company owns certain exclusive colours, motifs, flags, costumes, musical instruments and other insignia. In addition, some of the Companies have Company Posts (*Pusuban*), Company Poles (*Posuban*), others have Flag Poles whilst some do not have any of these mentioned objects. The *Asafo Posuban* serves as the headquarters of the unit that has them.

Kwamina Essilfie reiterated that:

Dutch Administration witnessed annual military rendezvous that displayed the various art forms, martial skills and drama that was brought to bear by these groups. The drill also known as '*Esun*' was used to test the strength and equipment superiority of these military units. The mastering of these group skills and individual capacity is always sensational and trilling.

Young men were under strict obligation to enlist in the units to which their fathers belong. To encourage female participation, active women faithfuls who influenced the community positively especially in civic and financial responsibilities were raised into the rank of Captains in their own spheres. *Asafo*

Companies of the Fante tradition of which that of Edina take inspiration has the number seven as its maximum numerical strength. The *Asafo* system of Edina rather has a non-Fante characteristic feature. They have ten Companies in number. Seven reigns superior in the Edina social organization, in that, the last three units are creations of European presences and needs. Hence, de Graft Johnson's suggestion that *the Fante proverb which epitomize the significance of seven runs thus; 'Esuon n'ekyir nnyi ba'*. Meaning offshoots that emerge beyond the number seven are not duly recognized.

The *Asafo* of Edina proves quite controversial on the issue of the Number Seven for their state. Some Supifo in Edina *Asafo* confirm the number seven as the actual total number of *Asafo* Companies associated with Edina people, and that the last three companies are deemed as unorthodox splinter group. Brown referring to the Benya Bakatuei stated that:

Edina people celebrants their *Asafo* groups in seven. And that there were only seven *Asafo* in Edina in those days but in modern time three *Asafo* have been added due to the presence of the Europeans and their influence and activities.

These three latter units, Brown affirms have strictly speaking no constitutional status in *Asafo* system. Undoubtedly, the *Asafo* organization has an influence for good in a disciplined community. As trustees of the state they are organized to take over civic duties such as sanitation, street, road and path making, policing duties, transport improvement and others as their share of the responsibilities devoted to the efficient and effective organization of the traditional area. Members see to the organization of the funeral of their members and other prominent persons. In addition birth, marriage and death ceremonies

are certain honourable celebrations due its members and their dependants. Again *Asafo* groups may be consulted by individuals and groups to perform other services. The units see to the raising up and down of dais, chairs and canopies for certain programmes and also see to the keeping of order and sanity of the people. Political responsibility is another important role played by these units. They see to the summoning of members to undertake social, communal and civic responsibilities of their town. Security of the town lies solely on the shoulders of the various groups as they swore an oath to defend the town and the flag of their Company from seizure, capture and abuse by other *Asafo* groups in and outside the Edina traditional area. The *Asafo* see to the enstoolment and destoolment of Edina Omanhen. They keep track of the genealogies of the royal families and help choose the right heir to the stool when vacancy occurs. *Asafo* groups are responsible for the confinement of elected Omanhen and make public the date of installation of a new Omanhen. They are the kingmakers as well as the political watchdogs and pressure groups of the town.

Historically, the *Asafo* Companies and their art forms are the repositories of the events of the past and present of the Edinaman. Flags, drums, poles, architectural forms, sculptures and other regalia have comprised a favoured form of presenting knowledge to the present and future generation. The documentaries and recordings of Edina's events and achievements were done mostly through the flags and Company Posts. Example is the story of the founding of the Edina town that has been incorporated in one of the Post of the Wombir *Asafo* group. Evidence that can be found from these Posts includes their relationship with the Europeans, victory over other Fante towns and alliance with the Asantes.



Spiritually, the well being of Edinaman rested on the efforts of the deities, ancestors, *Akomfo* (priests) and other *Asafo* spiritual leaders. These *Asafo* spiritual forces had several taboos that needed to be observed: invocations, libations and sacrifices are made to appease and arouse the spiritual potency of the supernatural and universal forces. Mental and attitudinal discipline is sought through the belief in these forces as their disregard may cause hell on its members and the community.

Medically, members are fortified through charms, herbs, body arts, mascots and others. Libations and sacrifices are made to the *Abosom* (deities), *Asaman* (ghosts) and other spirits and souls to reward members with good health, strength and long life. Vigorous dance, martial dance, song performance, body movement and other *Asafo* activities help to exercise the body therefore making the people healthy. Heavy reliance on religious and physical fitness frees the soul and body of their members from the fear of spells and evil.

Education: the *Asafo* Companies and their Posts as well as the numerous *Asafo* flags, drums, badges, staves, hats, costume and other regalia convey to the present generation the values, purposes, aspirations and achievements of the past and immediate generation. The youth, with their energetic strength were taught military skills and defence for the protection of the township. Ethical and moral knowledge are not untouched. Vocational and technical skills are offered to the members. These help the Companies in the execution of the Posts and other works since skills such as carpentry, masonry, sculpturing, painting, tailoring and dressmaking are brought to the youth with less hindrance. Singing,

dancing and drama amidst martial skills are taught the youth of the various Companies.

Economic: The performances of the dance, drama, and song at funerals, marriages and other social functions for a fee for both members and non-member go a long way to create economic power for members and the Companies. Since most of the members have vocational or technical skills, they are able to produce certain products that grant them some income for their personal use or that of the Companies.

Entertainment: a typical flag dancing sequence, a brief martial dance, singing, drumming and dancing amidst other skirmishes thrill audiences with lots of amusement to the satisfaction of their members and the townsmen.

The greatest importance of these *Asafo* Companies to the people of Edina is that it fosters a strong unity among them and also influences them to embark on socio-cultural activities that go a long way to develop the Edina community.

Politically it makes the people prepared psychologically and physically to protect and defend their town. These, if not done would have created separation or division that might make Edina weak and be conquered by her enemies.

Although most of the *Asafo* activities remain quite unpublished, their visual presentation through the company posts and other art forms make it possible for one to derive facts from them. These posts have made, their history for the present and future generation.

Since the *Asafo* groups provided most of the social services, it made development of infrastructure quite rapid, for labour was virtually free or cheap. Therefore the absence of these groups would have slowed down their social, educational, medical, economic and political advancement. It is indeed true that Edina *Asafo* Companies and their philosophies were traditionally based on unity and development.

### **EDINA ASAFO COMPANIES AND EUROPEAN INFLUENCE**

The periods of European occupancy - French, Portugal, Dutch and the British respectively on the West Coast of Africa, marked the introduction of varied Bills, Instruments and institutions which helped advanced their achievement in the exploratory venture in Edina.

The *Asafo* Companies of Edina which originally played a sociopolitical role in the life of the indigines gradually caught the eyes of the European Administrators. Edina *Asafo* is a military unit they used to have a run their military exploits over the Europeans whose motive was to take procession of the indigines lands. Also the *Asafo* acted as an instrument used to extend the tent of the Europeans to cover other coastal towns and those of the hinterlands (inland town such as the Asante traditional area. The *Asafo* Companies of Edina had appertained to the moral and social welfare of their surroundings and had therefore formed a system of instruction which was adopted from generation to generation. In order to control the trade in gold and slaves, the Europeans engaged the *Asafo* Companies to fight on their behalf or alongside against both local and foreign troops that stood as rivals in their adventure.

It is not deemed, unlikely, that the Portuguese established any course of instruction for the indigenes but it is on record that the Portuguese took some Edina male indigenes to Portugal for education and training of which it is alleged that some of them were offered military training to help sharpen and strengthen the skills of the *Asafo* companies. The engagement of the indigenous soldiers as auxiliary to their European friends emerged in the sixteenth century the re-juvenated force that had the purpose of protecting and defending the Edinaman and the interest of the Europeans. Within the eighteenth century a military depot was established in Fort George in which was attached an instructional medium to fashion the military skills of the indiginous military unit to be used as a run over machinery over European rivals.

In spite of the fact that the Edina *Asafo* companies are not inclined to garrison system of housing its members, numerous conflicts within the individual groups encouraged them to group and stay in '*Brono*' of the Edina township. Instead, some of the companies maintained *Posuban* which acted as their headquarters and also as meeting places for the co-ordination of the company's affairs. The *Posuban*, originally a fenced tree, later assumed a clay structure with thatch roof which was typical of the Fante building. Nana Kweku Awortwe stated that by the close of the nineteenth century the individual *Posuban* of the Edina traditional area had assumed the form of the European Forts and Castles that stood on the Coast. He went on to say that the Europeans sponsored their reconstruction by offering the indigenes materials and expertise for concrete and sandcrete construction. This was otherwise awkward to their traditional methods. The *Posuban* included architectural features like towers, arches, poles, canons, guns and others. All these were fashioned in cement and



sandcrete. One cannot deny the indigines of the figurative humor and the incorporation of human and animal characteristics in their architectural setting. On the other hand the inclusion of the European figures suggests the interaction with them and perhaps the influence it had over the *Asafo* institution.

These *Posuban* were either raised in single or multistory structures. The introduction of gay or colourful oil and emulsion paints on these buildings confirms the degree of the European influence on them. The indigines before the arrival of the European were noted for the preponderant use of natural chemical paints. These were known to be limited hue and scheme. Aluminum and Asbestos roofing sheets were used to roof these Posts.

Another form of European influence on the Edina *Asafo* Companies is the introduction of uniforms for the various units. This was an innovation that was picked from the garrison military men who were clothed in specific apparel. This made them recognizable and very colorful since every individual unit had its own prescribed colour(s) and style. These perhaps may be suitable for ceremonial reasons. It is largely accepted that indigenous warriors had their own way of identifying themselves and their enemies. Uniformity in dress code was archived through apparel, and body painting.

Perhaps the most astonishing of all the influences of the Europeans on the *Asafo* Companies is the use of the insignia and other instruments of office that might have been obtained through their participation in colonial wars and their position or achievement in military endeavors. Badges, belts, staves, bells, hats and masks are some of the military items that were put on display by the *Asafo* members. These were adopted by the indigines from the European friends.

Principles and practices of Western military organization such as organization of parades, checking of men on role, marching on parade grounds and along the principal streets, singing and chanting of war songs, military drills, hosting and display of *Asafo* flags were some of the innovations of the *Asafo* Companies.

In addition *Asafo* Companies coined some of the European titles for their use. Notable is the title Supi – which means a superior officer or Army General for the European Soldier. All *Asafohenfo* were likened to Army Captains, ‘*Frankatufu*’ being Flag bearers, ‘*Tufu*’ being expert shooters, sword bearers and many other listless leaders were adopted by the indigines.

The members of the *Asafo* Companies, like all military institutions, swore to protect and defend the flag of their state and Company. *Asafo* flags are jealously guarded by its members since a capture of ones flag denotes a complete fall and defeat of that company. The symbols and imagery portrayed in these flags show the history, culture and strength of the individual units. These flags employ the technique of appliqué, embroidery, painting and simple drawings on fabrics.

The hoisting of flag establishes the presence of a particular *Asafo* unit. It is no wonder that some of the Edina *Asafo* Companies who have no Posts maintain flag poles that are used to host their existence. Hoisting of flags goes along with that of drumming and sounding of rattles. Nana Kweku Awortwe said that the preponderance use of the *Asafo* flags takes its origin from the Europeans during the seventeenth century. The adaptation and reinvention of these flags were moved to a new purpose such as dance, display and parades during festivals.

The Dutch constituted the institution of an elective Finance board vested in some of the *Supifo* and other influential members of the elected community, who were responsible for the drawing up of the annual estimates of income and expenditure, and the control of state finance generally. Revenue deposited in the Bank and cheque drawn for expenditure as required by the '*Fotossanyi*' (treasurer) and countersigned by the Omanhen or authority were all European. This was to eliminate financial mistrust among leaders and members.

The European influence on the Edina *Asafo* Companies and their activities, helped transform the indigines cultural institutions into both ceremonial and military perfection. On the other hand the Europeans helped stabilize and control lots of the inter-Company and intra Company conflicts that could have led to destruction of life and property. In effect the presence of the Europeans helped create peace and order. It is observable that the presence of the European Administrators created lots of displeasure and discomfort since they made certain attempts at rubbing out the traditions and culture of the Companies.

In effect the Europeans imposed on the *Asafo* Companies the responsibility of ensuring sanitation, policing and improving of social amenities in the township. Unity and strength of the state or town, which are the core responsibility of the *Asafo* Companies, could not be compromised.

### **EDINA IN PRESENT TIMES**

Edina '*Abroakyer Kakara*' which was once an ancient city of the Gold Coast is now the political seat of the Komenda, Edina, Eguafo, Abrim District Assembly. The offices of the District Chief Executive and his principal officers are stationed in Edina. This makes it possible for Edina to enjoy needed political

and infrastructural development required of her. As the political pivot of the District, it has attracted all kinds of human effort needed to run the political systems required of the area. It is therefore observable that the traditional zone of Edina has become populated. Fishing and fish mongering still pervades the trade of the people. Recent times have seen the signing of contract for dredging and the reconstruction of the Edina fishing harbour and cold storage facilities.

Edina has an appreciable level of health care facilities. It plays host to the District government medical facility. This facility has Medical Doctors, Pharmacist, Dispensary technicians, Laboratory technicians, Nurses and other medical professionals. Edina abounds in Private medical services that include Clinics, Pharmacy and Licensed Chemical shops as well as medical laboratory. In addition, Edina has numerous herbal and spiritual centers that provide medical attention to the people. As part of the core towns of Central Region (educational pivot), of Ghana, nothing can be taken away from Edina in terms of educational facilities. Edina has both state sponsored and private basic and secondary institutions that meet all standards. Most of these are Christian based schools. Since Edina is closer to Cape Coast the regional capital, it is in a way connected to this center of academic excellence. Moreover, the Cape Coast University is about five kilometers away from Edina. Edina is currently a multi-religious town. It has orthodox Christians, Charismatic Christians, Moslems, traditional African faith as well as those of the Asian inclination. There is percentage of the people that do not practice any faith.

Edina is one of Ghana's most treasured tourist towns. It plays host to one of the greatest slave heritage (Elmina Castle) in the country. It also has some of the cherished Forts that stand on the shores of Ghana. Edina has a long stretch



of calm ocean beach. Edina has various classes of hotels and beach resorts that range from a star to five stars. In addition, Edina has types of restaurants some of which are open air. The trunk road connecting Edina to the rest of Ghana has a first class asphalted finishing. It has its entire principal street tarred to perfection. Edina is now an icon of culture and leisure.

## CHAPTER FIVE PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### INTRODUCTION

An attempt at dissecting into African Architecture makes it difficult for one to decide as to what a mere building is and what an architectural piece is. Willet,(1971) in his contribution to African Architecture indicated that *“it is difficult to decide where mere building ends and architecture begins.”* One may deem architecture as a field in which remarkable achievements have been made in habitable design and construction technology and conceptualization. In Africa, and Edina to be precise, in recent times architecture is a subject of no more than passing a comment or desultory study at most. The people of Edina have developed and advanced in mud and stone building of basic and conceptual geometric forms in single and dual storey structures. Most of these buildings were raised on stone foundations and it was to prevent termites and other insects from penetrating the foundations of these building walls. Room furniture such as beds, chairs, stools and others were made of mud and wood. Mud houses needed constant renewal due to wear and tear of the material. Although the annual rainfall or wind storm might not be great, it had a deteriorating effect on the buildings therefore reducing their life span. An African architectural structure did not only serve as a place of human habitat but also as a place of

honouring their heroes, ancestors, shrines and documenting events. They also sought to communicate the past events to the present and the future. African architecture landmarks especially the Edina Asafo Company Posts (*Posuban*) also serves as storage point for important objects of use and shrines. It is undeniable that the people of Bamileke of Cameroon honour their ancestors by carving their images on their door poles and window frames of their buildings. Like the granaries of the Nok and the Tiv, most farm houses are used as storage facilities.

Following the long tradition of the European stay on the coast, nowadays brightly coloured enamel and emulsion paints are applied on these street furnitures and that makes them attractive and imposing as they spring up on the streets of Edina. Dogbe,(1995) recounts that:

the 1960's mark the beginning of post colonial period in Africa, especially the south of the Sahara and that it was the most exiting time for all form of art which included the visual arts. As much as possible these artists who had evolved from the colonial art experiences of up to the mid of the twentieth century began to free their African artistic mood.

These artistic works were used to express the country's identity as well as for national development. Therefore, the need for the realization, exploration and preservation of these national heritages became paramount. Indigenes resort to messages and stimulate a new way of making art that identified them with their traditions.

Political ideologies and values of emerging new African Leaders of the late 1950's and early 1960's resorted to injecting into the indigenes the sense of belongingness and inward looking to their cultural values and tenents as opposed to that of their European past. Indigenes reverted to the use of their

customary names, graphical symbols, messages and traditional fashion. Other indigenous objects of importance were put on high nationalistic dais.

Dogbe,(1995) emphasized:

the reenactment of the three major philosophical concept of Negritude, African Personality and Pan Africanism as the major tool for the affirmation of African cultural and spiritual values that revere the living heroes, the dead heroes and the maintenance of spiritual balance in the African society. This is a concept of the retrieval of African cultural essence and the need for all people of African cultural decent to benefit from the rich skills and knowledge obtained by the elite Africans of Western training.

These concepts possibly saw artists like Dr. Kobina Bucknor, Vincent Kofi, Kofi Antobam and others leading in some of these spirit state motivated initiatives all over the capital towns and cities.

With the growing interest in the contemporary *Asafo* art forms that have become evident in the post colonial Ghana, it makes it necessary and imperative for the researcher to provide a critique production on the varied processes necessary for the production of the *Asafo* Company Post of the Edina people. It is necessary to espouse on the very technological and contextuels expressions which have been labeled as the mere replicas of the Western initiatives rather than a union of cultures. These Company Posts, despite their rendition, may not be able to free themselves from the necessary traces of the semi or full elitist African style that may be a fusion of the Western proportion and African conceptualism. It is equally evident that although the works were blessed by the African touch, they were of slight deviations from classical Western ones. They were somehow naturalistic or realistic or both. Possibly, the Egyptian

significance of importance was fully employed in the sizing of important figures as to that of the ordinary faithfuls or devotees of the *Asafo* tradition. Clear examples are the figurative representations associated with those of the Akyem *Asafo* and Abese *Asafo* Company Posts. One cannot take away from the indigine sculptors their high skill of realism in the representation of their leaders and mythical heroes. The Akyem *Asafo* Company Post is a clear manifestation of the classical skills that abounds in the Indigenes. It is noticeable that in times past the African could produce very high standard realistic heads and figures, products that were synonymous with the Benin and Egyptian people.

Hassan, recounts that:

colonialism in Africa disrupted cultures rich in visual arts, religions, oral traditions, social as well as political formation. Yet despite its extensiveness, this disruption was not complete, especially, in the artistic and creative domain.

Perhaps, it may be true that the Edina's encounter with the Portuguese and the Dutch made them more complex in thoughts and deeds than were perceived previously, hence the inclusion of the European materials, styles, techniques, forms and thoughts in *Asafo* creations which made the Indigenes artists quite selective and conceptual in their presentation and creation of art forms. Christian themes, Military ornaments, Colonial Police regalia and other forms were not spared in the creation of Edina *Asafo* Company Posts. Initially, the Company Posts of the Edina people were of the raffia fence fixed around a tree. These were replaced by sandcrete cement wall built around a tree and further into a sandcrete cement wall or dais built around a wooden staff. This progressed into a single room sandcrete cement building and then to what is now seen as the magnificent super structure of the privileged *Asafo* Companies.



With all these graduations, the medicine mound of the *Asafo* groups was placed underneath these structures to assume the spiritual potency of these groups. These medicine mounds were placed where the *Asafo* leaders, members and the Companies derive their spiritual and psychological superfluity to do and undo things. These spiritual spots served as the meeting arenas of the various *Asafo* Company members as well as their recreational centres. The various *Asafo* Companies as existed in Edina had their individual spiritual centres upon which they acted in accordance with the *Asafo* traditions and norms. In addition, these spiritual spots and centers served as the shrines upon which the shrines and ancestors of the various Companies could be invoked for action of defense, protection or attack. These sites became and are still the very remarkable souls of the *Asafo* Companies of Edina. The 1960's saw a paradigm shift in the presentation of some of the *Asafo* Company Posts in Edina. From this season emerged the introduction of massive one-storey, two-storey and even multi-storey architectural edifices that had striking sculptural representation that formed parts of the embodiment. It really brought to bear the indigenes masterly handling of certain European materials, skills and technology in the rendition of the artful structures that stood for the spiritual and mythical interpretations of the various Companies. Colours as well as certain symbols of identification were heavily represented in these street monuments. As a mark of cultural documentation, the various activities of these Companies and persons of great importance were not left unmentioned as part of these indigenes identifications. Possibly, one could propose that most of these cultural landmarks of Edina were used to glorify the very leaders that existed at the periods of the construction of these Posts. Objects showing the *Asafo* dealings with the Colonial authorities that portrayed a great sense of belongingness were vividly well represented as

part of the components of the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts. These Akan monuments were not free from the usual flagpoles that served as the host to the numerous but enviable *Asafo* communicative arts that identified with the various *Asafo* Companies. These flagpoles confirm the political authority that these *Asafo* Companies wielded before, during and even after the European imposition of the imperialist power over these indigenes. The Elephants, Lions, Eagles, Horses, Snakes and other animals that they encountered and that had a great symbolic influence as such appeared as part of the figurative representation of these very Posts that stand on the street sides in Edina. These are animals that were used to express the might and power of the *Asafo* Companies. Military accoutrements like the cannon balls, guns, telescope and others could not be left unrepresented on these very monuments. In addition, some security objects like the padlock and key features prominently on some of these edifices, thus making them strictly Edina people. These are madmade power objects that were used to express their might and power. These Company Posts have verandas and balconies that provide its members a place of relaxation and for making surveillance on their enemies. It is obvious that mention be made of the wisdom and masterly presentation of the skills and knowledge of the *Asafo* or Indigenes artist who contributed to these very architectural masterpieces of the *Asafo* Companies of Edina.

Contrary to the exterior manifestation of the marriages that existed between these cultures, the inner portions of these Posts depicts a typical African philosophy of storing relics of the shrines and the dead as part of the living wealthy pocessions. In addition, the inner section makes provision for the office of the caretaker or the mouthpiece of these Company shrines and ancestors. Apartments are allotted for the storage of the Company's asserts and certain

valuable materials and objects that are of great concern to the leaders and the followers of these institutions. Spaces are reserved for certain boardroom meeting that deals with both the *Asafo* and the town's development. These same rooms periodically assume the status of the judicial centre where disputes are resolved to the best of traditions. The fact still remains that the *Asafo* Company edifices that exist today on the streets of Edina are basically of these type; i) the flags poles that belong to the majority of the *Asafo* Companies that has no massive physical structures as their point of call and contact, ii) the simple structure Post that stands in Bantoma, this Post is nothing to compare with the modern ones that belongs to the four privileged groups, iii) the third and the last types of the Company Post are the ones that have the icons of indigene architecture and art dominating them. The third type, two-storey to four-storey concrete buildings now belongs to those of the Wombirfo, Akyemfo, Abesefo and the Ankobeafo Companies and that of the Alatamanfo that is still under contruction. For the purpose of this research work, much emphasis will be place on the last group. The Post of Alatamanfo when completed would fit into this category. These Company Posts have many adopted cultural icons, art and Architecture components put into a single whole is but a indigenes initiative.

The volume of impressions, that stems to make the Company Post of Edina great, are attributed to the *Asafo* leaders within the period of their construction. They contributed immensely to their financial and morale commitment on the raising up of their *Asafo* aspirations, visions, and philosophies from the dust from which these very Posts stands today. Edina as at today can pride itself of four contemporary *Asafo* Company Posts that stretche the thoughts and imaginations of its shrines, ancestors, leaders and the members as well. These



are the Post of the Wombir No. 4 *Asafo* Company, Akyem No. 2 *Asafo* Company, the Abese No. 5 *Asafo* Company and lately the Ankobea No. 1 *Asafo* Company. With the exception of the Ankobea Company Post that is sited close to the old Edina market, the first three Posts are all positioned behind the bank of the Benya Lagon, a densely populated area known as *Esuekyir*.

Assabill, (1980) recount that:

at the time of his work, Elmina could boast of three completed modern Company Posts belonging to the Abesefo No. 5, the Wombirfo No. 4 and the Akyemfo No. 2. The Ankobeafo No. 1 has not completed their modern Company Post due to some financial constrict on that part of its members and that others namely Nkodwofo No.3, Alatabanfo No.6, Enyampafo No. 7, Broformba No.8, Mawurefo No.9, Akrampafo No.10 are those who have not been able to build for themselves any such magnificent Posuban to drum home their cultural philosophy and appreciation for their *Asafo* divas.

### **BOASE WOMBIR ASAFO NO. 4 COMPANY POST**

The Post of the Wombir *Asafo* is the first to be built in Edina. This post was put up in the year 1960 under the able leadership of Supi Kow Kane the leader of the Wombir *Asafo* group who incidentally also doubled up as the state linguist at that particular period. This Post is sited on the T-junction of the Dutch cemetery with the Banya Street a place popularly known as ‘Oboho’ Bridge. The Post which has a house registration 100A/6 is sited a few metres away from the Akyem *Asafo* Post. The Wombir Company Post is fourstorey cement–sand building that has smooth cement–sand plastering that permits the easy acceptance of emulsion and oil paints. The building has smooth planar walls that are interspaced with decorative sandcrete rectangular banisters that



constitute the walls of the verandas. Both the walls of the verandas and building have angular corners. The doors and windows of this building are made from solid wood and painted with enamel oil paint.



**Plate 1: Boase Wombir Asafo No. 4 Company Post**

The Wombir Company Post is a tier type that has a symmetric presentation. The two lower floors that is the first and the second floors have the same dimension as compared to that of the third and the fourth floor which appear much smaller. The building processes projected beams on which the slab of the veranda rests. The verandas are positioned all around the building with each on every floor and on the roof of the top floor. These provide an all around verandas on each floor. The top portion of the banister in the verandas serve as the pedestals for some of the miniature sculptures especially the mermaids, the equestrian figures, and the amphibians or alligators. The *Asafo* flagpole on which the Company's flags are hoist also stands on the top floor of the building. There exist a three step stircase that leads to the ground floor. This has pilasters that support the veranda slab of the first floor. These pilasters host to the

facemask and the replica of the “Garden of Eden” that serves as a background to the statues of Adam and Eve. Behind the building is a staircase that leads to the verandas of the floors.



Plate 2: Details of Second, Third, and Fourth, Floors

The inner portions of the Wombir Post have been allocated for certain religious, political, judicial and curative purposes. According to Egya Adasape (Safohen of Wombir No. 4 *Asafo* Company, Edina. in June 2005) the first floor has the apartment of the *Asafo* priest (Komfo) and the shrine room of the Wombir deity(s); a place where the relics of the shrines are kept for inspiration. The room of the second floor is designed specifically as the official meeting room for the *Asafo* officials and members. The third and fourth floor rooms are not that large, yet they serve the purpose of storing *Asafo* regalia, paraphernalia, armament and musical instruments. The first and the second floors have large exterior verandas upon which members do repair after an effective day's work. These verandas and that of the third floor could be used to make surveillance on suspected enemies.

Sculptured figures and objects form the major component of the

Company Post. The roof of the fourth floor apartment is decorated with an alligator mounted on a pedestal. On the front wall of this, fourth floor is a plaque. The third floor has the statues of the equestrian figures mounted on the extreme top corners of the veranda walls. This shows the picture of an out-thrown horse rider holding a signal flag in one hand and a weapon in the other. On the middle portion of the frontage of this floor stands the miniature statue of an *Asafo* 'kyrema'; divine drummer and a gong-gong beater. Coming down to the second floor one finds the mermaids statues also placed on top of the extreme corners of the verandas. In the very middle of this floor stands a male miniature *Asafo* statue with raised right hand. The bottom part of the Post, the ground floor has numerous statues and inscriptions. The inscription Boase Wombir *Asafo* No. 4 Company and the figure 1966 signifying the year of completion of the town's premier Post. The figures as arranged from left to right are the statue of the Wombir supi who reigned at the time of construction of the Post, the image of Adam and Eve and the carrier of the Wombir shrine. Behind these are the images of the *Asafo* police officers or guards of the Supi and other *Asafo* officials. On the extreme top left and top right of the banister are the effigies of an animal that looks like the antelope. These columns at the extreme background display facial mask on them. The pillar that stands in the middle just behind the statue of the Biblical figures has the representation of the Garden of Eden modeled on it. These sculptures and texts are all displayed on the frontage of the Company Post. All these form a vertical alignment with the externals of the wall of the Post. Wombir *Asafo* prides in the colour red and also white and black. The Wombir Post has reddish-pick walls and their officials are clothed in red and white apparel's.



## Cultural Significance of Wombir No. 4 *Asafo* Company Post

### Colour Symbolism

Asmah, reiterates that:

the originators of the Edina *Asafo* Companies, Wombir wielded the greatest strength, power and wisdom due to the unity and cohesion that initially existed among all men. The colour red was adopted by their fore bearers to represent their perceived might and wisdom. In the past as other group spring up they choose their individual colours to represent their Company's aspiration and character. Boase Wombir as the originators of the *Asafo* group assumed the role of the indigenous infantry; the foot soldiers of the land. The colour red symbolized their readiness and ability to fight and defend their heritage and wealth. As deadly and skillful as they were, during the Edina-Fante wars that were fought in time past, they won for them the fierce and bravery award. This made Wombir to adopt the colour red as their symbol and it stands till date.

Egya Adasape:

attested to these submissions by his superior and General Asmah. He stated that the colour red represented the strength and aggressive nature of Wombir *Asafo* over their enemies and opponents and that red portrayed their true nature with respect to warfare and conquest, an effort that is attributed to their twin legends.

These twin legends were directly linked with the military achievements of the Wombir *Asafo* as their magical whisk and image could awaken and multiply war soldiers respectively. Annan-Prah, recounted, "*the Wombir got their nominal role as the infantry of the Edina traditional area.*" This is signified by the statue of the colonial infantrymen, a possibility that associates the colour red with them. In the colour symbolism of Africa, red expresses bravery, warmth, dedication and strength. For an infantry unit of a town to exhibit such quality militarism over its environs the colour red certainly befits them. The statues have their skin painted dark-brown, their hair coloured black



and eyes made in white and black. The indigenes were dressed in red cloth with white and black accessories. The colours offered these sculptures were a reflection of the spicy and flamboyant colours that were on the fishing boats and canoes that stood on the shores of Edina.

### **Sculptural Symbolism**

Evidence indicates that this infantry unit of the Edina *Asafo* had a strong engagement in amphibian operation in wars fought in and around Edina. The presence of the relics of the alligator that stands on top of the Company Post states that these units had the skills of fighting both on land and in water bodies just as the alligator does over the land and water. The alligator has the camouflage character, which disguises itself to suit all environments, thus confirming the military superiority that the Wombir has had over the Fante land and water. They had warfare potency of quick action and precise striking skills among the *Asafo* groups. The alligator symbolises their strongest and harmful attacking skills in physique and chemical (poisonous) might towards their enemies. Asmah confirms the tactical potency and high military supremacy of both jungle and the plain field types that their ancestors exhibited to redeem Edina people from their advisories, who were the Fantes. The Fante States purported to take over the state of Edina as their vassal property. The statue of the alligator that stands on top of the Wombir Post today plays an important role in the history of the Wombir *Asafo*. It is on this account that the alligator is vividly represented on the top most part of the Post as one of their most revered totems. Wombir is as amphibious as the alligator.

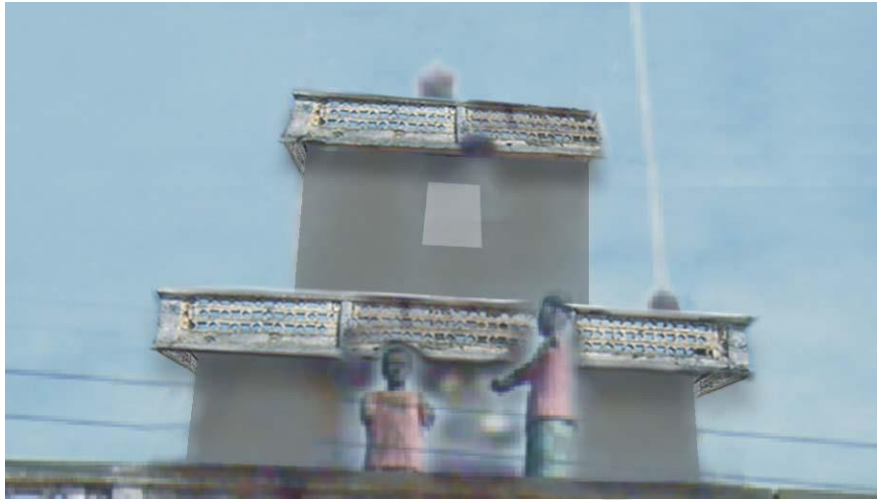


Plate 3: **Details of the Fourth Floor**

On the right side of the veranda of the forth floor stands the flagpole on which the symbol of authority of the Wombirfo *Asafo* is held. This pole like those found on the Forts and Castles of the Europeans in Edina, identifies the Wombir *Asafo* Company Post as their headquarters. The flagpole also seeks to register their Post as a seat of authority of this able infantry unit of Edina. As is done with modern military units, the flagpoles certainly communicate the flag language of the season; the grief, joy, victory and others. It has the most pleasurable communication link to its members and all the persons of Edina. The third floor displays an array of equestrian figures, Divine drummer, the gong-gong player and an *Asafo* official. The divine drummer and the gong-gong beater are modeled in a live size and in naturalistic style. The drummer is in frontal pose while the gong-gong beater is set in the profile, facing the drummer. The Divine drummer popularly called '*Okyremma*' and the gong-gong beater both represent the symbol of communication. It is through them that the various messages from the *Asafo* officials are communicated to their members and the community. The originator of the Wombir *Asafo* was a master drummer who introduced drumming and dancing as a recreational activity to the Edina town.

The statues that represent the basic activity of the Wombir group are used to honour their ancestor Egya Asem who introduced and established the Wombir Asafo group in Edina. Asmah, alluded that *“the drum is an important instrument to the Asafo Companies and that the capture of ones drum ‘Ekyen’ meant a total defeat of the Company in question”*. In this respect, it inferred that the drum signifies one of the instruments of authority that existed amongst the various instruments of the Asafo Company. Possibly, it is proper and truthful to see the ‘Okyrema’ being fixed in the centre of the frontage of the third floor. These cement statues have both emulsion and oil paint finishing. These music makers are dressed in blue shirts over red shorts, which are the colours of the Wombirfo.



**Plate 4: Details of the Third floor**

On the extreme end of the veranda of this third floor stand the equestrian figures. These figures are associated with the Wombir as the infantry warriors or the land soldiers of the Edina town. Like the Roman soldiers or Arab Raiders who used horse as the vehicle to reach their enemies so is Wombirfo. These are horse riders sitting on horses and holding signal flags and weapons. These horses are in the posture of throwing of their riders.

The horse represents the rest of the Asafo Companies in Edina whilst the riders represent the Wombirfo. Asmah stated that the Wombirfo had a proverb that



says that, '*Se Ponko a bodamaa Nurua mbodam bi*'; if the horse is crazy the riders are not, meaning if the rest of the *Asafo* Companies in Edina are crazy the Wombirfo are not. This establishes their superiority and their custodian leadership over the Edina *Asafo* culture. The equestrian figures are rendered in a naturalistic manner. They are symmetrically opposed to each other and are of the quarto live-size dimension. They have a smooth sandcrete finish with enamel oil paint coating. The riders are in red shirt over blue shorts and the horse painted off black. These are the colours of the Wombir *Asafo* Company.



**Plate 5: Details of the Second Floor**

The second floor displays the mythical mermaid statues that stands on both ends of the veranda and a statue of an *Asafo* official positioned in the middle portion of the same veranda. The statue of the *Asafo* official is in an upright standing posture with the left hand angled to the thigh whilst the right takes a salute. It is in a pink shirt and blue shorts, a type of indiginuos military uniform. This figure is positioned in a vertical alignment with the drummer and the gong-gone beater on top. It identifies the Post with the *Asafo* tradition as quasi-military institution that stands for the defense, the protection and the service to the community. This alert-ready military officer pocesses the preparedness to under take all military and policing services required of the Wombir *Asafo* as the provider of order and sanity in the community and the providers of



surveillance for the Company. This statue has a sandcrete rendition with enamel oil paint finishing. The extreme top ends of this veranda lay the mythical mermaids. They have their heads, the top of their body and hands stretching out of the Post with the tail pointing towards the Post. These mermaids are symmetrically posed to each other. As both Asmah and Egya Adasape told the history, the mermaids were marine goddesses that appeared in an unending procession to their ancestor Asem. Assabill, (1980) alludes to the fact that:

the mermaids symbolically referred to a situation where Egya Asem, the founder of the Wombir *Asafo* of Edina is known to have said that, an event of unusual long queue of mermaids moving to the land from the sea in a never ending file at Asebu a town near Cape Coast of which after a long waiting he Asem remarked, 'oh what a line' and suddenly this seemingly unending queue of mermaids came to an abrupt end, a situation which is believe was Asem's encounter with the shrines.

These mermaids are aligned vertically with the equestrian figures that are fixed to the veranda of the immediate top floor. According to Kweku Wasa, (Safohen, Wombir *Asafo* No.4 Company, Edina. in June 2005):

the mermaids are directly connected to the successes, superiority and supremacy of the Wombir in their *Asafo* deliberation and warfare. These mermaids were said to have educated Egya Asem on how to pursue the *Asafo* agenda. One cannot forget that the Wombirfo used to be the only *Asafo* group, until others were fashioned out of them. The mermaids provided this group the muchtreasured wisdom that was said to abound its ancestors and leaders.

These mermaids were the major source of thought and inspirations of the Wombir activities. The mermaids were rendered in sandcrete and finished in enamel oil paint. They were painted yellowish as Orientals or whitish as Caucasian images but with long black hair. The ground floor of this premier Post of Edina prides of numerous effigies that represent varied personalities and

characters. One is directly confronted with the famous publicity that reads ‘BOASE WOMBIR ORIGINAL *ASAFO*’. On the top left and top right of this sign post reads 31 Dec and 1966 respectively, that is the commemorative day of this premier Post. This inscription has been fixed into two vertical short pillars by which the left and right entrances of the Post are positioned. This piece is centrally placed and firmly supported beneath by five pieces of Doric style vertical banisters. This publicity piece is a cement concrete piece that has the text modeled high above the background. The background is painted white while the text is inked red.



**Plate 6: Details of the First Floor**

At the extreme top end of this veranda stands the antelope-like animal. This animal according to Asmah, is called ‘*Saakaekyir*’ and connotes a proverb which translate to mean; “*if an infant animal enters into a hole and stays long forgetting that it may develop larger horns whilst there, it makes it difficult for its return,*” hence the saying ‘had I know is always at last,’ a saying that informs the Wombirfo to pursue what is urgent and necessary immediately but not to procrastinate on issues.



**Plate 7: The Image of the Antelope-like Animal**

This animal enjoins the Wombir *Asafo* group to the wisdom of knowing what is worth doing, and doing it honourably as opposed to the dealings of other *Asafo* groupings. Behind the publicity wall is an array of Wombir officials, Medicine men and others.



**Plate 8: The Image of Supi Kow Kane**

To the extreme left stands the live-size monument of the Wombir Supi in whose reign this premier Post was built. Supi Kow Kane as he is popularly known stands upright with the left hand in Akimbo whilst the right holds a golden state sword '*Akomfena*' that points forward. He is seen wearing a red

and white '*Batakari*'; a traditional magical war apparel that identifies him as an Army General of his sort. The Akomfena that is painted yellowish or golden signifies his office of authority as the most superior official of the Wombir unit. Next to Supi Kane's statue is the effigy of Adam and Eve, a male and female Biblical images painted in pale yellow Caucasian complexion. They wear long stranded black painted hair. Like the Biblical story, these images have their genitals covered with green leaves, thus reminding us of their days of reckoning with God. These live-sized figures are placed in the centre of the front role effigies displayed on the floor. These figures symbolize the beginning of creation of man, thus likening the Wombir group to the genesis and origination of *Asafo* episode in Edina. The yellow skin of these early beings approves of the wealth, purity in wisdom and knowledge in the *Asafo* organization.



**Plate 9: The Images of Adam and Eve**

To the extreme right, just after the effigies of Adam and Eve is the statue of a virgin female figure, the carrier of the Wombir stone shrine. She holds on the head the image of the shrine with both hands. The figure is dressed in a raffia skirt that is synonymous with purity. To the Edina people, only virgins carry these *Asafo* shrines, since they possess nothing that can contaminate the spiritual



potency and efficacy of the powers of the shrines. These *Asafo* shrines are usually carried along in times of battle and they are known to protect and provide answers and solutions to problems as the *Asafo* journey along.



Plate 10: **The Carrier of Asafo Shrine**

This virgin figure has a nude upper portion with 'Nyanya' wreath placed around the neck. The body is coloured with dark brown paint. She wears short plaited hairstyle to confirm her state of adolescence or immaturity.

Behind the statue of Supi Kow Kane and the carrier of the shrines are two indigenes police officers dressed in typical European military ceremonial apparel. One of them carry's a whistle whilst the other holds a gun in the left arm. They are dressed in a red jacket over a black pair of trousers. They have a black leather belt over the red jacket. The jacket has white trimmings around the Chinese color and the overleaf of the breast pocket, a scheme that is in line with the Wombir *Asafo* Company's colours. These men are supposed to guard the Supi and other Safohenfo. Like what happens in modern day officialdom, these *Asafo* officials wield both political and military powers which do not allow them to commute alone and unguarded, since their capture, harm, or assassination by any enemy or opponent may dent the image, supremacy and

the superiority of the Company. By this reason the *Asafo* officials were to be guarded at all times. In effects, these men have special bodyguards who perform special security services such as protecting the life and welfare of the Supi and Safohenfo. This unicultural practices bridge security operations between the colonial authorities and that of the indigenous authorities. The red military jacket is a manifestation of the Wombir philosophy of colour red linked with the present day ceremonial red uniform of the army. Next to the indigenous police officers stand the effigies of the mystical twins; Atta Panyin and Atta Kaakra. These figures are of the same size. They are bare-chestered with magical brands over their lower area. Atta kaakra holds a *budua* (whisk) in his raised right arm whilst Atta Panyin has the image of their war shrine '*Atoom*' in his hand. These twins are the secrets behind the constant military success that the Wombir *Asafo* chucked during the active days of the *Asafo* episodes. The whisk was used to revive all Wombir fighters who fell in the cause of the battles. As such, the *budua* was used to awaken the dead, revive the dying and rejuvenate the weak. In effect, it kept all the *Asafo* soldiers battle going and maintained their numerical strength as they kept fighting. The war shrie "*Atoom*" had certain rituals performed for it that made the Wombir fighters stronger and powerful for all battles. It is believed that '*Atoom*' kept multiplying the men as the battle got fierce-some. These twins and their magical objects made the Wombirfo the strongest and the most fierce-some warriors along the coast. Asmah recounts that "these twins were cherished greatly by the Wombir *Asafo* and this cut the attention of the Wombirfo to fix their statue behind the living legend of that time; Supi Kow Kane and the carriers of the *Asafo* shrine".<sup>109</sup> The effigy of these twins also represents the Wombir *Asafo* members in Edina. Atta Panyin and Atta Kaakra were really

war legendary fighters of the Wombir *Asafo* Company. They also add up to the spiritual efficacy of the Company.

The spirituality of the Wombir *Asafo* could be well emphasized and depended on the presence of the effigy of the *Asafo* priest (*komfo*) which stands behind the sculptures of these twins. The '*Asafo Komfo*' is a life-size figure with an upright posture and an out stretched hand. He has a whisk in the right hand. He wears around his waist a white raffia skirt that signifies his office. *Asafo komfo* wears white apparel and has coated his or her skin with white talc or paint to approve their spiritual purity and association with the *Asafo* shrines and the ancestors as a central background support to the array of *Asafo* symbolism. The showcased *Asafo Komfo* provides the spiritual backing to the entire *Asafo* activities and adventures. He seeks for wisdom and direction from the *Asafo* shrines and ancestors as to how, when and where to pursue *Asafo* ventures and how to appease, pacify, venerate and give thanks to the *Asafo* shrines and ancestors on behalf of the *Asafo* faithfuls. This floor has three important rectangular pillars that say a lot as far as this Company Post is concerned. They stand in the middle section of the floor and are connected vertically to the slab of the second floor as supports. They are aligned horizontally to the ones attached to the building. One stands to the right the other to the left and the third in between the two. The middle one is fixed directly behind the statues of Adam and Eve. This pillar depicts a floral relief of a creeping plant, a type that goes around a support. The relief is modeled from the base of the pillar to the top most part. This pillar signifies the famous "Garden of Eden", a romantic palace where the first generation of man resided according to Bible source. This pillar and the statue of Adam and Eve identify the Wombir *Asafo* as the premier *Asafo* Company of the Edina traditional area. The pillars on the left and right have

facemasks modeled directly on the top portion of their frontage. These masks, according to Asmah are the disguised *Asafo* members who do most of the nocturnal operation of the *Asafo* Company. They have undisclosed identity and that makes them dangerous and tricky to deal with. Safohen Kweku Wasa identifies these masks as their ancestors, who did all the spiritual exercises to get the activities of the Wombir Company done.

A critical look at the arrangement of the various effigies shows a type of mythical communication. All the images aligned in the exact middle portion of the frontage of the Post are those associated with the originators or the creation of Edina *Asafo* Companies by the Wombir group. The statues of Adam and Eve at the base floor educates one on the creation of the Wombir *Asafo* as the premier *Asafo* group in Edina, a group whose prime responsibility was to provide entertainment to its people as social responsibilities. The statue on the left and right sides of the Post; the equestrians, the mermaid and the antelope-like animal portrayed the Wombirfo as the group, who owns and owes the repository of the Edina *Asafo* wisdom as far as the military and political prowess of the *Asafo* groups were concern. As stated by Assabill,(1980) *“these images serve as the sign post of the Wombir wisdom and powers.”*

### **Architectural symbolism**

The architectural setting of the Wombir Company Post has a vivid exhibition of the influence of the fisher folk nature of the indigenes as portrayed on their boats and canoes decorations. A vivid display of warmth, vibrancy and a sweet combination of dots, line, shape, form and colour present clear wealth and wisdom of their marine supremacy. As seen in the description above, pure



and matured sweet flow of warm primary and secondary colours that speaks of bravery and determination could be pictured on them. The Post of the Wombir may be of direct inspiration of the cabin block of a fishing vessel. It has a broader room at the base and a smaller Captain's lodge (ship cabin) on top, an apartment that gives place for critical surveillance of an incoming vessel or enemies. The architecture setting displays a sweet symmetric piece of block type that conforms to sharp ends but robust look, which lends itself to firmness, strength and power. As Cole and Ross (1977) put it *"the Post has a description of the wedding cake style, a type of building built in a tier style."* This building is said to establish a marriage between traditional practices and Christianity, between the African and the European governance; political and military systems and African and European architecture. The marriage of African principles and practices alike enjoined the Wombirfo to the Edinaman, a commitment that compelled the Wombir *Asafo* to defend and deliver the Edina traditional area from their neighbouring Fante traditional area as a result of Edina's allegiance with the Ashanti's. Like the Forts and Castles of their European partners, the Company Post of the Wombir became the seat of authority of this socio-military institution. It serves as the decision-making point as well as the judicial court of the Company, a place where disputes are settled among officials and members. Significantly, this Post, acts as the wealth bank of the *Asafo* regalia, paraphernalia, drums, flags and other items. It also served as the very place where the military equipment of the Company were kept and distributed for immediate action or assignment.

## AKYEM ASAFO NO. 2 COMPANY POST

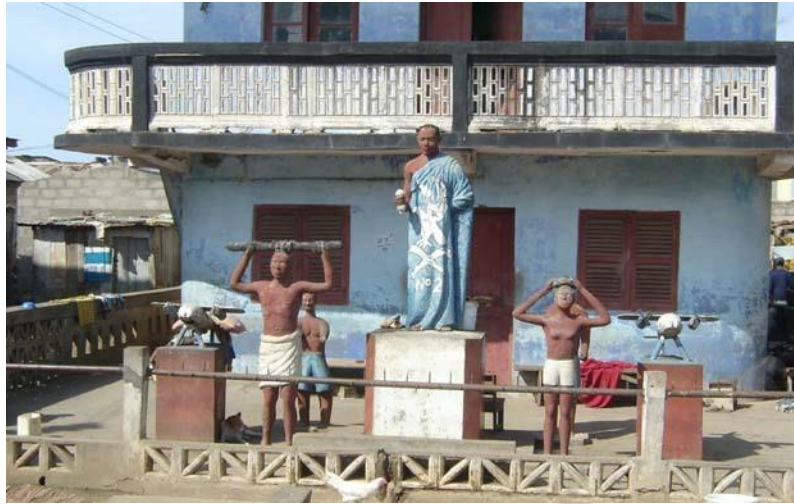
The Akyem Asafo No.2 Company Post is the second modern Post built in Edina. The Post was built in the year 1969 under the able leadership of Supi Kwamena Essilfie. This Post is located on the Benya street, a spot on which Nana Kwamina Ansa, the then chief of Egyafo, who also preceded over Edina met with Don Diego de Azamboja (of Portugal) over their settlement and future plans for Edina. The raffia and palm branches shed raised over this spot gained the name Azamboja Pata Ase, but by the passage of time, this name corrupted to read '*Mboja Pata Asa*' with the first three words (Aza) given off. Upon the bombardment of Edina, the Akyemfo Asafo annexed this spot and renamed it after their Asafo Company as '*Akyemfo Pata Ase*'. They raised their *Posuban* there to meet with their ancestor and shrines and with their Asafo officials and members. The spot therefore became the arena where all Akyem Asafo activities started and ended. This modern and magnificent Post of the Akyemfo is situated close to the Benya lagoon where majority of the fisher folks reside. This is a typical densely populated zone with lot of buildings closely put together. This Post is a few meters away from that of the Wombir Asafo and that of the Abese Asafo group.



### Plate 11: *Akyem Asafo* N.o 2 Company Post

The *Akyem Asafo* Post has an approximate dimension of five meters in width, five meters in length and nine meters in height. This modern Post is constructed of sandcrete blocks and concrete slabs with wooden doors and windows. The walls of the building have smooth cement-sand-plastering, which has been coated with blue emulsion paint. The doors and windows have reddish-wine oil painting. The plain blue wall that fuses into the blue colour of the sky is vividly interspersed with white painted balconies projected externally over the roof of the Post. These balconies have their white rectangular banisters encased in black horizontal and vertical members that run from the left side across the front view and to the right side of the building. The balconies have curved corners fixed between the first and second floor and on top of the second floor and the blue sky. The balconies have no external supporting columns except those found as attachment to the walls. These have beam projections supporting the slabs of the balconies. With the exception of the ground frontal portion of the Post, the sides and the back have banisters raised to prevent encroachers. This barricade also serves as a veranda to the Post. The frontal veranda has short sandcrete banisters that are fitted to the short vertical pillars which stand at the extreme end of the façade. A round metal pipe that has metal spikes attached to it is fitted to these short concrete columns. This serves as barricades to onlookers, intruders and passerbyers.





**Plate 12: Details of the First Floor**

Seven pieces of monument are raised on the floor of the facade of this building. Three of these pieces are raised on rectangular pedestals whilst the rest stand on the slabs. Two miniature replicas of airplane are placed on the short pedestals that stand on the extreme end of the facade. By the sides of these aircrafts stand canon gun. The live-size monument of Supi Kwamina Essilfie is raised on the tall concrete pedestal that is positioned in the middle of the composition. The effigy of Supi Kwamina Essilfie is dressed in the traditional Akyemfo blue cloth with the motif of an Eagle, two swords in cross position over the text 'No.2', boldly printed in white. He is seen holding a black sword in the right hand to signify his position as the chief of the group. Two figures stand in between the raised pedestals of Supi Kwamina Essilfie and those that host the miniature Helicopters. To the left of the effigy of Supi Kwamina Essilfie is the male figure with a white piece of calico wrapped around the waist. He stands erect caring the *Asafo* deity '*Akontsinbew*' on his head with both hands. The shrine of this deity is a wooden twig of a longitudinal manner but rendered in cement. The other figure that stands to the right of Supi Kwamina Essilfie is a female virgin figure that wears a white skirt over her waist. She carries on her head with both



hands the *Asafo* deity known as ‘*Obo*’. This is a stone effigy of the Akyem *Asafo*. Both carriers of the *Asafo* deities have their upper body uncloth. Behind these deity carriers are two additional male figures dressed in the traditional Akyemfo blue shorts but and have their top unclothed. One of these figures is a horn blower and the next is a gun bearer.



Plate 13: **Details of the Second Floor**

On the topmost part of the building is the replica of a wall clock pinned to the middle vertical column of the upper balcony. Underneath this clock reads the inscription ‘*Mboja Pata Ase.*’ On top of the clock stands the effigy of an Eagle; a totem of the Akyem *Asafo*. It is noticeable that the statues that are displayed on the ground floor of the Post stand a few metres ahead of the building but behind the metal barricade. All the exposed skins of the figures are coloured reddish brown with black hair and white eyes. The Akyem *Asafo* Company prides in the blue colour as their acceptable and destined colour and thus dominates their military armament, paraphernalia, drum, bugles, flags, building and others.

The inner sections of the Company Post of the Akyem *Asafo* are used for religious, social, administrative, judicial, executive and storage purposes. The inside space of the ground floor has two compartments. The first is an apartment

used by the priest as an office. This is where he does his consultation and repairs after usual religious and certain ceremonial activities. The other room serves as a shrine room where the altars of the shrines and the effigies of shrines are kept for expected invocation. There is also the storage for the Company's paraphernalia, armament and other valuable items of the Company. The top floor has a single but a large room that is used as a meeting place or point of call of official duties for the *Asafo* officials and members. This space has conference seats and tables set ready for official responsibilities. Kobina Ackon, alluded that *"the Akyem Asafo is one mighty Company that formally used to be part of the Nkodwofo Asafo but staged a split up to enable them pursue their agenda for growth and development"*.

## **Cultural Significance of Akyem Asafo Company Post**

### **Colour symbolism**

Egya Ackon, recounted that:

the Akyem *Asafo* identifies with the colour blue for several reasons; they likened the strength of the Company to that of the Eagle and since the Eagle operates actively in the sky, the colour blue was adapted as their main colour.

The Akyemfo shares the adage that says, 'the sky is the limit'. This approves of the strength and aspiration of the group. This emphasises the endless enlistment of their new members who keep unfolding as the day unfolds. The Akyem *Asafo* shares the opinion that, the Almighty God who resides in the

sky provided their ancestors with the necessary wisdom and strength that was needed for the conquest and the progress of the Edina town and its environs. Possibly, the African symbolism of the colour blue that projects purity, peace and wisdom can be associated with the past activities of the Akyem *Asafo* Company. Mark Essilfie attested to these facts that were shared by Egya Ackon.

### **Sculptural Symbolism**

Mark Essilfie, reiterated that:

their ancestors had a strong faith in the character and make of the Eagle and its knowledge and wisdom. The ancestors noticed and observed the Eagle could fly extremely high to undertake surveillance on whatever was being perpetuated by their enemies and others.

This connoted the impression that the Akyemfo could foresee and preempt the evil activities of their opponents at all times. The mighty strength that existed in the wings and limbs of the Eagle is likened to the military prowess of the Akyem *Asafo*. This is evident in one of the Akyemfo flags in which an Eagle is portrayed lifting off a full human being into flight. This possibly made the ancestors of the Akyem *Asafo* adopt the Eagle as a source of inspiration and aspiration. It is on this accounts that the Eagle is vividly displayed as an emblem sitting on top of the Company Post and shown in the cloths of the statue of Kwamina Essilfie, *Asafo* Company flags and other *Asafo* paraphernalia and drums.





Plate 14: **The Replica of the Clock**

The wall clock is another significant object found on the facade of the Akyem *Asafo* Company Post. Egya Ackon relates that this clock that reads five minutes to Six O'clock tells the story of an eventful war that took place between the people of Edina and the Fante towns, which included the Anomabofo, the Asebufo and the Fetufo, in Edina. A battle of which the people of Edina became victors was fought from the previous Tuesday morning till five minutes to Six O'clock in the next morning of Wednesday. The Akyem *Asafo* was very instrumental in the defeat of the Anomabofo and the other Fantes on this bitterly fought battle. They therefore adopted the Clock that registers the time five minutes to Six O'clock to represent their deep involvement in Edina's victory over their enemies. The clock, therefore speaks of the great event which has become a major credit to the Akyem *Asafo* Company. Egya Ackon, recounts that:

this particular victory that called for a greater congratulation message from Nana Kobina Gyan, one of the greatest chiefs of Edina, a citation which is found on the pedestal of the statue of supi Kwamena Essilfie's statue. The inscription *Mboja Pata Ase* is mounted on the facade below the clock. This is said to be a corrupt form of Don Diego de Azambuja Pata Ase, the site on which the Portuguese legend Azambuja met with Nana Kwamina Ansa, the then presiding chief of Edina over the Portuguese settlement on the coast of Elmina. The Akyem *Asafo* Company is associated with Nana Kwamina Ansa for his knowledge and wisdom in dealing with the European (for not selling the rights of his indigenes



to the Europeans). This influenced the citing of their 'Posuban' on the same site.

It is revealing that, today, some of the members of the group perceived the *Mbogya Pata Ase* as the spot where the blood of the Anomabo fighters was shed during their encounter with the Edinafo. Kobina Ackon recounted the spot did not signify the sacrificed blood of the vanquished but the effort of the indigenes to sacrifice for the acceptance of the Europeans on their land and the merging of cultures as a sign of peace and belongingness.



**Plate 15: The Image of the Supi Kwamina Essilfie**

The effigy of the able leader of the Akyem *Asafo* Company at the time, Supi Kwamina Essilfie, displays the political authority of the Company. Supi Kwamina Essilfie is posed in an upright posture and has a black state sword in the right hand signifying the symbol of authority over the Company members. He wields part of the political powers of Edina. This monument endorses the fact that, the *Asafo* is a political institution that thrives in the hierarchy of leadership and leadership by example. The figure is adorned with the traditional blue cloth of the Akyem *Asafo*, and, the drawing of a rising Eagle, a double-crossed state sword and the label No. 2. This effigy conveys the aspiration, inspirations and purpose of the Akyem *Asafo* Company. The registration of the

image of the Eagle and that of the double state sword is evidence. The effigy of Kwamina Essilfie in the traditional cloth style signifies the image of a indigenes chief who presides over his subjects. He holds the state sword as a symbol of authority and also as one who hold the Company in trust. As the chief of the Akyemfo people, he has the duty of seeing to the performance of the confirmation of the Benya festival a process popularly known as *'Kuraba Tei'*. In addition, the Supi of the Akyemfo has a major role to play as a member of *'Akyekwudu'* and the *'Kuwesuon'*, the union of the various generals Supifo's who see to the selection of a legitimate successor to the thrown of Edinahun. A citation found on the frontage of the dais of Supi Kwamina Essilfie's monument displays congratulation message offered by Nana Kobina Gyan of Edina to the Akyem Asafo Company, and it reads: *'Akyem koheraa gyegyee hon taa taabBenada mbo'*. This means "welldone, you who redeem us with your might and brought us to safety, well done". This citation was in recognition and honour of the Akyem Asafo members who rescued the captured women of Edina from the Anomabo fighters during Fante–Edina war fought in Edina.



Plate 16: The Images of Carriers of the Asafo Shrines

To the left of the image of Supi Kwamina Essilfie is a female virgin carrying the replica of the shrine of the *Asafo* deity on her head with both hands. The Akyem *Asafo* philosophy identifies virgins to be the only persons legible to carry the effigies of the *Asafo* shrines. Virgins are known to be free from immoral acts and as such seen to be pure in spirit and soul. The purity of this effigy is registered by the wearing of the white pair of shorts or knickers over her waist. To the right of the image of Supi Kwamina Essilfie stands a male figure, a priest, carrying the *Asafo* shrine '*Akontsibiw*' on the head with both hands. He has a white calico wrapped around the waist. This figure is a symbol of purity and loyalty to the shrines. The '*Akontsibiw*' shrine is believed to have its potency exhibited to the fullness if it is kept away from the touch of female adults. Both carriers of these shrines are half dressed and have their upper portions exposed. This act displayed the level of naivety of physical, mental and spiritual well being of man and to enhance the potency and efficacy of the supernatural forces.

Mark Essilfie, recounts that:

the Akyem *Asafo* as part of their tradition used to carry along their shrines as a guardian and spiritual support to whatever place that they endeavored, that is, in terms of battlefield, theatrical assignment or in search of good and evil.

Egya Ackon recount of a situation in the early 1940's when the Akyemfo had to journey to Sekondi on foot to perform *Asafo* dance and drama to the people of Sekondi on a special invitation of the state. The group carried along with them the images of the shrines to Sekondi. According to Egya Ackon, (*Asafo* Komfo, Akyem *Asafo* No.2 Company):

the Supi of the Akyem *Asafo* and his *Safohenfo* must all be spiritually sanctified and protected by the shrines of the Company. A mishap or calamity to these officials meant a calamity to the entire Company. This is therefore highly lightened by the display of the *Asafo* deities on both sides of



the monument of the Supi. These deities provide the spiritual protection and security needed by the Supi for his spiritual, political and humanitarian responsibilities. Any action of speech offered by the Supi is said to be the thoughts of the *Asafo* shrines and ancestors.

Therefore, the shrines are said to provide the Supi and other *Asafo* officials with the necessary wisdom and knowledge needed for the smooth running of the Akyemfo *Asafo* Company and that of Edinaman.



**Plate 17: An Image of a Member of the *Asafo* Company**

The back roll sculptures in this composition show two male figures dressed in the traditional blue shorts of the Akyemfo. These figures are *Asafo* members who performed certain traditional *Asafo* roles that included protecting the life of *Asafo* officials, *Asafo* properties and *Asafo* principles.

Kobina Ackon eluded that:

the figure on the left is a buggle player whilst the one on the right is a gun bearer. The beagle player is a music maker who is seen performing the usual *Asafo* entertainment function of the group. This figure also signifies the relationship that existed between the Akyem *Asafo* and their European counterpart especially with the event that led to the numbering of the Edina *Asafo* Companies by the Europeans for easy identification. This process earned the Akyem *Asafo* Company the identification number two (No. 2) as they became the second Company to arrive at castle and were



offered the beagle as a symbol of identify. This figure tells us of the philosophy underlining the number two (No. 2) associated with the Akyem *Asafo* of Edina. The gun bearer is said to be the symbol that ensures the security of the *Asafo* Company and Edina.

The significance of these figures is that Akyem *Asafo* has the propensity of making peace with all his neighbours and that the Akyemfo, though, with very questionable character, their doubtfulness always prefers peace to rancor. At the extreme ends of the figurative composition stands the replica of two proto-type airplanes of a frontal posture. They are mounted on two short rectangular concrete pedestals. In contemporary times, aircraft assumes the functions of the Eagle as an 'iron bird' that could fly high and far into the sky to do and undo the activities that are hostile to the Akyem *Asafo* Company. Assabill stated that these 'iron birds', aircrafts, depict the strength and capacity of the Akyem *Asafo* to protect the inhabitants of Edina. These airplanes are likened to the Akyem *Asafo* Company of today as the air force wing of the indigene military who operate in the blue skies though there exist, no air strip in Edina. Annan-Prah talks of "*the Akyem Asafo Company as the perceived air force wing of the traditional military institutions in Edina*". Assabill, calls these aircrafts "*the fire spitting weapons that perform tremendous task that are beyond human effort*".



Plate 18: **The Replica of an Aircraft**

He therefore likens the strength of the Akyem *Asafo* to that of these aircrafts. Assabill recounts that these aircrafts symbolize the Akyemfo's first contact with the aircraft. The strengths and might of the aircrafts and their perceived military superiority over ground forces, objects and targets confirmed the military potency of this very group. These aircrafts, which operates in the skies, go to confirm the Akyemfo's choice of the colour blue as their dominant colour. The canon gun found besides these aircrafts symbolize the firepower of the Company. These canon gun acts as the guarding instruments that provide protection to the Supi and the various Safohenfo. The presence of these guns confirms the Akyemfo's early contact with the Europeans. Kobina Ackon recalls a situation where the Akyem *Asafo* used the power behind the canon gun to vanished fighters from Anomabo and their environs during the Fante invasion of Edina on that faithful Tuesday.

### **Architectural symbolism**

The architectural edifice of the Akyem *Asafo* Company Post has a distinctive display of a cabin design of the fishing boat found on the harbour of the Benya

lagoon. The colour of the Post (blue, white and black) show a calm, serene and peaceful atmosphere even though the blue which dominates the structure is interspersed with the reddish brown windows and doors. Unlike the Company Post of the Wombirfo which has a broader base structure and a narrow or smaller size top floors, that of the Akyem *Asafo* has seemingly two storey tower structure of uniform design. The Post has a symmetric design that establishes an equitable balance and an unbiased nature of the character of the said Company. The Post has white and black combination balcony projection that breaks the monotony of the blue flat walls. According to Mark Essilfie, the combination of the black and white colours on the Post emphasis the good relationship that existed between the Edina people and their European partners. This is likened to the hamonous musical sound obtained from the black and white keys of the piano. These colour combinations register the fact that, the Akyemfo *Asafo* are not entirely rigid in their deliberations as stated earlier, but are equally flexible in their decision taking and has the ability to lend itself into situational adjustment. The balconies provide for the *Asafo* Company the ability to undertake periodic surveillance of the town to acquaint itself with situations of possible attacks and reprisals. Like the Forts and Castles in Edina and else where, the Company Post serves as the seat of Government of the Akyemfo *Asafo*. It is in this Post that the Legislative, Executive and Judicial arms of the Company converge to emanate reforms. The political will, the military will and the spiritual will of the officials and members are conferred upon them from this very structure. The Post therefore became the head quarters and source of defense and attack of this precious Akyemfo Company. As the administrative focal point of the group, members had to take and report on issues concerning the Company to their officials from this very Post. In the passage of time as

elitism became in vogue, documents of value and other related literary materials concerning the Akyem Company were stored in this Post. Very important *Asafo* objects and *Asafo* paraphernalias were all kept under security in this very Post. This was to prevent the situation where the death of a member could lead to the lost of certain important documents and materials, instruments that were in his custody at the time of their death. The Akyem *Asafo* Company Post provides its members with the spiritual, mental, and physical welfare needed to galvanize development and social balance.

### **ABESE ASAFO NO. 5 COMPANY POST**

The Abese No. 5 *Asafo* Company Post is the third most modern Post to be built in Edina. This Post was built in the year 1970's under the leadership of Supi Ansunna. The Company Post of the Abese group is located off the Benya Street and closer to the Benya lagoon, where a greater number of the fishermen reside. This Post is located in a heavily populated zone where the basic jobs are fishing, fish mongering and fish smoking. The Abese Post is built within a tight packed residential environment. This spot is popularly known as Dentsido. Dentsido is the original point where the initial tree-mound *Posuban* of the Abese *Asafo* was erected for the defense mechanism of the Abesefo. This Post is a few meters from that of the Akyem *Asafo* Company Post. This Abese Post measures approximately four meters in width, five meters in length and a height of about eight meters. This modern Abese Post stands in between two two-storey buildings. On the left is the yellow painted sandcrete house that has a concrete roof and the other is a white painted structure. This switch house has a tatted asbestos and zinc roof. These twostorey buildings stand very close to that of the Abese Company Post (*Posuban*).





Plate 19: **Abese Asafo No. 5 Company Post**

The Post of the Abese group is a single storey sandcrete building that has a concrete roof which serves as a pedestal to a replica of a sailing ship and its crew; sailors and captain which are all modeled in concrete and finished in emulsion and oil paints. The concrete roof has a short banister of about thirty centimeters high raised on the edges of the roof. This goes round the slab but with the exception of the area hosting overhang of the ship. The frontage of this eminent Post displays a set of *Asafo* officials, *Asafo* shrines and other mythical objects of paramount interest to the Abese group. All these figures are assembled on the veranda of the Post. These images include the live-size figure of Supi Kwa Bosomtwi dressed in green traditional wardress popularly known as *Batakari* and a green pair of trouser. Supi Bosomtwi holds in his right hand an *Akomfena* or a state sword which points upwards. He is positioned on the left side of the composition. Next to his right side is a three-quarter life-size statue of a male *Asafo* official holding a gun in his right hand. He is dressed

in an all green top and shorts and head cap apparel. Behind this male figure, stands another three-quarter live-size male statue carrying on his head with both hands the image of a bundle of palm fruit. This figure is dressed in green shorts but with no top outfit. On the left side of this composition sits a live size figure of the '*Asafoakyere*' (female *Safohen*) dressed in a green traditional two piece cloth wrapped around her waist and her bust. She is adorned with a traditional Fante headgear popularly called '*Tekua*'. On the left side of this only female effigy is the statue of another male who carries the Abese *Asafo* shrine over his hand with both hands. He is dressed in a traditional green short but with no shirt. The middle portion of the figurative composition displays two important objects of significance to the Abese *Asafo* Company. The first is the image of the Crab, a symbol of a shrine that, according to Canta, (Safohen of Abesi *Asafo* No. 5 Company, Edina traditional area, in November 2005) is one of the revered Abese shrines. The image of an Elephant attempting to uproot '*Akyebedua*', a small tree with scaly bark and fewer leaves are all placed in the frontage of this Post. These constitute the figures found on the ground floor of the Abese Post.



Plate 20: Details of First Floor



**Plate 21: Details of Top (Front View of the Ship)**

On top of the concrete roof of the Abese Post stand the masterly rendered sailing ship and its sailors. The sailing ship that has red and white painting on it is made of concrete. This ship is finished in a smooth cement sand plastering. It has six white sails and two cross supports all made from concrete. The ship has five sailors and a captain serving it. The captain is dressed in a green suite and cap. He is mounted on the foremast of the ship. He holds in the hand a pair of telescope, which he uses to focus on the mission set for him to accomplish effectively. The sailors on board are dressed in white and green sailors' apparel. Two of them stand akimbo on the concrete roof beside the Bulwarks of the frontal portion of the ship. They stand with both hands in their pockets. The remaining three sailors are mounted on the Poop, the Tween and the decks of the ship. These sailors are known to navigate the vessel and provide security to it. Flexible electric cables are stretched from the front part of the vessel, over the sails to the rear of the deck. These cables provide illumination to the ship and its environs. These figures and others make up the composition found on the roof and the upper part of the Abese *Asafo* Post.



The architecture setting of this Post has two major components; the house that constitutes the pedestal of the ship and the ship found on top of the roof. The group floor design of the Post is a basic rectangular form that has rectangular windows and doors constituting the exits to the building. This structure has a narrow front and a longitudinal side view. The walls constitute rectangular but plain smooth surface. They are made from sandcrete blocks with cement sand plastering that received green and white emulsion paint finishing. The building has a flat concrete roof that hosts the ship and its crews. Banisters are raised on the edges of the concrete roof. Parts of the concrete roofs are projected directly over the veranda. It has two beams projected from the walls and a single rectangular support pillar raised in the middle position of the frontal portion of the veranda. This pillar is placed ahead of the figurative composition found on the floor of the veranda. The banisters fixed to the edges of the roof run down on the sides of the staircase found at the back of the Post. The staircase fixed at the backside of the post provides an easy access to the roof where a member can take view of the town and Benya Lagoon. The frontal of the slab has the inscription 'ABESE No.5 COMPANY ELMINA' boldly printed in red and white. Like the Wombir Post the top of the slabs on which the ship is mounted provides a large space where the members repair after their days work. The ground floor veranda has rectangular banister laid from the back through the sides to the front of the Post. The frontal view has short rectangular concrete pillar raised on the extreme end to support the galvanized pipes connected to the central pillar. The Post has rectangular windows and doors made of wood and painted with enamel paint.

The inside of the Abese Company Post consists of apartments. The first is that of the office of the Company's priest and the other is the room where



administrative duties are performed. With respect to the Abese group, their deities are kept not in their Post but elsewhere in a structure, which is a distance away from the Post. That structure was built purposely to serve as the abodes of the shrines of the Abese *Asafo shrines*. Assabill in his contribution said:

by design the Abese Company Post was put up as a vault for the Company armament and objects of great controversial value. The same space became the storeroom of the Abese paraphernalia, regalia, drums and others. It also served as the converging point for *Asafo* officials and their members. The same place had a space for the *Asafo* spiritual leader. That unlike the other *Asafo* Companies who had their shrines housed in their Post, the Abese had a separate structure a distant away used to house their shrines.

This post served as a historic and educative monument rather than a mere shrine.

### **Cultural Significance of Abese *Asafo* Company Post**

The Abese *Asafo* Company is noted to be one of the strongest and greatest *Asafo* Companies in Edina. Kow Ntwafo, (the acting Supi of Abese *Asafo* No.5 Company, Edina. in June 2005), stated that:

our forefathers were the first to establish contact with the Europeans who first settled in the fishing village for the first time and that it is on this account that they adopted the replica of the ship sitting on the roof of their Company Post as a major component..

Kow Ntwafo further likened the strength of the Company to that of the sailing vessel that moved through the rough and tough conditions of the ocean to Edina. This ship popularly known as 'Man of War' is a symbol of the might and strength of the Abese group. It is observable that the major wars that were engaged by the European rivals over the Gold Coast (now Edina) saw the sailing vessels staging a strong force in their encounter. These vessels became the instruments of attacks on the commanding structures and forces that stood on the shores of Edina. Adu Annan (Safohen of Abese *Asafo* No.5 Company,

Edina, in June 2005) attested to this submission by Kow Ntwafo and further stated:

the Abese group, from the early days of Edina was noted for their bravery and strength, something that their ancestors attributed to their *Asafo* deity called Egya Eku. This is a deity that provided the Abese group with the needed protection and strength to make war, in spite of their smaller numbers as opposed to that of the Companies with greater numerical strength.

Annan-Prah, expounded that *“the Abese Asafo Company assumed the normal role as the naval wing of the indigenous military in the Edina traditional town”*.

Even though this did not reflect in their choice of colour, the inclusion of the ship as part of their Post confirms this.

### **Colour Symbolism**

The Abese Company adopted the colour green as its dominant colour but has red and white constituting a complement of its combination. Green, which is usually associated with forest and vegetation, has the perceived African philosophy of continuity, growth, energy that is linked to vitamins, minerals and nutrients obtained from the farm products. Perhaps the significance of the green Albright tree ‘Akyebedua’ with scaly and slippery bark that forms part of the figurative composition might have influenced the Abese group to prefer green as a Company colour. The green uniform of this group could be likened to the present military uniform of the present day army where all wings prefer the green and red camouflage uniform. This colour confirmed the military superiority that the Abese had over its neighbouring Companies in times of *Asafosa* (provocations and misunderstanding) among individual groups.

Assabill, elude that:

the Abese group sees themselves as the strongest of all the *Asafo* group and that members recounts with pleasure and

pride, their war encounters with other *Asafo* groups in Edina during which the Abese stood solidly against them. The Abese Company represents these victories by the palm fruits and the stone at the *Posuban*.

Assabill emphasised that the green colour of the palm tree has a strong influence on the success of the Abese group. Possibly the reddish colour of the palm fruit might have influenced the red colour of the replica of the sailing vessel sitting on the Post. Kow Ntwafo reiterated that the Abese *Asafo* Company drew their might and strength from the Palm tree. He stated that in one of their battles, their ancestors and their shrines offered them with palm fruits that provided them food energy to sustain their military might

### **Sculptural Symbolism**

As the presumed naval wing of the indigenous military of Edina, the Abese group sought to incorporate into their Company Post the model of a sailing vessel into one unit. The replica of the sailing ship that forms the top part of the Post signifies Edina's relationship with the Europeans, especially the Portuguese and the Dutch who lived with them for about four hundred successive years. These Europeans were known to have gotten to the shores of Edina through the aid of the ship. Quayson, reiterated:

the ship signified the buoyant business relationship that existed between the Edina people and the Portuguese and the Dutch. The sailing vessel was the major channel through which European goods and services; medical, religious, educational and certain social support systems got to the people of Edina.

One may not be wrong in stating that these very vessels served as the medium through which the much-treasured human resources and manpower left the shores of the Gold Coast (Ghana) to their western world. Quayson, further stated:



as business with the European became very intense, Edina gained greater attraction from its neighbouring towns and villages both far and near. This brought in the declaration of the port as a severance port. As the first severance seaport ever declared in the country, the Abese *Asafo* Company resulted to the model of the ship to drum home this message to all Abesefo and Edinafo.

Quayson went on to say that when the British took over from the Dutch, the people of Edina presumed that their commerce and trading practices were going to grind to a halt as they saw the Dutch pack off to their home country. The adage '*Kankahen apa Edinamanho*' meaning the Dutch vessel has sailed off Edina.

This caught the indigenes into a sigh of despair and hopelessness. Their economic status has been taken away because of lost of employment, lost of business opportunities and lost of financial supports for themselves and their dependants. These inspired the Abese *Asafo* to use the ship as one of the major objects in the design and construction of their Company Post.



Plate 22: **Details of theTop (Back View of Ship)**

The vessel has white trimming over red walls and has white painted sails raised the arch of the ship. Canta revealed that the white and red colours of the ship are the complement of the green colour of the Abese group and that the



hope for survival and development which could be attained through endurance could best be expressed through the red colour and white colour. He likened the red colour of the palm fruit, which provided their ancestors, hope for survival and progress in fierce battle with their enemies. This actually inspired the coating of the red colour over the ship. Possibly, the colour red which attracts passer by gives a reflection of the Abese military prospects and their ability to socialize with all men of both indigenous and European identity. The white painted sailing seals mounted on the ship told the peace story of the Abese militant group who were the first to strike a peace mission with Europeans when they arrived on the shores of Edina to prospect commence and other resource that also included labour. The sails exhibit electrical cables and bulbs that run across them. These cables and bulbs provide lumination to the ship, thus making it visible and attractive at night. The major significance of this to the society is that, it displays the avenue, which the Abese group helped in getting the Europeans to the shores of Edina. It is remarkable that the presence of these Europeans saw the introduction of new agriculture products, western education, enhanced social and medical services, provision and generation of energy for mass industrialization and for the revealing of precious mineral that hitherto were concealed in rocks and underground. There was the introduction of trading as well as the creation of employment opportunities western academic education and other social amenities. Quayson, emphasized that in spite of all the vices, slavery, colonization and extortions that were associated with the European presence on the coast of Edina, a much better life was introduced to the indigenes. He emphasized that though superstition was a solution to most of the problems of the indigenes, they also created a huge discourse amongst its people. He further said that the scientific methods of approaching issues

protected life and property therefore making the society more acceptable in the sight of other Fante tpowns. To Quayson, the light shown on the ship of the Abese Company Post reflects a revolution of the social, economic, medical, educational, agricultural and other enhancement that was brought to the people of Edina as a result of the European presence on the coast. One may ask questions such as what would have been the consequence if the Abese group initially prevented these Western influences. What could have been the state of the indigenes of Edina as well as the people of Ghana if these Westerners did not introduce foreign influences, services and products? How would Edina and Ghana be if the Europeans were not accommodated on the shore of the thiny village they called Aldea but now known as Edina due to the corruption of pronunciation and dialect.

On the forecastle of the ship stands the image of the ship captain dressed in green and white and seen viewing through a telescope. He stands viewing the social and economic wealth that Edina possesses as against those benefits that the Europeans could derive from the indigenes. The Post displays two sailors dressed in white and green uniform standing on both sides of the bulk heads these statues placed on the concrete roof of the building are seen focusing on the indigenes and Edina, hence showing the colonial masters quest for the indigenous land. Much emphasis could be placed on the fact that, the sailors are depicted as showing their readiness to collaborate with the indigenes for social and economic integration and advancement. As sailors, much of their effort was to enhance Afro-European trade, a practice that has till today been perceived as the Europeans' major channel of advancing their ideological interference and progress. On the poop or the rear of the ship, are the statues of three additional sailors also dressed in their traditional white and green uniform. They give a

backing to the issues raised earlier above. Both the sailors and their captain are of European identity and this portrays their declaration with the Abese and the indigenes of Edina. In between the replica of the ship and the house is the inscription ABESE No. 5 COMPANY EDINA. This white colour text has been boldly painted on a red background colour. This gives a vivid publicity to the Company Post. As usual, the red colour, which identifies this *Asafo* Company as been aggressive, is also enhanced with the bold white text that depicts peace and acceptability.

The array of images that constitutes the basic communicative language of the Post reveals a great philosophical importance of their ancestors to its present members and the society. These images offer researchers and indigenes oral history in concrete form. The front role shows the image of Supi Kow Bosomtwi standing upright in a forward moving posture. He holds a state sword (*Akomfena*) in his right hand. He is dressed in green traditional war apparel (Batakari dress over a pair of shorts). This statue expressed the very bold initiative that their ancestors made towards their European partners, an act which got the Europeans a stay on the shores of Edina for about four hundred years. This image projects the aspiration and inspiration of the Abese *Asafo* Company as a peace loving group that seeks to promote good neighbourliness among the diverse cultures. It therefore acts as a store and accommodative spirit for all humankind.



**Plate 23: The Image of Supi Kwa Bosomtwi**

Behind the statue of Supi Kwa Bosomtwi is that of the *Asafo* official who carries a long gun in the right hand. This statue expresses a security responsibility that is required of the *Asafo* guards towards their superior officials like the Supi and other Safohenfo. He provides total security to the Supi. The likes of these guards ensures the full life protection of the Supi from physical attacks that could be initiated by enemies. This figure represents the numerous Abese members who are assembled at all-times to render several functions such as social, political and military service to the Edina peoples. He is dressed in the traditional Abese apparel: green shirt over shorts and green cap to march. This image expresses the profound military aspirations and inspiration of the Abese group towards their officialdom. The figure carrying the palm fruit stands directly behind that of the *Asafo* official. This figure has both hands supporting the bunch of palm fruit over the head. The Abese *Asafo* reveres the palm fruit as one of their totems. It is on this account that they carry the palm fruit as they do for their *Asafo* deities. The palm fruit and its carrier that stand at the background informs one on how the Abese reveres the support and influence



that the fruit had over the lives of their members and their war successes, especially over the Fantes. The fruit bearer who is wearing green short has no shirt on. This practice culturally influences the spiritual fulfillment to both the deities and humankind. Adu Annan attests that:

the provision of the palm fruit through Abese deities was a timely intervention which their deities made to their ancestors: (Abese fighters). These needed energy and strength from a natural meal required no special effort to prepare them. The fruit he said saved them from dying from un-sustained hunger due to prolong battling with the Fantes.

It is therefore remarkable that the palm fruit is vividly captured as part of the composition that forms the visual history of the Abese group. Hence the Abese Adage '*Ako Dzibea Ewam So Dzi Be,*' features in one of their flags as a historic communicative art of the Abese *Asafo* group.



Plate 24: **The Image of Akyebe Dua**

The middle-right portion of the composition presents the mythical image of the 'Akyebea dua' the Albright tree in a faction with the Elephant. The slippery

scaly bark tiny tree that has very few leaves is represented very huge and tall, whilst the massive nature of Elephant is rather rendered small. The Elephant is seen struggling to pull down the tiny tree, an action that could not materialize due to the slippery nature of the tree bark and that of the slippery inner part of the tusk of the Elephant. Quayson, reiterated that the Abese *Asafo* had this to say '*Eson won tum Akyebea no odzi no ye neaba*', as the Elephant could not uproot the tiny tree, it adapted it as a siblings. The Abese has the saying, '*Enyim Enka Ma Enka Membra,*' meaning if you have issues to settle with me do not extend them to my offsprings. This, which is, expressed in one of the Abese communicative (flag) art forms emphasis the message surroundings the Elephant and the Albright tree. These and others drum home the huge wisdom and the military strength that the Abese group is endowed with, with respect to their numerically small human resources. The image of the Abese *Asafo* deity popularly called '*Egya Eku*' a night patrolling shrine is represented in the form of a Crab. This Crab is mounted behind the effigy of the Elephant. This shrine is said to undertake certain neferous activities in an attempt to protect its members and also to attack offenders and predators. This shrine is known to appear in the form of a pig at times. As a Company deity, its effigy stands behind all other images. This talks of its uncomparable huge spiritual support that offers the Abese officials and members at all-time. '*Egya Eku*' is revered and honoured for its generous contributions toward the various '*Asafosa*' from which the Abese group immersed victorious over their opponents.



Plate 25: **The Image of Egya Eku**



Plate 26: **The Image of Asafo Akyere**

The Abese *Asafo* prides in elevating of its female members to the status of *Asafo Akyere* or *Supi Besia*. Besides the *Akyebea* tree is seated *Asafohema* dressed in the traditional ‘*Akanhenba*’ apparel of two-piece wrap cloth. This ‘*Asafo Akyere*’ wears a traditional Akan headgear ‘*Takua*’ over her head. She represents all the female members of the Abese group. Her duty is to organize all the females of the Abese group to undertake social, economic, political and other functions in the society. This image educates the society of the invaluable support services that females in the community offer to the Edina traditional area.



Plate 27: **The Carrier of Asafo Shrine**

The carrier of the *Asafo* shrines stands at the extreme right of the composition. This male figure is dressed in the usual Abese *Asafo* green shorts. He wears no shirt just as the fruit carrier does. He carries the Abese deity on his head with both hands supporting it. Just as all *Asafo* Companies do, this image represents their sacred shrine who provides the leaders and their followers the needed spiritual fulfillment and wisdom to undertake all physical and human endeavors. He is paraded as a front liner due to the faith and confidence the supplicants have in him as their shrine. This stone effigy of a shrine is very much revered as their main support, one through whom the powers of the Almighty God descends to educate and bless the faithfuls and also punish the perverse and wicked. This shrine is expecting to lead his faithfuls to attain the spiritual and physical fulfillment and also to reward them bountifully if all his wishes and attornments are strictly adhered to.

It is said that the Abese leaders and their members could mount to classic honours and scholastic eminence due to their reportage on their ancestors' intercourse with their *Asafo* shrines. They had cordial relations with their unseen familiar shrine. This helped them to proclaim the gospel of peace and uphold strong fellowship with the Almighty God who makes them enter into divine



companionship if they could abide with the dictates of the *Asafo* shrines. No wonder the *Asafo* people were clothed with power to perform in all endeavors. Time spent with Him was layout as blessed interest to cast out or preempt evil intensions and work wonders. This could lead one down into the world guided with divine energy that God alone can offer through their shrines. This expresses the reason underlining the huge success chock by the Abese group irrespective of their numerical deficiencies. It is on this account that the elders of the group deemed it wise and necessary to project their shrines as part of their visual documentary and history. The Abesefo have the saying that ‘it is of no use engaging in ‘*Asafosa*’ when you have no spiritual weapons to back you’. Spiritual fortification was necessary for all duties especially before public responsibilities were conferred on nominees of high offices. It is of great reason that the elders of the Abese *Asafo* Company deemed it wise and necessary to project their *Asafo* shrines as part of their visual history.

### **Architectural Symbolism**

Just as the Posts of Wombirfo and the Akyemfo, that of the Abesefo also serves as the fortress and the headquarters of the Company. It is from this Post that Executive, Legislative and Judicial policies are formulated and implemented. Unlike the other Posts that have two or more levels of apartment, that of the Abesefo has but a single floor apartment that act as the pedestal to the ship. The frontage of this pedestal (Post) is embellished by the densely populated composition of indigenes that informs one of Abesefo’s controls over the sailing trade as an indigenous vocation in Edina.

It is remarkable that, the inclusion of the ship as part of the architectural setting emphasizes the cordiality that existed between the indigines and their

Western partners. It is believed that, the placement of the ship and its Western Sailors reveals the Europeans dominance of economic and political suppressions that were perpetuated on the indigenes since these Caucasians were welcomed ashore at Edina. Nevertheless, it is evident that, the inclusion of the lamps over the sails expressed the spirit of hope, progress, direction and understanding that were brought to the indigenes through trade, agriculture, industry and others. Invariably, nothing could identify the healthy relationship that existed between these cultures, than what is found in the Abese *Asafo* Company Post.

### **ANKOBEA ASAFO NO. 1 COMPANY POST**

The Post of Ankobea No. 1 *Asafo* Company is the fourth modern magnificent *Asafo* edifice to be constructed in Edina. This Post was built in the late 1970's under the spiritual leadership of Supi Dr. Mark Aaba. This Post is situated on the T-junction of the old market; the Old Dutch cemetery street and the Lime Street, a street leading to the junction of the Catholic mission. The Ankobea Post is located directly on the apex of this junction and it allows itself the display of two visible frontal views. The Ankobea Post has a registration of 100/1A. It is sited to the left wing, a few meters away from that of the Wombir *Asafo* Headquarters, and to the right side the Pole (fosuban) of the Enyampa No. 7 *Asafo* Company which stand on the frontage of the Maple Leaf Pharmacy Shop in the Chapel Square area. This area has a high concentration of social, economic and commercial activities as well as infrastructure development. This spot, in time past, has been the central point of the Edina township, a place where people commuted to and from the various points of the town and

elsewhere. The Ankobea Post is situated closer to the proposed park named after Nana Kobina Gyan, one of the famous Chiefs of Edina.



Plate 28: **The Ankobea Asafo No. 1 Company Post**

The proposed site is the spot where previously some social activities were held. The Ankobea Post measures approximately 450cm in width, 950cm in length and 900 cm in height. The Post is a three storey structure that is constructed of sandcrete blocks and concrete members (beams, columns, and slabs). It has a smooth cement sand plastering that lends its acceptance to emulsion and oil paints. The doors and windows are made from wood and they have yellow paint coating over them. This Post has a dome top with a Bow and Arrow fixed on top. This feature represents a replica of the dwelling temple of the tutelary shrine of Edina. The walls of this building consist of rectangular plainal members that form a cubic body within a quadrant.

The external walls of the building when viewed from the top gave a quadrant shape. The cubic form houses the offices and other facilities of the Company. The top floor and third floor have a large floor space that hosts the replica of the *Domo Buw* (the shrine of Nana Benya). This is of the traditional



Northern Architectural style that is designed from a cone mounted over a cylinder. The site layout (plan) of the area, of the Ankobea Post provides a dual view that lies at an angle of ninety degree. Both views are aligned on two major streets. The front view is on the old the Dutch cemetery street while the left view is on the lime Street leading to the Catholic Church junction. Mark Aaba identifies the front view of their Company Post as the portion facing the Old Dutch Street and has sculpture pieces mounted on.

Unlike the first three Company Posts (Wombir, Akyem and Abese) display a single frontage but that of the Ankobea is on the contrary. Ankobea *Asafo* Company Post has dual frontage. The building has projected verandas running from the front view to the right wing. The second and third levels or floors have their verandas set in an arc form whilst those of the first floor project at an angle. This floor provides two separate exit or entrance to the Post. These are on both views of the building. The suspended slabs of the second and third floors have drop concrete facials that adjoins the verandas. These that constitute the front view have no vertical column as their supports. A singular column on the first and second floors supports that of the right view. The right view of the veranda has a steep staircase that leads to the second and third floors.

The external walls of the verandas, the walls of the right side of the Post and that of the staircase are all painted white whilst the doors, windows and the front view of the main building are painted yellow. In addition, the dome, the band on the upper part of the cylinder structure and the vertical and horizontal encasement of the verandas are all painted in yellow. The Ankobea *Asafo* Post has white and yellow as their dominate colours but blue and black feature in some of their sculpture pieces and other objects of importance.





Plate 29: **Details of the Third and Fourth Floors**



Plate 30: **Details of the First and Second Floor**

Unlike the Wombir, Akyem and the Abese *Asafo* Posts, which have human figures staging dominance in the composition of their Posts that of the Ankobea has very few animal and man-made objects in their visual composition. On the other hand, the architectural members matters most to the Ankobeafo. The top floor of the Ankobea Post is a replica of abode or shrine of the Benya shrine as already indicated. This has a representation of a bow and arrow mounted on the dome. This bow and arrow is made from steel metal and painted black. On the top portion of the third floor veranda stands the image of

the Cock and Hen (male and female domestic birds). The birds are painted blue. The birds are in upright posture and are positioned in the middle portion of the front view of the veranda. On the top left and right corners of the second floor veranda are the compositions of cannon that are set across each other. These cannon have black outer covers and blue inner part. The image of a padlock is mounted on the middle portion of this very veranda. The padlock has a colour combination of black, white and blue.

The wall of the second floor veranda is a relief rendition of two keys set in a cross nature. These keys follow one direction. Beneath these keys is the label Ankobea No. 1. This is a two-dimensional text modeled on a profile of an amphibious animal in the like of an Alligator. Both the keys and the text are coloured in blue and white. The images of the Bird, Padlock, the Keys and the Text (Ankobea No.1) are all aligned vertically in the middle section of the front view of the Post. Inside the veranda of the first floor (front view) stands the image of two miniatures male Lions mounted on short concrete pedestals. These Lions that are coloured in red and black are positioned at both ends of the veranda. The height of these pedestals provides the images of these Lions the opportunity to be seen over the shoulder of this veranda. These images constitute the major philosophical significance of the Ankobea No. 1 *Asafo* Company Post.

The inner portion of the Ankobea Post showcases three important functions. The inside of the first floor has two apartments: (i): the shrine room, (ii): the office of the *Asafo* Komfo. As a spiritual centre the images of the Ankobea *Asafo* shrine are kept in this room for onward invocation and consultation. Shelves are provided to contain these abodes of the shrines. The second compartment serves as the office of the *Asafo* priest. The priest performs

the official spiritual responsibilities required of the office from this very point. In this space is an alter or a shrine upon which the spiritual activities for the shrine are performed. This floor therefore becomes the spiritual pivot of the Ankobea *Asafo* Company. The second floor has this large single apartment that serves as the meeting place for *Asafo* official activities. The third floor has the inner space of the replica of the Benya Buw. This space is the preserve of the top *Asafo* officials

## **Cultural Significance of Ankobea *Asafo* Company Post**

### **Colour Symbolism**

Ankobea No. 1 *Asafo* Company of Edina prides in the use of the colour white and yellow as their most revering colours in their *Asafo* visual history.

Nana Kweku Awotwe reiterated that:

the colour white found as part of the Ankobea history signifies the victory that their ancestors made over the then Fante towns (state) when the Fantes took siege on the Edina township during that faithful Tuesday. As the leading indigene military organization, the Ankobea had the privilege of hoisting first the white victory flag of Edinaman over the roof of the *Benya* shrine. This was fixed along side that of the Bow and Arrow. The white colour therefore became the official colour of the Ankobea *Asafo* Company of Edina. It therefore manifested in all the Ankobea paraphernalia, regalia, musical instruments, *Posuban* and lately their modern Company Post.

The African symbolism of colour speaks of the colour white as the symbol of victory, peace and progress. Symbolically, the Ankobea *Asafo* Company associates with the spiritual manifestation and significance of the tutelary shrine of Edina. Mark Aaba intimated that:

the Ankobea *Asafo* Company initiates the process for the annual celebration of *Bakatuei* festival of the Edina people. This is a process popularly known as the '*Kroba Butu*'



Ceremony. As a group, which ensures a commitment and loyalty to the tutelary shrine of the land the choice of their colour white, connotes their spiritual responsibility to the Edina traditional area.

White signifies purity, truth, peace, spirituality sanctity and potency needed to perform the necessary rituals require by the Oman deity especially during the reconstruction of the Benya shrine. Nana Kweku Awotwi recounts that a situation where a return from a great battle their Supi at that time had to pacify the shrine of the Abrobeano baka with an amount of gold nuggets before they were permitted to cross the Lagoon. The ancestors and shrines of the Ankobea revealed a chunk of gold nuggets which they used as a ransom for their passage. The colour gold or yellow became their next most important dominant colour.

This accounts for dominance of the colour yellow as part of the cultural importance of the Ankobea *Asafo* Company. One cannot dispute the fact that Edina was the centre of gold weaning during the ancient days of our history. This earned Edina the acronym Gold Coast something that was later extended to cover the Northern territories of the state. Smybolically the colour yellow represents the wealth and the loyalty that the Ankobea group pledges towards their shrines and the tutelary shrine of Edina. Safohen Kweku Mbra, (Safohen of Ankobea *Asafo* No.1 Company, Edina, in August 2005) recalls that:

the colour white and yellow has an important role in the culture of the Edina people. He further stated that the *Omanhen* of Edina who is a spiritual son of the shrins of the land and also the chief *Komfo* to the tutelary shrine and the seventy-seven shrines of the town dresses in white regalia adorned with wreath and raffia (yellow) head cap. These



white and yellow colours found on the *Omanhen's* apparel relates perfectly with the philosophy of the Ankobea *Asafo* group. It is on this basis that the colour white and yellow dominates in the colouration of the various Ankobea art forms which also includes the Company Post, drums, regalia, paraphernalia, adornment and others.

Nana Kweku Awotwe did not approve of the link between the Ankobea *Asafo* colours and those found on the Omanhen and the Amanfo of Edina. He made it straight that the choice of the white and yellow was by the Ankobea's encounter with nature and the results of their battles. He also said that Ankobea *Asafo* incorporates colours such as blue and black on nominal roles.

<sup>133</sup> According to Amoako Mensah (Safohen of Akyem *Asafo* No.1 Company, Edina, in August 2005)

Ankobea's inclusion of the colour blue is in recognition of the Benya lagoon and that blue signified hope, purity and wisdom that exist with the tutelary shrine. The use of the colour black in their visual compositions underscored their emphasis on the spiritual and magical Powers and command over the forces of the world. Black as a symbol of darkness and hope declare the very period that the Ankobea shrine and officials performed their nefarious activities especially during the period of the reconstruction or refurbishment of the Benya shrine. In spite of these nominal colours, white and yellow stand as their most adored colours.

### **Sculptural symbolism**

The Company Post of the Ankobea has no intense sculptural representation as those of the Akyemfo, Abesefo and the Wombirfo Companies. Nevertheless, the fewer ones found as part of their Post conveys enormous significance.

Annan–Prah, intimates that *“the replica of the bow and arrow fixed to the dome represents the abode of the tutelary shrine of Edina.”* Nana Kweku Awotwe emphasised that the Ankobea Asafo Company supervises the reconstruction or refurbishment of the Benya Buw when it became weak or deteriorated. As a group that prides its association with the tutelary shrine of the town it became incumbent for them to emphasis their league with the presence of the *Domo Buw*. In respect the replica of the *Domo Buw* as party of their edifice signifies Ankobea’s responsibility for the maintenance of the shrine of the tutelary shrine ‘Nana Benya’. The dome displays a bow and arrow fixed to the top. This bow and arrow according Mark Aaba *“tells of the Wrath of the tutelary shrine towards advisories of the Edina community”*. Mark Aaba recalls that in one of the inter town *Asafosa* and Edina’s defense towards the aggression of the Fantes towns to takeover Edina as a vassal state, the shrine were noticed to have imbued the bow and arrow with certain magical powers that helped in over powering and conquering their adversaries. These bow and arrows were used to strike down the enemies of the Ankobea *Asafo* and the Edina people.



**Plate 31: The Replica of Benya Shrine (Buw)**

The replica of the bow and arrow which has now been fashioned in metal and fixed to the apex of the dome is in recognition of the strength, toughness

and military tenacity of the Ankobeafo. Like the Blacksmith who is labeled as the spiritual icon of the society, so is the Ankobea *Asafo* to the Edinaman. The metal is coated black to symbolize the potency and efficacy of the Ankobea *Asafo* shrine and ancestors towards the adversaries of the Ankobeafo and Edinaman. It is obvious that since the Ankobeafo are the technical men who oversee maintenance of the Benya shrine, their shrine, their ancestors and leaders found it necessary to represent the image of the bow and arrow on top of the *Benya Buw*. The bow and arrow, which is replicated on the dome of the Ankobea *Posuban* emphasized Ankobea's appreciation to the Nana Benya for his spiritual and magical support. In this respect the presence of the bow and arrow on both the *Domo Buw* and the Ankobea *Posuban* act as a symbol of the Edinaman spiritual force over all other shrines that prevailed against Edinaman. Nana Kweku Awotwe talks of the use of the magical and medicinal bow and arrow that were used by their ancestors to conquer the Fantes that professed to takeover Edina as their property. The bow and arrow was the most effective weapon that existed among the indigenes before the introduction of the barrel gun by the Europeans. This weapon that stands on top of the dome has the arrow head pointing eastwards towards the Fante town; thus Cape Coast, Anomabo and the likes. <sup>138</sup> It is obvious that the bow and arrow symbolizes the furious nature of the Ankobea *Asafo* Company toward their adversaries.

The Ankobea group recognizes the Cock as one of the most important animals in the history of the Ankobea *Asafo* Company. The Cock portrays the innate wisdom that abounds the Ankobeafo. Nana Kweku Awotwe eluded that after a long battle waged by the Ankobea *Asafo* and Edina people over the Fantes, a new dawn broke up as the Cock crowed to announce Edinas' victory over the entire Fantes (states) towns. As the Cock sounded to announce Edina's victory

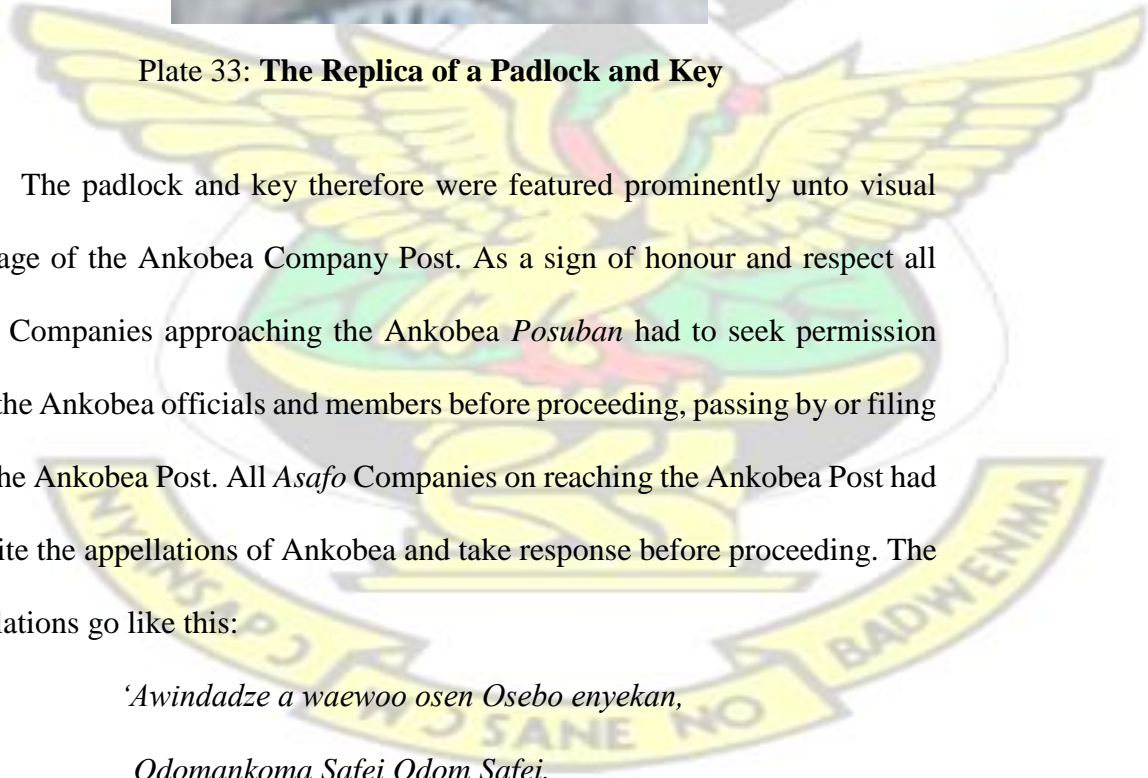
over their enemies, it compelled the Ankobea Supi to mount the Cock over his head. This symbolic event made it possible for the Ankobea *Asafo* elders and ancestors to adopt the Cock as one of their cultural icons.



**Plate 32: The Image of the Cock and Hen**

The presence of the Cock on the top section of the Post signifies the dawn of victory of Ankobea *Asafo* and Edinaman over the Fantes. As the strongest and leading warring group in Edina, the Ankobea *Asafo* led the people of Edina to resist and crush the Fante towns and save Edina from breaking apart and becoming slaves to the Fantes. Nana Kweku Awotwe revealed that the Ankobea *Asafo* on returning to Edina drew a line to symbolize their locking of the Edinaman from further attacks. The line meant the closure of all exits to Edina. In time past this line has been replaced by the padlock and one requires a key to open it. The padlock signifies the closure whilst the key offers the permission to entry, duty, responsibility and acceptance. It therefore inferred that the Ankobea *Asafo* were the only group that had the mandate to lock and unlock the boundaries of Edina. Ankobea *Asafo* therefore chooses to represent the power to entry into Edina with the padlock and key.





**Plate 33: The Replica of a Padlock and Key**

The padlock and key therefore were featured prominently unto visual age of the Ankobea Company Post. As a sign of honour and respect all Companies approaching the Ankobea *Posuban* had to seek permission the Ankobea officials and members before proceeding, passing by or filing the Ankobea Post. All *Asafo* Companies on reaching the Ankobea Post had to make the appellations of Ankobea and take response before proceeding. The appellations go like this:

*'Awindadze a waewoo osen Osebo enyekan,*  
*Odomankoma Safei Odom Safei,*

*Merebo Ago, ago, ago, meresrew*

*kwan, mamkwan nsen,*

*Odomankoma Safei Odom Safei,*

*kwan, mamkwan nsen,*

Mark Aaba, attested to this fact and stated that the Ankobea *Asafo* has the religious right to perform the ‘*Kroba Butu*’ ceremony for the celebration of ‘*Baka Tue*’ festival.



Plate 34: **The Image of the Aquatic Animal**

The next sculptural form that has a degree of significance to the Ankobea *Posuban* is the aquatic animal that acts as the background to the text ‘Ankobea No. 1.’ This relief work bears the shape in the birds’ eye view of an alligator-like creature locally known as ‘*Kyeekye*’. Mark Aaba recalls their history in a situation when their ancestors who were pursuing their enemies reached the River *Prado* at Kafodzedze. This situation compelled their ancestors to consult with their shrines for a solution. Mark Aaba stated that “*the Ankobea shrines spiritually empowered one of the Safohens to transform into a ‘Kyeekye.’ This Safohen spiritually consulted with the shrines of the river who sometimes appear in the form of a Crocodile or an Alligator for their permission to cross to their destination*”.

It is believed that the offspring of the river are creatures of like this.

Nana Kweku Awotwe recounts:

of a situation where the Ankobea *Asafo* on one of their military exploits arrived at the Prado River that has lots of

Crocodiles and Alligators as its offspring. He said the Ankobea ancestors upon reaching the banks of the river had one of their *Safohen* spiritually transforming into the image of an Alligator. This *Safohen* consulted with the shrine of the river for permission to cross to their destination. He mentioned that the shrine of the river gave way for the Ankobea group by moving his offspring from the river to the banks. The *Safohen* therefore led his people through the river to the other side of the river. The *Safohen* then resumed his human form to join his colleagues.

The Ankobea *Asafo* therefore perceived the Alligator as an important animal that is worth displaying as part of their visual documentation. Kweku Mbra and Kweku Petse elude that the Ankobea *Asafo* like the Wombir *Asafo* can fight fiercely both on land and in water bodies. It is therefore not strange that the amphibious creature serves as the background to the text ‘Ankobea No.1.’ They also said that the veranda of the first floor showcases two miniature Lions that are placed on short pedestals.



**Plate 35: The Image of the Lion**

They said the Ankobea *Asafo* is likened to the enormous strength of the Lion. Hence their appellation stated earlier. As the Lion of the town, neither the Fantes nor other *Asafo* groups dare trespass or engage the Ankobeafo in a battle.

## Architectural Symbolism

The architecture of the Ankobeafo *Asafo* Company Post has a unique expression of the replica of the abode of the tutelary shrine of Edina. This Post has an aerial view that looks like a quadrant. This Post is the only completed type in Edina that showcases a dual view. Ankobea *Posuban*, with its distinctive colours of yellow and white, depicts one of the spiritual and religious connections with the Benya deity. Like the Post of the Wombir group, that of the Ankobea has the first and second floors of the same dimension. These floors represent the interior spaces in which religious, social, executive, legislative and judicial responsibilities and functions are performed. They provide verandas on which members of the group do repair after the days' work. These, verandas, possibly, provide the Ankobeafo the opportunity to undertake surveillance over the Edina Township. The third floor makes available a large space on which social and recreational as well as security activities are duly performed.



Plate 36: **Benya Shrine (Bow and Arrow Fixed on Top)**

The dome that forms the upper portion of the Post is a replica of the Benya shrine (*Domo Buw*). The dome sits on the middle of the third floor. Significantly, it represents the spiritual force of the group to resist all external



forces such as the strong army of the Fantes and other supernatural forces of both the seen and unseen. The dome as the spiritual pivot of the community has the propensity to survive all external pressures and stress as a result of its curvilinear rendition and nature. The dome assumes a scientific significance of redirecting concentration of sunrays and their subsequent heat creation towards the larger atmosphere or environment. Ironically, the replica of this Benya shrine acts as the major spiritual forces with which the spiritual, medicinal, military and moral responsibilities of the Ankobea and the Edina peoples are ensured. Symbolically, domes ensure the security of persons and materials. It acts as the defense shield that wards off external pressures that could be the enemies of the Ankobeafo and that of Edinaman. The dome ensures the continuous survival of the Ankobea Company and that of the Edina traditional area even today. As a spiritual shield, the wall of the dome and the verandas act as protective mechanism that repels and redirects spiritual forces and other supernatural powers back to their adversaries. It becomes spiritually impossible for the Ankobea *Asafo* to become a source of target as opposed to that of the former *Asafo* Companies. Symbolically, the spiritual and physical appearance of the dome has a direct response on the activities of the Ankobeafo. Mark Aaba recounts:

the Ankobeafo were noted for their tactical performance in time of the numerous *Asafosa* that they encountered. As a spiritual group, their shrines acted as the foot soldiers as well as medicine men that provided magical supports and healing to their dieing fighters. These shrines in times of critical moments provided spiritual consultation and advice that lead to the success of the Ankobea *Asafo* Company.

These circular forms re-enforced the spiritual and physical resistance that the Ankobea group had and continues to have over the remaining *Asafo* groups in Edina and its environs.

The Post of Ankobea acts as the Headquarters and a place of call, where all Ankobea *Asafo* activities are initiated and terminated. The political will, military will and spiritual will of the officials and followers are conferred on them from this shrine. As the administrative centre of the Ankobea *Asafo* Company all policies concerning the running of the group are implemented from this source. Moreover the official administrative materials are all lodged in this Post. Amoako Mensah mentioned that:

the *Posuban* was built to house the Ankobea shrines, Ankobea *Asafo* paraphernalia and other objects of importance to the Ankobea group. that the Ankobea Post was constructed to ensure that all the *Asafo* properties that were with individual members could be housed under one single roof. This initiative was to prevent the loss of their documents and items as a result of death of a custodian, theft of one's property, or in the event of a member willing an *Asafo* property to his or her dependants, an act that may be deemed to be very grievous.

The Ankobea *Asafo* Post is a direct spiritual icon of the Edina people as well as the defense mechanism of the group.

### **ALATAMAN ASAFO No. 6 COMPANY POST**

The Alataman *Asafo* Company is the fifth group to raise the status of their *Posuban* into the modern type. Their ordinary *Posuban* was raised down to

make way for a modern and magnificent one that befits the group. This current Post that is not complete is located in Mmofa Akyeumu, a suburb that lies some few meters from Edina Bantoma. This Post is situated a few meters from the edge of the main road that runs through the town to Edina and other suburbs beyond. It is sited a few meters from the coastline and the shores of the town. The Post, as it stands now has an approximate dimension of eight meters length, four meters in width and three and half meters in height. This uncompleted Post is made from sand-crete blocks and concrete members. It has the steel rods visibly projecting off it. This structure has been raised to the concrete roof of the first floor awaiting the raising of the second floor. This Post is a proposed two-storey building that has large verandas to host the few sculpture pieces made to inform its members and the society about their history, achievements and exploits.



Plate 37: **Alataman Asafo No. 6 Company Post**

According to Kojo Esuon and Kow Esuon; young men who live nearby, the construction of this modern Post under the construction were motivated and initiated by Safohen Ato Dadzie who at that time happened to be the Chief

Executive Officer of the Komenda, Edina, Eguafo, Abrim District Assembly.

Kojo Esuon and Kow Esuon attested that the construction of the Post began less than a decade ago but came to a halt a couple of years later. They mentioned that the materials required for a completion of the Post were provided but the abrupt halt made some of them to lose some of items. They claimed members of the *Asafo* group provided the labour and materials like sand and stones needed for the construction of the Post.

Nana Kweku Awotwe a leading member of the Alatananfo *Asafo* approved of these submissions, but said members are considering drawing sand from the shores, stones from the quarries and impose some levies to see to its completion.

A close look at this uncompleted Post informs one of a combination of semi-circular, angular and flat plain shapes and forms into a complex whole.

The longest part of the structure faces the road as the frontage while the semicircle and shorter part forms the ends. Unlike the previously discussed Posts that are fixed in densely populated zone, this one enjoys a good amount of freedom from the sides and the frontage. The position of this structure lends it the opportunity to be seen from the left, the right and front. The Alatananfo *Asafo* parades in the colours of green and yellow. As their Post is not complete one cannot tell which colour could dominate the exterior of the building. Evidence could not be obtained as to the nature and type of symbolic images that would go along with the building to educate generations about the history, achievement and exploits of the Alatananfo *Asafo* group of Edina. Nana Kweku Awotwe reiterated that, the Alatananfo *Asafo* has few sculptures made to tell of their historic, heroic and humanitarian stories and that these sculptures have been stored in an apartment to be installed when their modern *Posuban* is



complete. He said these sculptured images were picked from some of their flag language.

## **Cultural Significance of Alataman Asafo Company Post**

### **Colour Symbolism**

Nana Kweku Awotwe intimated that:

Alataman *Asafo* has green and yellow as their main colours of identification. He said that symbolically reason for the choice of these green and yellow colours was as the result of their military exploits and the gold nuggets found on the *Mmofraakyem* beach. Additionally, sea shells, sand and stones ere mind on the *Mmofraakyem* beach for the construction of the Edina castle and the several forts situated in the Edina traditional area. Green and yellow dominated their outfit, as such they preferred specific wax prints printed in green and yellow colours, as such *Aban Nkaba*, *Ahaban Tetekuamoa* wax prints adopted as their uniform, flag were printed in green and yellow colours. Alataman *Asafo* flags and drums and other objects of importance were covered in green and yellow.

Egya Kojo Esuon (Safohen of Alataman *Asafo* No. 6 Company, Edina in August 2005) affirmed these facts stated by Nana Kweku Awotwe but also said that the choice of the colours green and yellow was as a result of their military exploits and worth. The choice of the names of the mentioned wax prints “*Aban Nkaba*” (handcuffs) symbolises power to subdue and arrest and “*Ahaban Tetekuamoa*” symbolises the military camouflage uniform. These choice was in recognition of their military and spiritual potency.

Studies revealed that this *Asafo* is spiritually and militarily powerful. They wield a lot of wisdom and knowledge and that made them excel in all their battles and physical encounters.

## Sculptural Symbolism

Nana Kweku Awotwe mentioned a few sculptural pieces that were part of their old but demolished *Posuban*. These were mostly figurative representation. They told stories of (i) the defeat and beheading of the

Anomabo warriors and the seizure of their drums by the Alataman *Asafo*,

(ii) The Enyampa Safohen's presentation of a piece of white calico and a barrel of gun powder to the Alataman Supi as a sign of gratitude and recognitions for their support in the battle involving the Enyampa and

Wombir *Asafo* groups,

(iii) The image of a dead bear being celebrated by pigs,

(iv) The drum decorated with the skull of the fallen Fante warriors and others

that constitute the major visual forms of their previous *Posuban*. Nana Awotwe

continued that the *Aketekete* drums are drums captured from the Anomabo

warriors and decorated with the skulls of the Fantes who took siege on Edina

and were overrun and conquered by the Alataman *Asafo*. This reminds

Alatamanfo of their spiritual and military prowess and superiority over the

Fante by *Edinafo*. These talk of the resilience and military control of Edina

towards the entire Fante (States) towns that professed taking Edina as their

vassal (state) town. Mention was made of the '*Aban Nkaba*' (handcuffs) print

shirts worn by their Supi and members as a sign of handcuffing and over

powering all the neighbouring *Asafo* groups into inactiveness and submission.

This symbol likened the Alatamanfo to the superiority of their European Master

who could subdue and suppress their neighbours through the use of the

handcuff. Nana Awotwe equated their spiritual extremism to the strange but

very tall spiritual image '*Samanta*' who could outsmart the drafts in their entire

mysterious endeavours to the Alataman *Asafo*. *Samanta* is recognized among

the Fante as a strange tall spirit that cannot be over powered by mere spiritual efforts. He said this image was adopted from their flag language that says ‘*Samanta wabɔ efu ɔsen Mmotsia tsentsen*’ meaning a hunch back *Samanta* is taller than the tallest dwarf. These are some images, which Nana Awotwe identified with their precious *Posuban* and anticipated could be found on the Alatamanfo magnificent Post that is under construction.

### **Architectural Symbolism**

The architectural setting of the Alatamanfo Post though uncompleted has the plan bearing semblance with the out lines of the skulls of their captives. This Post has the semi-circular portion representing for the top part of the skull whilst the jaw bones fit into the short angular portion of the building. The semi-circle is positioned towards the Fante towns. As a symbolic language to the Edina peoples, the exhibition of the skull at any time rejuvenated Edina’s total victory over their adversaries. Nana Awotwe reiterated that the skulls of the Fantes are so important to the Edina people that a number of them were buried on the fore court of the Benya shrine a spot popularity called ‘*Akyenaba*’. Although, the Post of the Alatan *Asafo* is not complete, the symbolic nature of it is much felt. Nana Kweku Awotwe made it bare that like all *Asafo* Posts, the first floor will be used as the shrine for their shrines and the office of the *Asafo* Komfo as well as a store room for some of their artifacts that include drums, flags, weapons and others. He stated that the top floor will be used as their meeting hall, a place where Executive, Legislative and Judicial services would be performed. The verandas will be a host to the few sculptures as well as an area for perusing surveillance by its soldiers.





Plate 38: *Alataman Asafo* No. 6 Company Post (Semi-Circular Portion of the Post)

### ENYAMPA ASAFO No. 7 COMPANY POST

*Enyampa Asafo* is the sixth *Asafo* Company to attempt the erection of a Company Post as part of the institutional development of Edina peoples. The *Enyampa Asafo* is one kind of Company that maintains three different spots as their points of call in the Edina traditional area. *Enyampa Asafo* is actually based in Edina Bantoma but has a pole (*Fesuban*) in front of the Maple Leaf Pharmacy shop on the Old Dutch Cemetery Street, specifically within the Chapel Square Area. This *Enyampa Posuban* is a few metres away from the *Ankobe Asafo* Post. One needs a critical look to identify this Pole that is raised on a low concrete dais. This *Posuban* although it is placed at a lower level of the floor surface, it also has an appreciable low wooden plank that measures about a metre. The pole has the usual black, white, red and blue colour combination arranged in a horizontal pattern. This Pole competes miserably with the various canopy poles that support the canopies of the Shops. This shrine is virtually consumed by the canopy poles that compete for the limited space



there. The second Enyampa *Posuban* (Pole) stands on the edge of the main road that runs through the Edina Bantoma. This Pole enjoys a great degree of prominence in the deliberation of the Enyampas' calendar. This is the actual recognized spiritual spot of the Enyampa Company, the spot where their *Asafo* activities start and terminate. This shrine although it is placed at a lower level than the road surface, has been raised on an appreciable high concrete dais that grants it the necessary recognition. This *Posuban* has a tall wooden pole that measures about one and half metres high and has the usual black, white and red colour combination set in a horizontal pattern. This pole is fixed into a white dais that measure about a meter square.

This shrine is situated in an open space that has no permanent structure that contests it like that of the chapel square. Possibly it is on this spot where the future modern Post of the Enyampa will be erected to commemorate their achievement and history

#### **ENYAMPA ASAFO No. 7 COMPANY POLES (*POSUBAN*)**



Plate 39: *Posuban* at

Plate 40: *Posuban* at Bantoma

### Chapel Square Area



Plate 41: **Enyampa Asafo Post at Bantoma**

#### **(Shrine House)**

The Enyampa *Asafo* Company is privileged with a third shrine that is sited in Bantoma. This is a single-storey structure located about fifty metres away from the *Posuban*. This shrine has very little prominence as compared to the first four Company Post previously discussed. It is a shrine house that serves as the abode of some of the Enyampa shrines as well as the storehouse of some of the Company's valuable objects and items. This Enyampa shrine measures approximately 250 cm in width, 500 cm in length and 300 cm in height. It is a sandcrete structure with smooth cement plastering surface, with both emulsion and enamel oil paint finishers. The Enyampa shrine is of the "*Pia Suban*" or the bedroom type. This is a normal rectangular form that is devoid of projections and recessions. It has single direction low tapering roof made from a corrugated asbestos sheet. This shrine derails the taste of the complex monumental expression that is usual with the Company Post that exists on the stretch of Fante towns. The door and windows are made from wood. The door to this shrine is

fixed to the end of the building rather than the edge, therefore making the inner space longer. The Enyampa structure displays the usual Company colours of black, white and red in vertical arrangement. The colour pattern goes round the shrine making it assume a fanciful and attractive look amongst the stretch of compound houses positioned around it. It has the text 'Enyampa No. 7 Company' printed in front of the shrine. This is next to the door-way. This shrine lays no claim to any sculptural forms. The Enyampa *Asafo* groups have the sole responsibility of providing the Edina Omanhen the needed security and protection required from the indigenes. It is from this group that the candidates for the Edinaman stool are selected and presented to the rest of the *Asafo* Company for approval and onward instalation ceremony.

### **Cultural Significance of Enyampa *Asafo* Company Post**

#### **Colour Symbolism**

Ironically, the colours of the Enyampa *Asafo* which are black, white and red are associated with their approach to conflicts and battles. Nana Kweku Awotwe intimated that the colour black meant the attempt at settling issues of conflict quiet and secretly between them and the *Asafo* Company in question. This symbolizes the Enyampa's readiness to make peace with its neighbours silently. The black colour according to the African symbolism is perceived as a period of silence, secrecy and darkness among others. Their shrines and ancestors are known to operate in the dark. It therefore makes it possible for them to intercede and mediate peacefully at all times regarding the settlement of issues and conflicts.



The white colour represents day, light, hope, visibility, clarity and perceived witness. The understanding of the use of the white colour meant if the Enyampafo, upon failing to achieve peace with its opponent under the quite, attempt involving elders of the state in their conflict resolution. This could be through the regular arbitration process that may include the use of their *Asafo* elders' or the *Kuwesuonhen* or *Atsekuwduhen* or the Omanhens' counsel. The Judicial Counsel of the town could be used to seek the necessary arbitration. These attempts make it possible for the community to assist or give hearing to the Enyampafo and their conflicting opponent. The symbolism behind the colour white meant making peace with all groups at all times. After all persuasions and amicable attempt have failed to make the Enyampafo *Asafo* and her opponents to be at peace, they therefore resort to battle it up.

The red flag is hoisted to invite their opponents to test their strength at 'Sakesedo'. The red colour is used to express their frustration and anger at issue.<sup>149</sup> To the Fante Akans of Ghana the symbolism behind the red colour represents grief, aggressiveness and attempt at achieving greater heights.

### **Sculptural Symbolism**

The Enyampa *Asafo* Company has no single sculptural form that constitutes part of their shrine house. The Company has no super structure that provides them the necessary space for the exhibition of the visual history of their past events and exploits. According to Nana Kweku Awotwe since the main ancestor of the Enyampa *Asafo* is the founder of the Edina traditional area, they had in mind raising the replica of a hunter to represent Kwa Anamkwa the hunter who founded Edina. In addition they desired raising an image of a chief priest to signify that it is from the Enyampa *Asafo* that the chief of Edina



is selected. Since the chief Edina is the head priest of the Edina traditional area it is very appropriate to have such a replica as part of the anticipated Enyampa *Asafo* Post

### **Architectural Symbolism**

The Enyampa shrine is a typical shrine house that serves as the abode to some of the shrines of the Company. This serves as the spiritual spot where the Company's Officials perform the necessary rituals needed to keep the growth, protection and spiritual balance of the group and community.

Invocations and pacifications are performed from this house. The shrines and ancestors of the group are offered their spiritual and physical meal in this shrine before the celebration of Edina '*Bakatuei*' and Edina '*Bronya*'. The external look of this structure reflects the indigeneses association with the colouric fishing boats cabin and canoes that abound at the shores of Edina. This in effect reflects on the aesthetic representation of the various drinking spots that are dotted on the streets shores of Edina.

## **AESTHETIC APPRECIATION OF EDINA ASAFO COMPANY POSTS**

The creation of Edina *Asafo* visual forms from the inception of the independence of Ghana has been a matter of strict philosophical discourse especially within the conceptualization of forms in the African perspectives. The *Asafo* artists and the *Asafo* leaders of Edina have till date remained in the African frames of conceptualizing their divas and deities who are held in high esteem for the spiritual force needed to balance the community in all spheres of

human endeavour, psychologically, spiritually, religiously, economically, socially, morally and in matters of good governance which affect both the family level and that of the community. The rendering of person of significance bigger in the *Asafo* visual language has been a matter of importance in relation to the role and responsibilities attached to the office of the *Asafo* Companies. Like the Egyptian philosophy of form that gives much prominence to the Kings followed by the Queens and down to the Subjects and Slaves in their compositions, the *Asafo* artist, *Asafo* connoisseurs and *Asafo* Officials who are behind these visual histories followed these Philosophies of Personality.

The principle of elevating people of high importance has been a practice with the African from their early days. It is no wonder the people of Edina are hooked to some of the principles of ancient Egypt which happened to be the centre of the world civilization and knowledge. The Posts of the Wombir, Akyem and Abese *Asafo* Companies replicate this Principle of Personalities. The Akyem *Asafo* portrays the image of Kwamina Essilfie a little beyond the normal life size. This figure is placed on a taller dais than that of the remaining forms. Outright encounters with the Post inform one of the significance of the office of the Supi as their Army General and also the Commander-in-Chief of the Company. As the most prominent image of the composition much emphasis and details are offered it, making it assume the importance due him. This expresses the level of importance that the Akyem *Asafo* creative minds attach to the office of the Supi as their most revered living legend.

The Akyem *Asafo* depicts the bearers of the *Asafo* deities as the next images of importance as the Company's form unfold. These images are much lesser in size than that of the Supi. The bearers of these deities '*Akontsebiw*' and '*Akyem Kofi*' are made bigger than those of the *Asafo* guards or members that

form the back roll of the composition. The composition on the Abesefo Post has a similar response to this Principle of Personality. The image of the Supi is pictured big almost beyond the live size. The *Asafo* Akyere is slightly smaller in size to that of the Supi. The conveyers of the Abese deities are made smaller than that of the *Asafo* Akyere but bigger than the *Asafo* guards or fighters. The Post of the Wombirfo, like that of the Akyemfo and Abesefo, has the image of the Supi modeled to live-size. This image is rendered bigger than all those *Asafo* subjects and folklore that say a lot in the *Asafo* visual history. Close look at images that stand behind the Supi are presumed to be of the same dimension possibly because they bear a similar status. The bearers of the *Asafo* deity, the *Asafo Komfo* and the images of Atta Panyin and Atta Kaakra who are all of spiritual icons are projected to the same status. This confirms the *Asafo* regards for the unseen and supernatural powers that are behind the achievement and victories of the Company in respect to their foot soldiers and lower officials who are made smaller to affect their significance.

In spite of these the Wombirfo rendered their Master drum; image of the founder of their Company, and gong-gong player all modeled to about live-size. Those guards dressed in the Colonial Police apparel are also of lifesize. The subjects who feature on these Company Posts are treated to reflect that of the Ancient Egyptian principle of making subjects to be of the least size as their responsibility narrows. As practicable as it is the Ankobea *Asafo* never envisaged making this principle applicable in terms of human forms in the recording of their visual history. Ankobea preferred animal and man-made representation to human form, since the former require no status identification as a measure of recognition. On the contrary, the presence of the Lions on the

first floor of their Post ring a loud bell in the philosophical interpretation of history.

In spite of the fact that human forms played no visible role in the documentary of the Ankobea history, the imagery of their (human) activities were firmly behind the forms that told the story. Ankobea's technical responsibility of reconstruction or the construction of the *Benya Buw* culminates the exposition of the replica of the shrine as part of their Post. The Edina *Asafo* Companies in their visual account made the necessary use of all visible forms as their process of representing their past for the present and future generations. These could be explained through the introduction of the various Cannon guns and balls the wall Clocks, the Vessels, the Bow and arrow, the Padlock and Keys and other Western objects of Colonial closeness. Aside the extent of amity that existed between these cultures, the impressions on the Edina *Asafo* creations clinched to their African aesthetic principles. Most of the images were presented in Frontal postures. Superior images, subjects, animals and man-made objects appeared in frontal pose. These impressions created the required and needed attention expected of the generation as a medium of communication with events of the past years. Exemption could be offered to the Post of the Wombir *Asafo* where the illustration of the Gong-gong player, the Mermaids and the Equestrians are set in profile and three-quarter views respectively. With respect to those figures mentioned above all the other forms on the Wombir Post are represented in the frontal view.

The Akyem *Asafo* Post and that of the Abesefo are close to a complete reflection of the frontal expression of the Africanness of *Asafo* art. As objects of the *Asafo* shrine, leaders and members required the necessary responsibility of encountering the domicile of their Heroes Ancestor and the Deities in a more



sacred manner. Frontality created the needed attention that technically keeps the eyes of the onlooker focused on the object in place. This offers a level of deep spiritual concentration which created the bond of belongingness between the shrine objects and the subject (viewer). A careful look at the images of the deity bearers and the *Asafo Komfo* reveal a pragmatic attempt at concentration on the essential parts of the human form that inform one of their spiritual channels to the shrines as well as their level of purity and innocence to immoral activities specifically sexuality. All three Company Posts that display human figures are associated with this principle. Much of the concentrations are found around the breast portion of the images irrespective of their gender.

The Wombir Post, in addition, has the images of Atta Panyin and Atta Kaakra having their upper body uncovered thus expressing their spiritual commitment with their supernatural powers. According to *Asafo Komfo* of Akyem *Asafo* nudity at the upper body of a priest shrine bearer enhances his or her spirituality. The *Asafo* artists in all their artistic expression managed to deal with forms within every level of human expression. Forms that were supposed to convey the folklore and mythology of the Company were expressed in the concrete representation of their visual and concrete language. The image of the 'Akyebeadua' and the Elephant on the Abese Post and the Mermaids and Adam and Eve on the Wombir Posts are no exceptions of these examples.

Edina *Asafo* creations assumed a dimension that peaks variance with the traditional African plastic of cubism, a principle that from all intent is known to influence the Modern art of the Western World. *Asafo* artists of the season resorted to the production of very real and naturalistic forms that informed all its admirers on the extent of realism that has been with us since the creation of man. Realism in these Company Posts is achieved firstly through the direct

version of representation of men, animal and man-made objects in their true sense of form. These images represents the realistic treatment of these forms and their natural character, devoid them of the steam of distortion and misrepresentation. It is notable that, the Akans of Ghana has from period past perfected in the representation of their Ancestors, Kings, Queens and certain important persons in these vain of impression. The funeral heads of the Asantes are typical examples of such realistic creations of the Akan forms. Impression on insignia of offices; belt hooks, button and others found on the *Asafo* guards of the Wombir *Asafo* Post, the Padlock and Key and the Bow and Arrow found on the Ankobea *Asafo* Post and the replica of the Helicopter and Canon of the Akyem *Asafo* Post are classical manifestation of the extent of realism of the *Asafo* artist. Nevertheless, the expression of the Spirit regarding order which may be deemed as a second version of African realism as referred to by Okpeuho (Nigerian writer) enjoins the former in the impregnated deity forms that appears as part of the composition. These images, though real in their representation may be the true communicated forms that transcend from the spirit upon which the forms are created for. The *Asafo* artists are in all intent the spiritual work tools through which the actual and real forms of these supernatural powers are represented.

Edina *Asafo* art has slight perceptible correlation between them and the ecology from which it germinates. The communities within Edina are strictly organic environment that is made up of sea and forest products. Activities from these environments engulf vigorous services that require maximum energy and fitness. The shore of these fishing communities' projects fully densely populated environments that create compactness and tension of human endeavours. Inevitably, the activities of these fisher folks make the men usually

stand to perform their daily chores. With the exception of the *Asafo Akyere* in the Abese collections, who is seated, the Posts of Wombir and Abese have their first floors packed with activities that reflect the upright creations. Edina as a forest environment, may have influenced the enmesh erectness of the *Asafo* collection of the Akyem, Abese and the Wombir groups. The correlation is that the thick and tall standing vegetations have direct effect on the figurative representation constituting the composition. Ankobea Post is no exemption of the environment that they belong. The statues of the Cock, the Lion, the Cannon and Padlock and Keys that stand erect attest to the postures of the vegetation.

Possibly, these ecological effects in the *Asafo* Post might have prejudiced the Enyampa *Asafo* Post at Bantoma to receive the vertical stripes of the Company's colour all around it. Warm and vibrant colours found on the fishing vessels and canoes located on the shores of Edina mimic on the various *Asafo* Companies' Post and poles. The fishing trade prides in the vibrant colouration of the fishing vessels are a mark of easy identification on the seas. These identification marks, from time past have been transferred onto the shrine spots of these *Asafo* Companies. Like the flags and sails poles and side walls of their fishing vessels, the various *Asafo* Posts and Poles have their individual chosen colours that distinguish one Company from the other. The flags and the banners that are displayed and hoisted on these *Asafo* Headquarters are of good semblance to that of the fishing vehicles. Until recent past, most *Asafo* groups engaged in fierce battle for a mere imitation, choice or reproduction of one's adopted colour(s).

Simplicity of sculptural forms is one fact that is undeniable with the *Asafo* artistic creations. Most of the forms that parade on the façade of Edina *Asafo* Company Posts have little of complexity and twist and turns. Most figures

are pictured in straight, simple, smooth and round forms that deviate from *contra posto* and a super fluidity of superficial rendition. Legs are planted straight and hands usually angled to the body or their attachment. Like the plastic forms of the forest regions that provide much caution to the detachment of the limbs of their figures, the creations of the *Asafo* artist have a similar response to the material limitations of these wood carvings. The *Asafo* concrete forms have their upper limbs usually angled to their truck or to the objects that they carry; such as the carriers of the deities, spiritual items, the guns, swords or knives. As freestanding figures, the images of the three Supis' who are in front of the various Post depict them as holding the sword that is free from any attachment. The various buildings associated with these *Asafo* Companies are relieved of heavy and elaborate ornaments and geometric relief modeling. The *Asafo* artist did not consider the reliance of long relief bands as the means of creating the needed stories of the *Asafo* Companies. Instead the *Asafo* artists depended mostly on the use of single figures or man-made objects and subject matter to form their basic composition and documentation. On the contrary, the architects of the *Asafo* Post incorporated the use of geometric banisters as a measure of providing decorations on the buildings. These decorative banisters that formed the walls of the verandas produced a break of the monotony that existed from the flow of the plain smooth walls of the Post. Invariably these banisters that provide another level of aesthetic uniqueness to these *Asafo* shrines could be related to some of the Asante shrine houses that have been discussed earlier. The *Asafo* artists managed the process of informing their community through the individual free standing figures that made up the *Asafo* history of the past. Even though they preferred the single free standing type of forms as opposed to



the group and interweaving ones. They combined these individual forms to create the very *Asafo* stories that the *Asafo* members encountered

The collections of forms that constitute the Edina *Asafo* Post were made to represent the community's wealth in the social and military services needed to foresee the continuity of the community. These *Asafo* sculptures that are of cultural 'master pieces' are community oriented. The indigenes of Edina accept and associate wholly with these Posts. It has become obvious that Historians and Cultural researchers who wished to take snapshots of these cultural 'master pieces' are deemed as encroachers on the cultural heritage of the Edina people. The community and its people, jealously guard against these treasures.

It could be said that the *Asafo* artist and their prestigious European connoisseurs and all elite indigenes that were involved in the promulgation of Western education and culture through the Colonial machinery indoctrinated the Edina people into second class Europeans. These affected the quality of architectural, sculptural and paint representation of the *Asafo* history of the present. The strict mixture of the cultures, concepts and techniques of production during the era promoted a type of artistic revelation that until date has become the landmark of the indigenes.

The inclusion of the Contemporary African Arts into the indigene artistic tray affirmed the inter-cultural and inter-marriages of the Edina and her European lovers in the promotion and exploitation of the *Asafo* tradition, but yet the principles of monumentality of even smaller form into colossal perceptions still prevailed. Forms that were represented in their smallest dimension unfolded the events of the biggest dimension therefore creating a huge degree of importance. Deities that were represented as part of their history assumed massive

psychological outlook as the myth uncovering them required nothing but philosophical inclination. As small as the images of 'Egya Eku\, the 'Akyembeadua' and the Elephant all of the Abese *Asafo* Post, the 'Akontsebiw', 'Egya Obo\ and the Air crafts of the Akyem *Asafo* Post and the Padlock and Keys of the Ankobea *Asafo* Post were, they maintained their gargantuan postures in the minds of the indigenes. The same can be said of the Alligator-like and the Deer-like figures of the Wombir *Asafo* Post.

The initiation of Christianity as a Pseudo Religion to the indigenes religious principle and practices promoted the inclusion of certain Biblical themes as part of the *Asafo* collection. The occurrence of the images of Adam and Eve as part of the Wombir *Asafo* historical album is something that cannot be overlooked. These figures, that acknowledged the Wombir *Asafo* as the originators of the Edina *Asafo* identify with the Biblical elucidation of the First Generation of Man. It is understandable that the *Asafo* artist are able to fuse a bit of Christianity into the Traditional Religion to create a type of religious league that brings into line a perfect marriage between Traditional Religion and Christianity. At the period of the creation of these Company Posts some sketches could be made from Islam. The apparels of the Wombir and Abese Supifo, a typical war dress of the people of the Northern Ghana relates as such. One cannot refuse to notice that the Colonial regime engaged the services of the likes of the Northern ethnic folks, who clothed in 'Batakari'. These ethnic groups were known to be law abiding and very loyal.

These groups carried along their culture and certain spiritual icons. The *Batakari* is a war dress that has a great spiritual fortification that enhances physical successes. It is agreeable that at a time in history Edinaman specifically after her bombardment by the British, a indigenes Moslem rose to the thrown

of ruling. This chief settled in the area now popularly known as ‘Ayesa’ a suburb of Edina. These account for the number of indigenes of

Edina who clinche to the Islamic faith. It is noted that the leaders of the Edina *Asafo* Companies journeyed to some parts of Nigeria to seek for spiritual fortification to influence *Asafo* activities and actions. These *Batakari* were decorated with magical objects such as Talisman, mirror, knives and others that could communicate with the wearer.

The aesthetic qualities of the Edina *Asafo* Company Post are the uniqueness that exists amongst the individual *Asafo* crew that is projected as part of their historic language. Variations in the individual structure and the aesthetic content that prevail in these Companies allow for originality and freedom of expression to stretch events and situations to their fullest. Edina *Asafo* artist ensured the uniqueness that was demanded of them as the spirits of their deities and ancestors might have inspired them to perform accordingly. The artist in all his intent duly put together the various cultures which are different but forms the basics of the *Asafo* history of yesteryear in today situation.

## CHAPTER SIX DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### INTRODUCTION

Historic facts hold empiric view that the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts are the key objects in the dispensation of the *Asafo* lineage of the Edina people. The *Asafo* Posts have remained as the seat of authority of the individual *Asafo* groups, since their creation in Edina. These Posts are the centres where decision making and their implementation and monitoring take place. Like the castles of the colonial era, these *Asafo* Posts assumed the custodianship of traditional political power and places where members could be sanctioned or apprehended

for wrong doing as well as for non-complaint of the custom and tradition of these *Asafo* groups. Military activities and decisions were always initiated from these Posts therefore making them the military pivots of the individual *Asafo* Companies. They are also the official headquarters of the very *Asafo* Companies who host these magnificent types as well as those Companies who still maintain their *Posuban*. It has been established that any Edina *Asafo* Company that makes no claim to any spiritual spot as its converging point cannot be recognized as such. It is therefore revealing that the people of Edina attach much importance to their *Asafo* Company Posts as a source of traditional authority and power.

Visual records have been adjudged as one of the media through which all cultures of the world have used to preserve their past and present events, activities and achievements for tomorrow's generation. Architecture, sculpture, painting and also graphical presentations have been some of the major channels through which information and education have been transferred to other generations and cultures. In Ghana today, the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts have become some of the cultural relics that cannot be brushed aside with ease. These cultural icons have part of the repositories through which the *Asafo* traditions have been well captured by the artist of the era. They also serve as part of the major exhibits of Edina's relationship with her European partners as well as the various Europeans who preyed Edina as a semi vassal state that they acquired psychologically but not militarily. Historically, these *Asafo* Posts of Edina also express Edina's relationship with its neighbouring towns that were the Fanti states. Edina's alliance with the Asantes could be well sought from the underlining facts that informed their various wars with the Fantes. There is no



doubt that these *Asafo* Posts have become the living records of the Edina people and their past traditions, exploits and achievements.

Edina *Asafo* Posts, in their quest to become the repositories of their history, also became the storehouses of the shrines of the individual *Asafo* deities which were or are associated with the various *Asafo* groups. Most, if not all, *Asafo* deities have their effigies stored in these *Asafo* Posts. It therefore makes it possible for them to be invoked and or pacified at all times. Additionally, the *Asafo* Posts by themselves serve as shrine houses for their members and officials. Members can therefore visit their *Asafo* deities through the *Asafo* Posts. These Posts are therefore viewed as shrines. It is therefore forbidden for people to visit and perform certain unaccustomed activities that may be deemed as taboos to the Companies. *Asafo* Posts of Edina have spaces created to store the Companies wares and small equipment that are of great value to them. These in effect prevent their loss and also the wrongful possession and bequeathing of *Asafo* properties to dependants. The *Asafo* Company Posts of Edina have strong rooms where important objects are kept.

As the cultural relics of the Edina people, the *Asafo* Posts have become a source through which the activities of the *Asafo* groups are transferred to other generations. Information on the activities of the *Asafo* groups is registered visually on these Posts therefore making it possible for visitors to access. Additionally, the Posts act as a medium through which the society is educated on the exploits, achievements and experiences of the *Asafo* Companies. The Posts also act as store of knowledge from the Companies to historians, archeologists and other researchers who visit these shrines for academic reasons or purposes. Also the *Asafo* Posts and their adjoint artistic representation communicate effectively to the unlooking public about the *Asafo* Companies.

Skills mentoring, talent nurturing and mastering could be obtained through these *Asafo* Company Posts of Edina.

The *Asafo* Posts of Edina act as the shrines and the storehouses of the shrines of the *Asafo* deities. These Posts offer the *Asafo* members the opportunity to seek for spiritual fortification from their deities in the form of protection, insurance and prosperity investment in their trade and vocation. Rituals are performed during pregnancy, child birth, maturity and death. The death of a Company's members may call for certain funeral rites that are exclusive of that particular group. In addition to the spiritual fortification of the members, certain pacifications are made for continuity of life and survival of members and their dependants. Also, certain rituals were required of certain *Asafo* groups in times of Edinaman's festivals and *Asafo* festivals. The priests of these various *Asafo* Companies are offered offices in their respective *Asafo* shrines to attend to the *Asafo* deities, officials and members.

Spiritual fortification is one of the critical manifestations of Edina *Asafo* exploits, achievements and experiences in their relations to their neighbours and European partners. *Asafo* activities were never complete without magical and mystical charms. Officials were fortified at times imbued with charms that made it necessary for them to perform leadership and military roles to the best of their Companies and Edina. Construction of the Edina *Asafo* Posts and Poles required the planting of a medicine mound underneath, and that sought to provide them the necessary spiritual potency needed to make them spiritually alive for the running and maintenance of the Companies. *Asafo* in the past thrived on magic, charms and sorcery and that most of them could travel to the northern part of Ghana and also Nigeria to acquire charms and other spiritual forces that made them spiritually powerful to pursue, turn and unturned all

situation. These powers could make them vanish or invisible and appear or reappear elsewhere. It also made members turn into certain creatures that were difficult to identify. These charms could make *Asafo* officials communicate effectively and spiritually with animals and certain dangerous creatures. Leaders and members procured apparels and objects that made them to sensor and or to communicate and also repel certain spirits, weapons and harmful objects from attacking them. Gymnastics and physical fitness are some activities that were pursued by *Asafo* activists. These physical exercises when well practiced make the members mentally and physically active and strong for all activities. Most *Asafo* activities require the necessary fitness to see them through the necessary physical activities. By going through these fitness tests, the members become physically strong to pause other economic and commercial functions that go to improve the financial well-being of the members. This makes it possible for members to have enough resources to undertake educational and wealth creation pursuits. Life time philosophy professes good health and maximum medical attention for all mankind. The Edina *Asafo* Posts, which have resident *Asafo* Priests, usually perform the role of health posts where members of the groups could go and seek traditional medical attention from the resident medical consultant who happens to be the priest of the shrine. Traditionally, indigenes visit witch doctors, medicine men and herbalists who own or operate shrines for medical assistance. The Edina *Asafo* Posts are therefore some of such medical outfits where members and indigenes could consult for good health and the sustainability of ones life. Members visiting the Posts for medical purposes would contribute in cash and kind for the upkeep of the shrines, hence contributing to the welfare of the Company Posts and well-being of the *Asafo* Priests. In effect it is prudent to

say that, the Edina *Asafo* Posts have the interest and welfare of the *Asafo* members and their investment at heart by providing them with the necessary security and assurance to good health, longevity of one's life, prosperity and the continuity of the survival of the society. The Edina *Asafo* Company Posts and Poles are the spiritual backbone of the Edina people and Edina traditional area.

Economic exploits have remained one of the major activities of the people of Edina, as such it was long established that their involvement in the economic marriage with the early Europeans made it possible for the Europeans to pitch camp with them. The Edina *Asafo* Posts have unofficially become part of the man-made culture edifices that for some time have attracted some level of cultural tourism among the locals and foreigners who make vacational, educational, funeral and commercial trips to Edina and its environs. Economically, persons who make such visits to Edina to glance at these indigenous military headquarters for personal or institutional documentation may be illegally cashed upon by certain locals. These locals who may unduly harass visitors may take undue advantage of their ignorance to create some financial gains for themselves but to the detriment and deprivation of the *Asafo* Posts. The *Asafo* Posts of Edina are economically self sustaining, in that their proper regularization into the tourism bracket could enable them to generate the needed financial gains that are tripling into private pockets. This could turn the Edina *Asafo* Posts into a major source of job creation in Edina. Each *Asafo* Company could have some of their members offered adequate professional training in the area of tour guarding and tour management. Such trained tour professionals will be able to inform, educate and assist tourists on the activities of the individual *Asafo* Companies. Such formalized institutions and



personalities may be able to help document the *Asafo* activities as well as offer assistance to both local and foreign researchers who may wish to research on the Edina *Asafo* Companies and their culture. Maintenance on these *Asafo* Posts may require the services of masons, painters, carpenters, sculptors and other artisans who may either be indigenes or inhabitants of Edina. Such persons may make some financial gains from the Posts. Such gains may go a long way to support the artisans and their dependants. Additionally, *Asafo* members who command great skills in *Asafo* performances could be made to stage *Asafo* gymnastics to organized groups of tourist at specific or regular intervals on their spiritual sites within the year. Also members and artisans could be commissioned to replicate *Asafo* artifacts and miniatures of the Posts, flags, banners, staves and others. Productions such as video clips, postcards, stamps, photographs, posters could be made from the *Asafo* Posts for sale. Additionally, *Asafo* apparels like hats, caps, headgears, shirts, shorts, and ‘T-shirts’ could be produced for display or for sale to visitors or as souvenirs. These souvenirs could be put on display in the various *Asafo* Posts. These economic activities will be able to create employment for the indigenes and members of the individual *Asafo* Companies. More so, the *Asafo* Companies could occasionally stage artistic performances of their forefathers’ successes at wars and also at humanitarian services. These could include saving the drowned, searching for the drowned, searching for the lost in the forest, delivery of women from the attack by enemies and others. They can also stage performances such as guarding their superiors all times, at their premises and at their Headquarters.

As the saying goes there cannot be an *Asafo* Company without *Asafo* schematization. Edina *Asafo* Companies are noted for their inspiring artistic performances that generate energy for social, economic, and political activities,

Edina *Asafo* Companies are required by tradition to provide entertainment and performance on occasions where their members are being commissioned, enstooled, ordained or celebrating birth, maturity, marriage and death rites. Individual *Asafo* Companies have certain traditional processes that deceased members are taken through before their burial. Corpse of death members are sent to their Post for certain religious rituals to be performed on them. This process calls for some artistic performances some of which may re-enact the deceaseds position and role played during his or her life time. Member groups could perform art forms for the entertainment members of their community. In the past, individual *Asafo* Companies performances were done as a measure to evoke the spirits of their ancestors and deities before specific activities or functions were pursued. *Asafo* performance and entertainment included flag dances, singing, yelling, crying, recitals, and dirges. *Asafo* matching, schematics and other rendezvous require energy and high intake of alcohol. In addition magical and mystical displays were made part of the Edina *Asafo* Company's performances.

Today, the Edina *Asafo* Companies and their Posts demand appreciation, admiration, adoration, acclamation and allegiance from the Edina community.

## GENERAL DISCUSSIONS

### EDINA ASAFO POSTS IN TRANSITION: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Edina *Asafo* Companies from the days of Egya Assem (originator of Edina *Asafo*) had played a major socio-political role in the cultural development of the Edina traditional area. As a mentoring and monitoring institution, Edina *Asafo* Companies did not only develop their own leadership and communicative skills, they also pursued a strict human resource and community development through the protégée of Egya Assem and successive leaders of the various *Asafo* groups that emerged. These cultural characteristics saw the development of physical structures, economic policies, intellectual capacities, psychological, social, emotional, spiritual and holistic symbolism of the way that the *Asafo* Companies existed in Edina. An attempt at building up the spiritual, holistic and religious possibilities of the *Asafo* concept in Edina, temples, shrines and thin relics were put in place to forestall the achievements of their shrines, heroes and other forces that they required of their protection and services in all times. Invariably, these forces and spirits were housed in the temporal abode popularly called ‘*Posuban*’ or the Poles; a structure that graduated into what is now popularly called ‘*Posuban*’ or the Posts. The present day Edina prides in four *Asafo* Posts; magnificent complete cement structures which speak greatly on the cultural exploits, achievements and language of the very *Asafo* Companies in question. In recent past and till date, most of the *Asafo* Companies in Edina are

attempting putting up similar magnificent Company Posts to be able to exhibit and market the past glory and history visually and physically. Thanks to the Dutch Government and their Embassy in Ghana who through the Edina Cultural Heritage Programme is refurbishing the existing Company Posts, complete the uncompleted one and also provide one each for those Companies who do not have. These proposed ones would be based on the designs, the history and aspirations of the people. In recent past, the Company Posts and Poles of the various *Asafo* Companies acted as the spiritual spots through which the various spiritual and religious rituals were performed and kept. These shrines have assumed monumental religious and spiritual stature through the minds of the society and its members. One dares approach these spiritual centers with items of abomination and spiritual unsanctity that show no purification to the shrines and the spirits of these shrines. Shrines of these *Asafo* Companies had therefore become a 'no go' area for all persons who had no spiritual connection with the *Asafo* Posts and *Asafo* groups. As such the spiritual potency of these Posts and Poles were very much perceived and assumed by all *Asafo* faithfuls, indigenes of Edina and all people who reside in the traditional set up of Edina. As spiritual centers of the various groups, all children of non-performing *Asafo* association and alien children of non- indigenes were prohibited from attending to usual child adventure on these shrines. Mark Essilfie stated that:

the *Posuban* of the *Asafo* Companies are spiritually fortified that in times past, women who could not give birth could invoke the shrines of the shrine to intercede on their behalf for their needs. Also traders' and tradesmen could insure their trade and wares with these shrines therefore ensuring them the needed protection for good sales for their trade and ventures.

Possible, reliance on the spiritual potency of these shrines helped promote a continuous survival and growth of the society and the *Asafo*



generations. It is therefore remarkable that spirituality among the people of the Edina tradition had grown to a height measurable to nothing. The emergence of Christianity is another spiritual force that helped shape the spiritual being of the Edina *Asafo* Companies and their people on both sides of its standing. Christianity might have introduced a critical faith that moved the hearts of the Edina indigenes and their *Asafo* traditions.

Nana Kweku Awotwe reiterates that:

the Christian faith had redirected the *Asafo* extravagance into oblivion, thus making the indigenes loose their steam of *Asafoism* and *Asafo* tradition and the traditions of Edina that centers on good moral standards, good neighbourliness, the spirit of self support and support for one another and communal development.

In present times, *Asafoism* has virtually been relegated to the background in terms of State politics, social, and economic development of the Edina traditional area and Ghana. Today, the *Asafo* Companies are reduced to mainly cosmetic ceremonial traditional politics and traditional religious practices. *Asafo* Posts in Edina have now been assigned to only religious, ceremonial and tourist points and this may be attributed to western and eastern religious principles, modernization, urbanization, modern educational principles, western educational policies and their advent taste associated with them. Spiritual significances attached to these *Asafo* Posts in Edina are gradually loosing up to darkness. Though, Carl Max had said that “Religion is the opinion of the mind”, to the people of Edina, their religion constituted their soul. Nevertheless, the message of *Asafoism* in Edina might not be well carried home by the indigenes of today. Instead, religious skepticism and traditional barbarism might have taken the center stage of the youth’s thinking. This therefore made it extremely impossible for the youth to associate perfectly with

the *Asafo* traditions of their ancestors. Hence the cold attitude of the Edina youth towards their forefathers' most cherished traditions. Perhaps, the Edina youth of today needs some traditional help and inspirations to stay focus on what made their ancestors the spiritual icons of social order and balance. The *Asafo* Posts of today's Edina are nothing but part of the street furniture that stand to enjoy part of the social decadent metering its share on them. As the social order and systems collapse the *Asafo* Posts also found themselves collapsing accordingly. The society is known to offer security and defense mechanism and support for these icons, but they are the very person metering out cruelty and vices at them. Trivial factional conflicts and misunderstanding among *Asafo* groups lead to destruction of images and forms on Wombir *Asafo* Posts, an action of the Ankobea *Asafo* attacked on the Wombir *Asafo* Post. Youth vandalism which is characterized with Edina youth of today and the past has come to replace the numerous '*Asafosa*' that were indulged by the *Asafo* Companies in time past. Frequent destructions of these *Asafo* Posts have rendered them unattractive, meaningless and quite ordinary. Lack of regular maintenance, restoration, replacement and repainting of *Asafo* Posts is one measure that Edina *Asafo* Companies is meting out on their spiritual centers.

The *Asafo* Company Posts of Edina profess the future prospects of becoming prominent mini museums for showcasing the *Asafo* culture and paraphernalia that establishes their involvement with the Europeans, their individual creativity and their military exploits with some *Asafo* groups in and out of Edina. Elevating the *Asafo* Posts into Museum status could make them attractive for research purpose, for formal tourism calendar and to make the Edina *Asafo* activities known to Ghana and rest of the world. This move could help and or encourage those Companies who do not possess magnificent Posts

to provide one for their Companies. Edina *Asafo* Company Posts as Mini Museums would help educate and inform the society and students about their achievements and exploits. It will also serve as a store house where the principles, norms, customs and taboos of the *Asafo* Companies could be attained. This will help uphold and inculcate into the Edina children and youth of today and tomorrow lessons about their forbearers' treasures. Edina youth of today are not held responsible for the care and maintenance of the cultural standards of the town and that of the *Asafo* Companies and their Posts. Edina youth have total inclination to the environment and cultural structures that are highly schemed towards the social orders of ethical and good moral uprightness as well as emotions. Visits to the existing Posts reveal absolute lack of respect and honour for these spiritual sites. They have virtually become the centers where the youth converge to pursue amorous and romantic leisure and pleasures. Undoubtedly, due to perceived neglect for or the swing of the level of spirituality among the youth, about these sites, the youth cannot phantom the need to revere them as before. This therefore makes it possible for the youth to prefer these spiritual sites as the remedy for boredom. Presumably, these sites have become perfect replacements of the inadequacy of recreational centers that existed in these communities. The Edina youth of today, unleashes little or no loyalty to the existing *Asafo* Company Posts of their ancestors and forefathers. Much attention is not offered the Posts in order to provide them the needed protection and security required of these privileged ones that are positioned there. One may comment on the sheer apathy that exists with these youth especially with the care and maintenance of the *Asafo* Posts in respect for quest, refurbishment, replacement and painting of these shrines and their visual forms. Voluntarism which is to be



the hallmark of the *Asafo* tradition has virtually grinded to a halt. People of Edina origin residing in Edina deem it extremely painful in performing the very usual responsibility required of them by their ancestors. On the official visit of Ft. Lt. J.J. Rawlings to Edina on one of the annual '*Baka Tue*' festival reiterated that "*I never knew Edina to be such a filthy town and that even the cat provides the needed sanity for its livelihood*". The then President of Ghana did not see why the once patriotic town could loosen herself up to stench, filth and dirt. On 31<sup>st</sup> march 2006, the Ghana television evening news broadcast a signed agreement by the government of Ghana and Belgium government for the dredging of the silt and filth that has blocked the entrance and the bed of the Benya Lagoon, which makes it difficult for fishing boats and canoes to ply it. The Edina *Asafo* Companies could have performed this task if they had been very operational today. Edina youth have gradually lost up to the great patriotic essence that kept their society free from filth, diseases and disaster. In time past all men were made responsible for the social and emotional just of the community and environment. Environmental issues were not of the state but rather the individual *Asafo* groups that held the society up together. The Edina youth of today find patriotism as a physical and mental torture that eats them up of their selfish endeavors. A financial and material commitment that requires the high holdings of the *Asafo* traditions has become the issues of concerns with the youth. People of this generation would never raise anything to keep their ancestors spirits stay alive. In principle they may even rob the shrines of their due. A section of the youth in their attempt at jealously guarding their tradition prefers extorting rewards from the touring neighbours visiting Edina. Those who succeeded in obtaining these financial rewards employed them as their personal rewards from ancestors and the shrines of the shrines. Invariably these



rewards are not used to better these shrines and headquarters but for personal aggrandizement. Major Retired Courage Quarshigah, in addressing representatives of the

National Union of Ghana Students at an African-Isrealee seminar in the University of Ghana, Legon said ‘the youth have the crucial move to restore the lost cultural values of the tradition as the agents of change that could see the renewal on the socio-cultural situation of the society’.<sup>153</sup>

In this case it could be said that the Minister shares the opinion that the youth of the society have loosen contact with their social responsibility and that this has called for the much decay of the moral fiber of the society. It is evident that the philosophy of some Edina youth of today has shifted from those held by their forbears to another paradigm level, a level which is towards non dignifying of their *Asafo* heroes, ancestors and deities. Matthew Ashimolowo, reiterated that “*people who never look up to posterity never look back to their ancestors*”. It is therefore prudent for the youth of today to be sensitized on the positive sides of the social responsibilities of the Edina *Asafo* Companies of Ghana.

### **ASAFO POSTS AND URBANIZATION**

Urbiculture, has in recent past been part of the major factors that has engulfed developing states such as Ghana. In the past, Edina was a major town where social, commercial and economic activities prevailed vigorously. This attracted various types of persons and trade to the place. In recent times, due to the search for wealth, financial recognition and social standing, neighbouring villages and towns migrated to Edina to practice the fishing trade and adjoining

specialization. This requires the provision of some social services and infrastructure; housing, sanitation, portable water, health, financial houses and communication services that will meet the appropriate living standards. Urbanization, as a global fiber, generates certain unanswered questions and vices that may be contrary to cultural proponents and sustainability within the traditional set of the Fanti communities. Edina which falls under part of Ghana's poorest regions could not be cut from such underdevelopment and social and economic deprivation accompanying them. Urbanization as a social problem exposes prostitution and crime. It also introduces insanitation and its related health problems. This creates proportion of illness that ends up making the people poor. It makes the society to experience early death leading to the breeding of orphans, school dropouts and finally introducing social misfits, deviants', lawlessness and rise in crime. This cycle continues as the state finds it difficult handling such problems. Non-indigenes of Edina attitudes have infiltrated the town and these are not educative about the tradition, norms and customs of Edina and her institutions. Hence the non-compliance of Edina *Asafo* traditions and its corresponding lack of respect for the *Asafo* divas and deities. Strangers living in the towms do not contribute to the running and maintenance of these Posts and do not also revere them as cultural shrines of great importance. Urbanization and infrastructure development in Edina has not affected the physical positions of the *Asafo* Post. They still stand at their normal spot except that they are being congested by private buildings. The Enyampa *Asafo* Pole near the Chapel Square is an example. Urbanization saw the majority of the Edina indigenes drift to other regional capitals in search of greener pastures. The financial gains expected from these indigenes as dues and contributions could not be attained from them. This therefore contributed to the

neglect of the maintenance of the *Asafo* Posts in Edina. This also affected the construction of new magnificent *Asafo* Posts for the *Asafo* Companies who do not have any.

The Edina Cultural Heritage Programme is one institution that has arrogated to itself the responsibility of supervising the cultural upgrading of the Edina township, especially in the maintenance and provision of infrastructure services and amenities. In addition, this group see to the provision of certain social and commercial services that are of great value to the Edina people. The institutions' will is for the refurbishment of all existing four *Asafo* Company Posts in Edina. It will also see to the completion of Alataman *Asafo* Company Post in Nmofra Akyemu. In addition it will see to the erection of befitting Posts for those *Asafo* Companies who lay no claim to any magnificent Post. It is remarkable to include that this cultural institution has done extremely well in sourcing for funding from the Dutch Embassy for the upliftment of the Edina *Asafo* edifices that will also go a long way to educate, inform and preserve the *Asafo* Culture of the Edina People. This institution, sought to the creation and completion of Nana Kobina Gyan II's memorial monument and Pack that is sited near the Chapel Square. It also sought to the refurbishment of the Etsewa hall, the first Methodist church premises built in Edina. This hall that stands adjacent to the new Methodist church at the chapel square was named after Ewuraba Etsewa the first Methodist priestess in Edina. Lots of such initiatives are welcome since they will help register the history of the Edina people in stone and concrete forms. As a result of infrastructural deelopment and Edina town's beautification selected to meet challenging standards, the existing Posts had to be standardized to make them look uniform. The present state of the Wombir *Asafo* No.4 Company Post (plate 42) has the top two floors ripped off,

thus making them a two storey structure. This makes it loose its originality as a four storey building. The Akyem *Asafo* No.2 Company Post (plate 43) has also lost the original banisters that were used on the Post. Although the Post of the Ankobea *Asafo* Company (plate 44) has seen the final stage of its refurbishment, the original banisters designs were incorporated in its new state. The Abese *Asafo* No. 5 Company Post (plate 45) maintained the same structure as the original. Even though the reconstruction of the frontage remained the same, the design of the banisters along the concrete slab has a different look. Such replaced members make the current state of the *Asafo* Posts different.



Plate 42: **Present state of the**  
**Wombir No. 4 Asafo Company Post**



Plate 43: **Present state of the**  
**Akyem Asafo No. 2 Company Post**





**Plate 44: Present state of the Ankobea Asafo No. 1 Company Post**



**Plate 45: Present state of the Abesi Asafo No. 5 Company Post**

### **ASAFO POSTS AND MODERNITY**

Social and economic empowerments have been identified as part of the major turning points of man's life. As a matter of phenomenal change, people of previous traditions may have become extremely disassociated with modern ways of affecting issues of religion and traditions. They may be inclined to their past practices. Unique and innovative methods of attacking similar situations have become a matter of social and emotional contention. The youth of today's Ghana are virtually loosing up to what is termed vogue or modern. Some schools of thought deem this term as a strict or blind copying of foreign cultures, specifically Western taste, into our society. These may be preferred as modern and also superfluous to the basic traditional principles of the community. Though it is agreeable that no particular culture can exist without any other cultural intrusion or infusion, it may be noted that the heavy dependence on Western culture over that of Edina may be very unacceptable. Blatant indulging

of immoral, inappropriateness, and the romanticizing of opposite sexes openly are some practices that have taken over the consciousness of the so-called indigenous modernists. These activities are performed even at the doorsteps of these ever cherished shrines that hold the souls together. The partial disregards for cultural practices, norms, costumes and others associated with *Asafo* principles are one issue that cannot be contented with by people of deep traditional bearing. The need for social support services, good neighbourliness and the love for spiritual balance for the society informed the people of Edina to choose the *Asafo* principles as a major mark of moral standards. Elders in the community could apprehend all those who disregard the cultural principles irrespective of their parental lineage, social background and influence. Hence, this will make it extremely possible for the enforcement of traditional principles thereby establishing moral and social standards and uprightness of the society. Modernity as a new principle in the lives of the youth and people of Edina has taken an untold dimension and proportion on the activities involving the Edina *Asafo* Companies and their Posts. *Asafo* Companies Posts are perceived by the youth of today as a mere representation of Past glories that do not benefits today's people and that the *Asafo* Companies Posts by themselves are mere cultural proponents set up to promote cultures that are fast dyeing out of their importance. This projects the present Edina indigenes' negative attitudes towards the sustainability and marketing of the *Asafo* Posts. This also showcases their weak spiritual and aesthetic appreciation. Their quest for deviation and non-adoption of the traits and interest of the *Asafo* Company and their Posts reigns supreme. The Edina youth do not necessarily uphold the *Asafo* principle of religious concentration, spirituality and emotional fulfillment that are derived from the impressions of the shrine objects of their deities and ancestors. Edina

*Asafo* principles inform, transform and educate the society. It also helps to shape the moral and sexual impulses of the youth and society. The peak of *Asafo* practices saw the society being free from vices such as rape, illicit sexual acts, and teenage child bearing, and lazing about, lack of skills acquisition and family and social irresponsibility. In recent past Edina practiced the typical extended family system; an African family support system that saw to have supporting the have not. In recent past, the quest for Western nuclear family type is in vogue. This does not encourage love for the weak, support for the needy and passion for the dying.

Modern principles do give concentration to oneself rather than community. This averted poverty among the have not, misfits from the not supported. The haves therefore prefer lavishing what they have on themselves rather than the community. A modern social order permeates the *Asafo* traditions, thus creating abandonment and neglect for the social fiber of the *Asafo* system. Modernity as a measure of social acceptability for today's Ghana and Edina might have contributed to the development of knowledge and information about the Edina community and that of Edina *Asafo* Companies. Scientific development and modernity have not eroded the co-operate systems of today. Therefore emphasizing the marketability of the Edina *Asafo* Companies and their Posts is crucial. Production of *Asafo* performances into play backs and on videos and audio tapes and clips could help promote and also transfer the *Asafo* system to the youth of today both in Edina and elsewhere. Yesteryear's technology affected the make and look of these cultural edifices. Today's technology has another level of influencing the physique and outlook of the Posts that are undergoing reformation and transformation. Although, in the past Edina abounded in stone quarry that could provide the *Asafo* groups with stone houses,



they kept with their ancestral direction. The *Asafo* regime had passed through appreciable stages, thus the graduation of the initial '*Posuban*' thought '*Pia Suban*' to what is now the magnificent '*Posuban*' of all times. Although names are nothing to go by, scientific technology has impacted heavily on the indigenous structural performance and the transformation of the Edinal *Asafo* Company Posts of our time.

### **ASAFO POSTS AND MODERN RELIGION Christianity, Islam and Others**

The fifteen century saw the introduction of the Christian faith in Edina. This new faith used trade and Western education as a vehicle to attract the indigenes to their faith. This Christian faith was mainly of the orthodox type. This faith picked greatly against the traditional African religion of the indigenes, a practice that was seen as uncivilized. The traditional African Religion was unknown to the visitors; as such they perceived the indigenes as worshippers of objects rather than the spirit of God. The Edina indigenes' have '*Odomankoma*' as the creator of the Universe and '*Kwereampo Kwame*' as the beacon of faith and hope. The early Christians doubted whether the African understood the concept of God, since God is unseen and His worship demanded a type of faith which is psychological. As such Christianity did not require the use of objects as vehicles of worship. Christianity has moved from Orthodox to Presbyterian, then to Pentecostal and of late the Charismatic type. The last two groups deny of the use of images or relics of faith as points of contacts or saints who may act as mediators. In addition faiths such as Islam, Hindu, Buddhist and others have surfaced. Even though these have impacted,



they have had no immerse effect than Christianity. Christianity introduced the renaming and baptism of the indigenes with those of the Christian divas. Christian names became popular first names for Christian converts. Islam had a similar response. Renaming converts was the first step to disclose their new identity. This psychologically replaced the person's identity and replaced him or her into another realm or level that automatically offered him or her opportunity to deny him or herself of their religious origin and also approve of their sense of belonging in their new found religious treasure. This psychological warfare produces second class indigenes who are totally invariance with their initial religious beliefs. The second idea of renaming was to abrogate the mentioning of the names of their indigenes deities in the Christian domain. Africans, like any other traditional culture, have their indigenes named after their deities. It became necessary for the Christian leaders to ensure the change of their indigenes names with that of the Christian saints. The Bible affirms that names have a great influence on the lives of those who bear them. Therefore Christianizing Africans was in the right direction with the Christian passion. By this development, the indigenes therefore sought to reject their traditions and customs as well as social institutions such as the *Asafo* Companies. These make them adopt a disregard approach towards the *Asafo* Companies and *Asafo* Posts. Undertaking baptismal values, accepting Christ as a Personal Saviour and swearing for celibacy saw source the indigenes becoming Priest, Catechists and teachers of the Christian religion. This helped in the mentoring and nurturing of indigenous Christians. Islam has done the same to the indigenes. Matthew Ashimolowo, in his work 'Is The Black Race Cursed?' espoused that "*the Christian religion was started among the Kush and the Ethiopians but their love for paganism and idol worshipping made them to*

*loose track with the Christian religion, and that these people were the original black race*". The

Kush, the Ethiopians and the Sudanese were the original black race but the Arabian crusade on these lands has corrupted them to become Moslems.

Mensa A. Otabil in his work 'Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia' reiterated that *"the Black race was the first to promulgate the Christian religion, and that Christianity was not alien to the black people"*. There is no doubt as to how the Africans totally embraced the Christian religion. In recent times, Pentecostalism and Charismaticism are a new Christian culture in the Ghanaian and Edinia people. They seem to emphasise on Christ rather than other mediums through which the Almighty God could be reached. They forbid images and relics as medium of worship. This therefore had widened the crack that has been created between the Christian faith and that of the Traditional African Religion and *Asafo* faith. This might have contributed immensely to the neglect and the rejection of the *Asafo* traditions and *Asafo* Posts by the youth. Canta reiterates that:

the Pentecostal and Charismatic cultures in Edina has become so persuasive that today, one finds such churches all over Edina and even closer to the *Posuban* and that some of them are even applying to use the *Asafo* shrines as their churches.

Modern religious practices are perceived to be the major parasite through which the *Asafo* tradition has dwindled. Some Christian faith especially the orthodox ones recognized the *Asafo* institution as a preserve of the African lineage. Appointing officials of the various *Asafo* Companies who belong to these Christian sects offer mass to honour them for their appointment to such prestigious position of honour. Nana Kweku Awotwi recounts of a situation

where the Catholic Church honoured Supi Kweku Gyata with a mass on his appointment to the office of Supi of the Akyem *Asafo* Company of Edina.

Most members of the *Asafo* lineage are also Christian. Though Christianity has pushed the *Asafo* tradition to the extreme negative, there has always been a marginal midpoint that also addresses situations between them. As indigenes of Edina and as modern as they may be, most Christians are returning to the use of their indigenous names as first names and as surnames. This may be a sign of announcing their African, Ghanaian or Edina identity, something that was taken away from them in the past by adventurous Western Christians who were in to create identity crash and inferiority among the practitioners of the traditional African religion and the *Asafo* faithfuls on one side and Christianity on the other. Baptismal values on the part of the indigenes have grown immensely that majority of the *Asafo* members have had their membership virtually redrawn thus clinching to Christianity. This new wave has had a dwindling effect on the membership register of the *Asafo* groups, therefore leading to lack of support for the *Asafo* Companies and their Posts. There is no doubt that in today's generation able men and women cannot identify with the paternal grouping. Hence the lack of growth of the various *Asafo* institutions and their ability to provide their Companies with befitting headquarters for those who do not have the Post and maintenance support for those existing Post. Modern religion has shown some amount of biasness towards *Asafo* institutions and their headquarters of today.

## **ASAFO POSTS AND WESTERN ELITISTS' PHILOSOPHY**

The presence of the Western partners on the shores of Edina saw the introduction of Western formal education. This type of education, though with religious intent, infused a type of psyche, knowledge and knowledge bank that were required of the indigenes of Edina for the colonial administration. The Western partners needed the indigenes to perform certain administrative and public services, something which turned to be known as a White-Colour Job. Though the colonial administration required some degree of infrastructural and social amenities to get their aspirations and motives of the Western partners through, it was far cheaper to equip the indigenes to live up to this task. This therefore saw the springing up of basic and secondary schools in and around Edina. One cannot dispute the fact that most of the students of these schools found their Western instructors and leaders as their mentors and therefore adopted the first or surnames or both as part of their names or full names. This therefore made it possible for the people of Edina to have French, Dutch, Portuguese and British names as part of their new culture. These names included ones such as Van Dyck, Vroom, De Bort, Fritz, Dehear, Wilberforce, Warllington, Wartemberg and so on etc were adopted. Brilliant indigenes and servants of the Westerners who were able to prove their worth academically had the privilege of studying abroad specifically in Britain and America. The return of these people, the 'indigene elites', saw another breed of people who were neither full indigenes nor were neither full Westerners nor both. Some school of thought refers to them as bastardized Africans and illegitimate Westerners. These groups of indigenes had adopted certain Western tastes, interests and influences and those things that were typical of Africans sounded rubbish to them. They had total disregard for their ancestors



and deities of their ancestors and also the norms and traditions of their society. To them staging white was the ultimate. They preferred Christianity to the traditional religion of their fathers, even though their fathers understood and appreciated the concept of God perfectly. Those who were fortunate to pursue Christian religious education and had become Priest or Catechist helped to promulgate the Western Christian religion since they could communicate effectively with the indigenes. In effect these were the persons who also helped in making the traditional African religion quite unpopular among the Edina people. As well, these Catechist and Priest, like those of today, had always seen the *Asafo* tradition as backward, uncivilized and inhuman and that certain religious practices of the *Asafo* were unacceptable to modern religion and Christianity.

It was established that from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, when the policies of the Europeans were well enforced in Africa, much could not be done to suppress the *Asafo* traditions and their religion. In recent times, even as the Westerners do not have direct hand in the ruling of the indigenous, Christianity is known to be on ascendancy as the *Asafo* traditions decline. Though from recent past till date, Christianity has permeated heavily through the African traditions, it is interesting to note that a greater majority of the indigenes combine both the Christian doctrine and that of the traditional Africa religion. This in effect gives a convincing hope for the revival of the indigenous traditions and associations. In spite of the strong foreign doctrines and their influence on the people of Edina, a greater number of the indigenes are fast reclaiming their cultural originality and awareness. Indigenes are fast dropping their acquired Christian and Islam first names for their birth names or their indigenous names which makes them quite African. True PanAfricanism and

the quest for cultural awareness of the African people are fast gaining roots in Africa and in the Diaspora.

### **ASAFO POSTS AND ELITISM**

The educated folks who studied in Europe had adopted the strict queen's accent to the detriment of the indigenous intonation. Persons of these like had nothing to do with *Asafo* vocal language and dialect. Words were forcefully turned inside-out and exaggerated when their pronunciations were given consideration. They have virtually gone lost with their *Asafo* identity as much as possible. Their return to the shores of Edina unveiled their lost identity as Africans as well as *Edinafo*. In principle they were more alienated to their natural traditions than were anticipated. The worse of it is the corrupted version of their indigene names in both spelling and pronunciation. 'Bosoomtwe' became Bosomfeild, Nkwadua became Condua, Kofi became Kwofie (Coufie), and Kwesi became Quayson, Badu to Baidoo and lot more. In present day Ghana, the educated elites have very little to do with the Edina *Asafo* traditions and their Posts. Most indigenes of Elimina have perpetually negated their responsibility towards the *Asafo* systems to the background. They can be excused in that, in the past Edina *Asafo* used to be a mainly a fisher folk embodiment, in that Edina per say was and is a predominately fishing community. This therefore had informed all educated members to gradually stay aside their operations and manifestations. They therefore regard them as uncivilized and backward. Educated members refuse to act their tradition by simply attaching misfeelings and misrepresentation to their acquired western

knowledge as against their heritage. Today, indigenes of Edina are refusing their identity with the *Asafo* groups due to reasons such as seeing *Asafo* as backward, primitive, unlettered, unrefined, and unmodern and many more. These indigenes cannot sing, dance, interpret, appreciate and possibly associate with the *Asafo* activities and *Asafo* Posts. It is revealing that most of these elite indigenes of Edina do not put up or make themselves available for the high offices within the *Asafo* ranks. Those who offer acceptance to some prestigious *Asafo* offices in their various groups either by persuasions or duress eventually do not live up to expectation as a result of their disloyal legacy to the *Asafo* traditions. Nana Kweku Awotwe recounts of instances where *“installed Asafo officials refused to show up for Asafo ceremonies and operatives and that nothing compelled them to support the Asafo initiatives and others”*. This perhaps informs one about the version why some of the youth and some old folks are not able to apprehend the activities and aspirations of the Edina *Asafo* traditions. Canta reiterated that *“the youth of Edina are not enthused with the Asafo operations and that may be a recipe to the numerous social vices and decay on the land”*. Edina of today is not as militarous as it was in the past and this might have contributed to the lack of discipline at both the family level and that of the community. Modern educational trends in Africa and Edina do not enforce communal principles but rather individualism, self centeredness and greedy. Most educated persons are striving for personal recognition but not communal perfection. Since the spirit of *Asafoism* does not tow that line, it becomes impossible for people of today to align by the *Asafo* principles and *Asafo* aspirations. It is preposterous to note that in present times some of the elites of Edina for want of social recognition have adopted or accepted the higher office of *Asafo* Supi or Safohen and is bold on displaying

them as part of their God given or acquired titles. The most affected are the rich and affluent that can buy their way through the unlettered majority. Such persons might have the prospects in *Asafo* affinity; they profess the elimination of *Asafo* religions and ritualistic practices. Their requests are mostly on the martial demonstration, flag culture, garment fashion, songs, recitals and dances. Modern people of Edina origin who are affiliated to their roots seem to challenge and restrain the ritualistic and religions spiritualism of their *Asafo* Companies and Posts. They therefore referred to them as symbolic social institutions but with more traditional political responsibility. Canta inferred:

The Abese *Asafo* will be lunching out to identify certain prominent members of elite status of their *Asafo* lineage and confer on them certain prestigious titles such as *Asafo Akyere* and *Safohen* to encourage them to strengthen their Company. To him this move will help attract and enlist persons of enviable and high caliber status group, which will also help encourage further expansion of membership and the marketing of Abese *Asafo*.

In his view this could be emulated by other *Asafo* groups if it becomes successful.

### **ASAFO POSTS AND MODERN EDUCATIONAL POLICY**

The inception of Western education in Ghana has involved lots of policies most of which undermined the artistic and cultural proponents of the indigenes. From time past the arts of Africa were labeled with lot of negative connotation and indigenes were not encouraged to appreciate and associate with what was their own. Formal educational policies especially from Western partners were found to be discriminaatory and tailored towards the formalization of Western aesthetics and elements and principles of design. These preferred educational policies did not accept, appreciate and recognize



the African art philosophies as well as the content associated with these imaginations. One needs to be reminded that African arts were and are for religious or secular purposes and that the arts did not just exist as a measure of mere over zealous belly-full satisfaction. It is therefore established that, the arts of the African were not allowed to be studied in western styled schools as part of their academic curricular. By this African children were not fed with their arts. This was to take away from the indigenes their ability to absorb, develop and promote the traditional arts of their fathers. Invariably, this saw the implantation of foreign images, features, idols and mentors who were of the Caucasian identity. This policy, established the principle of white supremacy over that of the indigenous ones. A policy that till date has managed to affect the psyche of the African, Ghanaian and Edina people, in that everything white is the ultimate, superior and best whilst all African ideas are inferior, bad taste, grotest and more. This Western psycho-educational policy employed by the colonial authority has affected today's African thinking, economy, taste, trade and education. The dismissal of African arts in formal Western fashioned educational institutions in Ghana and Edina could not be achieved in that this policy direction could not take away the Africaness from the indigenes. The return of indigenes elites from their Western educational centers saw the introduction of another type of artistic blend within Ghana. The merger of the African and Western artistic forms and philosophies paraded impressively in Africa. This style was labeled Modern African Art. This shot persons like Dr. Kwabena Bucknor, an indigene of Edina and others such as Oko Ampofo and Vincent Akwetey Kofi, who were also educationist to the lime light. African Art and Culture has from the mid of the nineteenth century been part of the curriculum of the educational policy in Ghana. Basic and secondary schools

have all incorporated the Cultural Studies subject as part of their academic programme. Tertiary institutions have also instituted African Studies programmes and centers as a pragmatic approach at informing and educating their students and Ghanaians about their cultural heritage and that of Ghana. African studies departments in all level of Ghana's educational programmes provide the opportunity for cultural researches, cultural information and the sensitization of the society about their need to accept their Africaness as much as staging African as an art of life. Such departments also provide non-Ghanaians the opportunity to feel, hear and taste the Africaness and Ghanaianess of our culture. African art has now gained much popularity and has become the preferred point of discourse among the so called civilized cultures of the world. This has been due to the new enlightenment being crusaded by critics, writers and proponents of African culture both at home and elsewhere as a result of the content that hides within these plastic forms and their dynamics as well. Though much is being done at home to make the study and appreciation of the Arts of Africa more enticing among Ghanaian and especially the Edina people certain educational inclinations and taste of some policy makers, policy implementers and facilitators have impacted negatively on these studies. This may be as a result of their previous experience with certain traditional African Medicinal practitioners, or religious men or magicians or otherwise the psyche of these persons in question. In Ghana, curriculum developers and policy makers who are science bias preferred devoting much of their resources and that of the state to science rather the study of the Arts and Culture of the Ghanaian people. This poor cultural background has a negative bearing on the type of scientist, engineers and technologist that are trained in the states of Africa. As such professionals have no connection

with their cultural background, and just as they may be Western inspired and informed, they thereby create solutions that may not be applicable to problems in Ghana and for Ghanaians. No wonder why, African problems are not solved with African research tools, therefore enabling Africaness in African culture.

The state of Ghana has for over a decade been sponsoring and investing heavily in science resource centers for secondary schools in order to promote and create among the early youth the ability to make and think scientifically. Less emphasis have been devoted to art and culture resource centers needed to awaken and announce to the same youth their being and soul as Africans and the need to think and make things that are universally accepted by African. Attempts have been made by educational policy makers to increase the number of Art programmes in secondary schools thereby giving a lot more of the youth the opportunity to tease their minds aesthetically and culturally. The art departments receive less funding, sponsorships and scholarships, and that admissions to these department are based on the least in academic performance rather than the tops 'top brass' or 'cream de la cream' of students. The art departments have become the dumping grounds for the academic have-nots, the financial have-nots, and the social have-nots. Art schools in Africa have their curriculum being less African than Western and those schools in and around Edina do not have the inclusion of the Edina *Asafo* Companies and their Posts as part of academic and non academic curriculum.

The school going bracket in Edina have little or no knowledge about their *Asafo* Companies and the Posts in that they are not structurally connected to these institutions because their parents were not well informed about their heritage when they were also in school or college. Students in Edina are not inspired through educational lesson. It is revealing to express that indigenes of

Edina who leave elsewhere are not able to awaken their cultural pride, in that, schools within the catchments area do not provide students with the needed knowledge on *Asafo* activities and operatives from the past to the present. Authors of Ghanaian literature do not feature *Asafo* activities in their publications. Musicians do not feature *Asafo* history as part of their creations. Also audio-visual materials produced for interactive studies do not cover those of the Edina *Asafo*. What is worrying is that, educational institutions do not provide students with the opportunities to learn on hand from educational trips as well as excursions. It is true that the future of any particular institution, like that of the Edina *Asafo*, depends mainly on children and the youth of the day. It is therefore necessary that educational authorities offer children and the youth the necessary cultural assistance through formal educational systems. It is emphatic that a formal traditional teaching and mentoring system be made attractive to the youth. The nature of Edina indigenes leaving within Edina and those residing outside Edina do not wield the necessary *Asafo* Cultural backbone that enables them to perform the needed formal traditional syllabus that involves the transfer of knowledge and skills from the ancestors to the children. As the unknown becomes known, it becomes possible for one to uphold these traditions and also transfer them further to others and generations unborn. The presumption is that, the *Asafo* culture will become popular among all generations of indigenes and this will facilitate their promulgation and promotion. Additionally, the elites will gain the interest in researching further, writing more about the *Asafo* and educating others too. Hence the knowledge circle will never diminish. As the society becomes culturally enlightened they will venture into tour guarding, publications, marketing and the establishment of Edina *Asafo* principles among all persons. This will improve tourism



attraction to Edina, thereby creating various types of employment within the Edina community. This will therefore lead to the provision of the needed infrastructure area up to the world standard. As Edina *Asafo* awareness becomes greater in Edina and beyond and as income and wealth creation become enormous, the state and the private sector will find it necessary putting more financial and technical assistance to make the industry buoyant and sustainable on the world's cultural calendar. T.A. Ntummy, (2006) recounts:

Nkrumah's largesse which no one disputes was the generous policies of his government particularly in education which enabled countless Ghanaians to acquire all levels of education free of charge including the bulk of today's elites. This policy involved the cultural proponent of all society.

#### **ASAFO POSTS AND WORLD ARTS Traditional, Modern and Postmodern**

Traditionally, the arts of the Fantes, especially those of the coast had been predominantly flag art (fabric painting or appliqué), canoe painting, and sometimes wooden figures which were used for either secular or religious purposes. These are forms, though quite symbolic, they had formalized impressions that made them Akan, *Asafo* or both. In the past artistic materials were limited to traditional ones such as clay, stone, wood, raffia, bamboo and lately iron and cement. The presence of the Western partners saw the introduction of lime, cement, plaster of Paris, steel, enamel oil paint and emulsion paints that were more permanent and had some appreciable surface quality. *Asafo* shrines (art forms) from the period of their inception had relied heavily on naturalism rather than mere geometric symbolic. These shrines (art forms), though symbolic in content have containers made basically of naturalistic and simplistic forms. Like the ecology of the area, the art form of

the past never pursued a strict deviation from nature. They rendered them as communicative as possible to the admiration of dieties, the ancestors and man. Originally, *Asafo* structures were created from trees, they were also raffia fence and fortifications made from natural objects and materials. Those periods witnessed the use of natural materials such as rocks (stones) clay, wood and so on. Public and domestic furniture were all made from natural materials. Architecture was basically clay set on rock foundations and had wooden members as entry ends and exit points. The Edina *Asafo* artist of the past had employed and abided by the natural principles of life until the Europeans injected some enhanced technology into their traditional system.

The return of the educated elites from Europe in the 1960's introduced another dimension of art forms into the Edina traditional area and Ghana. These artists had to combine the Western artistic content and form alongside that of the African. These forms that were Afro-Western in outlook and philosophy had pervaded the *Asafo* Company Posts of Edina. These certainly made certain schools of thought to pronounce the *Asafo* Posts of Edina as strict replicas of Western relics and fictions. This possibly could be due to the use of Western materials in the production of form that were African inspired in the *Asafo* artistic creations. These *Asafo* artistic forms also labeled, Modern African art, incorporated African images which are nature inspired, natural objects that represent *Asafo* deity(s), Biblical images and Western military apparels and their accessories. In addition, Western military wares, such as long and short guns used to perform guarding, aircraft, cannon guns and cannon balls used in wars were also incorporated. Also, telescope, whistles, horns (bugles), signal flags, clocks, padlock and keys were also adopted for the *Asafo* creations. These Western inspired materials that were fused with the *Asafo* philosophy and

content created these *Asafo* curious cultures that are not fully Western and not fully African.

Modern art of yesteryear and today especially the Western initiated versions had the plastic arts of Africa as their major ingredients to their compositions. Pablo Picasso and the likes had used the impressions of the Northern African painting and the plastic forms of the sub Sahara as the pivot to their artistic revolution. It is established that the plastic art forms of the African had strong philosophical content but the proponents of the Western Modern art forms understood and appreciated only the external and physical qualities of these African forms. These features provided them the necessary impetus needed to drive home their desire for a change from the normal realistic rendition of human, natural representation to artificial forms. Critics and promoters of Modern art have accepted that the evolution of art had taken place simultaneously and that all cultures have had an artistic change in one way or the other. Modern art of all cultures are inter-related and interdependent on each other. The Edina *Asafo* Company Posts of today qualify to be identified as part of the Modern arts of Ghana. This is due to the marriages that have been established between the indigenes and their Western partners in terms of experience and exchanges. '*Posuban*' of the past that were made of the tree and raffia fence could be classified as traditional. Those of the wooden planks set in concrete dais may be identified as modern. Although images of the Edina *Asafo* Posts are of natural forms they are devoid of the geometrically organized forms of the Negro art of Africa. Strict naturalistic realism took precedence over cubism, impressionism, post impressionism and symbolism of the past century. The physical qualities of the images on the Edina *Asafo* Posts do not have strict influence from the so called primitive or tribal art of Africans or

Akans. The individual figures do not employ the principle of significance of proportion or the over emphasizing of essential parts of the body particularly the sexual organs and other features. Although the chest portions and the breast areas of the shrine bearers or the shrine overseers are exposed, they are not erotic. The natural figure configurations are not disrupted. The *Asafo* images do not defy nature. These figures are quite energetic in their postures. The figures found on these *Asafo* Posts are naturally symbolic and not a mere realistic representation. By and large the *Asafo* artists of the mid 20th century and beyond were quick to adopt concrete and steel as a building and modeling material suitable for decoration and utilitarian structures.

The architecture impressions of the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts synchronize those of the classical Western styles. The sweet combination of their figurative and symbolism characterized the historic expressions of the political and religious strides of the *Asafo* culture in Edina. The architectural styles reflect barely the later years of the European reign on the West Coast of Africa, a period that witnessed a lot of political crises and conflicts amongst the *Asafo* Companies and the Colonial powers. Prior to this period and during the session, religious tensions, magic and superstition were drawn into the *Asafo* operations. These had contributed to the visual language of the Edina people. Ironically, each *Asafo* Company Post informs us of their military exploits and success stories. The Edina *Asafo* Posts could be likened to some of the Baroque architecture of the Western Europe. Lausie S. Adam, reiterates that:

the term Baroque is applied to diverse styles, a fact that highlights the approximate character of historical categories. Although classical themes and subject matter continued to appeal to artists and their patrons, Baroque painting or sculpture intended to be relatively unrestrained overtly emotional and more energetic than earlier styles.



Baroque artists rejected aspects of Mannerist virtuosity, and stylization, while absorbing the taste for chiaroscuro and theatrical effects. The Wombir No.4 *Asafo* Post is a typical manifestation of such purpose. A cursory look at the Ankobea No.1 *Asafo* Post of Edina reveals some reflection from the San Carloalle Quattro Fontane in Rome. Both pieces have two of their sides facing the road. They are multistoried and have a dome forming the highest part. Whilst that of the Ankobea has the relics of the bow and arrow, San Carlo has the replica of the cross affixed to its dome. Though, both edifices had natural objects dominating them, that of the Ankobea deployed less figurative.

#### **ASAFO POSTS AND GHANAIA CHILD ART**

There is the saying that ‘art re-stimulates’<sup>1</sup> human inspirations and also awakens the sensibilities in persons who are inclined to creativity and experimentation’. The Edina *Asafo* Companies’ activities and the aesthetics of their *Asafo* Posts provide the community, especially children (kids), the opportunity to experiment and also feed their innate self with the visual objects that stand along the streets of Edina. It is obvious that what one encounters often informs the minds eventually. Children are noted to be the most curious creatures of our world and such as their exposure to objects, practices and principles affirm their choices in their future. The children are the major vehicles through which the mental, physical and spiritual information may be acquired, processed, stored and made available for consumption by the future generation. The children of yesteryear’s Edina have become today’s adults; therefore their choices are carried over from their past. In today’s context the transfer and also the retention of Edina *Asafo* spiritism in children and the youth have become a worrying issue to contend with. The thrust is that incorrect

parenting principles, wrong mentoring icons and crooked inspirational methods and inappropriate government policies are some factors that have affected the right nurturing of personalities needed to take off from the respective support base.

In the 1980's and 1990's, most Ghanaian children could do freehand drawings of the then Ft. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, the leader of the longest Military revolutionary regime in Ghana, and Dr. Kwame Nkrumah the first president of Ghana. Also, most children today can represent the portrait of the Christian Messiah (Jesus Christ) at all times from their minds eyes. It is also revealing how the children of today can render and draw His Excelency President J.A. Kuffour on walls panels and canvasses. A search through Edina revealed that most of the children who have their parents and guardians as fisher folks are able to represent the numerous canoes, boats and fishing activities on any available surface that they make claim to. This is as a result of their familiarity with their parents' trade which is fishing. Very few of the images of the *Asafo* creations and the *Asafo* Posts could be identified on any of the surfaces that were spotted to host the creations of the children. This preposterous lack of imitation of the *Asafo* creations by children may be due to the fact that the *Asafo* creations by their standing today do not appeal aesthetically to people as a source of artistic inspiration. Even if they were, the lack of maintenance, and effect of destruction might have eluded their admiration to the children as objects worth imitating. In artistic creations among children, the traditional trade of the Edina people takes precedence over those of the *Asafo* creations. This may be due to the unpopular responds that the *Asafo* receives from the society.

The strict emphasis of cultural respect for *Asafo* deities and Edina traditional deities hampers the imitation of these images by the minors or youth of Edina. This might have contributed to the lack of their representation on surfaces of walls, poles and others. Present educational policies in Ghana are grammar centered rather than skills oriented. This makes it difficult for kids to experiment their talents and potentials in hands on skills which also include artistic reproduction of personalities of importance in Edina. Worldwide it has been observed that grammar-driven education is not skills motivated and does not provide the youth with free spirited skills nurturing and mentoring professions.

#### **ASAFO POSTS AND GHANAIAAN ARTISTS Professional and Amateur**

Within the *Asafo* community in Edina, Ghana and elsewhere, some of the major sources of artistic production could be found within the *Asafo* culture. Professional and armature artists have patronized the *Asafo* flags, banners and some other visual language of the various Akan *Asafo* Companies as their source of inspiration. These artists also had the *Asafo* flag dance and schematization as part of their artistic creations. Some of these artists did so as a sign of their allegiance to the enviable Akan culture of the Fantes. Others picked on these *Asafo* creations as a sheer love for the Akan *Asafo* culture. Artists like Ablade Glover, Ato Delaquis, Kojo Edusei and George Hughes are among some few academicians who have for some time relied on the *Asafo* flags, banners and symbols for their artistic creations. Other professionals such as Rikki Womegah and Ato Dadzie have also employed the *Asafo* flag language

as part of their representation. It is revealing that none of these great artists had anything doing with the Company Posts and Poles of the Akan *Asafo* culture. The artistic creations in the artists' community in Edina and Ghana have in present day not incorporated sufficiently the *Asafo* '*Posuban*' and Poles as part of the subject matter or theme for production. None of these representations that make up the exploits of these Companies have been replicated on any of the surfaces of the domestic, commercial and industrial edifices in Edina. In Ghana, no single monument has been erected (by governmental and non-governmental agencies) in honour of the *Asafo* leaders and members who helped raise the *Asafo* tradition of the Akan ethnic group. Artists in Ghana must be encouraged to research into the Akan *Asafo* creation and use them as their artistic production.

## COMPARISM BETWEEN FINDINGS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

A dip into the opinions of persons who have arrived at certain conclusions on the Fante *Asafo* tradition, the Edina *Asafo* institution, and the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts establish a negotiation between them and that of the findings of the researcher. Early submissions have shown that the Fante *Asafo* Companies and that of the Edina were created purposely as human centered support systems made to assist and protect the weak and the vulnerable, provide security and support and also offer recreational services to the members and the community. It is therefore remarkable as to how the indigenous artist have cleverly employed the indigenous concepts, images of man and animals, plants, and man-made objects to drum home messages of their *Asafoism* and



uniqueness to the community and the World at large by teasing the minds of the people culturally and artistically. Although lots of distortions abound in the reporting of the *Asafo* traditions and institutions, much of the blame cannot be put on those early writers since most of them could not understand and interpolate what they were writing on. More so, majority of these writers (Cole and Ross) who were Europeans had their perceptions clouded by superiority over the race they seem to report on. The principle of inward looking, aggression and the over possessiveness of fame and glory provided the European writers the ability to make false claim to these cultural innovations, a novelty which is a labour of love that processes a high drive of sonority and the passion make life safe for humanity.

Arhin (writer) argument that the *Asafo* of the Fante had its roots from the armed retainers during the era of the slave trade is a submission that contravenes information that exists on the field Nana. Kweku Awotwe (principal field informant) had stated in line with Wartenberg that the *Asafo* of the Fante especially that of Edina was originally created as a social club purposely to offer security, humanitarian services and entertainment to the community. And that the Edina *Asafo* groups were introduced to Edina by a Fante warrior – Oberima Asem who hailed from Asebu. It is evident though that the Early Europeans had a hand in the raising of the last three sprinter groups (Mawore, Brofo Nkwa and Akrampa) of the Edina *Asafo* culture, they can never be credited for their origin. The Europeans had no evidence of claim to the establishment of the Fante *Asafo* as part of their machinery for slave raiding and slave trade. Nana Kweku Awotwe (principal field informant) testified that their forefathers might be persuaded, encouraged and influenced by the Europeans to assist and expedite the perpetuation of the inhuman slave

regime and also help them to establish their roots within the country, an act that culminated the imposition of the colonial rule European Superiority over the indigines. He recalls a situation where the indigines western style soldiers had to fight along-side their European partners as an attempt to ward off other European (rivals and enemies). Asmah and Mark Essilfie (field informants) both reiterated that the Edina *Asafo* Companies were not established by their fore fathers to partake in Fante–Asante battles, and that the numerous attacks that the other Fante towns (Anomabo and others) waged on the people of Edina was as a result of their alleged alliance with the people of the Asante. So, there was no way the people of Edina could be organized to fight their own brothers, the Asantes and Fantes.

Edusei, (researcher/writer) acknowledged that, the *Asafo* Posts are the most conspicuous of all the *Asafo* art form of the Fantes. According to Eghan, (writer) since the *Asafo* Posts have not yet appeared as part of the attraction of architectural literature, their attempt at becoming self-documentary by way of labelling was equally important. A visit to the Edina *Asafo* Posts revealed a red painted wooden plaque that has a white autograph that informs one about the date of completion and the name of the Company Post. This makes it impossible for visitors to obtain first hand information on these edifices. In addition, one may mention that although the various Posts of the Edina *Asafo* have not been well published, that of Mankessim and Anomabo has received some attention by way of Internet publication by Western researchers. The researcher was bold to say that the older indigines of Edina possess the history of the *Asafo* culture intact but the only worrying situation is that they are not availing themselves with research work.

Cole, and Ross claim the posuban of the Fantes have little or no connection with the indigenous architecture of the people. This statement has less authenticity, in that, the architecture of the Fantes especially those Edina people were squares, angular and plain in outlook or appearance. Although most of the indiginous architecture pieces were of single storey type, the two storey one's occasionally made appearances. It is remarkable to find these Company Posts bear some of the characteristics and fortunes of the western architecture styles. But this does not make it complete to classify them as Western or European. *Asafo* Posts of the Edina people are superiorly unique in their own standard. They therefore cannot be tagged as Western or European. The content of this Akan *Asafo* edifice are quite different from any Western version. The container (buildings) may seem Western or European but it is refreshing that the content was not given the opportunity to be corrupted as such. It is therefore evil and cynical for Ross and Cole, great pillars of African Art history and culture to attempt at disconnecting the Akan *Asafo* Company Posts from the Akan indigenous architecture forms. The

Akan *Asafo* Posts, whether in Anomabo, Mankessim or Edina possess typical African philosophies, concepts and features. This is something unique that cannot be taken away from the Fantes. Even though the image of Adam and Eve of the Wombir Post and the Captain and his sailors of the Abese Post are well emphasized, they only appeared as part of the *Asafo* container and the content. In principle these Caucasian images were only a means and not an end in the context of the *Asafo* Language. Egya Kweku Ibri (field informant) intended that the presence of European sailors and their Captain as Part of the Abese Post, they are to inform and educate the community about their forefathers relationship with the early Europeans to Edina, but not as a sign of

expressing their subordination or the sale of human rights and resources to the Europeans as is being speculated by some elites of today. In addition, Mark Aaba (field informant) reiterated that their fore-father's adoption of some European man-made object as power symbols such as the Padlock and Key, canon guns and balls, short and long guns others. These Padlock and Key established Ankobea *Asafo* and Edina's superiority over the rest of the Fante towns. This made the Edina *Asafo* a formidable military force, capable of deterring all types of aggression towards Edina. This group wielded the power to determine who should enter Edina and who or what should be made to live at Edina. It will therefore be immoral for any writer to state categorically that the *Asafo* Posts of Edina are somehow alien to the Akan Culture.

Although, the researcher had much to critique the thoughts of Ross and Cole, they could be credited for their appreciation towards the proliferation of large and elaborate *Asafo* monuments along the coast of Ghana, that had sculptural ideas consisting of soldiers in traditional war apparels or European uniforms alongside *Asafo* medicine carriers, female warriors and leaders as well as policemen. And those sculptures of Lions, Leopards, Eagles and other animals, with whose ferocity the *Asafo* Companies identify themselves, were portrayed. This positive observation from Ross and Cole confirms the fact that the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts are deeply Akan and African despite their bias opinion that these *Asafo* Posts were mere replicas of European Forts and Castles and that the Posts were also dominated by objects that have European inclination and principles.

Although the presence of the Europeans on the coast of Ghana impacted immensely on the Edina *Asafo* Companies Posts, these Posts have their design



and concept schemed heavily towards the traditional beliefs and context of the Edina people.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

A critical journey into the search for the truth underlying the cultural significance of the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts of the Edina people, has revealed that, from the past to today, the indigenes have held on to these cultural icons as their true identity, and that their relevance and importance to the township has influenced both the national and local authorities to fashion policies that has kept them in the God-given location. Although, in recent times, modernity and urbanization have both prevailed strongly against these edifices, nothing could be done to defame and deface them. This is due to the resilience that the leaders and the structures have put against all odds.

The hypothesis of this research; the *Asafo* Company Posts are no longer relevant to the culture, neither are they important in the urbanization and modern development of the traditional area, also the Posts are not aesthetically worthwhile. This served as the tentative guide to the research

In recent times, Edina has been blessed with some social and infrastructure development as an attempt at giving the town an enhanced face as well as deepening and advancing the vocation of the people which is basically fishing and fish processing. These social and infrastructure developments include the creation of the Nana Kobina Gyan Memorial Park, refurbishment of the first Methodist Church in Ghana, the Dutch Cemetery, the *Asafo* Company

Posts, the Java Hill and lately the reconstruction of the fishing harbour as well as dredging of the Benya Lagoon. All these never affected the culture and history of the existing *Asafo* Posts that much.

In spite of all these developments, District Officials have found it necessary never to tamper with the placement of these *Asafo* Posts. In fact they have helped in facilitating their refurbishment as well as seeing to the completion of the abundant one and possibly the construction of new ones for those groups who do not have any of such magnificent Posts or are still clinched to the Pole type. These were done with the support and collaboration of the Dutch and the Ghana Government.

In effect it can be established that the well-beings of these *Asafo* Posts may contribute to the aesthetic enhancement of Edina township as well as helping to protect the culture, history and belief system of the immediate past generation for the consumption of today general and that of tomorrow. The Edina *Asafo* Company Post is worth maintaining for posterity to judge.

## SUMMARY OF THESIS

This research launched into the anthropological search and interpretation of the nature and functions of the Edina *Asafo* Companies Posts in the cultural domain of the Edina *Asafo* Companies of the Edina people in the Edina traditional area. Edina *Asafo* Posts of the recent past have consisted of Architectural forms, sculptures, painting, graphical symbols, textiles, flags, mascots and other forms, and these served as the major medium for the communicating and documenting exercise of the *Asafo* groups into meaningful language that educated one about the concept, and contents of the aspirations of these highly spirited men and women who stood for survival and maintenance of the Edina traditional area. In present times the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts cannot be seen to be performing their natural role due to human efforts; appreciation and criticism, cultural degradation, indigenes defiance and unrest on the part of the indigenes and modernization, therefore making it impossible for the Posts to continually speak to the people.

In the context of Edina culture, this thesis seeks to investigate into the role of the Edina *Asafo* Posts in the daily activities of the Edina people, and examine the beliefs system associated with Edina *Asafo* Companies, their Posts, and respond towards modernization and the quest for socio-economic advancement in the lives of the people of Edina and their *Asafo* Company Posts in relation to their continuous existence as cultural artifacts. The essence of this research work is to help put forward the philosophy and symbolisms of the Edina *Asafo*, which emphasizes on unity and development for the pursuance of the Edina Culture. It is geared towards using the traditional culture to promote local and international tourism in Edina and Ghana. In view of this the

indigenes will be economically and socially empowered to better the life of their generation and community. It will also offer material source for historians, anthropologists, sociologists, ethnographers, students of religion and other researchers to feed on. In effect this research may assist in the promulgation of Edina *Asafo* culture, and also offer clues to protect and project indigenous art forms, and also revive and strengthen the culture of the Edina people.

A search light on the Edina *Asafo* Companies and their Posts as a component of the Akan culture points to the ethno-cultural life of the Edina people. The *Asafo* Culture displays a range of diverse potentials that thrill the community about its visual arts, performing arts, oral arts, and possibly graphical symbols that speak volumes. Architecture, sculpture, painting and textiles works that constitute the main form of the *Asafo* edifice contain the main philosophy of the various Akan *Asafo* Companies as well as that of the Edina traditional area. This has therefore been termed as one of the major channels of communicating the achievements, exploits and activities that constituted the history of the individual *Asafo* groups. *Asafo* architecture of the pasts has transformed from 'Esewdo' through to 'Posuban'. The former is a simple fence around a tree and the latter, a concrete fence around a wooden plank. But the latter has single, double or multi-storey concrete building that has sculptures, man-made objects and flags dominating them. These Posts have some degree of foreign influence even though they are heavily imbued with features of traditional proverbial messages, concepts, symbolisms and philosophy. These Posts therefore assume the core spiritual potency and soul of the individual *Asafo* Companies and Edina traditional area.

The *Asafo* Companies of Edina have their origin from Asebu through the efforts of Oberima Asem, a indigenous soldier. His group was instituted as



a socio-cultural unit. This group was later replicated by the indigenes and this group also by the Europeans. *Asafo* groups performed specific and loose roles in the managing of the Fante town and some of these roles included policing, disaster management, search party, support services, entertainment and health care. They also provided defense and attack systems needed to protect their traditional area from attacks and aggression. It is established that some of the *Asafo* groups provided military and certain essential services to the Europeans especially in fighting rival Europeans as well as conquering of certain indigenes towns and possibly in their quest to secure or procure human labour for exports to the new world. In Edina the Akrapafo *Asafo*, Mawarefo *Asafo* and Brofonkwa *Asafo* were established due to the request of the Europeans (Portuguese). In Edina, these indigenes institutions received the support and recognition of the Europeans. They therefore became the life partners of the Europeans.

Edina is the only Akan town that has up to ten individual groups of which one (Akrapafo) is the direct descendants of the European. Edina, unlike the other Akan or Fante towns has the Enyampa *Asafo* Company as the only royal group and Kingmakers from whom a heir to the Edina traditional throne (stool) is selected. Edina has no queen mother who oversees the nomination of chiefs. No female assent to the traditional throne. The throne is wholly Patrimonial. A journey to the throne is only by males who have to be the direct son or grandson of a stool wife. It is alleged that the various identity numbers assigned to the various *Asafo* Companies were by their quick response to a call by a Governor and not by their sequence of migration or inaugurations. Naming of the individual *Asafo* Companies was as a result of their character, activity, association or an event in question.

In spite of all the cordiality and good relationship that existed between the indigenes (*Asafo*) of Edina and their European partners, political agitation, social disorders and positive defiance marked another side of their relationship. They became a pressure group that stood against the long arm of the colonial regime. Their activities frustrated the colonial rule and also facilitated the attainment of self government (independence rule) for Ghana. The Edina *Asafo* Company Posts is a mark of social perfection, unity and development.

Edina, a coastal town on the West Coast of Africa, is the first point of contact with the Europeans. Though a fishing town, Edina claims its origin from Takyiman – a Twi speaking Chiefdom on the mid-belt of the then Gold Coast.

Some of the Companies have headquarters or *Posuban*, others have flag-poles. They have their individual, regalia, flags, colours, insignia songs and others that go to inform their generations about their might, achievements and aspirations. The phenomenal display of in-depth culture on the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts is one that establishes the creative power of the indiginuos artists in their attempt at producing real life visual documentary of their achievement and exploits. This showcases a dramatic process of architecture that has progressed from simple raffia or palm branch fences, pitched around a tree, through the introduction of rectangular sandcrete platform or fences that host a coloured wooden plank. Edina *Asafo* Companies have enjoyed a single strong or a single room type of concrete structure. These structures house the images of the *Asafo* deities, uniforms and paraphernalia and were also the offices of the *Asafo* Priests (Komfo). Some of these structures graduated into what is popularly known as the '*Posuban*', magnificent *Asafo* headquarters of

all times. These architectural icons also have sculptures, paintings, textiles and graphical symbols constituting the major language of the Edina *Asafo* Culture.

At present, Edina is said to be blessed with four unique and outstanding Company Posts and one uncompleted piece that belongs to the Alatabanfo *Asafo* Company. The Wombirfo, Akyanfo, Ankobeafo and Abese *Asafo* Companies are those groups that are privileged with these magnificent structures. With the exception of the Ankobea *Asafo* Post which displays no human forms, the remaining three have their languages spelled out strongly in figurative composition with their *Asafo* Supi leading in the composition. The Wombir *Asafo* No.4 Company had their Post commissioned in 1960 by the leadership of Supi Kow Kan. This Post, four storeys in posture is heavily established with lots of figurative sculptures which spoke the language of the Wombir *Asafo* from the past to the period of its construction. Boase Wombir stood for originality, superiority, power and conquest, hence the adoption of red as their dominant colour. Wombir Post succeeded in marring the indigines and European cultures. This is through the display of the indigines spiritual figures and that of Adam and Eve, various indigines apparels and European Security uniforms and the presence of wide life animals and marine figures. This Wombir Post confirms the marriage that existed between the Edina traditional religion and Christianity and Edina indigenes governance and European governance. The symbolism found on the Wombir Post attests to the defense that the Edina people were able to put up at the aggression and possible taking of Edina as vassal town by the Fantes (Anomabo and her allies). Significantly, this Post is the backbone of Edina *Asafo*.

The Akyemfo Post is the next most prominent post to be commissioned in Edina. This Post was commissioned under the leadership of Kwamina

Essilfie in the year 1969. This two-storey piece which has blue as its dominant colour stands on the Benya Street, the very site where Nana Kwamina Ansa met with Diego d' Azambuja. This edifice displays indigenous spiritual leaders alongside the guards of the Supi. Like the Wombir Post, the Akyemfo Post expresses its marriage with the Europeans through the adoption and inclusion of the Aircraft, Cannon guns and balls and the wall clock, along-side the indigenes officials and members in their composition. The Eagle bird, aircraft and the cannon guns establishes the ferocious might of the Akyem *Asafo*. This group could also be likened to the military air force wing of any modern army. The Akyem *Asafo* Post has curved corners and this could be associated to the traditional Northern Architecture, something that is typical to the African tradition. The blue dominant colour of the Akyemfo and the totem of Eagle associate them with the adage 'the Sky is the limit'. They are assumed to possess superior powers in the sky. Akyemfo *Asafo* Post signifies Edina's superiority over the Fante towns. The Akyem *Asafo* Company Post made available to its members and the Edina community spiritual potency, mental capacity, physical welfare and the necessary encouragement needed to empower them economically and socially.

The Abese *Asafo* Company Post is the third magnificent *Asafo* Post to be commissioned in Edina. This Post came into effect in the year 1970 through the leadership of Supi Ansunna. This Post stands on 'Dentsido', the spot of the original Esewdu of the Abese *Asafo*. As unique as the Abese Post is, it paraded a fifty percent Edina images that incidentally constitute the base of the Post and a fifty percent European identity that makes up the top of the edifice. The Post is a one-storey structure that incidentally acts as a pedestal to the ship, the crew and captain. The frontage of this Post displays an array of Abese *Asafo* officials



and their stewards and shrines. It is the only existing *Asafo* Post with a female top official included. Three most significant images within the composition are that of the Crab and the Elephant and the Albrigh (Akyebe dua) tree. These constitute their spiritual potency and their military might respectively.

Abese *Asafo* Company Post has green, red and white as its dominant colours. These represent the continuous growth in strength, power and human sustainability as well as the ability of the group to devour its enemies. It is remarkable to state that the fixing of the ship as part of the architecture of the Post, dramatizes fishing as the primary vocation the Abesefo and Edina *Asafo* people, and also suggest the creditability that existed between the indigenes and their Western partners. It is perceived that the presence of the ship and its crew commemorated the beginning of western technology, philosophy, governance, social and commercial systems in Edina and Ghana. The Abese Post confirms the fusion of diverse cultures into a holistic good.

Ankobe *Asafo* Company Post was the fourth most prominent *Asafo* Post that was built in Edina in the Late 1970's under the leadership of Mark Aaba. This multi-storey structure abounds with animals and man-made images. It has no human figures forming part of the composition. This spells out the fact that the *Asafo* victories and exploits were beyond human capabilities. Most prominent of the images found on the Ankobe Post is the bow and arrow and the replica of the Benya shrine. The images on this Post include a Padlock and a key which establish the Ankobe *Asafo* as the gatekeepers of Edina; as such they wielded the power to determine the right of entry or departure. White and yellow colours dominate the colours of the Ankobe *Asafo* Post. The white colour signifies victory and progress that their forefathers won for the group and

Edina. The yellow signifies the gold nuggets they used to pave with the spiritual potency of Edina people as well as their defense mechanism.

The Alatan *Asafo* has not yet completed their Company Post. Their Post is presumed to be the replica of a skull of captured Fante men. The Post is supposed to take on the Company's colours of yellow and green. Reason associated with the colours are; Yellow symbolises their worth in gold, stone, sand mined in their area and green symbolises their military potency and achievement.

The Enyampa *Asafo* has three sites that express the spiritual base of the Company. The Pole that is in the Chapel Square area has virtually been dwarfed by the surrounding environment. The two edifices in Bantama have a Pole much exposed at the street side. The other, which is the shrine's house stand in a neighbourhood. The rest of the *Asafo* Companies have no prominent Posts while others have lost the sites of their poles.

The coming into being of the Edina *Asafo* visual language as part of the world's cultural discourse bring into focus the philosophical articulation of Edina people's effort towards human development. The *Asafo* artists displayed the strong edge over primitivism and managed to incorporate contemporary arts of all times with indigenous concepts and thoughts. *Asafo* creation had maximized all forms of elements and principles of design and artistic production to their greatest advantage. Various religions were best fused into creative composites that allow for tolerance, harmony and progress. In addition, it did not restrict its creation to only Africa or Edina traditional area but also incorporated western images and objects of great significance to the indigenes. These *Asafo* creations establish the militarism and spiritualism that prevailed among the Edina *Asafo* Companies.

The aesthetic qualities of these Edina *Asafo* Posts were dependent on the unique interplay of the spiritual inspiration, wisdom, knowledge and skills transferred over by the deities and ancestors to the indigenous artist from whom the history of the Edina people live.

The research findings have established that most of the spiritual force of the Edina community, which are the deities of the *Asafo* groups are housed temporally in the *Asafo* Poles but today most of the *Asafo* Companies have the effigies of their deities in the *Asafo* Company Posts (*Posuban*). Edina has four magnificent *Asafo* Company Posts (*Posuban*) that hold the history of the people. Edina *Asafo* Company Posts and Poles have till present day managed to stand the test of the urban culture. Urbanization and infrastructure development has spared these magnificent *Asafo* Company Posts and Poles. It is therefore remarkable the way urban officials have respected the Edina *Asafo* Culture and their relics. This has therefore attracted both local and international support for the maintenance and development of the *Asafo* Posts in Edina.

Cultural dynamism has in recent decades eroded the strength of traditionalism in today's generation. It has therefore made it impossible for allowing the youth of Edina to appreciate and also practice their God given tradition and talent. Modern religion or possibly Western and Eastern religious fraternity has managed to weigh heavily on the traditional religion of the Edina people. This has affected the faith, way of thinking and names of the Edina people, therefore allowing their indigenous identity to diminish.

Western elitist mentality and elitism in general are some factors that have impacted negatively on the Edina *Asafo* Culture. Edina indigenes who have been privileged to have tasted western education on the western countries have come home with a type of psyche that plays down on their own traditions

and identity. This has affected their intonation, names, taste of fashion, food and others. In present times those who sojourn in the western world are mentoring the youth negatively to the detriment of tradition. Western culture is now staging a central role in Edina tradition. Modern education policy is part of the set backs to the maintenance and promotion of African Culture. Policy makers are almost always inspired by western models, which are by themselves anti African. Moreover these Western policies have not proven to be the panaceas of African solutions; rather they seem to perpetuate Western taste, standards and ideologies on the African so they can continually stamp their influence and superiority on Africans.

African policy holders and framers have become agents of western products.

By the implantation of foreign products and ideologies on the educational policies of Edina and Ghana the Westerners have impacted strongly on the artistic culture of the indigenes. Professionals, amateurs and child artists have directed their art towards western standards and inspiration, although the indigenous philosophy has not entirely been left unattended to.

The hope for the revival and continuous stay of the Edina *Asafo* Companies and their Posts as part of the Culture of the Edina people and Africa are esteemed high. Regular maintenance of the cultural icons would make it possible to sustain and transfer into the present and yet to come generations, the rich cultural stuff that might get lost through decay and destruction of such edifices. Education must be made bare to the indigenes about the fact that not all aspects of the indigenous culture is idolatry, cultist or demonic. As a result of lack of adequate or appropriate information and vigorous exposure of this aspect of Ghanaian culture to the entire world, it has become necessary to inject maximum support to make them major tourist event and site.



Real life documentary programmed on the Edina *Asafo* Companies' activities and their Post is a recommended cultural boast to the Edina people. Additionally, making the *Asafo* activities as part of the curriculum of schools in and outside Edina and Ghana would affix into the youth the potentials that underline their fore-fathers' achievements and philosophies. Tour guarding programmes could be incorporated into the list of Professionals needed to spear-head tourism in Edina. Furthermore, funds could be made available to turn these magnificent culture icons into mini-museums. Edina *Asafo* Companies abound with lots of paraphernalia and other wares that are kept with individuals. The time has come for these artifacts to be displayed in the individual *Asafo* Posts as exhibits of culture and research.

In recent times the institutionalization of pilgrimage for the faithfuls and followers has been in vogue. It is prudent for the Tourism Ministry to institute the pilgrimage to *Asafo* Shrines and edifices by *Asafo* faithfuls, followers and admirers from within and outside Ghana. This will enhance the patronage of Edina *Asafo* product. As part of re-invigorating of the *Asafo* system, there is the need to have all the old members of the various groups reborn into their respective groups. There must be an attempt at registering all the youth who do not associate with any *Asafo* groups. Inhabitants of Edina who are non-indigenes could be enrolled into their preferred *Asafo* Company as a measure of expanding followers. Organizing training sections for the youth and also perfecting that of the older generation in *Asafo* history and others will sustain and also attract active followers to the groups. This may call for the regular staging of innovative *Asafo* performances as well as reenactment of existing ones. A special day could be set-aside in the culture calendar of Edina and Ghana to celebrate *Asafoism* in Edina. This day could see the show-casing of

*Asafo* Posts and artifacts that are kept as sacred objects which may be going bad. Edina *Asafo* has a rich culture worth consuming.

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## CONCLUSION

People are inherently creative. Some act on that creativity all the time, others stifle it, and most of the people are somehow in between. People mix creativity with modernity, because they are too narrow and focused on their taste for what is in vogue, avant-garde, modern and prestigious. People ignore traditions, customs and norms, simply because they do not fit into their personal descriptions and are contrary to their educational attainment, personal experience and professional (ism) field.

It is evident that, all cultures regardless of their remoteness and location have some element of richness that allow for some level of creativity, infiltrations and distortions. But inappropriately designed distortions towards a particular culture by another will certainly destroy the human spirit of the very persons for whom their culture is unjustly being attacked. That the arts of the Edina *Asafo* Companies especially the Company Posts still stand to speak volumes about the cultural significance of the Edina people. It therefore becomes mandatory for the individual *Asafo* Companies and the people of Edina to protect and project the Edina *Asafo* culture among its contemporary in the world. It is also to examine ways by which it may develop break through and explore opportunities on the world cultural calendars as well as influence the

indigenes of Edina and citizens of Ghana living inside and outside the boundaries of Ghana to appreciate and participate in their God given culture.

Samuel Kumadzi, recounts that:

all the Akan tribes of Ghana in addition to the Guans and the Ewes were all part of the ancient Egypt who possessed the African knowledge that were used to build the Ancient Egypt and had an inward looking culture that made it possible for them to develop the human capital and solve African problems. And that the Islamic Amorabis from Morocco broke out the technical Knowledge and expertise that was acquired from Egypt and that was imported to Ancient Ghana. This group achieved that through the imposition of the Islamic culture which was basically Arabian.

Africa after gaining its independence from their European masters have lost her identity and could not regain and focus on the Sofia (Sophia), which was the cultural proponent of the religious and scientific knowledge of their forefathers. Edina today has lost the self actualization, development and inward looking principles that kept the society warm till the European imposition of Imperialist measures of divisiveness and apathy that shook the foundation of the African philosophically, culturally, technologically and humanly. A sticky impression of the present adulteration on the perception of today's African, especially the Edina community, has daunting reflection that is quite retrogressive on the Edina culture. Creating a perfect image of the Edina people within the eyes of the human race has a major leap within cultural circles of the world. Shaping the image of the Edina culture within the Edina people and people of African descent living in and out of the African continent is well commendable. The struggle between the Edina culture and modernity continues to weigh heavily

towards the Edina people and their hybrid descendants. There is always the quest to educate and re-educate the Edina people on their cultural principles and proponents especially within the spheres of life attainment that may include the economic, social, political and spiritual development. It is therefore confident that the individual and group commitment to the Edina cultural practices and traditions will profess the tendency to establish direction and focus among the Edina people. There is the need to inform and shape the system, society, structure, soul and situation that evolved the Africans.

The *Asafo* Company Posts are no more relevant to the Edina people and does not appear to remain bound with the people for eternity. There is the need to reconcile the Edina tradition, the *Asafo* traditions and the modern traditions into possible establishment and support system for one another and to create a social fulfillment among the emerging traditions of today. The Edina traditional system has been wounded and offended by the Western influence and modernity for far too long, therefore preaching Edina culture as demonic, idolist and other vices becomes unfortunate to the Edina people. Reconciling *Edinaism* and *Asafoism* as a reinforcement to the Edina people will set an agenda to prosperity, entrepreneurship, employment and humanity and the preparedness to make Edina, Ghana, Africa and the world a perfect place. Teaching Edina people and the world about Edina culture must be active rather than passive. Shaping the mindset of people outside the Edina traditional area; other Africans, Europeans, Americans, Asians and others on the Edina culture, especially that of Edina *Asafo* is worth pursuing. The world has been fed with certain erroneous impressions about Africa to a large extent and that nothing better is expected from the African continent in spite of the numerous scientific, technological,



political, economic, social, and spiritual contributions that it has offered the world and keep providing to the betterment of the human race.

The appreciation of the *Asafo* Company Posts by the Edina people has dwindled considerably. It therefore becomes incumbent for the indigenes artist, artistes, writers, historians, scientist, spiritualist, and other professionals to stage African rather than Western, since modernity does not necessarily mean Western. In the nutshell, celebrating Edina *Asafo* Posts as cultural icon of the Akans of Ghana has a necessary significance that cannot be ripped off so far as community and continental development and peace building are concerned. Edina *Asafo* Posts advocates for prosperity through hard work and commitment to community and individual upliftment. Prosperity is a key ingredient in the well being of every society that seeks development and unity among its people. Edina people must embrace the Western culture, modernity, urbanization to improve its present generation and therefore give a fresh path to their cultural advancement. Focusing on the Edina cultural advancement is the most important exercise to be perceived by flag bearers of the Edina concepts. Edina leaders must ensure that their followers attain the true Edina identity rather than becoming correct copies of Africa and illegitimate copies of the western propaganda. Edina leaders must facilitate societal and community development among their indigenes, a process that will ensure that the individual communities of the traditional area are keenly involved in the policy formulation and their implementation at the local level. In situations where local politics are devoided of local participation, there is always the tendency for cultural neglect and possible revolt by the inhabitants. It therefore becomes necessary for the infusion of traditional concept and knowledge in local and national politics.

That the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts if well understood in terms of their aesthetics, philosophies, symbolisms and cultural significance, could preserve the culture of the Edina. It is therefore a responsibility for replicate and or re-enact the spirit of Edina *Asafoism* to the latter since that will be part of the panaceas towards the recapturing of the identity of the Edina people in totality. The Edina *Asafo* must be celebrated to the maximum. This may possibly encourage the newer generation to surrender to the principles and concepts of the Edina *Asafo* culture. Also celebrating the Edina *Asafo* will see the gradual erosion of the western and bad social and modern philosophies that preach corruption, betrayal, self centeredness, wickedness and cruelty among some Africans of today.

Our responsibility of informing the future generations of the rich Edina culture that lies side by side that of the world cultures as a possible force needed to reclaim the human hood. It is also necessary to make public the philosophy and symbolisms of the Edina *Asafo* culture as a component of world cultures. And that the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts are the cultural icons that provide knowledge and renewed mind and strength in the patriotism of the Edina people and their community development.

The researcher intend to use this work to inform and educate the world about the Edina *Asafo* activities, achievements, aspirations and philosophies in the shaping of the Edina Community and its people on relations to societal growth and development.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The hope is that the Edina *Asafo* Companies and their Posts would regain their past glory. The rebirth of the *Asafo* officials and adult members into the *Asafo* operations and activities is very crucial. Majority of the Edina *Asafo* members, who by virtue of their trade and vocation might have been lost to their contact with the tenets of the *Asafoism* in Edina, needs to be given some consideration. The following are some recommendations that can put Edina *Asafo* back to their hard earned reputations:

### REGULAR MAINTENANCE OF EDINA ASAFO POSTS

It is undeniable that, the acts of hooliganism, rancor, divisiveness, alcoholism, social tension and disorders on the part of the various Edina *Asafo* Companies and their youth have adversely affected the beauty and the wellbeing of these Posts in their present predicament and situation. Sculptures have falling apart, architecture members and features have seriously giving up, whilst colouration have faded to oblivion. As the spirit of *Asafoism* gradually recedes, no specific attempts are directed towards salvaging these cultural icons by the Edina indigenes or the Edina traditional area. Philanthropic concerns which were evident through 1960's to the 1990's have declined towards the well-being and developmental progression of *Asafo* activities in Edina. As a result, the supports that the *Asafo* divas and *Asafo* connoisseurs offered had come down to a zero degree. Probably this may be due to lack of interest in *Asafo* activities or the daunting economic pressures bearing heavily on these persons. Possibly, the lack of appreciation on the part of the indigenes towards these fortresses might have contributed to their deprivation. It is therefore obvious that much respect,

honour, appreciation and attention be given to these Edina *Asafo* Posts through frequent and regular maintenance of the forms. Indigenes could be levied to support the regular maintenance of these cultural icons of Edina. Edina Traditional Council must see to the regular maintenance of Edina *Asafo* Company Posts.

In addition, fees obtained from visitors to these shrines could be channeled in the maintenance of these *Asafo* Posts. Edina abounds in numerous local and foreign visitors from whom financial and material supports could be harnessed. Some of these visitors who trace their lineage to Edina could provide the needed financial and professional supports for the effective maintenance of these enviable Posts. Much attention must be given to these edifices in the form of regular and speedy replacement and refurbishment of the Posts

### **DEMYSTIFYING EDINA ASAFO POSTS**

The recent past saw the various Edina *Asafo* Company Posts as idolized, cultist or demonic shrines that provided nothing rather than mysticism. It is remarkable, how these spiritual centers held, provided and protected the military vibrancy and socio-religious activities of the *Asafo* Companies. These centers pivoted the *Asafo* mystical, spiritual, religious and superstitious systems that saw them perform the numerous military rendezvous that Edina staged over the Fante. Effigies of shrines vehemently aligned to these *Asafo* Groups are positioned within the Posts. In addition offices of the *Asafo* priests and priestesses are created in these edifices. This makes it very difficult for low spirited persons and persons of other faith to visit and appreciate or patronize these cultural Master pieces.



The *Asafo* leaders should make attempt at demystifying the *Asafo* Company Posts and make way for effortless appreciation. This will attract all persons to the Posts, as researches, visitors and indigenes will be able to visit and learn from the activities and achievements of these *Asafo* Companies. This in effect may help spread the positive norms of the *Asafo* institution and their humanitarian spirits towards the development of the modern society that is besieged with greed, selfishness, self-centeredness and lack of patriotism. It is therefore recommended that these Posts be demystified to make way for scientific, sociological and psychological attentions.

### **VIGOROUS MARKETING OF EDINA ASAFO POSTS AS TOURIST SITES**

Historic achievements worldwide have found it very intriguing to position indigenous cultural relics and heritages of the less developed nations into reasonable levels of world cultural calendars. In time past, the over mystifying of these heritages and their ardent belief make it unattractive for their showcased on cultural platforms. A recent electronic research revealed that no single publication has been lunched on the World Wide Web on the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts (*Posuban*). It is therefore important that Artists, Web page designers, Historians, Anthropologist, Cultural advocates and other researchers provide the appropriate materials needed to facilitate and position these Cultural heritages of Edina to the preferred destination for business. Research on Edina *Asafo* and their Posts could be made public through public lectures, symposia and other fora (forum) that could be organized in Edina, and out side Edina traditional area. These could target Basic, Secondary and Tertiary Institutions in and outside Edina, Print and electronic Journalist and other media

practitioners, Sociologist, Economic planners and Non-Governmental Organizations who may be interested in cultural and social advocacy and capacity building.

Possible attempt must be made at encouraging and funding the serialization of some of the research publication in journals, dailies, weeklys and monthly news released. Columnist reporters and media houses who publish Pan African materials encouraged to skew part of their resources towards educating the reading public about some of the significances of the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts. Vernacular or an acceptable Ghanaian spoken English could be for specific programmes on the Community Radio and Television networks to help inform, educate and entertain the youth on Edina *Asafo*. In addition vigorous promotion of Tour calendar should be directed towards these *Asafo* Companies and their Posts. Ghana Tourist Board should promote *Asafo* Company Posts as a tourist site and provide trained Tour Guides to assist tourist and researchers.

#### **DOCUMENTATION (LITERARY, PHOTOGRAPHIC AND MULTIMEDIA) OF EDINA ASAFO POSTS**

The Documentation of the *Asafo* Company Posts should be stepped up by all scholars and writers. Proper documentation of the Edina *Asafo* shrines into literary materials could help hold forth these fast loosing treasures of Edina. Research has established that very few literary materials have been devoted on the activities of these Edina *Asafo* Company Posts, Paraphernalia, Flags and others. It is acceptable that the very *Asafo* Posts that stand on the streets of Edina are self documentary. Notwithstanding these efforts, it is evident that, the forms and figures that constitute these compositions are shredded in deep symbols and

events. Stories that make these *Asafo* Posts in terms of choice of colour(s), architectural features, symbols, figures and objects could best be told by the ageing members and officials who keep visiting their ancestors one after the other. The few surviving officials and members who are the repositories of these *Asafo* histories are virtually the non-literate members. Since these pieces of information might not be handed over voluntarily to the youth, it is incumbent that, cultural researchers, historians should see these as theses, projects and assignments to unearth these rich oral treasures. It is recommended that, this available information should be well cross-checked to become authentic and classified. This processed information must be put into accessible literary materials such as books, journal, magazines, news prints, and periodicals and so on. It will be appreciated if these materials are also replicated on air waves and other multimedia channels that may include both local and foreign radio and television institutions. Incentives and sponsorships must be made available to all genuine people who would wish to go down this herculean road of cultural rejuvenation. Interviews, discussions, and oral forum could be held to inform the society on the activities of the *Edina Asafo* Companies and their Posts.

## **INTRODUCTION OF EDINA ASAFO ACTIVITIES AS PART OF ACADEMIC CURRICULUM**

Heidrunn Wolter, in her work **Ghanaian Children and Art Education** had this to say, “*Ghanaian children are more familiar with Western Culture than their indigeneous ones*”. This assertion is true to some extent in that schools do not emphasis on cultural programmes that are Ghanaian centered and that if they do, much emphasis are not due them. Curriculum developments

for Basic and Secondary Schools should include cultural materials that will allow the school going children in Ghana to acquire the cultural heritage. Edina Asafo Company Post and their cultural significance are materials worth pushing down the systems of the children, the youth and the post youth group. The saying that, 'catch them young and they shall be yours for ever' may help in inculcating into our emerging generations the cultural sentiments and tenets needed to carry the flag of Edina, Ghana and Africa high. Tertiary Institutions in Ghana should run Undergraduate, Graduate Post graduate programmes in African Studies. In addition tertiary institutions should have cultural research centers the may assist researchers

#### **INTRODUCTION OF TOUR GUIDES TO INFORM AND EDUCATE TOURIST ON EDINA ASAFO ACTIVITIES**

Empirical evidence establishes the world as a Global Village. In this respect, transferring, positioning and repositioning of goods, services and capital have made it possible for persons of race, creed and caliber to migrate for a just course. In view of this, people affected by this new wave may be seeking knowledge and information with respect to the cultural practices and principles of the idigenes and the communities in question. Information, if not acquired from the appropriate source, may form a dent, misinformation, misunderstanding and wrong impression in the minds of persons seeking it. Ghana Tourist Board should ensaure that trained resource persons or Tour Guides who processes in-depth knowledge and insight on touring and tour site are put on the fore front to assist tourist and researchers who visit Edina since touring activities world wide requires the dissemination of requisite knowledge



and information about the Tour sites that features prominently on Tour calendars.

It is recommended that Tour institutions and Tertiary institutions such as University of Cape Coast, Takoradi Polytechnic and Cape Coast Polytechnic who run Post Degree, Degree and Higher National Diploma programmes respectively in Tourism and Tourism Management should train Specialists in *Asafo* Tour Guiding. These specialized skills would help inform and promote the true culture of the Edina *Asafo* Companies and their activities. It is also recommended that the cultural advocates and reseachers in the Edina Traditional Area and Ghana provide specialized knowledge through lectures, seminars and workshops for tourists who visit the Edina Traditional Area for research and leisure. Also some loyal members of the Edina *Asafo* Companies could be trained in tour guiding since these indigenes are the true custodians of the *Asafo* Culture. It is the the responsibility of the indigenes to promulgate and protect the Edina *Asafo* Company Posts and their culture. Fieldwork indicated that the true custodians of the *Asafo* history are now the aged or virtually weak to share information and knowledge to today generation and researchers.

### **CREATION OF MINI MUSEUMS OUT OF EDINA ASAFO POSTS**

Worldwide, institutions of cultural relics are being offered newer dimension and attentions for their preservations, promotions and repositioning as sources of Cultural, Educational and Scientific centre. *Asafo* Company Posts of Edina are no mean samples of such cultural relics that need to be accorded Museum status. The activities of the *Asafo* Companies today have been reduced to mere ceremonial function even though their democratic responsibilities of confirming and installing *Omanhen* of Edina still exist. Attempts at demystifying these Posts would create the necessary enabling atmosphere

needed to attract sizeable patronage by local and foreign tourist to them. The Ghana Museums and Monument Board must include the Edina *Asafo* Posuban as part of the National cultural relics that need to be protected and preserved.

Edina *Asafo* Companies abounds in numerous paraphernalia, regalia, insignia, flags, banners budes, staves, poles, musical instruments and others that speak million words about their activities with their past and their Western partners. Also, the Companies have the various effigies of their cherished ancestors and shrines and religious objects used to perform the religious rituals and rites. The analogy is that, these Posts which are fast becoming symbols of deterioration if converted into Mini Museum could be used to house the many *Asafo* objects that abounds them. If approved, this could permit the State of Ghana to assist in the maintenance of these cultural edifices for future generations. Documentation of these *Asafo* wares could be properly effected to make way for researchers, historians, writers, photojournalist and local and foreign tourist to undertake research and leisure respectively. The Dutch Embassy in Ghana and the Edina Cultural Heritage Programme should pursue this recommendation. Annan-Prah, recounts that the Ducth Embassy is to assist those *Asafo* Companies who have not yet secured a modern Post to themselves with ones that will much up to those whose are being refurbished.

### **EXHIBITION OF EDINA ASAFO WARES**

The Edina Heritage Council should take up the task of seeing to exhibition of the Edina *Asafo* artefacts and wares at regular occations to the people to throw light on the Edina culture. In recent past, all Edina *Asafo* Companies kept their ware with individual members and official, but with the

putting up of the modern Posts which came to replace the ‘Pia Suban’ types, some of the Companies created space within them to house their precious items. All the Edina *Asafo* Companies should make available in their Company Posts adequate space to showcase their numerous *Asafo* wares that are under their custody for educational, informational and cultural expediency. These wares when made public will aid research work and publications on *Asafo* curiosity and activities. These publication and publicities would increase capital inflow, employment and the development of the infrastructures and hospitality activity and also the betterment of the social and economic lives of the indigenes, inhabitants and Edinaman.

### **CREATION PILGRIMAGE OUT OF EDINA ASAFO POSTS**

Creation of pilgrimage out of the *Asafo* Company Posts should be organised by the Edina Heritage centre. People who own allegiance to a place, people, or sort make regular visit to strengthen their ties. All over the world, Religious, Political, Economic, Social and Sports ideologist, make pilgrimage to their roots to connect, reconnect or find fulfillment with their souls. The people of Edina should be encouraged to do same. Edina *Asafo* Companies and their shrines are such institutions that may fit perfectly into the cultural calendar of Ghana. Edina *Asafo* advocates and leaders must launch vigorous campaign at informing and educating all Edina people about the need to visit Edina and her cultural edifices, at least once a year. In the past indigenes of Edina make pilgrimage to Edina to celebrate ‘Edina Bronya’, and ‘Edina Bakatue’

Also *Asafo* advocates and Cultural Agencies must organize pilgrim for African Americans, Caribbean, Europeans and Edina people to participate in

the above mentioned annual events. These acts will ensure the enactment and registration of members of the Diasporans as *Asafo* members and help create income and employment for the indigenes.

## **REGISTRATION AND RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP**

*Asafo* leaders should undertake the registration of new members and the renewal of old membership should be done to strengthen the Company activities. Evidence from fieldwork indicates that almost all the Edina *Asafo* Companies have somehow had their groups' registers depleted by death of the older members. Lack of interest in *Asafo* activities by the adults, youth and adolescence has deepened this situation. It is therefore recommended that the various *Asafo* Companies pursue vigorous re-registration exercise among its members in and around the Edina traditional area. This exercise could be extended to cover all Edina indigenes leaving in Ghana and outside Ghana. Within this process new members could be registered. This registration exercise will help strengthen their registers and therefore make it possible for them to generate resources through levies and donations, since in Ghana today, a major source of funding projects back home is through remittance from relations and friends abroad and elsewhere.

Moreover the registration and re-registration exercise of the Edina indigenes will also help sensitize the spirit of *Asafoism* and also provide the channel through which the various group members leaving outside Edina could establish Edina *Asafo* Companies in their respective communities to promote unity and development among their selves and the community.



## **TRAINING AND RETRAINING OF EDINA ASAFO MEMBERS**

For the sake of cultural expediency and promulgation, there is the need for members of the various *Asafo* Companies to be continually handed down with the requisite knowledge and techniques in *Asafo* performances. Regular training of old and new members in *Asafo* activities should be organised by the various *Asafo* Company leaders. These training of new members and the retraining of old ones when done properly and appropriately could attract ordinance that could lead to the attraction of financial donations and rewards needed to uplift the image of the various *Asafo* Companies.

## **REGULAR STAGING OF EDINA ASAFO PERFORMANCE Re-enactment and Enactment of *Asafo* Activities**

The Edina *Asafo* Companies from time immemorial have been characterized by their high spirit in martial, vocal, instrumental, flags dancing, mascotting and others performances in the celebration of their achievement and other social, political and religious endeavours. Edina *Asafo* has numerous performances with which they made great historic achievements, exploits and initiatives, known to the people and community both at home and elsewhere. It is recommended that regular staging of *Asafo* performance: reenactment and enactment of *Asafo* activities should be organised by the leaders of the various *Asafo* Companies.

## **CREATION OF EDINA ASAFO DAY IN EDINA**

Creation of a special day 'EDINA ASAFO DAY' for all the *Asafo* Companies in Edina will give publicity and attention to the *Edina Asafo* Companies. This will be very crucial for the development of the *Asafo* culture in Edina. Like the Emancipation Day and the Pan African Festival Day held regularly in Ghana a date set aside on the cultural calendar of Ghana, specifically for the celebration *Edina Asafo* culture could help uphold, maintain, restored and recreate the cultural importance of these enviable *Asafo* Companies. The observance of this day could help boost up the tourist attraction to Edina and Ghana. This could help promote the *Edina Asafo* Institution and their Company Posts and activities into the calendar of the Worlds Culture, thus making them gain position as cultural icons of the world.

The *Asafo* day must be organized to include *Asafo* performances, Public lectures, Seminars, Symposium and Exhibitions that may involve *Edina Asafo* artifacts, accoutrement and power objects obtained from their European partners and those adopted from them as well. The *Edina Cultural Heritage* Council could see to the organization of this day

## **EXHIBITION OF EDINA ASAFO POSTS AND ARTIFACTS**

*Edina Asafo* Companies abounds in numerous *Asafo* artifacts that include the *Asafo* Posts (*Posuban*) flags, banners, insignia,(badges) apparels, (dress, hats, caps) staves, musical instruments, military wears, photographs, letters and others that may reside in the store rooms of the *Asafo* Posts and with the individual, official and members of the various *Asafo* groups. A fair recommendation would mean that these treasured artifacts could be shown to the people of today and tomorrow, and to inform and educate people on the

activities, exploits and achievements of the *Asafo* groups by their leadres. The exhibition could be done by either displaying the items in the various *Asafo* Company Posts and in the community halls in Edina, or in recognized institutions of private and state sponsored halls. Also, these exhibits could be put on show in foreign states as an attempt at spreading out the message on the Edina *Asafo* Companies and their responsibility. Replicas of these copies could be fashioned from these *Asafo* relics and sold out as souvenirs.

These laudable recommendations if achieved will make Edina the most enviable coastal town

## GLOSSARY

Aborekyir; Overseas, Western world, Europe

Abosom; Deities

Abrobe; Pineapple

Akomfo; Priest

Asaman; Ghost

Asopatser; Sandals, Shoes

Asafo; Warriors

Boroenyi; Whiteman, Westerner, European

Brono; suburb

Edinafo; people of Edina

Esun; Drills, Schematics

Esuon; Seven

Fotossanyni; Finance Officer, Finance Minster

Frankatufo; Flag bearer, Flag dancer

Krata; Paper

Kokobo; Rock

Omanhen; Paramount Chief

Safohen; War Captain, Military Captain

Supi; War General, Military General

Tufo; Marksman, Expert shooter

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