

OBSERVABLE ARTISTIC CHANGES IN THE FUNERALS
OF ADANSE TRADITIONAL AREA

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OBSERVABLE ARTISTIC CHANGES IN THE FUNERALS
OF ADANSE TRADITIONAL AREA

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DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my lovely wife, Sarah Adu-Gyamfi, and children – Afua, Akosua, Jeremiah and Louis for their support and encouragement.

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I wish to acknowledge with sincere gratitude my indebtedness to all those who have played roles in the production of this study. I would therefore like to express my gratitude to all who read and commented on the draft and offered me valuable advice and practical suggestions; among such key figures are Mr. Lloyd Alexander Djangmah of Wesley College of Education, Kumasi and Dr. Dogbe of African Art Department, KNUST, Kumasi.

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I have special thanks for Madam Mary Korkor Dosoo for typing the study and Mr. Ebenezer Kwegyir Ayensu for arranging the pictures. I also owe my gratitude to all individuals who helped in putting the study into good shape. I must however, accept responsibility for whatever errors of presentation or interpretation there may be in the work.

September, 2010

P.A-G

ABSTRACT

Funeral rites have been with mankind since creation. Funerals are observed to pay the last respect to the deceased. Art has played a major role in funerals since creation. However, art in funerals has seen some changes in Adanse Traditional Area since the past fifty years due to modernity and technology.

The researcher, in an attempt to find out the changes in art forms in the area understudy used qualitative and descriptive research methods. The researcher adopted qualitative research method to help him to obtain a clear picture of what he observed. So also he chose descriptive method to enable him describe in detail all the art forms he observed and information he got from interviewees.

From the study, the researcher realized that the many art forms that have been added to funeral celebrations in the Adanse traditional area have brought employment opportunities to some of the people living there.

Despite the creation of jobs during funerals others see funerals with its attendant hardships. Some people are of the view that because of the affluence that people attach to it, huge sums are spent on the many use of arts. They made mention of the high cost of coffins, the many souvenirs, announcements and cloths, among others. They are of the view that such monies could be used to help brilliant but needy pupils in schools and developmental projects in the towns.

The researcher recommends that affluence which goes with funerals in Adanse should be minimized. The Traditional rulers and opinion leaders should take it upon themselves to educate the masses to reduce the many art forms thereby saving some money to help the needy or schools in the area. It is appropriate to use various art forms in funerals to showcase the rich culture of the people of Adanse. Its attendant advantages over weigh the disadvantages, yet the importance of the art forms is dear to the heart of the researcher. In all the funeral literature read so far by the researcher, the authors failed to show the importance and advantages of art forms used in funerals though they made mention of the arts. This constitutes an academic vacuum which this thesis has filled.

The researcher suggest to future researchers to look at the financial problems that the use of many art forms have brought to bear on many homes especially the children of a deceased person and the inheritor.

BOTANICAL NAMES OF PLANTS REFERRED TO IN THIS THESIS

Twɪ Words	Scientific Words
<i>Adwera:</i>	<i>Hyssop</i>
<i>Akyeampong:</i>	<i>Siam weed</i>
<i>{hy[:</i>	<i>Daniellia ogea</i>
<i>Hwer[mo:</i>	<i>Combretum grandiflorum</i>
<i>Nyanya:</i>	<i>Mallotus oppositi folius</i>
<i>Odum:</i>	<i>Malicia excelsa</i>
<i>Odwan-nkyene:</i>	<i>Bridelia micrantha</i>
<i>}p]n akob]fo]:</i>	<i>Loranthaceae</i>
<i>Wawa:</i>	<i>Triplochiton scleroxylon</i>

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1: Background to the Study

This thesis is an attempt to examine the artistic changes in the funerals in the Adanse Traditional area. That is, it is an attempt to find out the art forms that have continually been incorporated into the funerals of the people of Adanse from 1960 to the present day. While discussing the artistic changes, the researcher will also examine the functions and importance of art in Adanse funerals.

The term “art”, used in this thesis, refers to creative objects made by man, as well as human expressions that are verbal, melodic, or bodily (in the form of gestures comprising the movements of the head, arms, hands, legs and the body), that have aesthetic qualities and values (Amenuke, et al (1991), in which are involved in or connected to the funerals of the people of Adanse. Examples of the art forms are dancing, drumming, dressing of the corpse and mourners dirges. The art objects and artistic actions found in Adanse funerals have special meanings and importance.

There are ceremonies that go with death. Some of them are pre-burial, burial and post-burial funeral activities. Death brings with it loss and sorrow to families. It is accepted that death is part of life or a passage of life, yet Adanse people and other ethnic groups consider some human deaths as caused by external forces, thus categorizing death into natural and unnatural or mature and pre-mature ones. When a person attains 70 years or more or grows old before

“kicking the bucket,” he is regarded as mature and therefore dying a natural death.

To the people of Adanse the commonest cause of premature death is attributed to witchcraft. It is also believed that deities can cause death. Yet another cause of death is attributed to evil spirits and ghosts. Depending on the cause of death, befitting or unbefitting burials and funerals are given to the dead. Deaths that are not ascribed to any of the above- mentioned causes are ascribed to God. For example, the death of old people of seventy years and above is said to be from God.

Burial is the method by which a dead body is disposed of. In Adanse, it is done in a home or village of the deceased person. Formerly, people who died in accidents or diseases like leprosy and epilepsy were not buried decently in order to differentiate them from those who died “natural” deaths. But of late, those who suffer “unnatural” deaths are also accorded fitting burials.

Funeral celebrations are organized depending on the circumstances that led to the death. For example the funeral of a person who hanged himself or drank poison (*[t]fo*) is quite different from the funeral of the aged. Ofori-Amankwa (2003) said that in Asante, a person who is suspected to have been murdered is buried with a knife in his hand! It is believed that he/she is taking the knife to the underworld to show ancestors.

Adanse people, like other ethnic groups, believe that death is not the end of man. They believe in life after death. Funeral rites are, therefore, meant to prepare the deceased for the journey to *Asamando*, the next world. It is believed that if proper burial rites are not performed, the spirit of the dead person will

hover around as ghost; he/she cannot join the ancestors. Because of this belief, the Adanse, Fante, Ga, Ewe and other African communities spend a lot to give befitting burial rites for their dead relatives.

To enable the researcher to produce a successful work, he wishes to discuss the statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the research, delimitations, limitations, definition of terms, abbreviations, importance of the study and the organization of the rest of the text.

1.2: Statement of the Problem

Art in funerals has undergone several changes in the Adanse Traditional area. Nowadays many art forms which hitherto were not used have been added as a result of modernity and technology to show affluence. This has caused many people to complain of the many art forms that make the celebration of funerals expensive.

1.3: Objectives of the Research

The objectives of the study are:

1. To investigate the artistic changes in funerals of the people of Adanse from 1960 to 2010; and
2. To discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the artistic changes.

1.4: Research Questions

1. Is there any evidence to show that there has been an artistic change in the funerals of Adanse from 1960 to 2010?
2. Are there any advantages and disadvantages associated with the artistic change?

1.5: Delimitation

The study is limited to art in funerals of Adanse Traditional Area for 50 years i.e. 1960 – 2010.

1.6: Significance of the Study

1. This thesis will enable people know the art forms which were not incorporated in funerals in Adanse about fifty years ago.
2. It will bring out advantages of the artistic changes in the funerals in the area under study.

1.7: Definition of Terms

Artistic changes – additional art forms that are seen in funerals in the Adanse Traditional Area since 1960.

Nnwomkor] – it is a cultural song exclusively performed by a group of adult women. Originally dances were not part of *nnwomkor*]. The musical instruments used today like *firikiyiwa*, *nt]rowa*, *nnawuta* and *prempesua* were later additions.

The use of such instruments brought men into *nnwomkor* bands because they play the instruments most of the time in an otherwise purely female group.

Adenkum – a traditional music, meaning calabash music of festivals. In *adenkum*, the sections vary in length from one to three bars. Immediate melodic repetition is the most characteristic feature of the songs. Songs in *adenkum* are folk songs. *Adenkum* is performed by female bands but had male drummers or instrumentalists.

Adowa – is a cultural group which was originally a female dance. It was later that songs were added to the dance. It is performed orally with body movements. It adopts the “call” and “response” structure.

1.8: Abbreviations

- A. T. A - Adanse Traditional Area
- F.M. - Frequency Modulation

1.9: Organization of the Rest of Text

This thesis has five chapters. Chapter one reveals the contents of the thesis, how information was gathered and the obstacles that the researcher faced. It also gives the background knowledge of the thesis, what death is and how people regard it in the world, why funerals are organized and belief in life after death, hence a befitting burial for the dead.

Chapter two reviews literature related to the study by using pieces of information that have a bearing on the topic. The information was gathered from

published and unpublished sources like textbooks, brochures, journals, thesis, internet and others.

Chapter three talks about the research design – the methods that were used to gather information on artistic changes that have taken place the past fifty years. The chapter further investigates the types of funerals organized in Adanse with forms of art that have been added to what existed before.

Chapter four of the thesis discusses how the data were assembled and analyzed. Finally, chapter five deals with the discussions, conclusion and recommendations.

1.10: Profile of the Study Area

Ward (1996) says it is historically believed that the earliest Twi-speaking state to be established was Adanse a corruption of the word “Adansi”. The name Adanse means house building, and legend has it that the Adanse were the first people in the Gold Coast to build mud or swish houses. If this assertion is true, then they could be credited as the first to settle down in permanent homes, confirming other evidence that makes the Adanse the senior Twi-speaking state.

The founder of the Adanse state was Opon Enim; but it was the second chief, Ewurade Basa, who made Adanse powerful. Ewurade Basa is credited to have appointed one Kwae Mfrani as his *kyeame* or spokesperson, instead of speaking to people direct and other chiefs copied him in this practice, which is universal among the Akan today.

The first capital of Adanse was Adansemanso, which was close to the modern village of Mansia on the road from Fomena to Akrokyere (Akrokerri). Presently, Fomena is the traditional capital, with the Adansehene residing there. It was there that

the Treaty of Fomena was signed on 14th March, 1874 between the Asantehene, Nana Osei Tutu I and the British.

Geographically, Adanse is in the Southern part of the Ashanti Region. It is bounded in the south-west by Amansie Central District and south-east by Asante –Akim District. The Amansie East District forms the northern border while Assin North District is in the south.

The Adanse Traditional Area is made up of three districts – Adanse South with New Edubiase as its capital, Adanse North having Fomena as its capital and the Obuasi Municipal town with Obuasi as its capital.

The major vegetation is forest, and the natural occupation is farming. Both men and women do crop farming. Cocoa, plantain, cassava and maize do very well in most parts of the area. In swampy areas rice is grown. Palm trees grow profusely in many parts of the area.

People from almost all parts of Ghana reside in Adanse; many of them being farmers. They include Fantes, Gas, Ewes, Krobos, Kusasis, Mamprusis and others.

Adanse, like other Asantes, believe in the Almighty God. There are few gods as Patakro Bonsam and Edubiase Brekune. They believe in the ancestral veneration, spirits, ghosts and magic. Christianity is widely practiced in Adanse. Churches like Methodist, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Christ Apostolic, Assemblies of God, Pentecost, Church of Christ, Twelve Apostles and others have been embraced mostly by the people.

When Thomas Birch Freeman was coming to Kumasi from Cape Coast to establish the Methodist Church, he was delayed for six weeks at the border village of Fomena, precisely Kusa.

All these beliefs affect the culture and customs of the people. There are traditional entertainment groups like *Aprede*, *Kete* and *Densuom*.



Fig. 1: Map of Ashanti Region showing the position of Adanse
(Source: Ghana Wall Map)



Fig. 2: Map of the Adanse Traditional Area showing
the towns where the research was conducted
(Source: Ghana Wall Map)

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to compare and contrast what previous writers have written about the use of art in funerals in various cultures of the world.

According to Opoku (1978), death is the inevitable end of man, but the attitude towards it is everywhere ambivalent. It is a journey which man must make in order to reach the life beyond and continue to live as an ancestor. The dead, therefore, do not remain in the grave, but become spirits and proceed to the spirit world, called *asamando* by the Akan. Death, to the African in general and Akan in particular does not sever his or her connections with his/her family.

Opoku goes on to say that death does not end life; it is an extension of life. The belief is that the community of the dead exists alongside the community of the living, and that there is a mutual beneficial partnership between them. It is therefore the responsibility of the living to perform the funeral rites of the dead properly and give them a befitting burial and thereafter to offer them sacrifices and drinks which constitute acts of remembrance and reverence. The dead on their part begin to play a larger and more important role in human society in general and in the life of their families in particular because of their increased prayers.

Bridger (1978) quotes the Greek philosopher Aristotle as saying, "Death is a dreadful thing for it is the end." He also quotes Rousseau who said, "He who pretends to face death without fear is a liar!"

Mbiti (1975) writes that death is a process which removes a person gradually from the *sasa* period to the *zamani*. Death stands between the visible and invisible. It is something that concerns everybody, partly because sooner or later everyone personally faces it and partly because it brings loss and sorrows to every family and community. It is no wonder, therefore, that rituals connected with death are usually elaborate. Mbiti goes on to say that death is conceived as a departure and not complete annihilation of a person. He goes on to join the company of the departed, and the only major change is the decay of the physical body, but the spirit moves on to another state of existence.

According to Nabofa (1991) in *Traditional Religion in West Africa*, edited by Ade Adegbola (1998), the Urhobo have a saying that *ats' akpo re je kpo-o*, meaning that 'man has not come to life to live for ever.' *Erhi* must go back home, that is to its original home which is in *Erivbin*. It has just come to *akpe* as a sojourner, but not as a permanent dweller on earth. When it has fulfilled the task which it set for itself during the process of predestination, it must return to where it really belongs.

Sarpong (1974) says death is proper to us; only we do not yet possess it. An unripe fruit develops towards ripeness. Death provokes thoughts of darkness and light, weakness and strength, evil and good, sorrow and joy, non-existence and life, war and peace, defect and victory, vice and virtue, ignorance and knowledge, in short, confusion. To the Ghanaian, death is regarded as the occasion when a deceased person sets out on a journey to the underworld or spirits world to which his ancestors have already gone, a place where he must settle any account he has with those who have gone before him. His journey is

arduous and unavoidable. One, who sets foot on it, cannot and should not come back, except as a respected ancestor spirit.

2.1 Verbal Announcements

Bame (1991) states that messengers are sent to convey the sad news to the head of maternal lineage and all its members, wherever they are. Some of the numerous runners are sent to inform the father of the deceased or his successor, who in turn informs his lineage members.

Achana (1993), states that the announcement of an old woman's funeral in Kasena-Nakana area can be made by relatives and through musketry firing.

Adzie (1993) wrote that shouts are regarded as the first and foremost of all the announcements in the Somey traditional area. They are made by women. It is known that women are easily carried out by emotions. It is this behaviour of theirs that makes them responsible for this first announcement. The way the message is put across with the use of idioms and proverbs makes it verbal art. Sarfo, of Kumasi Cultural Center, whose work is unpublished, states that the people around, the immediate family members, the elders and opinion leaders, the chiefs and the entire community and sympathizers of all walks of life must know about the death of someone they knew and loved. They have to be informed officially and unofficially when someone goes the way of all people.

There are various ways of informing people when death occurs in a family. Some elders, opinion leaders, very important persons in the society, and chiefs have to be informed by sending an individual, a delegation of two or more persons to give out the information. In such cases the one or those who run the

errand go with a drink. Most often he/they carried aromatic schnapps (imported or local according to the status of the person) or in the villages a local gin may be presented. It is when the drink and the message, a verbal art, have reached the recipient that informs him that he has heard of the death of his kinsman officially. He may not attend the funeral if this custom is not observed. He might also choose to attend the funeral on protest and the family will have to appease him at the funeral before he performs the necessary rites.

Various methods were adopted in the olden days such as beating of gong-gong, drums and or booming of guns which are arts. But these days various methods have been adopted by which people learn of the death of someone near or far. These include the following:

(a) Posters: Before 2000, posters were printed in black and white, but quite recently posters are produced in colour. Even the one week or eight day celebration now attracts the printing of posters in the Ashanti region. The posters trace the family lineage under the heading “Obituary” or “Transition.” There are other numerous headings including “Call to Glory, In Memoriam, At Rest, and Home Call.” If the person is a Christian, it will mention the Church and the former place of work, if still a worker at the time of death. Some posters carry the pictures of the deceased, may be at the time of death and one taken during the person’s youthful days or both. Some do not carry recent pictures and so one gets confused when he/she looks at the age. These posters may be posted in the town, cities suburbs, villages, where the funeral will be held. If the deceased had children who are working, they send some of them to the working areas with their names underlined boldly. The posters which are art forms are pasted with

adhesives which are bought. These are found on walls, poles, trees, church premises and homes and even on vehicles.

(b) Invitation Cards - Apart from the posters on the walls, invitation cards are also printed to be distributed to those who matter and friends, co-workers and business partners of the deceased's children and other relations. The cards are sent to the invitees between one week and at most two weeks. Even people find it necessary to call to remind persons invited on phones or call personally when it is getting to the time of the funeral. The same information on the posters and cards are printed in the invitation. The posters and invitation cards are liberal arts.

2.2: Non-Verbal Funeral Announcements

The pictures of deceased persons are replicated in the local newspapers in the advertisement columns. But where there are no pictures the cross is represented. This is liberal literary art. They may be in colour. The very large ones, which cost a lot of money and also in colour may have the heading "Celebration of Life" with all the information on the posters appearing. Other captions that appear are 'Call to Eternity, Memorial and Thanksgiving Service, sacred to the Memory of our Beloved' etc.

2.3: Electronic Announcements

Funeral announcements may appear on television both state owned and private television stations, a form of visual art. If one wants it just before the news bulletin or just after it attracts a special fee. If one wants it to be decorated with flowers and other things that will make it attractive to draw viewers' attention, then one has to put in a lot of money.

Radio announcements could also be made. Rates depend on time duration and the time the announcements are to be made.

FM stations. Others choose to announce them on the various FM stations. Here, people are at times at a loss as to which stations to choose as the FM stations keep on multiplying. Those who go to the FM stations may select about two or three popular stations. All these electronic announcements are verbal art.

According to Amponsah (1975), the death of someone is not announced immediately. It is kept secret until the washing and preparation of the corpse is done. If relatives wail immediately, other relatives and sympathizers would come there and this would prevent them from preparing the corpse to be laid in state. The chief of the village has to be informed immediately otherwise the funeral wail should not be done or under a fine of GH¢0.93; *asanu ne nsanu*. The death of a chief or king is not announced immediately, it is kept for about a week or two. The funeral rites of a chief need a lot of preparation.

Korang (1993) reports that when someone dies, the family members send people to inform the chief or king, as well as the deceased's father, his wife, if a man, and his children.

2.4: Preparation of the Corpse

Adogba (1979) states that the dead body is first of all cleaned of any dirt or medicine applied on the body. Preparation of the body is of great spiritual significance as well as for hygienic purposes. It is prepared with care to remove any dirt or offensive matter so that the person is clean to enter a new society.

Great care is taken to preserve the body so that it can remain until all the ceremonies of the burial have been adequately performed. It must be treated so that quick decomposition is avoided, that the mourners and relatives are able to stay comfortably by the dead body until the time of the burial. In our hot climate, decomposition takes place very fast. To preserve the body, it is laid flat on the stomach before it is bathed. This helps drain liquid matter from the body through the mouth and the nose. Others drain through the anus and the other openings. For preservation to last a long time beyond twenty-four hours, the body is seated on a hole for a long time before the bathing takes place. Salt solution is poured down the throat to preserve the body. Lime and camphor-balls were also used. The body is actually pressed to make the stomach as clean as possible. The effectiveness of the preservation, however, depends on the nature of the body of the dead person and the type of sickness which killed the person. When the body is to be carried to a distant place for burial, no water should touch it since it is believed that it aids decomposition. The preparation needs knowledge of art and customs. Special people are selected to see to the washing and preparation of the body.

Sarfo, in his unpublished work, says the elderly women in the family in the village have a way of draining water from dead bodies by using traditional herbs

and spices to keep the body safe before burial. In certain areas in Ghana, the dead was placed on the bare cement floor and covered by fresh and green leaves of the 'nim tree' or '*Akyampong*' (siam weed). For more than three or five days the body would not decompose. Lately, "quack doctors" were employed to keep the dead intact by using orthodox medicine to keep the body dry before burial.

Amponsah (1975) states that in most parts of Ashanti and Brong Ahafo the washing of the corpse is done by the children or close relatives of the deceased. This is to prevent the disclosure of any disgraceful thing that might be found on the deceased. In Fantiland and Denkyira areas, the washing is done by the members of the '*asafo*' company, of which the deceased might be a member. The total articles are provided by the widow in Ashanti and Brong Ahafo. The wife of the deceased has to provide a new mat, sponge, towel and soap as well as drinks for those who would wash the corpse. They pour some of the drinks down the throat of the deceased to prevent the corpse from decomposition. The left hand is used for washing the corpse. In the past among the Brongs the core stem of a plantain tree (*baha*) was used as a sponge. The finger nails of the deceased are trimmed and the cut finger and toe nails are used to prepare medicine to ward off the spirit of the deceased from visiting the orphanage. In certain parts of Ashanti and Brong Ahafo the hair, finger and toe nails cut, are put in the coffin of the deceased. The deceased would need all these in order to be reborn as a full person into the lineage or clan. The items used in bathing the corpse are all art pieces. The room in which the body is kept before bathing is an architectural form which is an art work.

Amponsah goes on to say that the corpse is washed and stretched on a show bed (which is an art work) to lay it in state for a few hours before burial. In Brong Ahafo and Ashanti the deceased is laid in state in his father's house, but if he is from a royal family, he is laid in state at the house of the head of the royal family. The decoration of the show bed an art work and the preparation of the corpse depend upon the status of the deceased. Sometimes the corpse is adorned with gold dust or money and other gold ornaments. All these are body art. If the deceased is a head of a family, *abusua panin*, the head is shaved and marked with red, white and black stripes which are body art. This is done so as to be able to recognize him when he arrives at *Asamando* the land of the dead. The importance of the lying in state is to enable relatives and friends get the chance of having their last look at the deceased. It is also done to honour the dead. It is during this time that the personal belongings of the deceased are exhibited to demonstrate the status and wealth of the deceased. The corpse is fanned by the mourners who sit at the bedside, to drive away flies and to honour the deceased.

Before the last bath was performed for the dead body, the husband or wife of the deceased was expected to present bathing materials. These items include a new sponge, a new towel, a bathing pot, presently an enamel bucket – *b]brapa*), sweet scented soap, pomade, powder and lavender. Others include traditional spices like lemon, chewing sponge, white body clay, razor for shaving and a few other items that differ from clan to clan. All the items demanded must be presentable else they would be rejected. If rejected, new set of items must be procured and presented before the final bath takes place. Elderly women from

the dead person's father's family perform the bath among the Akans. If the dead person was a man the wife has to be present at the bath house.

Spices and sweet scented perfumes are used on the dead body after the last bath. This must be done diligently. Where the deceased is a man his eldest son is called to put on the traditional panties, *danta* which is an art work. If on the other hand the dead is a woman, the eldest daughter does it.

After the bath, the dead person was forced to take hard liquor. This helps in the preservation of the dead body for some time before burial. The bathing items are parceled and finally placed in the coffin. They need not forget to bury the dead without them because those were the bathing toiletries he/she would be using at *asamando* the underworld. In the event they forget to place them in the coffin the items will have to be sent to the cemetery and bury them in the grave.

In the olden days the dead was laid in state in homes. Every household has a special place designed for that purpose. The house is an art work. During that time the dead was laid on his/her side - precisely on the left – which brought about the saying “He has slept on his left” meaning “he has died.” (These days the dead is laid on the back with face up and the hands placed at the sides or on the chest. Again, these days some deceased persons are made to sit, stand or made to act like holding a cutlass in one hand and a cocoa pod in the other hand if he/she were a celebrated farmer. Others are made to hold guns as a renowned hunter or royal).

The body is laid in state well-dressed with gold ornaments, aggrey beads and special pendants and rings. The dead body may be covered with gold dust to show the wealth of the family. The body is placed on an iron bed which may

be hired if the family does not possess one. Even the poorest person being laid in state is gorgeously dressed so that the dead or the family is not disgraced. Here, body art comes into play.

Members of the family are invited to view the dead body in state. If they are satisfied with the whole presentation then the public would be invited to file past the body or view it. When everything is set after the dead has been laid in state then the women start wailing, which is performing art. By this time all the children in the house where the dead has been laid in state are sent to a nearby house. They do not have to come back to the house until the dead is buried.

Rattray (1954) says hot water, a new sponge, and a new towel are used for washing the corpse. The washers and dressers of the corpse are paid with wine which is known as *nsa a y[de yi no adware]* (the wine which is used to bath him). Rum is often poured down the throat, with the idea of staying the process of decomposition; a small quantity is also poured upon the ground for the spirit. The pouring of libation with the use of idioms and proverbs is performing arts. Various forms of 'ghost' or 'soul' currency ("*saman sika* or *kra sika*), in the form of ornaments of a certain shape and design, are bound round the wrists of the corpse. Gold dust is often put into its ears and into the hollow above the zygomatic arch, known as *sika gu ber]* (the place for pouring gold dust). Gold dust is also bound up in a small packet and tied to the loin cloth; hair is sometimes placed in the mouth. The body, dressed in its best cloth and adorned, in addition to the 'soul money', with every available gold ornament, is laid on its left side, generally with the hands folded against the cheek, and sometimes with a silk handkerchief between them to wipe off the sweat that comes upon them in

climbing the hill. These are visual arts. The room in which the corpse is laid is an art work.

The funeral wailing, performing art, now begins: *Agya e! Buei!* (Alas! Father') or *Buei! Eno e!* (Alas! mother') according to the sex of the deceased, and guns are fired. The blood relations smear lines of red clay (*ntwoma*) on the forehead (known as *kotobirigya*) and on the upper part of the arms (called *safe*). Body art comes into play. In the case of any relation who is in the priesthood, he or she must smear himself or herself with white clay. Mourning bands (*abotire*) are fastened round the head into which red peppers are sometimes placed. Sometimes the head of the corpse is shaved and marked with alternate red, white and black stripes, made with *[sono* (red dye), white clay, and *bidie* (charcoal), these are body art. This is done so that the dead person may be readily recognized if he or she walks as a *saman* (ghost). Occasionally a brass pan is placed beneath the head and later is buried in this position, in order to receive the head when it drops off. Instead of the hands being folded, as just described, they are sometimes allowed to rest with the fingers inside one of the metal vessels called *kudu* which contain gold dust. The next stage in the proceedings after the body has been washed, dressed and laid out in the manner described, is the preparation of food for the journey, upon which the deceased is supposed to have embarked. This food generally consists of a fowl, eggs and mashed plantains or yams and water, which are placed beside the body, which has been laid on its left side purposely to leave the right arm and hand free for eating. The food, known as *Kra aduane* (food for the soul) is placed before the

corpse, with the following words repeated three times; *Wo kra akok] ni o!* (Here is a fowl for your soul”),

Encarta (2008) states that in all societies, the human body is prepared in some fashion before it is finally laid to rest. The Neanderthals, who lived in Europe from about 20,000 to 28,000 years ago, were among the first humans to practice deliberate burials. Today, washing the body, dressing it in special garments and adorning it with ornament, religious objects or amulets are common procedures. All these are body arts.

2.5: Art, Funerals and Disposal of the Dead Body

The various methods used for disposal of the dead body are linked to religions beliefs, culture, climate and geography, and social status. Methods used in disposing off the dead body are catacombs, cremation, embalming.

Cremation

Encarta (2008) says that “cremation is the practice of burning corpses”. In cremation, the body is reduced to ashes in specially constructed furnaces; the ashes are then preserved in an urn, buried, or dispersed.

Evidence of cremation dates from antiquity. Pottery vessels, which are art works, from the Neolithic period, filled with the ashes of several individuals, have been found throughout Europe. Between 1400 BC and AD 200, cremation was the preferred burial custom, especially among Roman aristocrats. The Caesar family was one of many to choose this mode. Between the 3rd and 19th centuries Christianity became widely accepted. Its doctrines forbade cremation because of the belief that the body could not be resurrected if it were destroyed.

Early Jews also prohibited cremation, believing it was the desecration of a work of God. Orthodox Jews, the Eastern Orthodox Christian churches and Muslims are still forbidden to cremate their dead. Other groups of people, especially in India, continued to practice cremation and still do today. Today, cremation is practiced by some Jews and Christians. It is also practiced by some Buddhists, Sikhs and Hindus. It is being practiced in Ghana today. The dead body is put in a coffin or a box, an art work, before it is set ablaze.

Economic and sanitary considerations are the principal reasons for the increased numbers of cremation in recent years. Expanding populations have created land shortages; causing space for burial plots to become scarce and expensive. In addition, in-ground burial can contaminate water supplies for entire communities. This is especially serious when death has been caused by a highly contagious disease.

Today there are memorial gardens and buildings called *columbaria* with niches where ash-filled urns can be stored and visited by relatives. The memorial gardens and buildings are architectural forms which are art works. Cremation is increasing rapidly in the United States; the percentage of cremations has risen from 8.49% of deaths in 1978 to 15.31% of deaths in 1988.

Embalming

Embalming, as Encarta 2008 explains, is a mortuary custom, the art of preserving bodies after death, generally by the use of chemical substances. It is believed to have originated among the Egyptians, probably before 4000 BC, and was used by them for more than 30 centuries. Much evidence demonstrates that

embalming is religious in origin, conceived as a means of preparing the dead for the life after death.

From the Egyptians, as Encarta 2008 says, the practice of embalming spread to other ancient peoples including the Assyrians, Jews, Persians and Scythians. Ancient embalming methods consisted of removal of the brains and viscera, and the filling of bodily cavities with a mixture of balsamic herbs and other substances. The Egyptians immersed the body in carbonate of soda, injected the arteries and veins with balsams, filled the cavities of the torso with bituminous and aromatic substance and salt, and wound cloths saturated with similar materials around the body. The Assyrians used honey in embalming, the Persians used wax, and the Jews used spices and aloes. Alexander the Great was embalmed with honey and wax. The tools used during embalming are art works. The building in which the body is preserved is an architectural design, an art work.

According to Encarta the ancient peoples of Africa and Asia, embalming spread to Europe, where in time, it became a widespread practice. Embalming during the Middle Ages included evisceration, immersion of the body in alcohol and insertion of preservative herbs into incisions previously made in the fleshly parts of the body and wrapping the body in tarred or waxed sheets. The Danish King of England, Canute II, was embalmed by the above or similar methods, as were the English monarchs William the Conqueror and Edward I. William's body was found well preserved in the French city of Caen in the 16th Century; Edwards was also found to be well preserved when it was disinterred in Westminster Abbey in 1700; and Canute's body was still in a state of good preservation when

it was discovered in Winchester Cathedral in 1776. The essential purposes of modern embalming are preservation and prevention of the spread of infection both before and after burial. Cosmetic work is used to restore injured facial features or for aesthetic reasons. Embalming methods now consist essentially of the removal of all blood and gases from the body and the insertion of disinfecting fluid; sometimes the viscera are removed and immersed in an embalming fluid and are then replaced in the body, in which they are surrounded with a preservative powder. Most corpses in the United States and Canada are embalmed and the practice wide spread in other countries.

Mbiti (1975) says among Akans of Ghana, embalming was usually done by the elderly women in the family or in the village. They have a way of draining water from the dead bodies by using traditional herbs and spices to keep the body safe before burial. In certain areas in Ghana, the dead was placed on the bare cement floor and covered by fresh and green leaves of the nim tree or *akyampong*. For more than three to five days the body would not decompose. Lately, 'quack doctors' were employed to keep the dead intact by using orthodox medicines to keep the body dry before burial.

Coffins

Sarfo (2008) in *Definition of Deaths. Beliefs, Mourning and Types of Deaths among Africans*, says corpses are buried in coffins, art works, which are in various forms. Some families may import their coffin from the United Kingdom or the United States of America or elsewhere. These days most coffins are made in Ghana. Most of these coffins are well made in Kumasi in the Ashanti

Region and even sent to Accra, the capital city of Ghana. Coffins are made in other parts of Ghana.

Atta (2000) says formerly coffins were made with *wawa* boards for all persons. The *Odum* or boards made from mahogany were those meant for the wealthy, royals and very old persons who have led distinguished and exemplary lives. Some coffins could be described as very sophisticated. Some are very decorative with white beddings, flowers, shiny silver, bronze or gold metal plates and bars which are art works. The artisans may use glass and broken mirror to make them. You can view a dead body's face or the entire body in a coffin from outside. The artisan can make a coffin that can be dismantled into a bed with stands without hiring a bed on which to lay the body. They were made to be on wheels which could be folded and incorporated into the coffin when one desires.

Coffins are usually well painted or sprayed in desirable colours. White ones are usually for the aged, about 80 years or more. If a family wishes the artisan to remove all decorations before burial (which most of the times are stolen after burial) then the cost of the coffin is reduced considerably. At Teshie-Nungua in Accra, capital of Ghana, there are special coffins made for those persons who have undertaken some professions throughout their lives. There are coffins for farmers – usually a cocoa pod, one for drivers in a form of a car, and one for soldiers (a riffle). Then there is a coffin in the form of a fish for fishermen and one made in the form of a bible for pastors and ministers of religion. All these are art works – the art of moulding and painting.

From the internet, modernghana.com, modern coffins manufacturers offer features that they claim will protect the body for example some may offer a

protective casket that uses a gasket to seal the casket shut after the coffin is closed for the final time. Many manufacturers offer warranty on the structural integrity of the coffin. However no coffin will preserve the body, regardless of whether it is a wooden or metal coffin, a sealed casket, or if the deceased was embalmed before hand. In some cases, a sealed coffin may actually speed up rather than slow down the process of decomposition. An airtight coffin, for example, fosters decomposition by anaerobic bacteria, which results in a putrefied liquification of the body and all putrefied tissue remains inside the container, only to be exposed in the event of an exhumation. A container that allows air molecules to pass in and out, such as wooden box, allows for aerobic decomposition that results in much less noxious odor and clean skeletonization

Tombs

According to Encarta (2008) tombs are chambers built above or below ground to hold the remains of the dead, or a shrine above a grave. Tombs are among the oldest and most universal human structures. They were traditionally believed to be the houses of the dead and were frequently richly adorned and stocked with personal or household articles for use in the afterlife. Tombs have inspired great architecture and provided much information about the past. The architect who builds or designs the tomb is an artist.

The prehistoric practice of burying the deceased under their houses probably led to one of the earliest forms of tomb, the chamber covered by a mound of earth. Such mounds are found the world over - the barrows of northern Europe, the beehive tombs of Mycenae, the Stupas of India, and the mounds left

by the Mound Builders in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys of the United States. Another form of tomb was a chamber cut out of living rock, as for example, in the Valley of the kings, near Thebes, Egypt, in Petra (now in Jordan), and in Etruria (now in Italy). Early Christian tombs were subterranean galleries known as catacombs.

As civilization developed, tombs became more elaborate. The body was often enclosed in a sarcophagus, or coffin, within the tomb chamber, which could be painted by an artist and the basic tomb mound, became an architectural monument to royalty or a religious leader, often becoming a place of worship as well. The Egyptian pyramids, built by artisans for the pharaohs before 2000 BC, were the magnificent sculptured tomb of King Mausolus at Halicarnassus (now Bodrum), which was the source of the term *mausoleum*. Two magnificent Muslim tombs are the domed tiles tomb of the Turkic conqueror Tamerlane (1405) in Samarqand (now in Uzbekistan) and the white marble Taj Mahal (17th century), built for a Mughal queen in Agra, India.

Notable among modern tombs are those of Napoleon in the Hotel des Invalides in Paris, the U. S. presidents Ulysses S. Grant in New York City, and Lenin in Red Square in Moscow.

In ancient Egypt, royal tombs were located along the Nile River, the vital water way that runs the length of the country.

Green (1998) says that the people of Madagascar use tombs to bury their dead bodies. Betsileo tombs are well decorated by artisans, including familial proclamations. Upon death, the living enshrouds and inters their deceased relatives in a provisional burial or the family tomb.

The New International Version Archaeological Study Bible (2005) states that in the New Testament era, the dead were carried to the place of burial on a bier (Luke 7:14), typically accompanied by a large procession. Depending upon the degree of wealth of the deceased, the body was either laid in an earthen grave to be covered with dirt and stones or placed within a tomb hewn from rock. Such tombs were often, but not always, sealed with rocks or millstones. Interment often involved Ossuaries, chests in which the bones of decayed corpses were collected and later reburied.

The most important features of ancient Israelite burial is reflected in the interment of Samson in the tomb of his father. Other individuals are specified to have been buried in their fathers' tombs including Gideon (Judges 8: 32) Asahel (2 Samuel 2: 32) and Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23). The first such burial noted in Scripture is that of Abraham, interred in the tomb of Sarah, his wife, later followed by their children and grandchildren. The building of tombs are undertaken by architects who are artists.

2.6: Funeral and Burial of Chiefs

Fosu (2000), writing about Akans say that traditionally, an adage goes like the chief never dies. That is, when a chief dies, the people say he has travelled to the village to show the subjects, the people that there is someone there to take over and govern the village or town so that there will be no anarchy.

The death of a chief is kept secret for some time before it will be formally announced. Besides, when a chief dies, messages are sent to inform relatives,

loved ones and especially the other chiefs in the country and some abroad and even messages to some government officials, diplomats and so on. Verbal art is in play. The relatives then schedule the date for the wake-keeping.

For an ordinary person he / she may be laid in – state for a day, but for chiefs, normally three days or even a week duration is used. For instance, a five - day wake-keeping was held for *Otumfo* Opoku Ware II (The late *Asantehene* at the Manhyia palace in Kumasi.

Long period of wake-keeping is observed to enable many people pay homage to the dead chief. It also helped the numerous chiefs to swear to the dead. Those who swear use proverbs, idioms and gestures, thus making it an art.

Fosu (2000) tells of some swearing words;

Twi *Me Mamp]nhene a mete*
 Amaniampon Akonnwa so]
 Wo Nifahene ne me
 }domankoma wuo a]kura

 Adeε a onipa ntumi nnye[
 S[anka]sa na y[k]e[
 Na wot]e[na s[manhuri
 Antra wo ank]twa]sahene
 No ti ammesie wo a nka
 Meto Ntamk[se[

English: I, Chief of Mampong,
 Occupant of the Amaniampon Stool
 Your right hand chief
 Death being the controller of mankind
 From whose hands no one can snatch someone
 If you had died in a battle
 And having failed to defend you
 I go against the Great Oath

Fosu goes on to say that the Akan chief is decorated with head gear, traditional sandals, gold ring (body art) and aside all, a state sword (*Akofena*), visual art, is put on him as he lies in state, a feature which is peculiar to only chiefs.

After the days for the wake-keeping are over, the dead body would be buried. Chiefs are normally buried in the night. They are usually buried at the Chie's Cemetery whilst some are buried in their homes. They are buried in the night so that outside people who are not from the royal family would not see the actual place of burial. Chiefs are buried with ornaments and sometimes gold dust or pure gold are put in the coffin. In view of this, when they are buried in the night the actual location could not be identified. The room in which the corpse is buried is an architectural form which is an art work.

Fosu (2000) goes on to say that when a chief dies, the next chief (successor) should be enstooled before the funeral ceremony of the former one will be scheduled and held. The royal family members (Queen mother, the children, *Abusuapanin* – family head and others) put on Red cloth. The other chiefs, some put on their war garment (*Batakari*) with charms and amulets in it and wearing metal hat while some may be sitting in a palanquin that is for the paramount chiefs. With these, body art is in play

Gun shots are given by most of the chiefs. The significance of the gunshots are;

- a) To show that the people are in a mourning state.
- b) To signify that they are warriors and brave.
- c) To drive away the spirit of the dead.

According to Bonsu (1993), in Akan area we don't say a chief is sick, but rather the chief's spokesman is sick because it is a taboo to say the chief is sick. When any of the spokesmen is sick, the chief priest prepares herbs for him.

In Akan culture, it is the *Gyaasehene* who sees to it that the chief is healed. The Queen mother and the one in charge of the stool house offer libation every morning in the stools room.

When all attempts fail to heal the chief, all the attendants with the exception of '*Dabehene*' leave the chief. He goes to inform the Queen mother that the new palm leaf is pointing downwards (*mmer[nk[nsono asi ne ti ase)* so she should give him the last water. As she gives him the last water she says.

Nana Asomasi
Owuo kura adef a nkwa
Ntumi nnye
S[εbaa s[y[mfa sika anaa
Nnipa mpere wo nkwa a,
Anka abusua ne wo manfo] b[y[
Nanso amma no saa.
Nea onipa pε na owuo nso p[
Worek] ak]to mpaninfo]
Yεsr[wo k]b] kase[pa.
Kosi nsamankwan
Abusua kakra a aka
Akyire yi nkwa so
Mma obi nnwu bio
Wo manfo] b[y[w'ayie f[f[[f[,
De ahy[wo animuonyam
Y[sr[wo, mma basabasa
Biara nsi w'ayie ase
Abodinakeka ny[d[
{ka biara a y[b[b] no
Yenya sika ntua,

English translation of what the Akan queen mother says

King so and so

Life cannot snatch a person
From the clutches of death
If we were to spend money or
A human being to save your life
The family members would have done that.
But we didn't have it so
What man cherishes is what death likes
You are going to meet elders
Please, give a favourite message
Go and block death's way
May the little family members left behind
Live for long
No one should die again
Your townsfolk will perform a
Befitting funeral for you
Please, don't permit any unpleasant scenes at your funeral
Apportioning blames is not nice
Let us receive enough donations
To pay for all expenses.

After this, the *Gyaasehene* (overseer of the king's household) closes all doors in the palace, rendering the place quiet. Members of the *Gyaase* group do not do anything to indicate something has happened. *Soodofo*] (cooks) cook and eat everyday so that fire will not quench at the palace.

Gyaase and members of the royal family meet to discuss how the funeral will be observed. This is the time the *Kurontihene* is informed of what has happened.

When it is time to bath the dead body, the queen mother orders the chiefs spokesman to pour libation. After the libation, *Dabehene* (a chief who is in charge of the chief's sleeping place) gives the body to *Adwarehene* (chief among those who bath the dead body) and *Ahenemma* (sons of chiefs) to bath him. In Akan culture, when a dead chief is being bathed, it is the *Ahenemahene* who, with a new sponge puts water on his father three times before the actual bath. The

dead chief is placed on a stool to make his spirit enter the stool. It is this stool that is preserved in the stool house. The stool is an art work. The building in which the dead is bathed is an architectural work by artists.

It is the *Dabehene* who clothes the dead chief with white cloth before the body is taken to the *Asrahene*. The first thing *Asrahene* (the chief who applies pomade) does is to put gold dust in a piece of cloth around the waist. *Asrahene* then besmears the dead body with gold dust. The corpse is taken to the dining room. The queen mother had by then ordered mashed yam and placed it on the dining table with the other junior queen mothers and grandchildren of the chief all seated. They eat as if nothing has happened.

After this the dead body is taken to the chiefs in charge of finances and the elders. The dead chief is placed on a stool. The *Sanaahene* (a chief who is in charge of the finances) gives enough money to those in charge of the funeral - *Gyaasehene*, family head and other family members. *Dabehene* takes the corpse to *Dabekese[m* (the sleeping room) to clothe him. Gold head-gear and other gold ornaments, all being forms of body arts, are tied around the head, arms and other parts of the body. The dead body is then put on a bed. The *Ahenemahene* and elders sit in front of *Nana*— the chief, holding *mmena*. They all move the *mmena* upwards and downwards in unison. At the same time holders of fan use them to fan the dead body. *Adumfo]* (executioners) also go to *Gyaasek[se[m* with their cutlasses and take to the roads to get people who will go with the chief. The sitting arrangement is an art form, so also the fan is art

Gyaase and head of the family send the spokesman and sword bearers to inform the paramount chief of what has happened. The messengers apply body

art – put on *Kuntunkuni* (black cloth) with red cloth and charcoal marks on their shoulders and palm leaves around their necks. They do this to signify their sorrow. When they reach any town or village they inform the chief's spokesman who informs the chief what has happened. The chief's spokesman orders gong-gong to be beaten to assemble all elders. When they hear of the death of the paramount chief, they all go back home, put on black cloths (*Kuntunkuni*) and come back. It is now the turn of the drummer and horn blowers to inform the public of what has happened. Members of the entire village apply red clay on their bodies and put on palm leaves around their necks.

On the day of the burial, the wives of the paramount chief bring in items to be used in bathing the chief. They include cloth, silk, blanket, pillow, mat, gold dust and human being. The bathing items are art objects. Before the dead body is put in a coffin, the chief spokesman pours libation thanking the chief for his selfless devotion to the town. He shows the items brought by the wives to the family members before putting them in the coffin. Part of the cloth used in burying the chief is put in the coffin. Part of the cloth used is given to *Sanaahene* and *Dabehene* for keeps. After this, all the chiefs come to swear oath of allegiance to the dead chief. Example:

*Me Mamponhene a mete
Amaniampon Akonnwa so],
Wo Nifahene ne me
}domankoma wuo a]kura
Ade[a onipa ntumi nnye[
S[anka]sa na yek]e[
Na wot]e[na s[manhuru
Antra wo ank]twa]sahene
No ti ammesie wo a anka
Meto Ntamk[se[*

Literally translated

I, Mampong chief
Who occupies Amaniampon stool,
I am your right wing
Death, who when he holds the life of man
No one can challenge him
Had we gone to war
And you died at battle field
And had failed to cut the head
Of the apposing commander,
I go against *Ntamk[se]*.

The swearing speech which takes the form of a poem is verbal art. The state sword used to swear is also an art object.

Any chief who finishes swearing in is consoled by the drummer. He (the chief) begins to wail with the state sword he used in swearing on his head. When all the chiefs finish swearing to their master, the burial follows.

The burial is the work of the executioners (*Abrafo*) and *{banmufo}*. This is done deep in the night.

In the olden days funerals were observed on Mondays and Thursdays by Akans. They were believed to be peaceful days. Nowadays, funerals are observed on Saturdays, when people do not go to work

The family members prepare towards the funeral day. They plan to inform other chiefs and people, the dance groups to perform and other things. As at now, announcements are made on radio, television stations and daily papers. Posters are also made and pasted at almost every nearby village. Some go to the extent of printing funeral invitation cards. Here, liberal or literary arts are seen.

A day before the funeral, vigil is kept. Dance groups like *Adowa*, *Adenkum*, *Dansuom* and *Nnwonkor* are used to keep vigil. Early in the morning, on the day of the funeral, the women wail to usher in the celebration. The family head pours libation saying;

Agya Asomasi
{nn[ne da a abusuafo] ne
Ad]fo rey[amanne[akata w'akyi
{nn[na y[regu wo nisuo ase
Y[sr[wo mma basabasa biara
Mma w'ayie yi ase
Y[sr[s[ma nsaab]de[mmra
Na [ka biara a y[b[b] no
Yenya bi ntua
Y[n a y[ahyia ha nyinaa nkwa so

Literal translation

So and so
Today is the day family members
And loved ones are performing rites
To see you off
We beg of you to prevent all
Calamities from the funeral
Let donations abound to
Enable us defray all costs
Those of us gathered here ask of your blessings.

After the pouring of the libation, the people gathered at that time spend some time and leave for their homes to prepare. They come back in the afternoon to the funeral grounds for the main funeral. By this time cultural groups like *Adowa*, *Kete* and *Nnwokoro* would be performing. Mourners who have come for the funeral donate substantial amounts to defray cost incurred by the family. When someone donates, it is announced as follows;

Abusua montie me!
S[nea asomasi se[ni

*Jse n'adamfo ne asomasi
A waka baabi no
Na s[waba a]ntumi mfa
N'ani hunu nhw[abusuafo]
Nsan nk] saa ara
{nti }kura ne nsam sika....
De[jde boa abusuafo] ma
W]de atua ayiaseka no ne no.*

Literally meaning;

Lend me your ears, family members;
This is what so and so says
So and so is his friend
If he has attended his funeral
He cannot go without donating
He has donated an amount of
To defray the cost the family has incurred.

The family sits till evening before they disperse. The people sit on chairs under sheds or canopies which are art objects. In the olden days such funerals lasted for a week before accounts were rendered but nowadays accounts are rendered on the Sunday. When every body has paid his part of the debt incurred by the family, a sheep is slaughtered and shared among the members.

The women in the family would move from house to house to express their sincere thanks to the townsfolk.

Achana (1998) stated that in the Kasena – Nankana area, when a chief dies, no announcement is made immediately, A side wall of the deceased chief's palace is broken down and a grave dug there. He is buried in the night and the wall is put up again that very night. The wall is plastered immediately using earth, cow dung and pods of *dawadawa* fruits boiled and used to smear the wall. The building and painting are done by artists. Achana went further to explain that the regular smearing gives the wall a shiny brown colour. This is to prevent the wall

from being washed away by rain and finally making the wall to withstand erosion. After the burial, a day is set aside for the announcement of the death. On that day, a model is created from his clothes and smocks to look like a chief's body, and then it is laid in state. The announcement is made to all his relatives, the sub-chiefs and people around. There is always a war dance for three days where people come to show their black powers. The drumming and dancing that go on is performing arts.

Achana again stated that a chief is dragged into his grave instead of being carried in Kasana-Nankana area while in the Akan traditional area and other ethnic groups do celebrate the funeral of a chief with much respect. It is believed that the undertakers who do the burial may not live long. This is because it is believed that the chief will not like to be alone in the next world so he has to go with those who buried him. She again said that the chief in Kasana-Nankana area is normally treated that way because the community will not like him to send their wealth away. It is considered that when he was alive, he enjoyed life and now that he is dead he should also experience bitter life.

The corpse of a Kasana-Nankana chief is anointed with shea butter and sewn into fresh cowhide for embalmment. The official announcement is made by striking a special funeral drum; the skin is split by the announcer once the message is revealed. Achana did not explain why the skin is split but the researcher thinks it is split to mean that now the news of the death of the chief is scattered or being spread. The drum is carved by a specialized carver. Grave diggers dig two circular pits, ten feet down. A horizontal tunnel is channeled between them and the chief's body posed in it, reclining and facing the east, the

usual position adopted in the burial of Mossi men. Muslims lay their corpse to face the east because they believe that their holy Ka'bbah in Mecca is at the east. Beside the dead body is placed a bar of salt, a jar of honey and a jar of millet beer. The author, Achana, did not explain why these things are placed there. Previously, a king's wife and a court jester were buried alive with the king, but the modern substitutes for these are a live cat and a cockerel.

The present researcher thinks substituting a live cat and cockerel to do away with the old tradition of killing human beings is good but feels the live cat can harm those who hunt for it so in future, non-harmful animals can be used. It is also a cruel act to bury live animals which have done no wrong and it is also uneconomical. It can be sold for money to be used for something good, or the cockerel can be eaten since it contains protein for body building.

2.7: Burial of Dead Pregnant Women

The death of pregnant women is celebrated according to the belief of the ethnic group concerned. That is, each society has its own way of celebrating the death of pregnant women. Achana's account about the burial of a dead pregnant woman differs from other writers. She wrote that when a pregnant woman dies, the normal funeral rite for a woman is carried out in the Kasena – Nankana area. The woman is buried with the baby still in the womb. But the grave is not to be sealed because it is hoped that in the night the ancestors will visit the woman to help her deliver the baby. If the following morning the baby does not come out,

which is usually rare, then, the undertakers have to operate on the woman to remove the baby. It is then put in front of the mother's corpse in the coffin in the grave and then the grave is sealed. The act of operating the dead pregnant woman is an art.

Ntiamoah (1998) shared the same idea with ethnic groups like the Asantes that it is a very bad omen for a pregnant woman to die. If a pregnant woman dies, the death is described as a "great warrior's death" and no funeral celebration is performed for her. The body is not washed but operated upon by a brave man, a herbalist or a woman in her menopause. It is believed that if a fecund woman does the operation, the misfortune is bound to occur to her in future.

It is a taboo in Asante custom for two persons to be buried in one coffin and for that matter in the same grave. In the case of a pregnant woman, the deceased child is removed and put in a pot and buried in a different grave while the mother is laid in her coffin and some of her belongings are given to her to be taken to *Asamando*.

In the ancient time in Asante, the husband of a dead pregnant woman was allegedly forced to go and stay in a hut in the bush for forty days when only women in their menopause went there to give him food and water. On the fourteenth day, the widower's head was shaved. His fingers and toe nails were cut and he was allowed into the village for the purification of his soul to avoid another misfortune of this kind in his life.

Opoku (1973) indicated that if a pregnant woman dies in the Akan area, the body when sent to the cemetery, the chief executioner of the town or village

extracts the fetus from the mother's corpse and the corpse is buried separately. A piece of cloth is used around the waist, the chest is bare, sometimes with marks made from charcoal on the face and the body. Body art is seen here.

2.8: Funeral for a Woman who Died in Labour or After Child Birth

In Sarpong (1974), to die at childbirth is considered a frightful calamity that does not happen if the woman has not committed some heinous crime. What Sarpong has said may not always be the case. Sarpong says further that such a woman is not given the normal funerary honours accorded people. It is stated that among some people, such as the Akan, on no account must a dead pregnant woman be buried without the child being extracted from her womb and buried alongside her mother in different coffin. If she were buried with the unborn baby in the same coffin, the earth would be angry; there would be drought, famine, deaths and so on. The coffin is prepared by an artist.

According to Nabofa (1998), when a woman dies soon after delivering a baby, there is a belief that the deceased person's spirit lingers around because of the baby. Rituals are therefore performed to drive the spirit away. A doll, an art work, is made to represent the surviving baby and wrapped in used baby's clothes and laid beside the mother in state.

During burial, the doll is put in a small coffin and placed inside the mother's coffin. The significance is that, the doll replaces the baby so that the spirit of the deceased woman does not feel the loss of the child. Used baby clothes around the doll are to give true representation in shape, form and smell of

a living baby. A miniature coffin for the doll is to indicate that the child had gone normally and independently on the same route with the mother.

In all the funeral literature read so far by the researcher, the authors have failed to show how many art forms in funerals is affecting the pockets of people. They also have failed to show the importance of art forms used though they make mention of the arts. Moreover, they have not explained the ideas behind the use of art forms in funerals.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is an account of the design of this thesis. It shows the procedures employed by the researcher for obtaining and processing of data for the successful accomplishment of the research.

3.1: Research Design

The researcher used Qualitative and Descriptive research methods. Qualitative research is typically used to answer questions about the complex nature of phenomena, with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' point of view. A qualitative research asks how well, how much or how accurately. The researcher obtains a more holistic picture of what goes on in a particular situation or setting. Qualitative researchers are often described as being the research instrument because the bulk of their data collection is dependent on their personal involvement (interviews, observations) in the setting. Qualitative researchers tend to select a few participants who can best shed light on the phenomenon under investigation. Both verbal data (interview, comments, documents, field notes) and non verbal (drawings, photographs, video tapes) data may be collected.

Qualitative research helped the researcher to obtain a clear picture of what he observed. Frank and Wallen (1994) say descriptive research describes a given state of affairs as fully and carefully as possible. Descriptive studies describe a given state of affairs, so the researcher adopted it to help him describe everything that he observed in detail. The method afforded the researcher the opportunity to record and describe in detail

all the art forms he observed and information he obtained from resource persons during his field research.

3.2: Population,

The population of the five towns under study (New Edubiase, Fomena, Dompase, Atobiase and Akrofrom) is heterogeneous. It is made up of males and females, both old and young. They are mainly Asantes, Fantes, Ewes, Akuapems, Gas, Grushis, Dagartis and Moshies. There are workers like teachers, nurses, doctors, clerks, policemen, and women, carpenters, masons, farmers, traders, the clergy and others.

The target population is the people of Adanse traditional Area and beyond who will benefit from this thesis. The accessible population was two hundred and fifty (250) selected from all the five towns. They were the people the researcher could sit with and interview.

3.3: Sampling

The researcher employed simple random sampling method. Simple Random is one in which each and every member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected (Frankel and Wallen, 1994). The researcher used this method to get the two hundred and fifty (250) who were interviewed. The researcher used this method because each and every member of the population had an equal and independent chance of being selected. The researcher also used Purposive Sampling. By this, the researcher went to opinion leaders namely Chiefs, Assembly men and women, Religious leaders and elders in the communities he operated to find their views on how they see art in funerals of today as compared to what was done in the past.

3.4: Data Collection Instruments: Interviews, Questionnaire, Library Research, Internet

The researcher used observation and interview. The researcher adopted a relative outsider method, but on other occasions used the participant observer approach. He observed how corpses were decorated, types of coffins used, different kinds of music played at funerals, the types of chairs used at funeral grounds, how announcements were carried across the mourners and so on. In all these the researcher noted the forms of art used and took some pictures and found out what people think and how they feel about funerals nowadays.

Moreover, the researcher used an interview guide to interview the accessible population (see Appendix). The researcher asked for information like age, sex, number of funerals attended, number of years a resident has been in the Adanse Traditional Area and so on. A section of the interview guide looked at the role of art in funerals in the Adanse Traditional Area.

An important aspect of the study was the research at libraries. The main KNUST library, the College of Art and Social Science library, Faculty of Renewable and Natural Resources, and the Department of General Art Studies library, all at KNUST, were used. The other libraries the researcher used were at the University of Education, Winneba Campus, Art Department library at the University of Education, North Campus, Winneba. The main library at Cape Coast University was also of help to the researcher.

Table 1: The Outcome of the Interview

Sample		Those who say art in funerary has changed	Those who say art in funerary has not changed
Teachers	35	30 (85.7%)	5 (14.3%)
Men	50	40 (80.0%)	10 (20.0%)
Women	40	38 (95.0%)	2 (5.0%)
Youth	30	20 (66.6%)	10 (33.4%)
Undertakers	5	5 (100%)	0 (0%)
Assembly– members	20	18 (90.0%)	2 (10.0%)
Chiefs	15	14 (93.3%)	1 (6.7%)
Farmers	30	25 (83.3%)	5 (16.7%)
Carpenters	15	15 (100%)	0 (0%)
Tailors / Dressmakers	10	9 (90.0%)	1 (10.0%)
	250	214 (85.6%)	36 (14.4%)

Out of 250 interviewees, 214 responded that there has been an increase in art forms of funerary celebrities in ATA. This figure represents 85.6%.

Those who said there has not been an increase in art forms of funerary celebrities in ATA were 36. This represents 14.4%.

3.5: Interviews Conducted

The researcher interviewed focus groups and individuals in all the five towns he worked in. The interview was important because it enabled the researcher to establish rapport with the interviewees and therefore gained their cooperation. All the interviewees were ready and willing to talk. This enabled the researcher to befriend them. Vital information was therefore released to him.

Those interviewed were teachers, youth, men, women, undertakers, Assembly members, chiefs, farmers, clergy, carpenters and dressmakers /tailors.

3.6: Observation

Some vital information was obtained through observation and this helped the researcher to remember some of the facts needed in his write-up. He observed the arts used in dressing a dead person. He also observed different types of coffins used to bury the dead.

At the pre-burial stage, the researcher observed how people wailed and the objects applied to the body. The decoration at the funeral grounds, types of canopies, different types of chairs and others were carefully observed by the researcher.

3.7; Interview Guide

See Appendix I for the interview Guide used by the researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The people of Adanse celebrate funerals for various categories of dead people. Some of the categories are pregnant women, chiefs, and ordinary people. There are differences in the celebrations for the various categories of the dead. How art is used in the funerals is the main concern of this chapter. The narrative and descriptive techniques are adopted for processing data in this chapter.

4.1: Arts used in the Funerals of Adanse

Writing on the definition of “Art”, Amenuke (1995) opined, no common definition of the word has been agreed upon by philosophers, psychologists and artists. He however explained that “Art” is considered as an activity of organizing ideas into forms using media and techniques. He goes on to say that art involves a process and a product. In Ghana, our arts are found in the home, on the body, on the farm, in the market, in the shrines, during festivals, puberty rites, marriage and funerals.

The World Book Encyclopedia (1995) says art is skill in making or doing. We can say that someone knows and practices the art of basket-weaving, of tuning a piano, or even of hitting a home run. In this sense, there are many arts – as many as there are kinds of deliberate, specialized activities for human beings to engage in. The word art is used in many ways. Some people speak of the useful arts as the ones that produce beautiful objects for everyday use, and the decorative arts as those that produce beautiful objects for their own sakes.

Schools offer liberal arts courses in such subjects as architecture and mechanical drawing. Teachers use the term language arts to mean the related skills of reading, writing, speaking and spelling. Many people speak of the graphic arts as those involved in printing and bookmaking.

The word art is often used in a more specialized way to mean fine arts, such as painting pictures, writing novels, or composing music. Things created as a result of such activity are supposed to be different from, and more valuable than things that require mere craftsmanship or technical skill. Some traditional fine arts are poetry, fiction, opera, painting, sculpture, drama and ballet. Today architecture, motion pictures, photographs, pottery, weaving and some forms of modern dancing are also considered art in this special sense.

According to Katz, et al (1995), art may mean many different things to different people. Some people use this word to refer to the 'fine arts,' including classical and established forms of dance, music, theatre, and visual art, such as painting and sculpture. Some people use the word to refer to anything well made. For example, someone might look at a beautifully decorated cake and exclaim, "That is no ordinary cake – it's a work of art!" What the person means is that it is a beautiful cake that is skillfully done.

Art is the special; expression of ideas, feelings and values in perceptible form. If something is perceptible, it means that we are able to perceive it. To 'perceive' means to be aware of things through our senses – seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching. To 'perceive' also means to have the ability to recognize and understand things we experience in our environment. In fact, this definition allows a wide range of objects and performances to be considered

works of art. A work of art does not have to be a painting hanging on a gallery wall or a sculpture piece resting on a museum pedestal. But a work of art will have special qualities and meanings that people value.

Amenuke et al (1991) say art is used to control the environment. The types of art are visual, verbal, body and performing. Visual arts refer to all the arts that can be seen. They can also be perceived by our sense of touch. They include sculpture, painting, textiles, pottery, beadwork, basketry, calabash, leatherwork, architecture, blacksmithing and goldsmithing. Body arts comprise painting. The human body can be painted with one or more colours. This can be for religious, political, medicinal, entertainment and war purposes. Coiffure – Human hair can be plaited, braided or treated in other forms. Hairstyles indicate one's position in the society, and they can be for religious or hygienic purposes or for beauty and prestige.

Performing arts are art forms perceived by our senses of hearing, seeing and our kinesthetic senses, but they are performed rather than made. They consist of drama, mimicry, gestures, gaits, dance, ballet, plays, music, songs, dirges, oral traditions, tales, fables, myths, proverbs, appellation, lampoons, maxims, riddles, poetry, legends and oratory. Music – indigenous music is played at religious and social ceremonies. It accompanies ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death. The artists who practice visual and performing arts are highly respected in their societies and their works are often in great demand. Therefore they are well paid for their works. The works satisfy the social, religious, political and economic needs of the people. The arts are being practiced today as vocations.

Bame (1991) points out that Ghanaian funeral rites and ceremonies reflect not only Ghanaian ideas and beliefs about human personality, but also their conceptions of the entire cosmos, as well as, some of their important social values. Death, being inevitable end and implacable enemy of humankind, Ghanaians, and for that matter people of the Adanse Traditional Area, regard it not as an end of life but as a transition from this present earthly life to another life in the land of the spirits. Therefore, appropriate rites are performed to help strengthen the bond between the living and the dead.

There are many variations in funeral celebrations, as stated earlier in this chapter, as the rites are performed (which focus on art) they are dictated not only by the circumstances of the death, making it a good or bad death, but also by such considerations as age, social position, and status of the deceased. The funeral of a child, for example, is quite different from that of an adult; it is generally characterized by less wailing, briefer rites and ceremonies. An adult, however, receives a more elaborate funeral and even more elaborate and complex are the funerals of royals, paramount chiefs, elders and the affluent in the society. These are more elaborate in design, more splendid, more restricted and sacrosanct.

Funerals in Adanse are performed in stages; preparation of the corpse, pre-burial mourning, burial and post-burial mourning. All these stages are characterized by a lot of artistic creations in the form of gestures and body arts – adornments and body paintings. A few basic examples can be enumerated here. Items like sponge, towels, buckets used in bathing the dead are art pieces. First, the bathed body of the deceased is clad in its finery or art objects including gold

ornaments and laid in state. That is, the corpse of the dead chief is clothed in gorgeous and intricately designed or artistic *kente* cloth and decorated with gold, silver, glass beads or other ornamental accessories on the neck, arms and wrists, as well as , beautifully designed indigenous sandals (see Plate 15 and 16c). The deceased chiefs are decorated with such art objects as headgear, headbands and crowns with glittering state swords flanked on their bodies to indicate their status, power and dignity. These accessories make the corpse appear more aesthetically pleasing, awesome and sacrosanct.

Second, the mourners who attend or participate in the funeral, including the bereaved relatives, wear mourning clothes which may be black, indigo blue, shades of red, brown, maroon, orange or ochre in colour. However, in the case of a person who dies at a very old age, the relatives may wear white. From the colour of the cloth worn one is able to deduce or know if a mourner is closely related to the deceased person or not. According to Sarpong (1974), orange cloth or red clay marks or painting on the shoulders and forehead symbolize or show that the mourner is very closely related to the deceased. He further articulates that black cloth indicates that the mourner is related to the deceased but not as closely as those wearing “red”. Other dark coloured cloths and *adinkra* cloths are often a sign that one is a sympathizer rather than a mourner. Colour symbolism is very crucial to the Adanse populace as well as artists. Hence the colour black or red is used on occasions of deep feelings of melancholy and death of a relative. Red can also mean violence or sudden calamity, wars and anger or crisis. Other body adornments may be raffia and leaves which have their own unique significance. The young girl who carries the

ad/soa is richly and gorgeously dressed in *kente* loin apparel and superficially decorated with gold plaited jewelry from head to toe. She dances perfectly to the tune of *Adowa* or *Kete* music to the admiration of all. The giant size bottle of whisky, clothes and other items displayed during the funeral are well decorated. These decorations enhance the funeral and also raise the image or status of the bereaved family.

Widows and widowers also may be seen wearing long stripes of raffia on their elbows. This symbolizes that now that their spouses are dead, they have nobody to support them effectively and so they are as light as raffia. But when a person is noticed wearing leaves in place of jewelry, or has leaves in his mouth, it signifies that now that the deceased person is no more, he has nothing to eat except leaves.

Bodily movements and magnificent gesticulations are also part of artistic creations and sources of inspiration at funerals in Adanse. Just as the women express grief through funeral dirges, so

In the bodily movements and meaningful gestures,
dancers spoke of sorrow, of bereavement, of struggle,
or rest; or they conveyed his condolences or simply
danced away his grieves, for sorrow and mirth could be
Expressed in the same rhyme (Busia, 1962)

The art of coffin manufacture is of a high standard. In Adanse, there are shops of coffins of every description. Coffins in the form of cars, cocoa pods and others have been produced. This aspect of art in funerals is magnificent involving the display of wealth and high status.

As soon as news of a death is heard, some women throw themselves on the ground, burst into tears, and wail for some time before they settle to think of what to do. In the actual mourning, there is gesticulation of various forms of expressions. They cry and sing. This shows the intensity of the love for the departed and the bitterness of the loss the mourners have felt. This performing art is seen in almost every home when there is death.

Swearing of oath to the dead is full of dramatic display. The forward and backward movements of the chiefs, holding the sword in front of the dead body is very interesting. The voice, rhythms, the mood and songs which move in order are art.

The art of poetry has its place in funerals in Adanse. Various forms of libation prayers to the departed have poetic and oratorical expressions which are verbal art forms. The ability to recall the genealogy of the ancestors with the correct tones is art which must be admired.

Music as a form of performing art is indispensable in funerals in Adanse. There are types of music – *Kete*, *Adowa*, *F[nt]mfrjm* and others. Their art has effects on spectators and perhaps on the departed who are believed to be present, hearing, seeing and taking part in the music. The songs and the dirges have special roles to play in addition to being a part of the drumming. A song can move people to tears, comfort them, give them messages about death, the causes of death and its effects on the living.

Posters and dossiers used to announce the death of someone are liberal or literary art works. Writing and painting on tombs and bill boards which serve as epitaphs are also arts.

One cannot divorce the changing nature of art from the various stages of funerals in Adanse. Art has always been very much a part of the people's life, manifest in every aspect of their working, playing and believing worlds.

Because death is an inevitable end, Adanses see it not as the end of life but as a transition from this present earthly life to another life in the land of the spirits. It therefore, behooves the living to perform appropriate rites or funerals to help strengthen the bond between the living and the dead.

Funerals in Adanse are performed in stages; preparation of the corpse, pre-burial mourning, burial and post burial mourning. All these stages are characterized by a lot of artistic works in the form of gestures and body arts – adornments and body paintings.

Visual art: The preparation of the dead body is great art. The body is prepared to appear in its most beautiful form for happy and lasting memories. The choice of clothes used to decorate the dead is selected according to the quality, beauty and colour. The decorators are also to select a suitable artistic hair style for the dead person to suit his/her age and status. Art plays a role when the dead body is to be made both elegant and easily recognizable by the sympathizers and mourners.

The employment of linear, angular and circular motifs, arranged to form attractive patterns and designs, painstakingly executed, is art. The method of laying the dead body in state follows a laid down formula. When the body is to be laid in bed it is decorated with beautiful expensive clothes. The body faces up in a conspicuous place so that viewers can see it clearly. This method of placing

the body is like that of an artist exhibiting his sculptures, paintings, ceramics and other art works.

To make the body extra magnificent, jewels such as trinkets, necklaces, expensive beads and rings are used for the final decoration. Some of these adornments are removed when the body is to be put in the coffin. In dressing up of the body, orderly arrangement of jewels, headgear and laying the body in a convenient place to show its beauty, art comes into play. The beauty in these materials, and the way they have been used are full of a high standard of art.

In the case of chiefs and queen mothers, regalia come into play. Sandals, spokesperson's staff, state swords, umbrellas and gold ornaments are used. The use of photographs of the departed people is becoming very popular.

Coffin: Before 1960 coffins were covered with cloth when they were being carried to the cemetery. The art of coffin manufacture is of a very high standard. In Adanse, there are shops of coffins of every description. Coffins in the form of cars, cocoa pods and others have been produced. This aspect of art in funerals is magnificent involving the display of wealth and high status.

Graves: Graves are cemented or tiled. There are grave stones and monuments on graves. Before 1960, graves were cemented but not tiled as we see today.

Dramatic Activities: As soon as news of a death is heard, women fall on the ground, burst into tears, and wail at least for half an hour or so before they settle to think of what to do.

In the actual mourning, there is gesticulation of various forms of expressions. They cry and sing. Tossing oneself into the air and rolling on the

ground because of grief are dramatic. This shows the intensity of the love for the departed and the bitterness of the loss the mourners have felt.

Swearing of oaths to the dead is full of dramatic display. The forward and backward movements of the chiefs holding the sword before the dead body is very interesting. The voice, rhythms, the mood and songs which move in order are art.

Poetry: The art of poetry has its place in funerals in Adanse. Various forms of libation prayers to the departed have poetic and oratorical expressions which are verbal art. Libation as practiced before 1959 is not so today because of Christianity and education. Prayers have set forms. The ability to recall the genealogy of the ancestors with the correct tones is art which must be admired.

Music: Music as a form of art is indispensable in funerals in Adanse. There are types of music – e.g. *Kete*, *Adowa*, *F[nt]mfr]m*, etc. All these forms of music, the dancers, drummers and singers are performing art. Their art has effects on spectators and perhaps on the departed who are believed to be present, hearing, seeing and taking part in the music. The songs and the dirges which are art, have special roles to play in addition to being a part of the drumming. A song can move people to tears, comfort them; give them messages about death, the causes of death and its effects on the living.

Liberal arts: Posters and dossiers used to announce the death of someone are art works. Writing and painting on tombs which serve as epitaphs are arts

One cannot divorce art from the various stages of funerals in Adanse.

4.2: Funeral and Burial for the Ordinary People

In the Adanse Traditional Area (ATA), when a man or woman of age dies natural death, messengers are sent to inform close relatives who are at home. A messenger goes to inform the chief of the town or village about the death with one bottle of schnapps and thirteen shillings (13s) or GH¢13.00 (Nana Kwaku Addae, personal communication, 2010).

Because there were no mortuaries before 1960, the dead body was prepared for burial the next day (24 hours) or in 48 hours. The hair was shaved. The hair of the sons and daughters of the dead person was shaved and thrown away. Some of the dead person's hair was put in his/her mouth. If the dead person was a chief, the children kept the shaved hair at the cemetery. It was done to distinguish them from other mourners and also to signify that the dead chief brought them to the world. If the dead person was an ordinary man, the hair of the wife was shaved to indicate that the man bought the hair when he married her. It was also believed that the dead man will show the hair to the spirits that he led a decent life whilst on earth. The wife/wives by this is/are saying she is/they are valueless.

Red and white clay and charcoal were mixed with water separately and used to make spots in the face of the dead person. This old art is no more in use. Red means seriousness, so by the red clay they are indicating that the dead person was in a serious condition. White means victory. The dead had been victorious in life. The wife of the dead chief had the marks in a concave way with that of the family members in a convex way. When the researcher asked of the meaning, his informant could not explain it. However, the researcher thinks

these marks showed a distinction between the wife and the family members. The dead person was placed on a chamber pot after giving him/her cement mixed with water to drink. Or lime mixed with water was forced down the throat of the dead person. That made the intestines dry, thus preventing the body from decaying. Like the lime, schnapps was also forced down the throat of the dead person. It also dried up the intestines. This prevented the body from decaying quickly. When it is time to bath the corpse, it is the sons of the dead man or the daughters of the woman who do that. If a married man, the wife provides powder, pomade, cloth, lavender, sponge and soap. The wives of his sons also provide the bathing items (Offin Akwasi, *{ban mu hene*, Personal communication, 2010).

The bereaved family and loved ones in the community kept wake. The wake-keeping was for a special purpose. In the olden days people lived near each other. Houses were built having four sides with one room having an open front (*pato*). When one died he/she was laid in state in this room with an open front. In the olden days, villages or towns had forest near them to the extent that wild animals could easily come home. The hyena was one animal that used to come to town. If it came to see a dead body, before people were aware, it had eaten all or part of it. So when a person died, the elders and the youth kept wake to protect it from being eaten up by the hyena. Asante people call it *Apesire*. Those who kept wake had guns ready to kill the animal. This made the animal afraid to come home, thereby staying away from the dead body. With the emergence of people staying closer, the animals retreated to the deep forest.

However, the watch over the corpse continued, with the name *apesire* – wake keeping (Anin Afriyie, personal communication, 2010).

The corpse was dressed with a nice cloth and laid on a bed. It was a wooden or iron bed. White stripes of cloth were tied around the stands of the bed. The bed was covered with about thirty blankets of different types like *bommo*, *kasa*, *nsaa* (see plates 4.1 and 4.2) for pictures of *bommo* and *kasa*). The edge of each of the blankets covering the bed was exposed to public view.



Plate 4.1: *Bommo*



Plate 4.2: *Kasa*

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher at Atobiase)

The blankets were donated by relatives and friends. Pieces of *kente* cloth were used to decorate the walls where the corpse was laid. With the corpse in bed, *fufu* and [*t*] (mashed plantain or yam) were placed in front of the bed. It was the belief that the spirit would eat the spiritual component of these types of food. After the burial, these meals were thrown away. A piece of hair could also be placed in the mouth of the dead man. The hair placed in the mouth was believed to break the link between the dead and the living. A stick of cigarette or pipe was put in his hand. If a Christian, a ticket was put in his hand. (See Plate 4.3 for a specimen of the ticket). It was the belief of the people that the dead person will appear before his creator to show the ticket to tell that he was a Christian whilst on earth. By that he would earn entry into heaven. Anyway this art work is no more practiced.

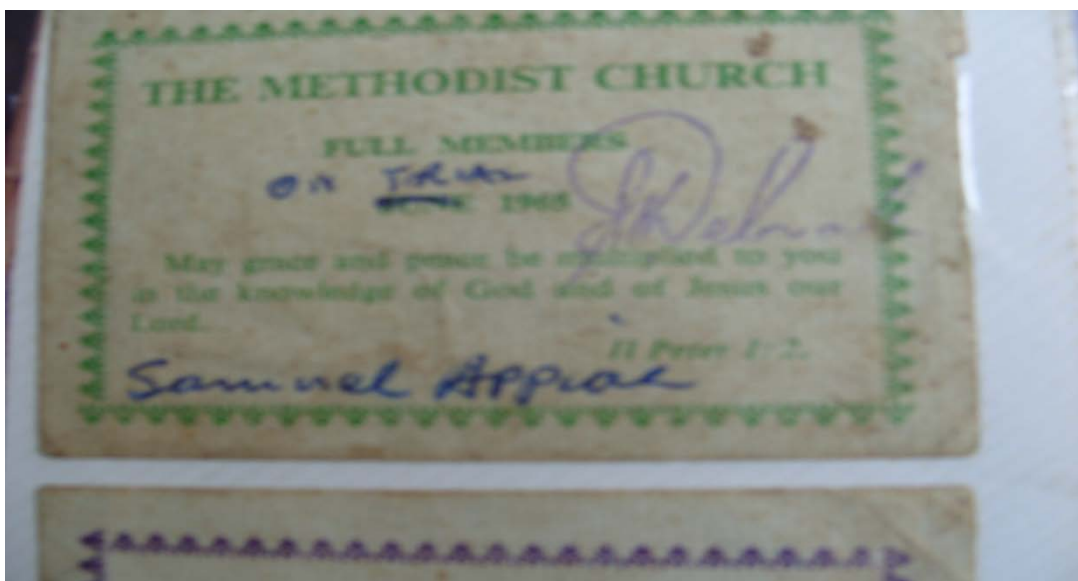


Plate 4.3: Sample of Ticket used by the Methodist Church Ghana in the 1960s

(Source: Picture taken by the researcher at Adanse Akrofrom)

All along (i.e. as the dead body was in bed) traditional music *adowa*, *densuom* etc continued to be played (Opanyin Penkra, Personal communication, 2010). This form of art is still in use.

Charcoal or black powder from the bottom of a cooking pot and red clay were used to mark the shoulders of relatives, especially the sons, daughters and grand children (*wotwitwa asafe*). Loved ones wail the dead in this artistic or poetic manner which is a dirge. The use of black powder and red clay used to mark the shoulders is not seen today.

*Awo Kyeiwaa ee
Wok] a se me Nana
Asomasi s[,]mmane me
Na ade[ahia me
Efie mu ada mpan
Nti]nnane n'ani mm[hw[fie
S[.]remane me nso a
mmmane me d[nky[mmer[bo]
Na manya ogya a
Mawe no amono
(Yaa Kraa, personal communication, 2010)*

Literally meaning:

Mother Kyeiwaa
When you go inform my grandmother
So, so and so, to remit me
For I am in hardship
The house is empty
So she should look back
When remitting,
She should give me

The liver of a crocodile
So that without fire
I can eat it fresh

The moment a person died, the elders of the family gave *odum* boards to a carpenter to prepare the coffin. In those days almost every elderly person had some boards on his room ceiling or carpenters had them at their shops. The coffin for the ordinary person was called *Adakateaa*. Some of the coffins were not polished, while others were painted with red oil.

Before putting the corpse in the coffin, the family head, (*Abusuapanyin*), pours libation, after the piece of cloth from the village head or chief and relatives have been put in the coffin. He says,

*Asomasi, [nn[worek],
Y[atoto atuo
Y[de odwan aba
Y[de ntoma aba
Y[ay[wo ay[paa
Mma y[n mu biara nyare
Ma yennya sika ntua wo ayieaseka
S[wo hy[ber[na wode rek] a [nne[nante yie
S[nso [nte saa
Na obi na wabu wo abu gyen a,
{nne[worek] yi
Nkosi asaman kwan
Ma]yaa no nni w'akyi
Na omm[yi n'ano w] asamando h].*

The literal meaning is;

So, so and so, today you are leaving
There have been gun shots
We have presented a sheep
We have presented pieces of cloth
We have really honoured you.
Don't let sickness befall us
Help us to get enough money to defray all your funeral expenses
If it is your destiny to leave

Then go in peace
But if it is not so
And that someone has caused your death
Then as you leave,
Don't block the path of death
Let that person follow you
To answer why he did that.

The coffin is then closed and carried by friends, relatives and sons of the deceased to the cemetery. By this time, those who went to prepare the grave had come to inform the family head of their finished business. Before they started to dig, the eldest person among them from the deceased person's family poured libation saying;

*Nana Asase Yaa nsa ni
Wo nana Akwasi Twum aka baabi
Y[resr] wo atu ne damena w] ha
Asase Yaa darekena!
Asase Yaa darekena!
Asase ne ne mfuturo
Mete ase a
Medan wo
Mewu nso a mesan ba wo h]
Y[refr] wo
Gye y[n so
(Offin Akwasi – {ban mu hene, Akrofrom, Personal communication, 2010)*

The literal meaning is;

Grandmother Earth, here is drink
Your grandson Akwasi Twum is dead
We are seeking for permission to dig his grave here
Grandmother Earth our condolence!
Grandmother Earth our condolence!
I rely on you when I am alive
So also when I die I come to you
We are calling you
Respond to us.

The coffin is then lowered into the grave and covered with soil. If the coffin was not polished, it was covered with a piece of white cloth whilst going to the cemetery. Those who buried the corpse were obliged to report at the dead man's house before returning to their houses. A bucket full of water, with leaves of hyssop in it, was placed at the entrance of the house for those who went to the cemetery to wash their hands and feet. It was the belief that the leaves could drive away bad spirits so any bad spirit following the person coming from the cemetery would be driven away when he/she touched the water. The act also had scientific significance. While at the cemetery people might have touched things thereby soiling the hands. It was therefore necessary to wash the hand in order not to create an avenue for any germs to enter the body. Coffins were not prepared ahead of death as we see today (Opanin Kwasi Boakye, personal communication, 2010).

A day before the final funeral, the adult males in the town or village went to the bush to cut two-pronged sticks and palm branches. These were used to erect sheds. On the funeral day, benches were used as chairs. There were no decorations at the funeral grounds. Music was provided by a cultural group in the village; e.g. *Adowa*, *Nnwomkor* or *Densuom*. Palm wine and kola were served to mourners. Pots of palm wine were donated by friends who attended the funeral.

According to Nana Kofi Owusu, *Krontihene* of Atobiase, he had an elder brother called Yaw Wuo and a younger brother called Kwasi Gyekye. Yaw Wuo who was a palm wine tapper had a friend by name Kwame Dapaa. The story goes that when Kwame Dapaa of Atobiase died, Yaw Wuo ordered his younger

brothers, Kofi Owusu and Kwasi Gyekye to send two big pots of palm wine to the bereaved family.

A day or two after the funeral, elderly women in the village went round the village hitting an old hoe amidst shouts like, *Y[da mo ase o! Y[da mo ase!!*, to express their sincere thanks. Other elderly women who could sing *Nnwomkor]* followed the group.

Funerals were observed on Saturdays. There were no observance of One Week, 40 days, 80 days and One year on Wednesdays. *At[fo]*, (people who died unnatural deaths) had their funerals observed on Wednesdays. During funerals, people wore torn *kuntunkuni*, black cloth and *k]bene* (red cloth), to show sorrow. (Yaw Anto, personal communication, 2010).

With the change about 50 years ago, people who die are sent to the mortuary for preservation. Announcements are sent to inform people through the following media; Radio and Television, One Week Posters, Funeral Day Posters (see Plate 4.4 and 4.5); these are liberal or literary arts.

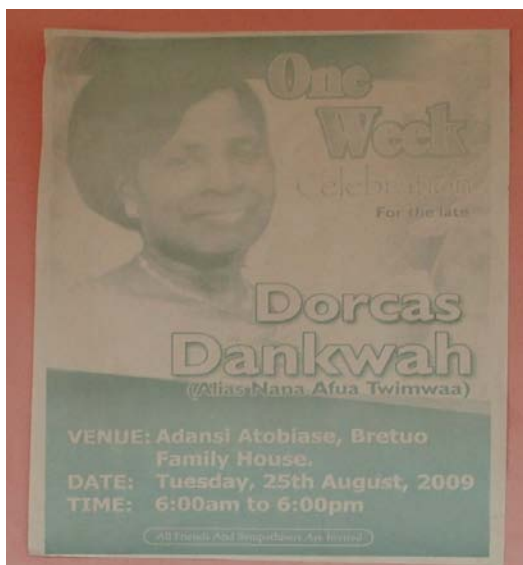


Plate 4.4

Plate 4.5

Types of Funeral Posters (One Week Observance) (Source: Pictures taken by the researcher)

The One Week Celebration is observed as the funeral day. The house is decorated with red and black materials and ribbons. The picture of the dead person is placed at the centre of the funeral grounds with flowers and balloons around it (see Plate4.6 and 4.7). The floral decorations are made by artists. Loved ones donate cartons of soft drinks and money to the bereaved family. A spinning machine is in attendance to provide music. Others bring in cultural musical troupes. People dance to express either joy or sorrow. Drumming, singing and dancing are performing arts.



Plate 4.6

Plate 4.7

Display of Picture of the Dead at the Funeral Grounds

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher at Adanse Dompouse)

Flowers and other materials for decorations were absent about fifty years ago. These were incorporated in the 1990's. One week observance was not practiced with fun fair before the change. With the change, dead bodies are kept at the mortuary. Keeping wake while the body lies in state, as was practiced some time ago, is now becoming obsolete. With the Methodist Church Ghana banning it, most people who are not even Christians have accepted it. However, where it is observed, it is not a big deal. The corpse which used to be bathed by the sons or daughters of the deceased is now mainly done at the mortuary. Whether bathed in the house or mortuary, bathing items like soap, sponge, towel, pomade, powder and lavender are used or applied on the corpse.

The night before the burial and final funeral rites the body and where it will be laid in state are prepared. This architectural form has not changed. However, the beautification of the place with flowers and the red and black ribbons is a new art. According to Gloria Yeboah, an undertaker is contracted. If the deceased is a woman, beads, linen strips of cloth – {*tam*, pants, a mat, two or three pieces of different cloths and cover-shoulders are used to dress her. An elderly woman is decorated with *ntekua* or wig. If a young woman, the hair is styled. This body art has seen some modification.

If a man, he is given a pair of boxer pants, pants and a singlet and is placed on a mat. Newspapers are used to wrap the body and covered with a bed sheet, which are pinned before a piece of cloth is put on. If a pair of trousers and a coat is to be used, papers are used to fill the coat and trousers to make him look fat. This was not used some fifty years ago.

The bed on which the corpse is put also has a mattress covered with a blanket and a bed sheet. The bed may be decorated. The ceiling above the bed is covered with white lace or kente. The ceiling type may be *Ananse* – spider or circular. The spider is believed to be wise so by the design, it is telling the living that a wise person is dead. Flowers are placed near the ends of the bed and the corners of the parlour with a woolen carpet spread on the floor. Red and black linen is used to decorate the entrance of the house and parlour or room. All these visual arts are new modifications.

The corpse in state attracts crying, wailing and all sorts of noise-making in the form of mourning the dead. If there is an elderly woman in the family, one would hear her wail as follows in Twi:

*Enowaa abasateaa a,
Ne nsa so amani
Ne ah]ho] so
Enowa w] h] a,
Anka]baatan adidi
Yie!]baa basia a
Wo mmrane ne Yiadom
}k]ntene, Besewa koro a,
{so apem
Eno Buruwaa de[woduru
Kurotia a, b] wo din
Ma abrane mma wo so
Na, wonim s[wow] d]m.*

English version

A woman with outstretched hand
That reaches natives
And strangers as well
Had mother been here
The traveler would have been fed
Alas!, a woman

With an appellation Yiadom
A single kola
That serves thousands
At the outskirts of the town
Mention your name
For strong men to carry you
For they know that you have a multitude.

This performing art has been there for ages

The time when *Adakateaa* (an unpolished coffin made of *wawa*) was used to bury the dead is no more. With the evolution, art plays a major role in the preparation of the coffin, which is an art work. The carpenter is an artisan or artist who uses wood to design the coffin. According to Isaac Mensah, a carpenter who manufactures coffins he uses wood to design the coffin. Filler, sand-paper, plumber, white linen /polyester material are used to decorate the inside of the coffin. American or Chinese handles are also used to decorate the coffin.

The coffins are of different names like “Six and Seven, National Theatre, *Fa }d] b[b] }d] mu* (Reciprocate my love), My Mother, *Aben w] ha* (It is well cooked), U.T.C. or *mank] no yie* (of low standard). (See Plates 4.8 - 4.12 for types of coffins).



Plate 4.8



Plate 4.9



Plate 4.10



Plate 4.11



Plate 4.12

Different Types of Coffins

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher)

Today, coffins are not carried by human beings to the cemetery as it was the practice in the past. Coffins bearing the corpses are put in a hearse which is an industrial art work. Some are put on trucks. These are also designed by industrial artists. (See Plate 4.13 – 4.16 for types of hearse vehicles).



Plate 4.13



Plate 4.14



Plate 4.15



Plate 4.16

Different types of Hearse Vehicles

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher)

Though tombs were in use before 1960, those seen today have seen major changes (See Plates 4.17 and 4.18). Terrazzo and marble tombs were not known before 1960. Presently, wreaths put on the grave of the dead person are art forms. They have replaced the real flower plants which were planted at the extreme ends of the grave. The *Akuaba*, a piece of art work which was placed on graves have been replaced by the tombstone.



Plate 4.17



Plate 4.18

Plate 4.17 and 4.18: Concrete Tombs

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher at Atobiase)

Mourners go to the funeral grounds. The fork-sticks and palm branches which were used in the early 1970's have given way to canopies of different styles. The canopies are well decorated with balloons and buntings, flowers and large photographs of the deceased are also decorated with both natural and artificial flowers, balloons and ribbons. These did not exist in the past. The benches used some fifty years ago are not in use today. People now use plastic and aluminum chairs (See Plates 4.19 and 4.20).



Plate 4.19



Plate 4.20

Plastic and Silver Chairs used at Funerals

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher at Atobiase)

The orderly and solemn way sympathizers go round to greet at the funeral grounds is a piece of art. Traditionally the Akans of Ghana greet from the right to the left (See plate 9). This art form has not seen any change.



Plate 4.21: Sympathizers in red and black cloth Greeting at the Funeral
Grounds

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher at Atobiase)

Special places are allowed for traditional groups like “*Adowa*, *Kete*, *Nnwomkor*] or *F[nt]mfr]m* (See Plate 4.22 and 4.23). This performing art has not changed. However, the costume of the dancers and drummers has seen some changes. They now use a common type of cloth as seen in plate 4.22



Plate 4.22: *Kete* Group



Plate 4.23: A combined *Adowa* and *Kete* Group

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher at Atobiase)

Spinners also have their special place at the funeral grounds. There are at times live band; either a guitar band or dance band is engaged for the funeral (see Plate 4.24).



Plate 4.24: Live Band Performing at a Funeral

(Source: Picture taken by the researcher)

Another “new thing” that has emerged in the funerals in ATA is video coverage, which started in the early 2000. On the day of the funeral some families engage video operators and cameramen to cover the funeral activities.

A table or tables well covered with white lace with glass boxes on them are used to keep the donations that come in. Formerly people used *yaawa* – brass containers to collect donations. Both the glass box and *yaawa* are products of an artisan. The glass box is a new innovation. Before 1960, the announcer collected a palm leaf and put the money on it, with the belief that the money will not be snatched by the spirit of the dead person

The announcer then said the following:

*Nana Abuasupanin neabusuafo]
Mesr[, mony[aso mma me
Me y]nko br[bo ne...s[[nn[
Y[rekata n'akyi a, mekuta me ns[m
Sidi mmienue de ma abusua
S[momfa ntua mo kube ka bi.*

English version

Head of clan and other members
Ofclan
Please, lend me your ears,
.....was my best friend,
He is now on his journey and today,
Being the funeral day,
I donate two ceddis to be used to
Defray part of the debt incurred.

This practice of putting the money on a palm leaf is no more done. Donors take their monies to the table where a receipt is prepared for them. The announcement is then made. There were no receipts before 1960.

On the day of the funeral, special donations from widows or widowers and in-laws are given. The wife or the husband who is bereaved will have to make a

presentation in a special way. The items include a sheep, clothing, indigenous sandal, headkerchief or (if a woman), drinks of all kinds – both imported and local ones – including hard liquor, beer of all brands and crates of minerals. Other items presented are boxes of matches, candle sticks, handkerchiefs, sugar, milk, milo, tea, sheep, et cetera. These items are arranged in shiny brass pans and bowls or covered in groups with shiny wrappers. Beautiful and well dressed ladies are engaged to make the presentation. They follow each other in a procession (See Plates 4.25 – 4.28).



Plate 4.25



Plate 4.26



Items being presented at a Funeral

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher)

Before the presentations are made a special announcement is made for all to give ear to the drama which was about to unfold. Each set of item is mentioned and why those items were presented. For example a set of matches is to be used to light another set of candles to brighten the way of the dead person as he / she journeys to the underworld.

Such things were not formerly seen at funerals. This special donation which people, in local parlance, called *ad]soa* is not *ad]soa* but *adekyer[*. It becomes a competition when many in-laws are involved and each wants to show her wealth.

According to Nana Kwaku Adee (of Dompase) and Opanin Pinkra (Akrofrom) both personal communications 2010, *ad]soa* used to be carried at the funeral of chiefs, family heads or queen mothers. It was not done at funerals of any ordinary person. The *ad]soa* was made up of a brass basin filled with a piece of wood carved in the form of human being, *abaduaba* with cloths lined around it. A piece of velvet material, *serekye* was used to cover the basin. In the basin was a hearth. It is covered nicely to prevent people from knowing the content. It was placed in front of the bed on which the corpse lay. During the funeral a young woman carried it to the funeral grounds. The carrier at a point started to shake and speak. In Akan it is said *]saman no aka no*. Sometimes the carrier of the *ad]soa* told the cause of the death of the deceased.

Some dead people had strong spirits. The spirit of such a person descended on the carrier either to show appreciation to the wife or some family members. There were those who came to tell of the cause of the deaths. The living believed such messages and if one was instructed to do something he/she abided by it. My informer, Kwaku Nkrumah, said when his father died, the wife prepared *ad/soa*. The spirit of the dead husband descended on the carrier asking why the wife did not put her piece of cloth to him as a parting gift. The family head collected the piece of cloth, dug one side of the grave and put it there.

4.3: Changes in Art in Widowhood Rites (*Kunay*)

According to Opanin Pinkra of Akrofrom and Nana Kofi Owusu, *Krontihene* of Atobiase, widowhood rites were performed solely by women. Adanse people believe that the dead man's spirit would visit the wife so to get rid of the spirit; the woman was taken through widowhood rites. When the husband died, the wife and other family members of the two families slept in the man's room for one week. This practice is done presently. The widow was not allowed by custom to go out. It was the belief that not until forty days, the spirit of the husband continued to hover around. During that time if the widow walked alone or went out, the spirit of the husband may reveal himself to her. It was the man's family that fed her (i.e. money to spend on food and *ntunkum* (fresh palmwine). This sustained her from hunger. She then ate an egg. After this she was given kola to chew. This also helped her to live for sometime without food. Palm wine was mixed with the leaves of *hwer[mo]*, a type of plant with thorns

(botanically called *combretum grandifloru*) because the leaves prevent stomach ache. Since the widow was not eating, there was the fear that she would have stomach troubles/pains. The palm wine was drunk to prevent hunger. Fasting by the widow is not currently observed.

Afua Serwa, one of my informants from Atobiase, said the leaves of a plant called *odwan-nkyene* and *{hy[*, local incense were put in a broken pot with fire on it and placed at the entrance of the room where the wife slept. This is believed to drive away the spirit of the deceased husband. Once dead, the man had nothing to do with the living. So the spirit was driven away to let the living have their peace. In the course of the one week, the wife ate kenkey and soup.

Before the dead husband was buried, the woman had to break the widowhood pot (*[b] kuna kukuo*). A pot filled with water and stones were carried heading towards the cemetery when the coffin containing the remains of the husband was lifted. On reaching the outskirts of the village or town, the widow hits the pot on the ground to break it. She turns back towards her house. She should not see the coffin containing the remains of her dead husband. There was an everlasting separation between the man and the woman. The woman had nothing to do with the dead husband so no need of seeing the coffin. She was then taken to the river side to bathe. The widow bathed in a stream to wash away the filth that the death has brought on her this practice is not healthy because it spreads diseases. After bathing, the sponge and towel were thrown away to signify that she no more needs the husband. A strip of cloth was put around the waist with a padlock hanging on it. The padlock meant the woman's womanhood was locked.

The widow had her hair shaved, with twisted headkerchief tied around the head. It was the belief that when a person shaves his/her looks changes. By the shaved hair, the woman would look a bit ugly, thus making her unattractive to the spirit of the dead husband. The widow held roasted corn in her right hand. In Akan, roasted corn is known as *d[ŋky[mmo]*. By this the woman meant that the man who feeds her is no more, and she is burnt or placed in an awkward situation. There was no one to care for her. Presently, instead of the roasted corn, the widow holds a flower, visual arts, to prevent people from shaking hands with her. By shaking of hands she would soon get tired or exhausted.



Plate 4.29: A widow with a Flower

(Source: Picture taken by the researcher at New Edubiase)

The widow wore black cloth for one year after which she had the right to stop wearing it. The woman wore black cloth for one year to express her sorrow on the death of her husband. Moreover, it indicated she was still a widow; someone who had not been divorced, thus, preventing men from approaching

her to propose love. She was not allowed to wear white cloth as done today. If she wore white cloth, men would approach her for love. It would also indicate that she is happy of the husband's death. Nowadays, this rite is not adhered to though the body arts are in place. If the husband of a woman dies, she is not taken through the rites. She wears white and black cloth. Some even do not stay for six months before seeing another man. These rights are dying away because of education, Christianity and traveling to other parts of the world. People now frown on their cultural practices, saying it is unchristian.

4.4: Changes of Art in Funeral of Dead Pregnant Women

Madam Afua Kyeiwaa, alias Awo Kraa of New Edubiase, Opanin Kwasi Boakye, the oldest man in Dompooase, Opanin Kwaku Adee of Dompooase and Nana Kusi Kwaa, *Adontenhene* of Dompooase are of the opinion that before 1950, a pregnant woman who died at child-birth was considered *[t]fo*, as one who died in an accident.

If a pregnant woman died with the baby in the womb, a traditional priest or someone who had “spiritual eyes” was called in to remove the baby from the womb. Akans have the saying, *Bommu y[nho]* meaning an animal is not roasted without cutting it open. It is therefore regarded as an abomination to bury the two/dead mother and dead baby together. It was also believed that the deceased baby was a stranger who had brought calamity to the family so he/she should be sent away alone. The dead pregnant woman was taken to the outskirts of the village or town and placed on a mat. The one to remove the baby cut part of the abdomen and removed the baby.

There were those who did not cut the abdomen but rather gave concoction to the dead body. A type of leaf called *jp]nakob]fo]* was ground and mixed with schnapps. It was put into the mouth of the dead woman with the chest beaten till it got into the belly. This medicine brought out the baby.

The bodies were not bathed. The baby was not washed because it was believed if bathed he/she would look nice and feel happy to come back to life though another woman and die again. Being not washed, he/she would feel rejected by the home. The baby's corpse was placed in a small box and its mother's dead body was placed in a coffin. The corpses were not laid in state. The woman was buried with the baby near her in a different grave. No mourning was observed for such a person because the death was considered as abomination.

As a result of modernization, a pregnant woman who dies is treated like any ordinary woman who passes away. She is put in a mortuary, laid in state and her funeral observed as any other person where art works as recorded earlier in the death of any other person are applied.

Before putting the dead pregnant woman in a coffin, charcoal powder and red clay was besmeared in the face, which is body art. White clay, (*hyire*) was also besmeared on the shoulders of her living children. The powder and red clay disfigured the face, telling her that the people despise her. As a result of that, she would not want to come back to the earth. The family head did this and spoke to the dead mother telling her of her separation from her children and that the spirit should not attempt visiting them. This is called *jpae mma no ho* meaning separating the children. Currently, the dead pregnant woman is nicely

dressed and treated as the death of an ordinary person with its attendant art as indicated earlier.

4.5: Changes of Art in Funeral for a Chief

Opanin Kwasi Boakye of Dompooase, Kwaku Nkrumah of Atobiase and Nana Kusi Kwaa also of Dompooase are of the opinion that the death of a chief was not treated lightly. It was a bit different from that of an ordinary person. People got to know of the death of a chief about four weeks after his death. In those days, that time was termed *Adamuasi* – black days. It was during that period that people were killed by the chief's executioners. The heads of those killed were put in the grave before the coffin containing the remains of the chief was lowered into it. It was believed that a chief should not walk or travel alone so if he was going to the underworld there should be servants to serve him there. Plates 4.30 and 4.31 which follow show pictures of executioners. The dressing of the executioners as the pictures of plates 4.30 and 4.31 show is body art.



Plate 4.30

Plate 4.31

A Chief's Executioners

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher at Atobiase)

When the death of a chief was announced, a ban was placed on all funerals in Adanse. If any other person died, he/she was buried in secret. If people gathered in the house of the deceased to cry or play any form of music, the family head –*Abusuapanin* stood the risk of joining the dead chief. During the mourning period, no one was permitted to wear anything white. When anyone violated this rule, the person was seen off, that is he went to serve Nana. White stands for victory. So for anyone to wear white means that person was happy of a victory. But the chief, having gone to battle /war and has not returned does not call for white.

Because there were no mortuaries in those days the dead body was preserved in the local way. Schnapps and or lime water was forced into the stomach of the body to prevent it from decaying, as any of them burns up the intestines, which cause the body to decay fast. The body was then put in a cane chair with a hole under it. A brass pan, *yaawa* was placed under the chair to collect the liquid that came out of the body. Old women in charge of the body threw away the liquid when the pan was full. The cane chair and brass pan are the works of artisans.

The *Dabehene*, the sub-chief in charge of where the chief slept and some servants were made to go and serve Nana.

The dead chief was laid in state on a Tuesday or Thursday. Tuesdays and Thursdays were funeral days and that was why the chief was laid in state on any of these days. Wednesdays and Fridays were considered “bad” days so funerals were not observed on these days. The body was neatly dressed with gold ornaments as he used to dress when attending a durbar with the state swords crossing each other on the stomach (see Plate 4.33). This time, a big table was placed before him. *Fufu* and soup prepared with mutton was placed in front of him. He was served as if he was alive. Big drinking cups found in the stool room were used to serve him with water. The items, state swords, cloth, dead gear, sandals and so on used in decorating the dead chief are art works. The room in which the chief is laid in state is an architectural form which is an art work.



Plate 4.32



Plate 4.33

A Chief Lying in State – Nana Kwame Antwi, late chief of Atobiase.

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher at Atobiase)

The queen-mother and the sub-chiefs marked their right shoulders with red clay. The five fingers of the left hand were put in the red clay mixed with water and marked on the right shoulders. This was termed *safe[*. The red and white clay on the shoulders of the queen mother and the sub-chiefs showed respect for the chief. The servants at the palace also had their fore-heads marked with red clay with their cloth worn around the waist. This was called *kotobrigya*. (*Nhenkwaa no twa kotobrigya*). One could see the executioners who had put red-clay on their right shoulders, lined up on both sides of the way that leads to where the dead body is laid in state with the end of their cutlasses touching each other. Both the *safe[* and *kotobrigya* depicts the respect accorded the chief. All the decorations are pieces of art.

After 12 midnight the other chiefs swore to the dead chief. In case the *Adansehene* (chief of Adanse) died and *Ayaasehene* (chief of Ayaase) came to swear, he would say:

*Me
 Me na mete Apianim Kwaforamoa adwa so]
 Adanseman Krontihene ne me
 A me ne wo na [k] ba
 Wo tu a na matia mu
 Etuo anto, manhunu akorabo]
 De[mete[ara ne s[
 }domankoma wuo ab[fa wo k]
 {nn[merebese biribi akyer[wo,
 S[sa na y[k]e[na nka wokot]e[
 Nna manhuri antra wo
 Ank]twa]tamfo no ti amm[kyer[wo a,
 Anka me to Praso ne Adanseman.
 English version*

I ... (name of the one swearing)
 Occupying Apianin Kwaforamoa's stool,
 The right-hand man of Adanse

Always moving with you
I have been following your footsteps
There was no gun shot, no bullets
All I heard was that
Death has laid its icy hands on you
Today, I am about to tell you
That had you fallen at war front,
And I had failed to go ahead of you
To behead the enemy
I go against the great oath of Praso and Adanseman.

The state sword used to swear in as art work, so also the act of speaking and movements by the person swearing is performing art.

The queen mothers wore black – *brisie/kuntukuni* from their waists down to their feet, with red cloth – *kjbene* – on top. Black and red cloths indicate sorrow. They used *nyanya*, a type of creeping plant to make shrouds around their necks. *Nyanya* represents disgrace. The woman wearing it is telling the world that she is wearing a necklace of disgrace as a result of the death of the husband. During these mourning days only palm wine was served. Palm wine is used to fight hunger. It serves as food. At the swearing of the living chiefs, each presented human heads as he was obliged to submit. Those who could not get the human heads were made to pay huge sums of money. Each chief brought in addition to the human heads, items like blankets – *nsaa*, or *bommo*, a piece of cloth, an amount of money – *predwan* - £9 (nine pounds in those days) currently equivalent to GH¢19.80 cedis and 2 bottles of schnapps. A chief swore with *Mpintin*, *fjnt]mfr]m* or *Mpebi* following him.

If a chief distorted the words as he swore, he stood the risk of losing his life. No customs were performed on the following day – Friday – after the burial. It is believed that it was on Friday that the Golden Stool, the heart of *Asanteman*

(the people of Asante) was commanded from heaven by Okomfo Anokye. It is also believed that the chief of Asante, Osei Tutu I was killed on River Pra on a Friday. Adanse being part of *Asanteman* also considers the day as sacred. Fridays are regarded as sacred days in Asante. The *mpintin* and *f[ɪnt]mfr[m]* signified the dignity and power of the chief. It also meant the chief had died in a war proclaiming him as a warrior.

The coffin used to bury a dead chief was made of *odum* (malicia excels) boards. It was called *Puduo*. The chief was buried in the night at the royal cemetery, called *[ban mu*. The *[banmuhene* – chief in charge of the royal cemetery, stood the risk of joining Nana, if he misconducted himself as he went about his duties.

On meeting Nana Baffour Kyei II, *Gyaasehene* of Fomena and the other chiefs of the town, it was made clear that things, as stated above, have changed. Asante people do not say the chief has died. They say “the great tree has fallen”. This is said to blindfold people, thus Asante people do not accept the fact that the king is dead. As *Nananom* chewed kola on the death of a chief, today, chiefs eat real meals. Kola prevents hunger. In the olden days people who went in to view the dead body in state put off their shoes or sandals, which are body arts. Presently such people do put off the footwear. Putting off the footwear shows respect to the chief. Because Asante people think the chief does not die, people who go where he is laid-in-state take him as sitting in state so he needs to be accorded respect.

The swearing of living chiefs to the dead chief goes on with the state sword and

*t/n*ee, a local torch light made out of dry palm branches. The *t/n*ee is used to brighten dark places. Presently, dead chiefs are laid in state for three or four days. The body is watched by the living chiefs who are fully dressed as if going to war. In course of the wake keeping, the chiefs fire musketry. The firing of musketry showed the death of a chief, outsiders were made to know what has happened.

The wife/wives go from one end of the village to the other end wailing (*w/to ayinan*). The dead chief's wives use *nyanya* to make shrouds around their necks. The *nyanya* – a type of creeping plant is bitter. It depicts the wives are in sorrow. The said wives sit in front of their husband with outstretched legs.

The grave of a dead chief is not dug in advance. The coffin is carried to the *[ban mu* before digging. As a result of the depletion of forest, it is now difficult to get *odum*. So some dead chiefs now have their coffins made out of teak tree. Asante people are of the view that the king never dies. Therefore when the grave is dug ahead of the burial people will think the chief is dead.

As a result of Christianity and the state law human beings are not killed today. Rather, when the body is being taken to the royal cemetery, livestock or game that comes across the path of *Banmuhene* and his entourage is killed. The blood is put in the grave. The meat is cooked at the cemetery in the night and eaten before they come home.

People who watch the mausoleum, *banmufo*] keep watch of the grave for one week. This was done to prevent thieves from stealing gold and other precious things used in burying the chief. The researcher's informant said a chief of Ayaase, name withheld, was buried with gold and other precious items. He

was placed in the grave without covering it. Later on it was detected that people had looted the grave. It was as a result of this that people watched the grave. Presently, according to my informant, people continue to watch the graves of chiefs.

Not until a successor is found to inherit the dead chief, the funeral is not observed.

4.6: Advantages of the Arts in Funeral in Adanse

The many art forms that have been added to existing ones since 1960 in funeral celebrations in the Adanse Traditional Area have brought about economic gains to the people living there.

When there is death in a house, the family members put that particular house in shape. Artisans like masons, carpenters and painters who put the house in order get monies into their pockets. Moreover, the undertakers who dress corpses also cash in during funerals. During funerals, women exhibit different hair dos, so the beauticians cease the opportunity to add to their purses.

The women who deal in textiles increase their sales because of the purchase of red, black and white cloths that mourners use. Dressmakers who sew for the women also get some money. People who trade in indigenous sandals have their share of the booty.

Printers of items like posters, invitation cards, dossiers, T-shirts, handkerchiefs, tea cups and other items embossed with the picture of the deceased charge sums of money for their works. Moreover, spinners, drummers,

singers and dancers of traditional musical groups such as *adowa* and *kete* get monies into their pockets.

Poets who are hired to funerals in Adanse to sing appellations to the dead or the bereaved family also get their quota of the economic gains. Carpenters who produce different kinds of coffins also have field days as far as monies are concerned during funerals in Adanse.

One cannot dispute the fact that as a result of the artistic evolution in funerals in the Adanse Traditional Area, some school dropouts both male and female have enrolled to become undertakers. Some males who could not further their education are learning to become coffin producers.

4.7; Disadvantages of the Arts in Funeral in Adanse

During the researcher's rounds, many people – chiefs, religious leaders, opinion leaders, males and females expressed their concerns about the organization and celebration of funerals in Adanse as becoming a great burden with each passing day. They kept expressing their concerns about the escalating expenses incurred during funerals which are brought about by the use of many duplicated art forms thus making it disadvantageous.

As a result of some people getting involved in the music at funerals grounds, they get drunk and involve themselves in social vices like fighting which may result in death, hospitalization and imprisonment. There are those who use liquor to blindfold others to cast insinuations on their rivals.

At funeral, rivals use art to enhance their rivalry. People, especially, females who dance use gestures to tease their rivals. There are those who through wailing says words against enemies which results in fighting.

Art works are expensive. Families who indulge in the over use of art forms during funerals spend a lot. This may bring debt to the family.

4.8: Importance of Arts in Funerals in Adanse

The forms of art – visual, body, verbal and performing which is seen in funerals in Adanse is of paramount importance to the people of the area.

In the area of visual art, umbrella tops, pottery, painting, textiles, goldsmithing, palanquins, stools, spokesperson's staff show the rich culture of the area. It also teaches the people the culture of Adanse. Moreover, it is a way of transmitting the culture of Adanse to people outside the area. It helps the people of Adanse to sustain their culture.

Body art made up of the customs for the dead and living, red, black and white clay and the hair cut of widows portray the culture of the people. Their significance teaches the moral values of the people of the area. They also show respect and love to the departed.

Verbal art- wailing, singing, poetry recital and pouring of libation also teach the culture of the area. The people of Adanse learn moral values from these and try as much as possible to eschew social vices like fighting, stealing and drinking. They help to express grief in a sad way to touch people's heart.

In the area of performing art – drumming, dancing, dirges and appellations tell outsiders the rich culture of the people of Adanse. People learn and become employed in these fields. It also makes the place lively or enjoyable.

These art forms also show the status of the bereaved family and the deceased. Colour symbolism at funerals speaks a lot. Red and black clothe worn by sympathizers show deep feelings of melancholy. Some of the arts used in funerals in Adanse like billboards of the deceased and brochures bearing pictures of the dead help family members to keep memories of the dead and also remind people about activities and days they will be held.. The use of red and black balloons and ribbons help make the funeral grounds beautiful.

Without these art forms, the researcher thinks the funerals of Adanse people cannot be performed in a grand and appropriate way, and the respect given to the dead will not be as splendid as it is. Even, it might be difficult to know that funeral celebrations are taking place at funeral grounds, when nobody was wailing.

4.9: Discussion

Art forms have been seen to be of high increase in funerals for the past fifty years in the Adanse Traditional Area. It has its aesthetic, economic, social and religious values. Many employment opportunities have been opened to people in the area especially transportation, breweries, and textile industry. In addition to this the presence of beauticians, food sellers, entertainment, housing and churches at funerals has greatly enhanced social cohesion.

However, people have expressed misgivings on the overuse of art in Adanse. They say Adanse is gradually drifting towards a society of funeral lovers other than lovers of life. Interviewees are of opinion that while in other parts of the world people are working so hard sometimes seven days in a week, people in Adanse spend time on non-essentials with its related arts.

About fifty years ago people fasted between three and eight days during funerals if the deceased was a close relative. This caused many people to fall ill, complaining about stomach aches. Now that people are served with food and drinks during funerals, the health problem is somehow solved.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, APPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter covers summary of study, conclusion and recommendations.

5.1: Summary of Study

In the study, it has been found out that there has been a change in the use of art forms in funerals in Adanse Traditional Area from 1960 to present time. This has come about as a result of high degree of acculturation, Christianity, Western culture and literacy. These have resulted in the use of mortuaries to preserve dead bodies which were not in place about fifty years ago. Currently, when someone dies, the house in which he/she lived is renovated; money is collected from family members to cater for all that will be done in the funeral celebration. Expensive coffins are bought to show the class of the dead relation. Other things like hiring of chairs and canopies go on. Music, announcements on radio, television and posters are all employed to make the funeral grand. The house in which the dead is laid in state is decorated with flowers. The dead body is laid on an iron or golden bed, with lights decorating the coffin as long as the corpse is in bed. The corpse is dressed according to his/her status (see plate 5.1 – 5.4).



Plate 5.1



Plate 5.2



Plate 5.3



Plate 5.4

Corpses laid in State- Dressed According to their Status:

(5.1) Academician

(5.2) Successful Business Woman

(5.3) Chief

(5.4) Responsible Father

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher)

At the funeral grounds are canopies, chairs, wailing and weeping and dirges sung in honour of the dead. Presently live band or recorded music is employed to entertain sympathizers. Donations are given to defray part of the funeral debts. Clothes with

different colours – red, black, brown, black and white to indicate state of mourning are worn by mourners. Red, brown and black colours mean sorrow. Patterns were made of clay on the body of mourners. Red clay meant sorrow, pain and seriousness. Any way this practice has died away.

The literature review showed that pregnant women were not given a fitting burial but the research has shown that they are now treated as people who died natural death, thereby using art forms in the burial and funeral.

The death and funerals of chiefs which used to be fearful is not so at the moment. Announcement on the death of a chief is now not kept secret. Servants who went to serve the chief some time ago is now a thing of the past due to Christianity, education and modernization

From the study art could be seen as an expression of feelings and values in perceptible forms. Art is desirable, worthwhile and important in the funerals of Adanse Traditional Area. As a result of that the people of the area have added more art forms to their funerals than it used to be about fifty years ago. This is helping to raise the living conditions of those whose goods and services are directly involved in the celebrations of funerals, especially drinking bar operators, transport owners, textile sellers, beauticians, food sellers, and others. It has made funeral celebrations enjoyable.

However, others have expressed concern about high expenses incurred during funerals as a result of the many art forms. They say the many art forms have eroded the solemnity that accompanied death and its celebrations. The researcher weighing the two sides of the coin has seen that the use of art forms in Adanse Traditional Area has helped to bring money into the pockets of people. Yet, he is of the opinion that the many art forms can be minimized.

5.2: Conclusions

It has been established that there have been artistic changes in the funerals of Adanse Traditional Area from 1960 to 2010. This has created employment opportunities for the youth of the area. This notwithstanding, the over use of the art is affecting the pockets of the people (particularly those in the middle and low income groups). Those in these groups need not copy blindly the affluence of those who are economically sound. They should not borrow to organize expensive funerals.

The economically sound families should channel their resources to assist the needy in the society in such areas like education and job creation.

5.3 Recommendations

The researcher suggests that expensive caskets with its decorations, announcements which are duplicated (on FM stations, Television stations and news papers), bill boards of deceased, mourners buying the same cloth purposively for one funeral, giving out of souvenirs with the picture of the deceased and the use of many musical groups at one funeral should be discouraged by the Adanse Traditional Council and opinion leaders. Examples of such items or souvenirs (all for one funeral) are shown in Plates 5.5 and 5.6.



Plate 5.5



Plate 5.6

Souvenirs used at Funerals

(Source: Pictures taken by the researcher at Atobiase)

Through constant education the many of such duplicated art forms may be minimized. If it is minimized many are those who will patronize it more than we are seeing today. Monies spent on them could be channeled to help the community. There are brilliant but needy children who are falling out of schools. There are schools which do not have tables and chairs, lacking sporting equipments and teaching and learning materials. There are villages in the traditional area that lack good drinking water and other amenities. Monies on the many art forms could be used to solve these problems.

When a person dies, it is preserved scientifically for a long time while preparations like renovations, paintings, and other things go on. They even hire people to decorate the house to make it attractive. These decorators charge huge sums of money. The researcher suggests that a dead person should be buried within a week or two.

Though it is good to see the person off well, arrangements can be done in a simple way despite the family's good economic stand. Buffets which are organized for sympathizers are very costly. The researcher suggests that the cost must be minimized as a funeral is not for enjoyment.

The researcher also suggests that the use of alcohol at funerals must cease since most drunkards misbehave and cause riots or wound people at the end. An art center can be opened in the Adanse Traditional Area where beads for necklaces and other funerary arts will be produced to create new employment for the youth. This will expose our culture to outsiders and promote tourism which will bring in foreign exchange to help in the development of the country.

The researcher further recommends that very simple celebration could be attractive to draw people to the area during funeral celebrations, thus, creating an avenue for tourists. Other people outside the Adanse Traditional Area can learn from what is practiced in Adanse.

Information on the topic is not yet exhausted. The researcher suggests to future researchers to look into the area of the hardships associated with the many use of art forms in funerals in the Adanse Traditional Area.

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APPENDIX
INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Age:
2. Sex: M [] F []
3. Are you an Adanse citizen? Yes [] No []
4. How long have you lived in this town? (If not a citizen)
.....
5. Can you mention ten (10) things used by Adanse people in their funerals?
6. Mention the names of the producers of things you have named in Q5
7. Are the producers named in Q.6 artists? Yes [] No []
8. Have you ever seen Adanse people on funeral grounds?
9. How does their dressing look like?
10. Who will take the credit if the dress looks attractive?
11. Have you ever seen a dead person dressed and laid in state before?
12. If yes, how do you see the decoration of the corpse?
13. What art forms are used in the decoration?
14. How do you see some of the coffins used these days?
15. Are they expensive? Yes [] No []
16. If yes, what do you suggest?
17. What do you say about decorations at funeral ground?
18. a. through what means are funerals announced presently?
b. do you see any duplication? Yes [] No []
c. which of them can be avoided?
d. why do you say so?

19. What caused the introduction of these many art forms?
20. a. has you seen present day *adosoa*? Yes [] No []
- b. name some of the things that constitute the *adosoa* of the old as compared to that of today
- c. what it its importance?
21. What are your suggestions to the use of these many art forms at funerals?
22. a. what changes have occurred of late in the funerals of chiefs?
- b. why these changes?
23. a. Do you see how pregnant women who die at child-birth are buried? Yes []
- No []
- b. What changes occurred in the burials and funerals of pregnant women of late?
- c. Give reasons for the changes.
24. a. How are mourners entertained at funerals?
- b. Name some art objects used nowadays.