

MANHYIA PALACE ART SYMBOLS AS A MEDIUM FOR EDUCATION AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the PhD 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 the due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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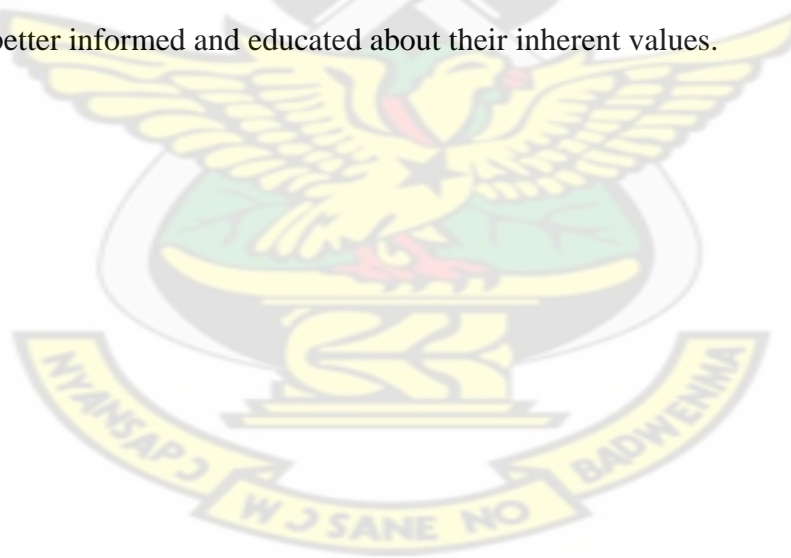
ABSTRACT

What are traditional art symbols used at the Manhyia Palace as decorative motifs on several royal regalia, objects and paraphernalia have been created under the patronage of the various Asantehene since the reign of Nana Osei Tutu I, the first Asantehene. It is assumed that these symbols have meanings that provide information and education in addition to their aesthetic value. The objectives of the study were to find out the extent to which the Manhyia Palace symbols have been used to educate and disseminate information in the society; the type of information, depth of interpretation and education and the effect of the education and disseminated information on societal attitudes and behaviours. The research methods used to unearth information were descriptive and qualitative. The research tools used were observation at Palace durbars and regalia, interviews of persons who are conversant with the art symbols, photography of the symbols and the administration of two hundred (200) copies of questionnaire. This dissertation unearthed more and new information that could be added to the present scanty information available which will support the claim that the Manhyia Palace symbols have been used to educate and inform the society since their creation and that the symbols would continue to serve these purposes. It was found out that the different Manhyia Palace symbols have not been as comprehensively researched as this one. Although the symbols are Akan related, it was found out that some non-Akan Ghanaians have learnt about them and they have achieved global popularity adding to their national value. The dissertation is presented in seven chapters. Chapter One is the introductory chapter featuring the background study, problem statement, objectives, research question, delimitation, limitations, purpose and importance of the study, method of research, ethnographic study of the Asante and the arrangement of the rest of the text. Chapter Two reviews the literature on the subject under study from available published and

unpublished sources while Chapter Three presents the methodology and instruments used in acquiring data. Chapter Four chronicles the history of the Kings of Asante from Nana Osei Tutu I to Nana Opoku Ware II (1401-1999) to show their patronage of the various types and number of the symbols. Chapter Five identifies, describes and presents the functions and importance of the symbols. Chapter Six features the analysis using the charts and discussion of the major findings of the research, leading up to the conclusion that the Manhyia Palace symbols have meanings useful for the promotion of positive societal behaviours. Chapter Seven, the final chapter, summarises the whole work, drawing conclusions and making several recommendations pertaining to the significant value of Asante Palace symbols to the society at large. A major recommendation was that the Manhyia Palace traditional art symbols and their meanings should be made easily accessible regularly so that members of the society could fully appreciate them in order to become better informed and educated about their inherent values.

May 2011

H.R.A-H



DEDICATION

To my children,
Angela, Anna, Elizabeth, Eunice and Seth.

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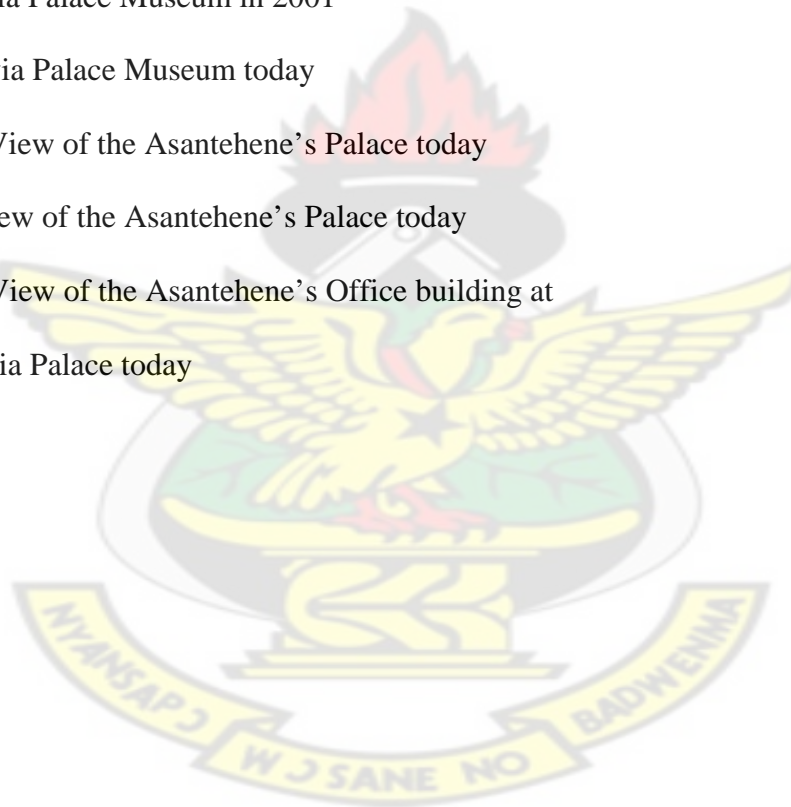
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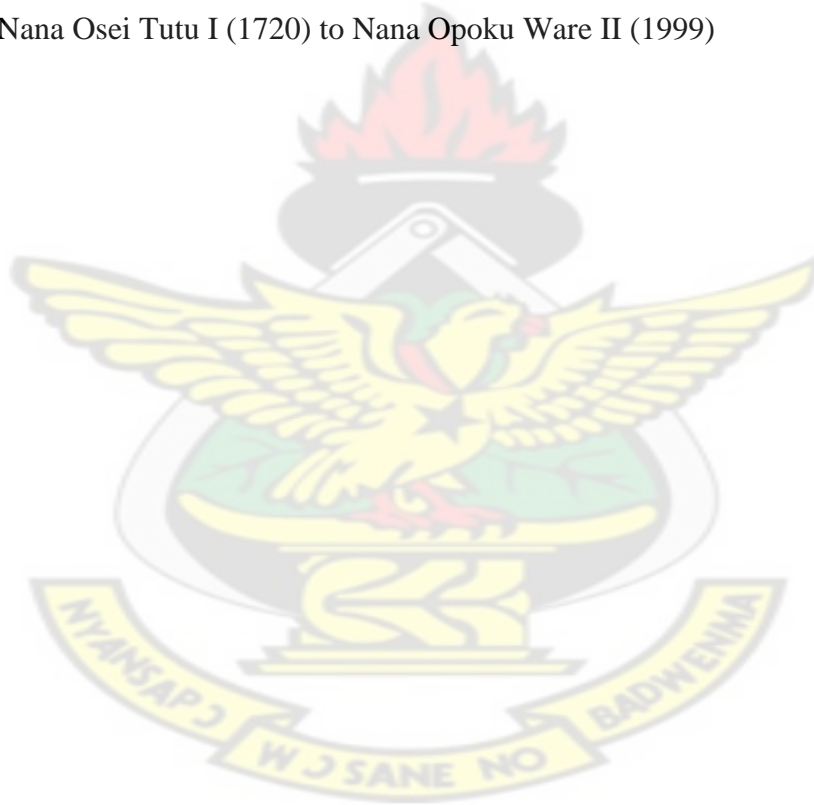
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Asante symbolism is complex. It is therefore necessary to identify and interpret motifs to enable one unravel its complexities. In Asante culture the use of verbal communication, language, proverbs, euphemisms, homonyms as well as patterns of naming objects and things have to be well understood to lead to the meanings of these things and objects. Symbolism has long been used by the Asante as very effective means of communication. The extent to which these symbols serve educational and informational purposes is worthy to be studied to know if they really have such values, so that the society can learn from them in order to improve not only their relationships with people but also their lives.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Manhyia Palace artistic symbols appear as motifs and designs in cloth, patterns in jewellery, designs on walls, carvings and on several other material objects found in the palace. It is widely assumed that they convey messages, information and are also educative. These assumptions have not been verified or disproved. This work therefore is aimed at finding out if these art symbols indeed convey information and provide education for national development.

Worldwide, information dissemination has come to be accepted as the bedrock of development, as long as the information is accurate and is disseminated to the right destinations at the right time. This principle, however has not been applied to Akan or

Asante Manhyia Palace art symbols so far. Currently, knowledge as to whether they convey any information for development, and if they do, whether they are disseminated to the right places at the right time cannot be accurately quantified or established. This work also set out to verify the fact that Akan traditional art symbols convey information for development that libraries and other media can assist to disseminate.

1.3 Objectives

The Objectives of this study are to find out:

1. The extent to which the art symbols of the Manhyia Palace have been used to educate and disseminate information in the society so far;
2. The type of information, depth of interpretation and education they carry; and
3. The effect of such education and disseminated information on societal attitudes and behaviours.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

There is some amount of literature about the traditional Asante nation and its arts and symbols, but not specifically the art symbols in the Manhyia Palace. This scanty information on the subject has mostly been presented as symbols in graphic forms and at best only superficial interpretation to them. This research is aimed at finding out if more (and newer) information can be added to the available scanty literature in order to prove that the art symbols in the Manhyia Palace, have so far educated and disseminated information to the society, and that they continue to benefit the society. This work studies the physical or visual aspects of the symbols rather than the verbal.

1.5 Delimitation

Delimitations encountered include the fact that there are quite a lot of traditional art symbols in the Manhyia Palace but most of them are not open to public view because they are used for ritual purposes or are sacred.

The study therefore looked mostly at selected art symbols in the Manhyia Palace that are open to the public like some of the Asantehene's personal accessories - headbands, rings, necklaces, cloth; and other paraphernalia used by him like swords, linguist staffs, stools, chairs, umbrella finials and the musical orchestra instruments. The Palace buildings, themselves as symbols, were also studied. Although the study is limited to symbols of the Palace, other Asante symbols outside the Palace were referred to in order to buttress points and enrich the discussion.

1.6 Limitations

It was extremely difficult to assemble a lot of persons related to the manufacture, storage and use of the symbols to interview. Several visits were made to the Manhyia Palace to talk to court officials and attendants on appointment but other pressing palace assignments often caused the appointments to be cancelled. In the end, three Chiefs and three palace attendants were interviewed who unfortunately had very little relevant information to give. Significant funds however were dissipated in this bid.

There was also a serious challenge concerning access to some of the regalia of the office of the Asantehene. This was due to the belief that exposure of such materials to research and photography would compromise their sacred nature and the secrecy around them. This belief according to McLeod, (1999) and Krout (1999) prevented the custodians of the Manhyia Palace regalia from releasing items for the opening of the Manhyia Palace Museum to

commemorate the Silver Jubilee anniversary of the reign of Otumfuo Opoku Ware II, the then Asantehene, in 1995. Since 1995, the custodians had not changed their minds. They still do not give access to several of the regalia so permission was not given for those not for public viewing to be studied. Even with respect to those in public view, permission to photograph some of them was not given. As a result of this, some of the pictures used in this study had to be sourced from the Internet and other books. This raises a question, which may need another study, as to how non-Ghanaian authors were able to gain access to photograph the traditional art symbols in the Manhyia palace and reproduce them in their books and on internet websites.

Rightly as Nooter (1993) observed, many works of art in Africa have restricted access to them, thereby withholding them from public view, which in effect restricts knowledge about them. This is very common with the arts of the royalty. Most times a single kingship has two treasuries, one public and the other private. It is in view of this situation that not all the symbols in the Manhyia Palace were captured in this work. The private ones were not opened for observation and study, while the public ones were mainly found from various other sources.

1.7 Research Question

“That Akan royal art symbols are not merely artistic but they do disseminate information for the good of the society.” This question by the researcher has been the thrust which has directed the collection of data that have been interpreted and analysed in the work to support or disprove the research question. The featuring of photographs and illustrations of the symbols have made the assertion clearer. It is important to state here that most of the Akan art symbols emanated from the Manhyia Palace through the works of the craftsmen of the

Asantehene who were commissioned to produce them, hence the research question, although the actual study was on the Manhyia Palace art symbols.

1.8 Importance of the Study

The study is of much importance because most people look at the symbols with only their aesthetics and do not go further to enquire about the meanings attributed to them. Since the Akan of Ghana often use symbols and non-verbal actions to speak to each other, it is important to know the meanings of the messages communicated through these symbols especially for the non-Akan or the Akan untrained 'ear or eye'.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study of the educational and informational values of the Manhyia Palace symbols within which several complex set of symbols are being featured in a comprehensive study for easy access. This study aims at enabling people to take the symbols more seriously than they have hitherto done in order to fully appreciate the information and knowledge contained within, to the current generation and generations yet unborn.

It will also be an eye-opener for persons in the tourism, education and archives services to prompt them to look into further research interests in the symbols of other ethnic groups in the country with the aim of interpreting and unearthing their educational and information values. Some income can also be made out of the publication of the results of such study either in book or electronic formats for its sale to tourists and other interested Ghanaians.

Ghana, as a country, respects her cultural values and beliefs. The research into the meanings of these symbols will further promote societal regard for the cultural values and beliefs enshrined in these symbols, as being aspects that educate and inform the society to be better

members. It is hoped that this work will enable the application of such knowledge to national development.

Finally this work will make anthropologists, ethnographers, curators, cultural officers, art educators, art critics, visual artists, aestheticians and all other persons who work with these symbols to appreciate the wealth of knowledge inherent in what has been entrusted to their care, so they may preserve them well and also be in a position to share their educational and information values with other persons who are interested to know.

1.9 Research Methodology

This section deals with the sources of data and the techniques used in the data collection. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this research. The quantitative method involved the use of a questionnaire which produced numerical data that were analysed and interpreted through the use of charts. It was qualitative, in that the researcher used a primary data gathering instrument through direct observation, examination of the symbols to enable a critical evaluation and description, recording of events and interviews. The data gathered was in the form of narrations and pictures of objects that were then described in detail. Although this method was expensive and time-consuming it provided more room for diversity in responses in order to further enrich the work. The results were then presented as tables and charts.

1.9.1 Sources of Data

Available literature in the form of textbooks, journal articles, newspaper articles and unpublished works, both in print and electronic formats, were reviewed for background information. Data were gathered from primary sources through visits to the Manhyia Palace

to witness durbars and festivals and to talk to persons whose works were related to the subject of this study.

A detailed discussion of the subject was undertaken in Chapter Five to bring out the information to support the research question. The research was concluded with recommendations as to what additional activities needed to be embarked upon to further enhance the use of the traditional art symbols in the Manhyia Palace in disseminating information to enlighten, educate and even improve the attitudes and behaviours of members of the society for national development.

All the information generated was word processed and produced on paper and on compact disc (CD) for use.

1.9.2 Techniques of Data Collection

Face to face and telephone interviews were conducted and recorded on tape recorders and on paper. Questionnaires were administered and critical observations made. Examination of historical and archival records was also done. Photographs were taken with digital cameras and on-the-spot sketches were made on drawing paper. Descriptive, analytical, narrative, statistical, historical and interpretative approaches were used in the analysis of the data as well as pictures, illustrations, drawings, tables, charts and maps.

1.10 Facilities Used

A good number of facilities were used for this study. Visits and contacts were made with the British Museum, London; British Library, London; Smithsonian Museum, Washington DC; Indianapolis Museum of Art in Indianapolis; PRAAD, Accra and Kumasi; George Padmore Research Library on African Affairs, Accra; University of Ghana Libraries (especially the Balme Library and the Institute of African Studies Library) ; KNUST Libraries (especially

the Main Library, Faculty of Art Library and the Faculty of Social Sciences Library); Ghana National Centre for Arts & Culture, Kumasi; Manhyia Palace Museum; Internet websites; some Chiefs and members of Staff of the Manhyia Palace; and the public who had some information on the art symbols in the Manhyia Palace.

1.11 Ethnographic background of Asanteland and its People

There are various assertions of the origin of Asantes. Oral history states that the ancestors of the Asante nation came out of a hole at Asantemanso near Asumegya. Some say they came from Mesopotamia to Africa and settled in Old Ghana, but to avoid the influence of Islam migrated to the forest area of present Ghana. They then settled in the Adanse area, probably about the 14th century (Osei, 2000).

a. Ashanti Region

The area called Ashanti Region in present day Ghana is surrounded by the Brong Ahafo Region to the north, Eastern Region to the east, Central Region to the south and Western Region to the west (Map 1.1). The Region is in the central part of Ghana and has an area of 24, 389km² being the third largest region in Ghana after the Brong Ahafo and Northern Regions respectively. The 2010 National Census Provisional figures indicate that it has a population of 4,839,100 (the most populous region in the country), with 27 Districts. Its indigenes are the Asantes who speak the Twi language and are part of the larger Akan ethnic group. The area is a dense forest area, partially mountainous but with mostly fertile land. Like the country Ghana, it has two seasons, the rainy season which is from April to November and the dry season from December to March.

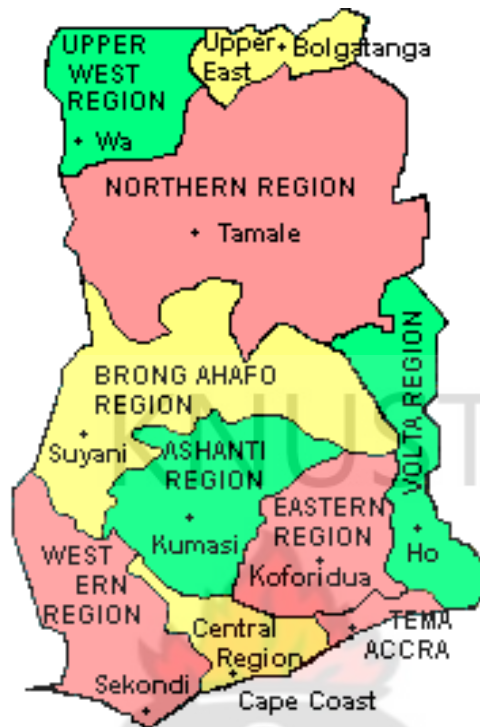


Fig 1.1 Map of Ghana showing Ashanti region

Source : <http://74.54.19.227/GHP/img/pics/42291028.gif>

Most of the country's cocoa comes from this region as well as its gold (Wikipedia, retrieved October 18, 2009). For most parts of the nineteenth century the Asante had control of an area of about 550 km radius of Ghana, stretching north, south, east and west . The Asante army was strong, well equipped and organised and assuming a belief of "limitless numbers and bravery" as likened to the porcupine (kɔtɔkɔ) hence the saying that "*Asante Kɔtɔkɔ, wo kum apem a apem beba*" (McLeod 1981 : 10). Its capital is Kumasi and it has 36 traditional councils headed by paramount chiefs who constitute the Ashanti Regional House of Chiefs with the Asantehene as its President.

b. Kumasi Metropolitan Area

Kumasi was founded by King Osei Tutu in 1695 as the capital of the Asante State (Fynn,1971) and it is today a major commercial centre because of its strategic location, lying in the central part of Ghana.

Early settlement was mainly around the present Manhyia Palace with a few houses scattered from there to present-day Bantama. Later on places like Zongo quarters (Aboabo of today) and Fante quarters (Fanti New Town of today) were added during the reign of Nana Kofi Karikari (1867-1874). The population of Kumasi was about 50,000 in 1860. Kumase was situated on a hill which overlooked river *Subin*.

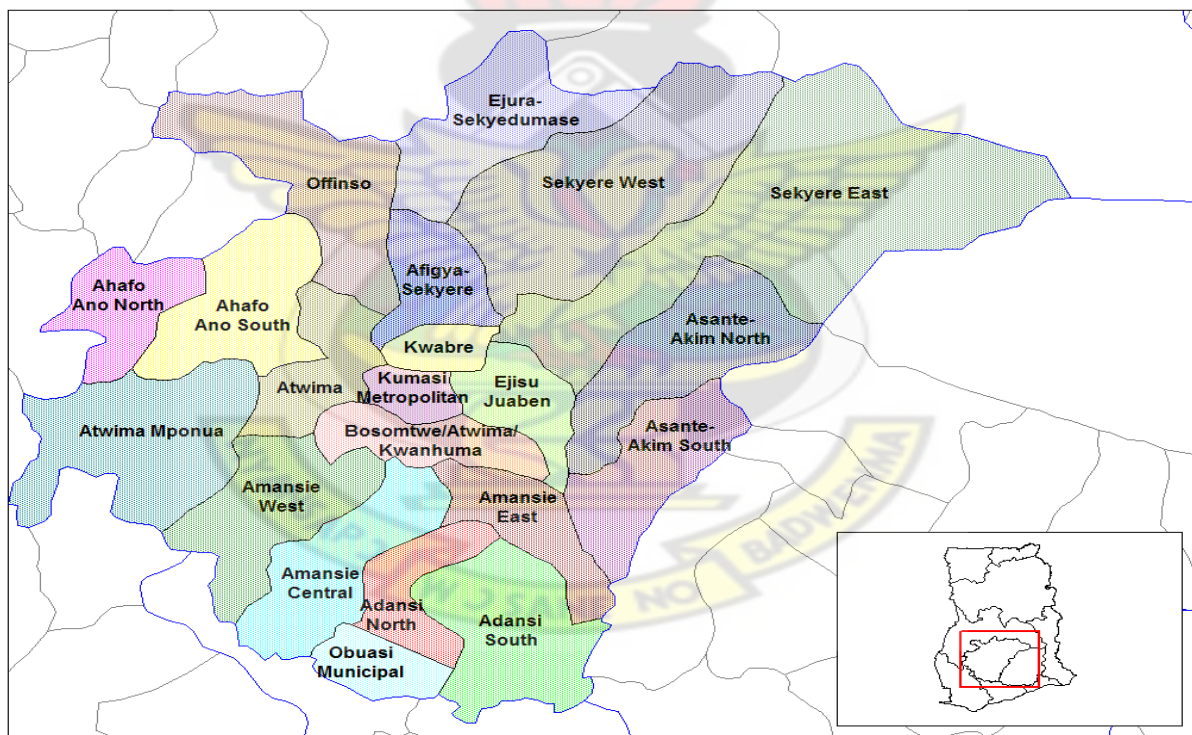


Fig 1.2 Map of Ashanti region showing Kumasi metropolitan area

Source : http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ashanti_districts.png

The Palace complex covered about five acres of Kumasi and was at the eastern quarter of the town. The *Aban*, which was the only stone building was situated at the northern side of the town (Wilks, 1975). The long passageway from the main entrance of the Palace ended in a large yard with several large rooms by it. There was the *Prama Keseso* (Great Court) where the council of Kumasi met by the early 1870s.

Around the palace except to the east were the seventy seven (77) wards that Kumasi was divided into. Directly the south of the palace was the Adum Ward where the Adumhene lived. Two to three hundred (200-300) yards west to the palace lived the Gyasehene. The Bantamahene lived at Bantama to the north of the palace and the Asafohene at Asafo to the south of the palace (Wilks,1975). *Dwaberem*, a wide open space, was used to receive the guests of the Asantehene as well as for military reviews. It also served as a market place with no permanent stalls because of its multi-purpose use. Immediately to the east side of the *Dwaberem* was the *Asaman* or *Asamanpomu*, Bush of Ghosts (Wilks,1975).

In 1817 Kumase had 27 streets, all named, with the four main ones being *Odumata*, *Guabo*, *Opemso* and *Osamarandidem*. Each street was lined with the *Nyedua* trees, well kept and taken charge of by a Captain. In the middle of each street was a platform made of clay upon which the King sat in order to interact with his subjects (Anti,1996). Wilks says this platform was called *sumpene*. Kumase in 1874 was as in Plate XIII (Wilks, 1975) viewed from the *Aban* (see Plate 1.1).

Its foliage was chiefly dense elephant grass to the south, and the east, north and west was of primeval forest. It was hilly with sides sloping down to swamps around the town. The town had springs, which were active in the rainy season feeding into the several swamps.



XIII View of Kumase from the Aban, 1874

Plate 1.1 View of Kumase from the Aban in 1874

Source : Wilks, 1975

Subin river was the main source of potable water. Kumase has an average temperature of 27°C with average rainfall of 127-178cm. from May to June and September to October. However, in recent times the rainfall pattern has changed with rains continuing into early December.

There were two types of residential quarters in Kumasi. Those for the 'lower' class were located near the swamps and were houses made with sticks and thatch-roofed with banana leaves or palm fronds. Those of the 'upper' class were built along the streets with wattle work and plastered with clay and swish with palm fronds as the thatched roof. They had open balconies opening into the streets with an inner yard which had several open court

rooms, *adampan*. Some of these houses had upper rooms. Each of these houses was home to about one hundred people. The 'upper' class houses had relief designs on their walls and were painted with red clay, *ntwoma*, at the base and white clay at the top. Each house had its own tree, *Nyamedua* *Altsonia boonei*, with a pot of sacred water on it, near the front door as well as magic medicine materials (Wilks,1975).

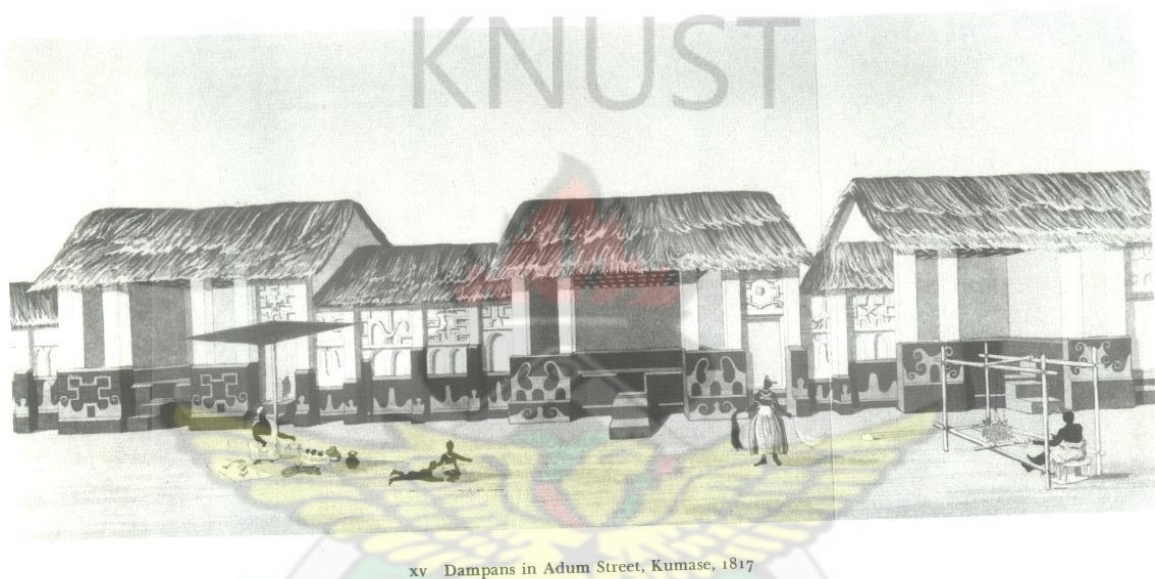


Plate 1.2 Dampans in Adum Street 1817

Source: Wilks,1975

Kumase became a commercial centre after 1896, hitherto Salaga and Kintampo to the north and Adubease and Ankaase to the south were the markets for Kumase (Wilks,1975).

Deducing from McLeod's account, Kumase in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a place for the good, the bad and the ugly. It was inhabited by about 20,000 people. The good was when it was a commercial town, business boomed and people of different ethnic groups did business together. The Asantehene would also find time to sit on the *sumpene* platform

surrounded by his sub chiefs and court officials to interact with his people, receive visitors and give out gifts. The bad was when quarrels would result in disorder and fires set which razed down houses in a whole street because of the highly flammable thatch roofs. The Asantehene's abode was not spared if he was the cause of the quarrel. The ugly was when convicted criminals would be publicly executed and people were killed when the Asantehene 'went to his village' , that is, died, and during his funeral (McLeod,1981 : 41).

The traditional ruler of Kumasi was known initially as the Kumasehene. As the Kumasehene he was the leader of the Asante Confederacy and therefore known as the Asantehene. According to Fraser and Cole (1972), the Asantes were in history an organised complex hierarchical state that could quickly be mobilised militarily and had an effective territorial and political expansion policy. The Asantehene was the '*primus inter pares*' over a confederacy of paramount chiefs, who were also responsible for important religious ceremonies that strengthened the political system. The Asantehene used some regalia in the performance of some of his responsibilities. He had the exclusive right to commission the manufacture of regalia such as stools, swords and others.

The city of Kumasi today, is also known as the 'Garden City' because of its rich and beautiful plant and flower life. It lies about 250 km northwest of Accra by road, about 483 km north of the equator and 161 km north of the Gulf of Guinea. It is 299 km² (115.4 sq miles). It is the second largest city of Ghana, with a population of 1,517,000 (2005,United Nations Population Division). Most of its inhabitants belong to the Asante ethnic group with others made up of people from all other regions in Ghana and some foreign countries, especially from Lebanon, Mali and Burkina Faso (Wikipedia, retrieved October 18, 2009).

c. The Asantehene's Palace (Manhyia Palace)

The Manhyia Palace is situated in Kumasi and is the residence of the Asantehene. The original palace which was situated close to the current site of the Ghana Military Museum was destroyed by the British in the 4th Anglo-Asante War in 1874(Ghana-net.com). Detailed discussion of the Manhyia Palace is in Chapter Five.

The Golden Stool which is regarded as the soul of the Asante ethnic group also resides in the Manhyia Palace. Detailed discussion of the Golden Stool is in Chapter Five. Today, the Manhyia Palace Complex consists of the durbar ground, accommodation for attendants, Stool room, the Museum, the Court and Offices of the Asantehene and Residences of the Asantehemaa and the Asantehene.

The Asantehene is the apex of the Asante power structure and the King of Asante. He reigns over all the chiefs in Asante land in a hierarchical structure. The position of Asantehene is for life and he is crowned on to the Golden Stool, the '*Sika Adwa Kofi*'. He is addressed as 'Your Majesty' or 'Otumfoɔ'.

The first Asantehene was Nana Osei Tutu I who reigned from 1675 as Kumasehene and from 1701 to 1717 as Asantehene. There were subsequent Asantehene. However, in 1902 when Asante nation became a British protectorate the office of Asantehene was abolished. When Nana Prempeh I who had hitherto been exiled was repatriated to Kumasi in 1926, the British allowed him to use the title Kumasehene rather than Asantehene (in actual sense he got back his title as Asantehene because the Asantes know the Kumasehene as the Asantehene). In 1935, during the reign of Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II, the British officially restored the title Asantehene. Today the traditional ruler of the Asantes is still known as the Asantehene.

According to Rattray (1929) the Asantehene's palace has various types of courtiers with responsibilities as follows:

1. Akyeame – spokespersons or linguists in the Akan sense
2. Akonwasofo – Stool carriers
3. Asokwafo – Drummers & Horn blowers
4. Akyiniyekyimfo – Umbrella carriers
5. Barimafo – Royal mausoleum caretakers
6. Adwareyefo – Bathroom attendants
7. Akradwarefo – “Soul washers”
8. Ahoprafo – Elephant tail switchers
9. Papasofo – Fan bearers
10. Soodofo – Cooks
11. Asoamfo – Hammock/Palanquin carriers
12. Akokwafo – Floor polishers
13. Sanaahene – Treasurer
14. Afotuosofo – Assistant Treasurers
15. Adabra – Eunuchs
16. Nseniefo – Herald
17. Afenasofo – Sword-bearers
18. Atumtufo – Gun-bearers
19. Akyemfo – Shield-bearers
20. Kwadwomfo – Minstrels
21. Abrafo – Executioners

Arhin (2002) adds the following:

22. Abanasefo – Wardrobe attendants
23. Mpabofo – Sandals keepers
24. Nsumankwafo – Medicine men / Physicians.

The *Sanaahene* is the head of the *Gyaase*, the Asantehene's palace staff. Traditionally palace attendants were first-born sons who succeeded their fathers. They were recruited from all over the Asante state and when they became adults they went back home and were replaced by their first born sons. One could deduce from the limited accommodation in the palace and the fact that they needed to have undivided attention when serving in the palace, that the families of these attendants did not live with them in the palace and they were either living outside the palace or even in their own towns and villages. If the Asantehene so wished, he could retain such staff when they became adults in the palace and they would serve till death. Loyalty to the Asantehene was of much importance in service at the palace.

Rattray (1929) states that there was a non-wage system for workers of the Asantehene's palace. They received gifts rather than wages for the work they did. One can therefore infer from here that this could and would result in cheating or extortion by the courtiers to make ends meet. Today, as confirmed by some palace informants who pleaded anonymity, there is some semblance of such extortion from courtiers especially when one is brought to the Asantehene's court and found guilty of an offence.

1.12 Arrangement of the rest of the Text

Chapter One is the introductory chapter and it provides the background to the study which especially indicates the need and importance of the study. It further presents the statement of the problem, objectives of the research, purpose of the study as well as its importance, scope of the study and its limitation, research question, research methodology and ethnographic background of Asanteland and its people. Chapter Two features a review of literature from published and unpublished sources that are relevant to the subject. The discussion is presented under the following sub-headings : Overview of symbols; Global Royal art

symbols; African Royal art symbols; Akan and Asante Royal art symbols and Manhyia Royal art symbols. Chapter Three deals with the research methodology used in the study including the instruments used, sources of data and facilities used. Chapter Four chronicles the history of the Kings of Asante from 1401 to 1999. This is done to show what their major activities and achievements were as well as the type and number of symbols they produced during their reign. Only the Kings from Nana Osei Tutu I to Nana Opoku Ware II are featured. The present King, Nana Osei Tutu II is mentioned and some photographs of him featured in the work to show some of the symbols used by the Asantehene because traditionally every Asantehene is expected to use the regalia of his predecessor and then add some more if he so desires. A study of his reign is not included in this work since he is still on the throne and a study of his reign at this period will be premature. Chapter Five presents the identification, description, functions and importance of the traditional royal art symbols of the Manhyia Palace. Here the meanings of the symbols and their educational and information aspects are revealed and discussed. Chapter Six is the discussion and analysis of the data received from the questionnaires that were administered to two hundred (200) people from twenty (20) professions. One hundred and seventy-two (172) persons returned the questionnaire as completed. Chapter Seven includes the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. It discusses the research findings and how it has answered the objectives of the study and the research question. It indicates how the findings have contributed to existing knowledge on the subject. It concludes with some recommendations on how the hidden (but now revealed) educational and informational aspects of Manhyia royal art symbols could be made available to more people to educate and inform them so that they could use the education and enlightenment they have received to improve their lives and also assist in national development. This is followed by References and an Appendix.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Overview

The use of symbols is as old as man. Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilisations had symbols which were used to signify several things. According to Colleen (2006:1) symbols are “something used to represent something else”. They can represent ideas, concepts, beliefs, doctrines and feelings. They can have powerful meanings and evoke strong emotions.” This has been likened to a national flag to a countryman and the crucifix to a Christian as they would also have powerful meanings and evoke strong emotions.

Agbo (2006) says symbolism is the representation of ideas by the use of signs, literacy and artistic invention to express ideas, emotions and abstractions in place of realism. A symbol generally stands for something visible, like an object, a mark, a sign or an abstract idea. Signs may be ambiguous in their use but they provide information about the environment, intentions and feelings of people and so elicit appropriate responses. Yankah (1989:102) illustrates that a certain chief who thought that a court decision had been badly made, turned up the next day in court wearing his cloth inside out and his sandals on the wrong feet. This action which was symbolic immediately told people that something was wrong and it was likely that the chief was ready that day to turn the court “upside down”.

Symbolism is mankind’s oldest form of communication. In the stone-age, artists carved female figures with large abdomens and breasts as symbols for continuity of life and fertility. (Colleen, 2006). Today, realistic and abstract symbols are being used to convey several human thoughts and issues.

Symbols were found in the Ancient age. Ancient Egyptian art symbols in hieroglyphics were found in tombs and as part of other forms of decorations, including the *ankh*. In Ancient Greek art, the symbols of gods and goddesses to signify war and wisdom (Athena), love (Venus), thunder and sky (Zeus) for example, were used. In the medieval era art in Europe, symbols used in Christian art included the crucifix, snake and apple, etc. to represent the death of Jesus Christ and deceit of Adam and Eve respectively. In Eastern art, Buddha Sculptures are symbols of peace and spirituality. In India the dancing Shiva has symbolic importance for creation, destruction, grace and liberation. In Japanese art, the Zen garden arrangements of sand, rock and mounds of mass are symbols of water mountains and islands (Colleen 2006).

Signs and Symbols

Often a time, people perceive that signs and symbols are one and the same when they perform the role of transmitting information. This is not so. Signs usually give simple basic information while symbols communicate abstract and complex concepts which make one to form mental images providing deep meanings. As confirmed by Sarpong (1974), a symbol has a meaning but not all things that have a meaning are symbols. Symbols often represent abstract ideas like peace, patience, cowardice, wisdom, unity etc. Symbols may also express ideas, and values, for example, the flag of a nation expresses nationalism and patriotism causing nationals who see the flag, to respect it and by extension, feel what it stands for.

Signs, however, do not point beyond themselves to hidden meanings and information as symbols do. According to Dzobo (2009:2) “signs provide simple information, but symbols communicate complex knowledge, abstract truths and ideas about life and its meaning”. He further states that a symbol is a powerful instrument of thought and Gardner (1970:138)

extends it further that symbolism is “a visible or audible sign or emblem of some thought, emotion or experience, interpreting what can be really grasped only by the mind and imagination which enters into the field of observation”.

Hill (2006) agrees with Dzobo that symbols are icons that represent meanings that are not immediately obvious. They stand for knowledge or great learning (retrieved June 10,2007). According to Geary (1988:103) “all research on African art – be it of art objects as such or of objects or events in other domains that can be grasped through the study of art – share the concern with meanings.”

Sometimes also, meanings given to symbols run true to the type of object, animal, person or plant. For example, a woman is a symbol of procreation, man for strength, egg for fragility, fire for destruction or heat or warmth. Gold weights also often serve dual purposes, both as a weight and in order to convey a message. For example, a gold weight featuring a symbol of a man carrying a keg of gun powder and at the same time smoking a pipe is interpreted as meaning that you can have an important duty to carry out at a specific time but that does not mean that you should not spare time to do other important things. Depending on the context, this same symbol may mean that one is acting dangerously and so should be careful. Again, the symbol of two crocodiles with a joint abdomen has a saying attached to it, that although they both eat into the same stomach they struggle to catch their food. This may be interpreted as, although people may aim at the same purpose, they have different ways of getting there (Sarpong,1974).

Considering the wealth of wisdom within them, the deeper meanings of symbols in the Manhyia Palace do need to be unraveled so that the knowledge and great learning hidden in them will be made available for use by the society in general.

In other African cultures, besides Egypt, several symbols that are used in daily occurrences in life. Symbolism here becomes an unspoken language that is dynamic and imaginative and used to communicate ideas in visual form. For instance, in traditional Ghanaian society, human dressing, apparel, architectural designs, stools people sit on, proverbs and even articles used in daily life are means whereby the people express themselves and also educate people, young and old. African art is highly expressive, communicating meanings to persons who have the ability to understand (Sarpong, 1974). Sometimes dancers use their body movements, steps, and hands to praise or even insult a person, symbolically. For example, among the Asante, raising the index and middle fingers to form a 'V' is used in congratulating a good dancer for a performance well done (Sarpong, 1974).

Sources of Symbol

Most of these symbols were derived from the religious and philosophical beliefs of the people. Appiah (1979:64) further observes that:

“symbolism plays an important role in African art, and in Akan society in particular it is found in every aspect of life as what we now look upon as works of art were in most cases functional objects but they had a literary and metaphysical quality as well. Even the crudest artifact could have profound meaning”.

The importance of culture actually aids in understanding its meaning because art, society and culture have a good relationship. Art in reality explains and affects culture, social practices

and beliefs. In the same way culture, social practices and beliefs also explain and affect art. This is evidenced in the manner Africans will explain a carving or sculpture with reference to its meaning according to their cultural beliefs, although in its form, it is a work of art.

In the Akan society, traditional and modern, non-verbal messages have strong implications. The use of symbols to convey messages without a vocal accompaniment carries the same weight as that spoken vocally. For instance, the practice of giving a newly married woman a gift of a stool is intended to welcome her to her husband's house and to invite her to "sit down" in her marriage.

A symbol can only have importance if its viewer is aware of its meaning. This implies that it is necessary for one to understand what that symbol represents, in order for it to be of any benefit. Also, in trying to know the meaning of a symbol, it is necessary to look back at its traditional origin, the culture it is coming from, so that one can get its meaning right. Most often symbols are used to inform or educate people on the important principles, norms and values of society. For instance, the porcupine, *kɔtɔkɔ*, is a very important symbol to the Asante. It is said and believed that it has the ability to immediately grow quills to replace what it shoots out. This is however not scientifically possible. The quills may grow back, but not immediately. The quills are its self-defence mechanism which it successfully uses. The Asantes identify with the porcupine because during their expansionist activities in the pre-colonial and colonial times they could easily reinforce their army. The Asantes therefore have a motto, "*Asante Kɔtɔkɔ, wo kum apem a apem beba*" literally meaning "Asante porcupine, when one kills a thousand, a thousand will replace them". The Asantes have therefore identified with the porcupine in their ability to defend themselves successfully at all times as seen in the numerous victories they chalked in the wars they waged against states close or far to them and therefore made the porcupine symbolic to them.

It is a fact that the meaning given to symbols is not universal and therefore generalizing the meaning will miss the actual meanings from context to context. One symbol may mean life to one culture and death to another culture, that is, the meaning of a symbol in culture - A may be different from that of culture- B. In effect, culture plays a great role in giving meaning to symbols. One of the objectives of this study therefore is to try to unravel the hidden meanings the Asantes give to the symbols to be studied so that they can be better understood and appreciated. Similarly, symbolic analysis in the African context as opined by Douglas (1978) should consider the fact that symbols emanate from and refer back to indigenous systems of thought and classification that give meaning. It is therefore wrong to attribute the same meaning for symbols and their classification for all cultures, since each culture has its own meaning(s) attributed to a symbol. The meanings of a symbol may be multiple depending upon the interpreter's knowledge and understanding. A symbol that has a positive meaning in one culture may have a negative meaning in another culture. For example, the presentation of a sword by emissaries of a King may mean asking for peace but the recipient King may interpret it as a sign of war, unless the sender adds a verbal message of its meaning to it.

Geary (1988) opines that African arts carry messages and do comment upon society. This is very true among the Akans since existing meanings of some symbols point to societal behaviours that are positive and therefore should be emulated; or negative and so should be abhorred. For example, a symbol of a person being pushed by another person from below, described in Akan reads, *'woforo dua pa a na yepia wo'* ' which literally means 'if you climb a good tree you will be given a push up'; has the meaning that one will receive support for what one does if the attached motive is for good purposes. In the same vein, a symbol of a tortoise with a tsetsefly on its back which in Akan reads as *'hruie si akyekyede akwi kwa'* literally means 'a tsetse fly perching on the back of a tortoise does not gain anything for it',

has the meaning that it is useless or foolish to embark on a certain behaviour since one will not have any benefit from it.

Animals are also used as art symbols to define certain important aspects of humanity and Ben-Amos (1976:242) supports this when he contends that “the nature and defining characteristics of animals, function to establish the outer limits of humanity that is the non-human or uncivilised as well as the more-than-human or supernatural”. In this sense a link is established between the physical appearance or looks and behaviour of animals on one hand and the ideal or unsocial behaviour of humans on the other hand. It is for this reason that, in some cultures, humans may be referred to as elephants, lions, doves, ants etc. thereby enabling society to conjecture the possible character of the individual. In Akan art, the lion and leopard are symbols of leadership and used often in the regalia of chiefs and personalities in the Chief’s Palace (Ross, 1981).

In the ancient and traditional life of the Akans, a larger group to which Asante belongs, art symbols have been used for various purposes. When there were no writing characters or alphabets, these traditional art symbols were used to communicate ideas of religious ideology, political philosophy, social norms and sanctions, moralistic and educative proverbs and military prowess. Most of these communications originated from the Chief’s palace (Anquandah, 2006, Retrieved, September 20, 2007 from http://www.ghanaculture.gov.gh/modules/mod_pdf.php?sectionid=506)

Appiah (1979) again argues that many Akan symbolic designs were all pervasive. They appeared on funerary urns, in plaster designs on old shrines, on chiefs’ appliqué cloth, on *kuduo*, *forowa*, linguist staffs, umbrella tops, swords, jewellery and all other items of stool

paraphernalia. Today, these symbols, in addition to the above, appear on several other things like house doors and walls, shoes, carved decorations in private and state houses and clothing.

Cole and Ross (1977:23) also observed that the ceremonial costume of a Chief in the Akan speaking area showed an “overload of material, symbol & wealth” which cut across verbal and visual appreciation because their themes could be one or more of power, wisdom, dignity and wealth shown in jewellery sandals, appliqué designs and umbrella finials.

Symbolism in Ghanaian traditional art, is found in various spheres of life and is used to communicate philosophical and didactic ideas. In dancing, for example the *adowa*, the Akan dancers, man and woman, speak to each other in symbols. Mourning attires have symbols which are for grief, that is, the colours black and red. Akan drums, *ntumpan* are used to transmit messages symbolically.

Traditional Ghanaian art is expressed in three forms, namely ,verbal, visual and performance. **Verbal art** is the drum language, drummed proverbs, poetry, speeches, gestured prayers, recitations and folklore; **Visual art** is seen in physical artifacts; **Performance art** is found in dancing, drumming and music (Anquandah 2006, Retrieved,September 20, 2007).

Visual art abounds in the Akan society. The Asante traditional architecture are found in cult shrines of gods, some dating as far back as the eighteenth (18th) and nineteenth (19th) centuries are found within fifty (50) km radius of Kumasi in Besease, Asenemaso, etc; and also in domestic architecture and the Asantehene’s palace in 1817. Visual art is also seen in

Asante cloth, the *Adinkra*, *Akunintam* and *Kente*, which is known as **Body art**, and is seen in the wearing of rich *Kente* and gold ornaments by the King and Chiefs, the styles of hairdo of the queen mothers and other courtiers, and also in the regalia of the King like stools, gold ornamented swords, royal umbrellas, drums and linguist staffs.

Performance Arts are often seen in the musical arts of royal eulogia, praise songs, lyrics, dances and funeral dirges. **Visual, Verbal & Performance Arts** are seen in the various Asante durbars, where there is a display of royalty and its regalia, singing, dancing, orchestra music and functions of linguists.

Fraser and Cole (1972) see African royal art as having the function and structure which they call leadership arts. Court arts usually depict leadership. The political structure, the role art plays in the palace and the rich and flamboyant display of art cannot be ignored when one enters an African palace. The function of leadership arts and its structure – form, materials, style, iconography – are related. In actuality the structure is derived from the function. Leadership arts have had a function of maintaining the position of the King, encompassing his social position, political status and symbolic power. These separate the ruler from the ruled by virtue of the ruler having objects and symbols made out of more precious materials or in special shapes and sizes and superior quality craftsmanship compared to those of his subjects. It is therefore a widely acknowledged fact that no other person should adorn clothing with the same design as that of the Asantehene. In years gone by, there were craftsmen who made clothes specifically for him and it was even a punishable offence if they made any such clothing for any other persons. All these were to ensure that there was a distinction between the ruler and the ruled. Today, no physical punishment is prescribed for such offence though it is still frowned upon and anyone wearing anything that is the same as

or similar to what the Asantehene is wearing on that particular day or function is asked to go and change, or leave the said gathering where the Asantehene is present.

Proverbs

Proverbs are indirect speeches which are also used in traditional Ghanaian culture. According to Ofei (1973) proverbial visual symbols are used in Adinkra cloth, linguist staff, gold-weights, other regalia of the King and as state emblems. Proverbs are also symbols as they differ in both concept and method from straight speech. These qualities make them very good means of symbolic speech.

Proverbs can be spoken, visualised or used in music in the language of the drum and dance moves. When one is well versed in the understanding of proverbs, it is easy to understand symbols created out of proverbs in whatever form, on wood, cloth or even in physical gestures. Proverbs are sometimes used to hide the meaning of a communication from someone whom the speaker does not want to be part of a conversation, especially if the person does not understand proverbs. In effect, proverbs can be used to talk over the heads of some persons who may all be seated in one place. They also teach about morals, flora and fauna, history, serving as a means of engaging one in deep thinking to unravel issues; a method of advising a person to look at an issue from several different angles, an expression of meaning of an issue in only a few words, or even as a summary or conclusion to a discussion. They also beautify speech, remind people to conform to societal norms and values and serve as a last resort warning to persons who do not heed to several warnings. Among the Akan, if one can use proverbs in speech one is seen as a person who talks well, communicates meaningfully and is tactful. He is also respected as one who adheres to cultural truth and expresses reality. Sometimes a proverb has several meanings, each meaning being derived from the situation or context in which it is spoken. Also, a good speaker may

take the initiative to create a proverb depending on the situation at hand. So although there are ancient or often used proverbs, there is always room for the creation of new ones.

2.2 Global Royal Palace Art Symbols

In the palaces of several kingdoms of the world there are several symbols termed regalia that signify the sovereignty and dignity of the king or queen. In Europe, for example in England, The Netherlands and pre-1789 France, royalty was known by the crown and scepter (Asiwaju, 1976).

In the Dutch Royal House, the **crown** symbolises the sovereignty of the Kingdom of The Netherlands and the dignity of the Sovereign as head of state; the **sceptre** symbolises the reigning monarch's authority; the **orb** is a symbol of the monarch's Sovereign territory; the **sword** of state a symbol for the monarch's power and the **national standard** is symbolized by the Dutch coat of arms (Retrieved June 22, 2007 from <http://www.koninklijkhuisinl/english/content.jsp>).

The Apostolic Palace or the Papal Palace or the Palace of the Vatican is the residence of the Head of the Roman Catholic Christian denomination, the Pope, in the Vatican City. Among the regalia of the Pope are the **crossed gold and silver keys** symbolising the power of binding on earth (silver) and the power of loosing in heaven (gold) given to the church. The **Triple Crown (tiara)** symbolises the Pope's three functions as "Supreme Pastor", "Supreme Teacher" and "Supreme Priest"; the **gold cross on a monde (globe)** surmounting the tiara symbolises the sovereignty of Jesus; the **umbraculum**, a canopy with alternating red and

gold stripes symbolising temporal powers of the Papacy and is a sign of the Basilica's dignity (Retrieved October 31, 2007 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/papal-regalia-and-insigna>).

The Imperial Regalia of Japan, also known as the **Three Sacred Treasures** consists of the **sword, necklace of jewels and a mirror** that symbolise three primary virtues, that are the sword for valour, the necklace of jewels for benevolence and the mirror for wisdom. No known photographs or drawings exist of them. (Retrieved October 31, 2007 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three-Sacred-Treasures>) which is a situation similar to the secrecy shrouding some of the symbols at the Manhyia Palace.

Thailand has royal regalia known as the **Quintet of Royal Regalia** consisting of the **Great Crown of Victory**, the **Sword of Victory**, the **Royal Staff**, the **Royal Fan or Fly whisk** and the **Royal Slippers**. These are the main symbols of regal authority. (Retrieved October 30, 2007 from <http://www.ethailand.com/index.php?id=955>).

2.3 African Royal Palace Art Symbols

In ancient Egypt, the **crown and sceptre** represented power and protection. It set the King apart and conveyed his authority, secular and religious; the **crook** symbolised the very concept of rule; the **was - sceptre** symbolised dominion in the divine sphere (Parsons, Retrieved October 31, 2007 from <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/reg.htm>) . Symbols of royalty are not the same. They vary by culture. The Kingdom of Abomey of the Republic of Benin had a court art tradition. Paszatory (1970) indicates that the palace of the King of Abomey was decorated by low-relief mud plaques painted in bright colours, representing

scenes of warlike exploits as well as exclusive access to the works of the silver and brass casters and the hangings of the cloth appliqué makers.

In Nigeria, there are several monarchies and kingdoms. Each kingdom has its regalia like a coat, robe, mantle, costume or headgear kept in its palace. These regalia often have more than political importance. For example, in the south of Nigeria the regalia is also of religious importance (Retrieved October 31, 2007 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerian-Royal-Regalia>).

Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, the crown *ade* which is a beaded head-wear is the most universally accepted mark of royalty and the most outstanding element of the most enviable political symbol with the highest socio-political prestige in the entire regalia, which consisted of the royal staff, the decorated white cow tail, the royal sandals or shoes and an embroidered large umbrella. The crown is also an emblem of the royal ancestral spirit, an object in the shrine at the palace and it is placed on the throne in the King's absence (Asiwaju, 1976). According to Bertho (1950:71) "the shapes of these crowns (*ade*) may be conical, cylindrical or square but they all have the same purpose".

Lloyd (1960) contributes to the discussion when he states that an Oba may only assume the beaded crown and other symbols of royalty only after he has proved that he is a direct descent of *Oduduwa* as well as the direct descendant of the first ruler of the dynasty ruling that particular town. This holds true for any occupant of the Golden Stool. Also one can only be an Asantehene if the lineage is traced to prove that he is the right person from the right lineage to occupy that stool. In comparison, the Yoruba belief that their Oba, when he dies,

is not dead but has “gone away” is similar to what the Asantes also believe; that their Asantehene has “gone to the village”, when he dies. The Asantehene must not be seen eating in public or walking barefooted even in his room. He inherits the wives of his predecessor. All these apply to the Yoruba Oba (Lloyd 1960:228). This goes further to prove that some elements of African culture are not peculiar to one ethnic group.

Another similarity between kingship of the Yorubas and that of the Asante people is the existence of judicial and legislative courts, payment of fines at the court, the divinity of the king and the sovereignty of the government of the state, to whom the king as the head, addresses a meeting through a spokesperson, *Okyeame* for the Asantehene and *Elegbe* for the Yoruba King, as presented by Lloyd.

Among the Igala of Nigeria, the *akp'Ayegba* is a cylindrical stool made of solid brass with human and animal motifs. The king places his “spirit double” on it. This is under the direct control of the king who could move the stool from one place to another (Dike,1987). The masquerades and six major objects of regalia of the Igala King in Nigeria are archives of the Igala memory and mass media that portray Igala ideas about power and generate loyalty among the people. They are also of political, ritual and historical significance. The regalia of the Attah of Igala manifest his political power and are a part of a complex of sacred antiquities that offer protection to him and his Kingdom (Dike, 1984). This is akin to what happens in the Manhyia Palace, necessitating more research to substantiate or refute the assertion that the symbols found and used in the Manhyia Palace have political, ritual and historical importance. These six major objects are, *ane* an undecorated brass bowl filled with earth (soil) which represents the land of Igala or the Igala nation; *ajibo* a brass staff with a

representation of a human head symbolizing the traditional authority of the king; *Okwute*, solid bronze staffs about 120 centimetres high on the average, each with a lead finial representing a human head richly decorated and covered with cloth. They were 26 as at 1984 and they were different from each other. At any particular time, only nine (9) of these staffs representing the last nine *Attahs* are important. If the reigning Attah dies, the oldest of the *Okwute* is removed and a new one made for the new Attah, is added. This is akin to the Asantehene making a sword for himself and also a stool for himself which is blackened and added to those of his predecessors in the stool room when “he goes to the village”; *ejubeju-ailo*, two bronze pectoral masks worn by the Attah around his neck for important occasions, indicating the military might of the kingdom; *ononuere*, the Attah’s traditional crown; and *atekpa*, protective medicine in nine pots, which is used by the Attah at the big Igala festival of purification and renewal. These six items of the Attah’s regalia are of political, ritual and historical significance as symbols of superiority that focus attention on the Attah’s authority and therefore commanding obedience (Dike, 1984).

In East Africa the kings who came out of the Zenj Empire especially in Zanzibar had horns and drums as their regalia. The regalia of the Mwenyi Mkuu had two horns and two drums; In Vumba, the regalia was two ivory horns; In Pate, the *Siwa* of Pate was made out of a tusk or ivory. These were regarded also as magical items, not to be touched by an ordinary or common man (Ingrams, 1800). The King of Katsina in the Northern part of Nigeria is known as the Emir of Katsina. His symbols of office are two swords, a large camel-drum of bronze and a bronze pot made of overlapping plates riveted together. They have great local veneration and are displayed in a cabinet in the Emir’s Council Chamber (Daniel, 1932).

Royal art symbols are unique and beautiful to behold. At the same time some of them are used for various ceremonies that are not for public view, and even for those in public view, the ceremonies and activities they are involved in keep onlookers spell bound.

Dike (1984) supports this view when he states that “African royal art when seen in its ceremonial context, does not disdain aesthetic appeal but its aesthetics is always motivated, intended to impress, to awe and to startle.” In the same vein, the symbols in the Manhyia Palace, have aesthetic properties, impressing and startling the viewers who hold them in awe and provocation.

2.4 Akan Royal Palace Art Symbols

The Akan, despite having different dialects and autonomous traditional political groupings, believe that they have a common origin which is evidenced in their belonging to common clans across the Akan landscape. Writers like Bowdich, Reindorf, Cruickshank, Sarbah, Ward, Danquah and Boahen all have attested to this fact (Arhin,2002). The Akans also until quite recently were distinguished from the other ethnic groups by the common court regalia, procedures and etiquette and their drumming and dancing (Arhin,2002).

This makes it clear why one cannot draw a fine line between Asante and any other Akan culture, explaining why more Akan royal regalia and culture is seen in Asante royal regalia and culture. For example, *Adae* and *Odwira* festivals are celebrated by several Akan traditional political groupings in the country.

Hanna and Eubanks (2000:25-32) observe that “Akan art works are decorated with visual symbols that refer to proverbs and can be ‘read’, much like written text. Proverbs are indirect speeches and are used in traditional Ghanaian culture. Akan symbols ... remind people how to live, see, love, work and worship”. This is a true observation since one can say that almost all Akan symbols have meanings, proverbs or metaphors attached to them that are related to societal behaviours, attitudes and expectations. From carvings to jewellery, wearing of apparel to decorations in houses and on walls, these symbols either convey ordinary or elaborate meanings meant as information or lessons for the society to learn from.

The Asante rulers usually communicate their status and power through the use of golden jewellery, well decorated woven cloth and sandals. This is seen in the extensive use of such jewellery, fabric and exquisite designs of sandals of the King, Queen mothers, Chiefs and court officials during state and traditional ceremonies and occasions.

The regalia of chiefs in the Bono ethnic group in the Brong-Ahafo region of Ghana, an Akan speaking group consists of large drums, state umbrellas, stools, cowries, talismans, rings and arm bands, kente cloth, gold leafed state swords and staffs, elephant-tail fly-whisks. Each of these regalia has some kind of oral literature linked to it in the form of a proverb, folktale or a song. These regalia may be found in the chief's palace or key shrines, which is an indication of the roles of the chief and the shrine in the governance of the town and so the need for them to work together in harmony and cooperation (Warren,1975).

Ross (1977) states that the wealth of the former Gold Coast was made explicit in their royal emblems whose rich and often cryptic symbolism revealed the strength of Ghanaian

chieftaincy and the complexities of thought and action surrounding it. The symbols in the Manhyia Palace also mostly point people to what needs to be done or avoided in daily lives to ensure peace, tranquility and love in the society.

Again, Akans including Asantes, use dance regalia and even day to day clothing symbols to speak to people. For example, designs in cloth worn for several occasions such as funerals, festivals and wars are used as symbols for communication. Cole and Ross (1977:23) observed that the ceremonial costume of a chief in the Akan speaking area showed an “overload of material, symbol and wealth” which cuts across verbal and visual appreciation because their themes may be of power, wisdom, dignity and wealth and these can also be shown in jewellery, sandals, appliqué designs and umbrella motifs. This study of the symbols of the Manhyia Palace will therefore include clothing and other dressing apparels used by the occupant of the Golden Stool, the Asantehene who resides in the Manhyia Palace.

Asante Symbols and Proverbs

Asante culture has a lot of symbolism, which also has a lot of proverbs. Most symbols can be interpreted by proverbs and most proverbs can be expressed in symbols so it is difficult to draw a line between symbols and proverbs among the Asante. They are both means of effective communication of cultural and social truths. Most times symbols among the Akan of Ghana have their meanings expressed as proverbs or traditional sayings so in effect there is a strong link between verbal and visual arts in the Akan culture. For example, the proverb *Obi nkyerɛ ɔsebo ba atow*, to wit, “no one teaches the cub of a leopard how to spring”, is interpreted literally as “the wisdom and strength of the chief is passed on to his heir”(Cole and Ross, 1977: 9-12).

2.5 Asante Royal Palaces Art Symbols

The main Asante states in the 15th Century were Kwamang (Kumase), Dwaben (Juaben), Asumegya, Kokofu, Nsuta, Mampong, Bekwai, Offinso, Edweso (Ejisu) and Agona (Osei, 2000, Part 1). Each of these states had a palace with regalia and symbols but not all of them have been documented.

According to Osei (2000, Part 2) Nana Offe Akwasi of **Kokofu State** who reigned from 1800-1827 during the period of Nana Osei Kwame Asibe Bonsu the Asantehene took part in the Asante war with Adinkra of Gyaman. During the war, at the bank of River Tain there was a stiff resistance from the Gyaman. He sent a message to the Asantehene that he was very thirsty and so wanted some water to drink. The Asantehene sent sixty calabashes of water to him, all of which he poured out and sent another messenger to the Asantehene that he wanted to drink out of the River Tain to quench his thirst. The Asantehene then granted him permission to fight with his men and with reinforcement broke through the Gyaman forces to get to the River Tain. The Asantehene Nana Osei Kwame Asibe Bonsu gave him the title ‘*Ɔko Gye Asuo*’ “he fought to capture a river”. The episode of the request for drinking water is a classic example of intangible symbolism. The message was well transmitted and well understood by the Asantehene. It was also Nana Kofi Nti who was the chief from 1905-1910 who built the present Kokofu Palace.

Nana Osei Hwedie ruled the **Dwaben (Juaben) State** from 1715-1730 during Asantehene Nana Osei Tutu I’s reign. He created many stools for the Dwaben State; the *Sanaa*, *Twafo* and *Akonfore* stools and also made the first *fontonfrom* and Prempeh drums for his state. It was also Nana Akuamoa Panin, the chief from 1745-1755 during the reign of Asantehene

Nana Opoku Ware I who created the Ankobea Stool for the Dwaben state (Osei, 2000, Part 2. Vol.1).

Nana Asentifo was the Chief of **Bekwai State** from 1730-1740 when Nana Opoku Ware I was the Asantehene. He created a drum called *Nimsaa aka akyi* ,“Had I known is always at last”. This was in remembrance of an incident when he was serving in the Asantehene’s court years earlier that affected the Bekwai state in later years. When he first became the chief, he discovered that the Bekwai Stool would have been better off financially if he had not reported to the Asantehene, in whose court he was then serving, that the Bekwai army had kept the gold dust they captured in the Akyem Anweam war rather than hand it over to the Asantehene. This resulted in the Asantehene collecting the gold dust from them (Osei, 2000, Part 2. Vol.1). Most times in Akan society, proverbs or sayings are used as symbols for verbal communication which are decoded by the recipients and this was what happened in the case of the *Nimsaa aka akyi* drum.

It was Nana Kwame Poku who was the chief of Bekwai from 1920-1926, during the reign of Asantehene Nana Prempeh I who began building the Bekwai Palace which was completed by Nana Yaw Gyamfi who ruled from 1936-1958 during Nana Prempeh II’s reign as Asantehene (Osei, 2000, Part 2. Vol.1).

Mampong State is the Silver stool of the Asante Kingdom as a result of Anantuo’s request to Nana Osei Tutu I which was granted. (Osei, 2000, Part 2. Vol.1). It was during the reign of Nana Akuamoa Panin who ruled Mampong from 1699 to 1735 during the reign of the Asantehene Nana Opoku Ware I, that the *Adonten*, *Kontire* and *Akwamu* stools of Mampong were created (Osei, 2000, Part 2. Vol.1). The Mampong state suffered a set-back in its stool

regalia when Nana Atakora Kwame was the chief from 1770 to 1777 when Nana Osei Kwadwo was Asantehene. He fled Mampong with the silver stool and stool regalia when Gyamase and Effiduase rebelled against Mampong. He subsequently drowned in the Pru river with the silver stool and the stool regalia, losing them all (Osei, 2000, Part 2. Vol.1).

When Nana Safo Kantanka II became the Chief of Mampong from 1951 to 1958 during the Asantehene Nana Prempeh II's reign, he started the building of the Mampong Palace and it was completed by Nana Kwabena Dwomo II who reigned from 1958 to 1966 under Nana Prempeh II, Asantehene (Osei, 2000, Part 2. Vol.1).

Nana Gyebi Kuma II was the Chief of the **Asumegya State** when Nana Opoku Ware I was the Asantehene. He destroyed the stool regalia in annoyance when his sister insulted him, to punish her and her children. He also burnt the drums of the state. This act made the stool poor and was evident during the reign of Nana Sakodie Anim and so he founded a village and named it *Kyekyewere* (comfort), (Osei, 2000, Part 2. Vol.1), presumably to comfort him for the loss of the stool regalia. Here too one can see the proverbial aptitude of the Akan in expressing themselves in intangible symbolic verbal communication. When Nana Kwaku Dome became the Chief of Asumegya during the reigns of Nana Kwaku Duah I, Nana Kofi Karikari and Nana Mensah Bonsu as Asantehene, he started replacing the regalia for the stool. (Osei, 2000, Part 2. Vol.1).

The **State of Offinso** had Nana Nakaa Abisi as its Chief from 1768 to 1778 and he fought the Banda war under Nana Osei Kwadwo, the Asantehene. After the war he was given the title *Ko-Awia*, the official title of the then Asantehene. The Asantehene also gave the *Banda Worasa* sword to the Offinso State. (Osei, 2000, Part 2. Vol.1)

Nana Kofi Kesse, a wealthy man, who was the Chief from 1905 to 1909 brought some wealth to the Offinso Stool with the acquisition of golden-sandals, a gold-bunch of keys and various swords of state with the *Kɔtɔkɔ* insignia embossed on one of them.

He also built a house for the Offinso stool, presently House No. OTA 12 at Adum, Kumasi. Nana Kwame Duodo, 1916-1920, built a modern palace for the Offinso State at Tutuase (Osei, 2000, Part 2. Vol.1).

2.6 Manhyia Royal Palace Art Symbols

Royalty among different cultures the world over, have regalia and insignia of office that symbolise authority, power, leadership and rank in the society. Manhyia Palace is the abode of the Asantehene, the King of the Asante kingdom and the occupant of the Golden stool. The regalia or insignia of office and symbols of the occupant of the highest royal office in Asante land, the Asantehene, are not any different from these. These symbols of art found in the Asantehene's regalia and insignia of office, some of which are cloth, headgears/bands, rings, wristbands, bracelets, armlets, elbow-wear, neck-wear, ankle-wear, knee-wear, talismans, slippers, linguist staff, stool, umbrella finials, palanquin, swords, musical orchestra and on the palace architectural designs, have diverse meanings. A few of these regalia are studied here (cloth, headgears/bands, rings, bracelets, elbow-wear, neck-wear, slippers, linguist staff, stool, umbrella finials, swords, musical orchestra and the palace architectural designs).

The Gulistan Palace of the Shah of Iran in the period 1797 – 1896 about a century ago was a cynosure of all eyes. Even today the remains are still worth viewing. As Scarce (2001) states, the palace is one of the few examples of palace architecture, surviving in Iran today. The Gulistan Palace was both a residence for the Shah and his family as well as his

administrative officers. It employed several workers and skilled craftsmen who produced items for Shah and family. There were also several detached buildings within the Gulistan Palace. This can be likened to what exists in the Manhyia Palace which is the residence of the Asantehene, as well as his administrative offices. The Manhyia Palace provides employment for several court workers who attend to the direct needs of the Asantehene and are also engaged in general duties to keep the palace running. The Asantehene also has skilled craftsmen who are responsible for the production of his regalia like cloth, umbrellas and their finials, swords etc. The Manhyia Palace also has detached buildings for different purposes. In essence therefore one can conveniently say that some activities of royal Kings in their courts are similar irrespective of the Kingdom or the cultural environment they reign over.

The *gendang nobat* court orchestras of the Sultanates of Sumatra in Indonesia and West Malaysia were the key symbols also considered the most powerful and sacred of the Sultan's regalia. The ensemble would play at very important ceremonial occasions involving the Sultan. The ensemble consisted mostly of a pair of double-headed drums called *gendang nobat*, one or two single-headed drums called *nekara*, one to three suspended *gons* and one or two melody instruments, either the *nafiri* which is a long silver trumpet or a *shawn*, and the *serunai* a *shawn*. These drums were carved in rough shapes by *Suku Mamak* craftsmen who are the Sultan's most loyal subjects. The *Suku Mamak* craftsmen of Malaysia could be likened to the craftsmen of the Asantehene in the pre-colonial era who were concentrated in communities close to the Manhyia Palace and loyally made items exclusively for the Asantehene and his palace use (Kartomi,1997).

In this work the symbols found on the stools, chairs, swords, linguist staff finials, umbrella finials, cloths, jewellery (headgears/bands, rings, neck wears, elbow wears) will be studied as well as the musical orchestra, and the palace which itself is a symbol.

Meyerowitz (1951) opines that symbolism in the royal Asante court was introduced by captive Bono and Denkyira craftsmen who remained in Kumasi. In Asante land new meanings were given to these symbols because the captive craftsmen kept the original meanings secret. It is therefore possible to see the same symbol as seen in the Manhyia Palace in other Akan areas but having different meanings or interpretations. In this work it is the meanings ascribed to them in the Manhyia Palace that will be used in order to arrive at its hidden meanings.

The Asantehene is the traditional leader of the Asantes in Ghana. There have been several efforts to document the individual traditional art symbols available in the Manhyia Palace by various researchers but none has been able to put the different types of symbols as well as their uses together and delved into the hidden and various meanings of these symbols. This is why this research has, as much as is possible and permissible, studied some of the types of symbols used in various forms in the Palace to determine the extent of their meanings as to their being educative and/ or informative for the enhancement of the lives of people.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter states in various sections the research design used to carry out the research which is qualitative and quantitative, where methods like Research instruments, Library, Archival and Museum research, Field Survey, On-site and Direct Observation, Conducting of Interviews, taking and collection of photographs were employed.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) do not believe that qualitative and quantitative methods of research can both be used successfully in one research work. Patton (1990) and Reschardt and Cook (1979) however have a different view that a researcher can combine both the qualitative and quantitative methods of research in one work as long as the researcher knows what is to be done and expects to achieve and where in the end the benefits will be great from the use of both words and numbers. The qualitative method can be used to give meaning to the numbers and graphs that quantitative methods bring out, and the quantitative method provides expression that can test the qualitative idea. In support of this and to reap the benefits to enrich this work, both the qualitative and quantitative methods were used. For the qualitative method, the researcher was a primary data gathering instrument through direct observation, examination of the symbols to enable a critical evaluation and description, recording of events and interviews. The data gathered were in the form of narrations and pictures of objects that were then described in detail. Although this method is expensive and time-consuming it provides more room for diversity in responses to enrich the work. The quantitative method was also employed through the use of questionnaire which produced

numerical data that were analysed, figures were derived and charts plotted. This method often involves the collection of empirical data and the development of instruments and methods for measurement, analysis of the data and the evaluation of the results. The quantitative method was used to collect data through the questionnaire and the responses were analysed and the results presented in tables and charts.

Data were obtained from primary sources such as Manhyia Palace, Manhyia Palace Museum, personal observation at some Asanteman durbars and festivals, interviews with some Asanteman chiefs and staff of the Manhyia Palace; Secondary sources that were mainly from documentary sources such as books, journals, internet sources, unpublished theses and other printed ephemeral literature like brochures, pamphlets, programmes for Asanteman functions, Asanteman calendars and Almanacs. These pieces of information were critically evaluated and conclusion drawn from them.

The data were presented in descriptive format as well as in bar charts and tables in the thesis.

3.2 Research Design

The qualitative approach or descriptive method of research has been mostly used in this work. In any research work that uses the descriptive method to analyse data, the researcher is enabled to do a critical examination of the subject under study and clearly present the experiences and outcomes of the study. This method made it possible for information, facts and ideas, to be presented chronologically and logically in the work. The method was also used for library, archival and museum researches to gather information. This qualitative research method employed enabled direct observation to be made to both appreciate the aesthetic value and critically evaluate the symbols and their intricate designs. In addition, an ethnographic study of the reigns of the Asante Kings has been carried out to provide an in-

depth knowledge of the creation and existence of the symbols of the Manhyia Palace in order to enable a better understanding of the Asante people and their cultural beliefs, values and norms.

3.3 Research Instruments

Instruments for data collection were mainly direct observation at the Manhyia Palace and at festivals and durbars at the Palace grounds; taking of photographs, collection of photographs from the Manhyia Palace photographer and copying of photographs from internet sites. Formal and informal interviews were conducted with some of the staff of the Manhyia Palace as well as some members of the public who were knowledgeable about Manhyia Palace symbols and regalia. Information was gathered from Libraries, Archives and Museums. Related literature was also reviewed and responses to questionnaire used. Finally, bar charts, tables and figures were used to further explain the information collected. These information gathered have been analysed and described in the discussions where the researcher in some cases has offered some opinions to support the available information or challenge it.

3.4 Field Survey

The area of study, Manhyia Palace, was defined out of the wider Kumasi and Asanteman areas because it is the specific locality within which the Asantehene resides and also serves as the subject of study. A visit to the Manhyia Palace, a field survey, during an *Akwasidae* celebration, was purposely made to critically observe the environment, the symbols in the regalia on display in the procession and on the walls of the buildings and to ask questions from people who seemed to know about the symbols to help in verifying the information about these symbols accessed from secondary sources.

3.5 On-site and Direct Observation

In order to ensure that accurate facts are presented in this work, the sociological approach for collecting information about people's attitudes and beliefs, that is, direct observation and participation, was used because one can describe better what one sees with one's own eyes as compared to describing things only from pictures taken which may not always present the objects accurately. Observation is often used in research when detailed, accurate and effective information is required (Gilley, 1990). One of the advantages of this method is that users can be observed in the environment where the system is normally used. This is why direct observation is said to have high face validity (Drury, 1992). Visits to the Manhyia Palace grounds during durbars and festivals where most of these regalia and symbols are outdoored, made it possible for the researcher to have direct and on-site observation, take photographs with a digital camera and ask some questions from people, some of whom knew the names and meanings of the symbols and others who did not know the names or meanings of the symbols but offered personal views as to how the meanings and information concerning the symbols could be made more public. In addition to these, the pictures taken and the information gathered from books, journals and on the internet and even the interviews were corroborated with data directly observed.

3.6 Interviews Conducted

The technique of using interviews in research was also used. According to Cohen and Crabtree (2006), interviewing involves asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study and is a widely used tool to access people's experiences and their inner perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of reality (Zhang and Wildemuth 2006). Interviewing can be divided into three categories: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews (Fontana and Frey, 2005). Zhang and Wildemuth (2006) describe

structured interviews as using a set of predefined questions and the questions being asked in the same order for all respondents. They explained, this standardization is intended to minimize the effects of the instrument and the interviewer on the research results. Minichiello et al (1990) also describe unstructured interview as using a method in which neither the question nor the answer categories are predetermined. Instead, they rely on social interaction between the researcher and the informant. Zhang and Wildemuth (2006) quoting Patton (2002) stated that unstructured interviews are a natural extension of participant observation, because they so often occur as part of ongoing participant observation fieldwork and argue that unstructured interviews rely entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction.

Structured and unstructured techniques were therefore used on interviewees in offices, shops and homes on appointment and also spontaneously. The language used was mixed, that is, English, Fante and Twi.

The one-on-one interview technique was used most often in this research due to the fact of the Akan having an oral culture. This technique has been proven to result in the highest response rate permitting the longest questionnaire (Neuman,2007). More relevant information was therefore received in this way than would have been the case if people had been asked to write down their responses. This method has also exposed the researcher to persons whom but for the study she would most likely not have come across in life. It also enabled the researcher to cross-check information in some of the documents used in the review of related literature for corrections, corroboration and to obtain more information to add to the work. These interviews were recorded on tape recorders by permission and were played back while at home, critically studied, compared and contrasted with already documented information for similarities or differences. Some information, especially the responses to questions were

recorded on paper. In this research, telephone and Skype® interviews with museum staff overseas were also made.

The local interviewees were three Chiefs of Asanteman, four members of staff of the Manhyia Palace and some persons who had no direct relation to the day to day work of the Manhyia Palace but were well versed in the topic under study.

3.7 Taking of Photographs

The researcher personally took some pictures with a digital camera during festivals. Some on-the-spot rough pencil sketches were also made. Some of the pictures were selected from the Picture Library of the Manhyia Palace photographer and also from the Manhyia Palace Museum. These photographs have been shown and discussed within the text of the work.

3.8 Library Research

There was a lot of library research done to access relevant information. Several libraries were visited both in Ghana and in the United Kingdom, the latter because most information about pre-colonial Asanteman history was located in some British Libraries. The British Library was visited in London. In Ghana the George Padmore Research Library on African Affairs, Accra; University of Ghana Libraries especially the Balme Library and the Institute of African Studies Library; the private library of Dr. B.K.Dogbe and the KNUST Libraries especially the Main Library and the College of Art Library were accessed. These libraries were extensively used to collect relevant secondary information, albeit scanty, from books, print and electronic journals, pamphlets, brochures, calendars, almanacs, other internet sources and from published and unpublished theses. There was however, not much information directly related to the subject of study but quite a few about royal art symbols

globally, in Africa, and the Akan of Ghana were accessed and presented mostly in chapter Two.

3.9 Archives and Museums Research

A visit was made to the British Museum in London to directly view some of the symbols and regalia from the Asante kingdom that were taken away during the colonial era. Another visit was made to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, USA to gather information about some of the symbols and regalia. The Indianapolis Museum also in the USA was contacted by electronic mail and Skype®. The Ghana Archives Departments in Accra and Kumasi, The Jubilee Museum of the Centre for National Culture in Kumasi and the Manhyia Palace Museum were all visited to source information from the documents kept in the archives and to see some of the symbols in pictures or their replicas and ask questions from members of staff.

3.10 Questionnaire Design and Administration

A three page questionnaire consisting of 20 questions was designed. The questionnaire was randomly pilot-tested with twenty persons consisting of lecturers, librarians, undergraduate and postgraduate students, teachers from first and second cycle institutions and lawyers to ensure validity. Their responses proved that the questions were relevant to the study.

Two hundred (200) copies of the questionnaire were then administered, ten each to twenty (20) identified professional groups of people, male and female, of all ages, from various ethnicities residing in Kumasi. Out of the number administered, 172 copies were returned after a lot of visits and cajoling of the respondents (see Appendix 1 for a sample of the questionnaire).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE HISTORY OF THE ASANTE KINGS AND THE BUILDING OF THE ASANTE NATION (1401 – 1999)

4.1 Overview

This chapter is included as a necessity in this study because the Asante nation has been built under the leadership of the various Asantehene, from Nana Osei Tutu I to Nana Opoku Ware II who directed the growth of the nation for over three hundred years. During their reigns, acts of symbolism were created and several symbols were brought into being. These Kings acquired materials during their reigns that are symbolic and relevant to this study. For example, stools, where the King's stool is blackened when he dies, and the said black stool becomes a symbol that he leaves behind, representing him and his life; swords, that have various symbols on the *abosodee*, (ornament) the finial of linguist staffs and umbrellas which also exhibit symbols.

The Kings had strengths and weaknesses that in totality caused them to win or lose the eleven (11) major wars that helped Asante Kingdom to expand its territory. These wars were symbolic and also introduced symbolism into Asante land through designers and craftsmen who were captives from the various states that were conquered in the wars and who were brought into Asante land to practice their crafts.

Claridge (1964) states that the major wars that the Asante fought were the *Anomabo War* fought in 1805 with the British which the Asante won; the *Apam War* fought in 1811 with the

Fanti which the Asante won; the *Egwa - arru War* fought in 1874 with the Akyem which the Asante won; the *Nsamankow War* of January, 1824 which was fought with the British which the Asante won; the *Efutu War* fought in May, 1824 with the British which the British won; the *Dodowa War* fought in August, 1826 with the British and Allied forces which the British won; the *Asikuma /Bobikuma War* fought in 1863 with the British which the Asante won; the 1873 *Nyankumasi / Jukwa War* fought with the British which the Asante won; another 1873 *Dunkwa War* fought with the British which produced no winner; the 1874 *Amoafu / Kwaman / Bekwai / Fomena /Kumase 'Segrenti War'* fought with the British which the British won; and the 1900 *Kumasi Yaa Asantewaa War* fought again with the British which the British won. Asante fought with the British in nine wars, won four, lost four and there was no winner for one. Asante won the two other wars fought with the *Fantis* and *Akyems*. These all made the Asante nation a force to reckon with even up to the early parts of the 1900s. The four wars that the Asante lost, the *Nsamankow*, *Dodowa*, *Segrenti* and *Yaa Asantewaa* wars, are symbolic to the Asante nation.

Initially, the Asantes lived according to eight clans: *Oyoko*, *Bretuo*, *Aduana*, *Asona*, *Asene*, *Ekuona*, *Agona* and *Asakyiri*. A man and a woman from the same clan were forbidden to marry as it was believed that each clan originated from one woman. As a result of this the different clans began to relate favourably with each other to promote inter-marriages. This relationship brought about the creation of bonds among the clans because a male in clan A had his nephews and nieces coming from a clan B father because his sister had married a male from clan B so the need to have cordial relationship with clan B to protect his nephews and nieces was paramount.

It is interesting to note that the Oyoko clan was identified in Asante history as producing rulers. This is not explained by any historian but one could speculate that *Oyoko* men possessed some favourable qualities such as brilliance. For example Nana Osei Tutu I and Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II both belonged to the *Oyoko* clan and their achievements during their reigns were highly remarkable. Wherever the Oyoko clan members settled their rulers had links with *Oyoko* rulers in other towns. For example, Nana Twum and Nana Antwi were rulers of the *Oyoko* clan in Asantemanso State, Nana Kobia Amanfi in Asumegya State and Nana Oti Akenten and **Nana Obiri Yeboa** in Kwaman State, later Kumase State. These rulers had strong relationships with the rulers of the *Oyoko* clans in Nsuta State, Dwaben State (now Juaben) Kokofu State and Bekwai State and at the same time had cordial relationships with other clan rulers such as those of the States of Mampong, Kumawu and Offinso (Osei, 2000).

In a human environment there are bound to be disagreements and petty quarrels which might result in conflicts and wars. These may end up weakening the societies within the environment. Such was the case of the Oyoko clan. Their cordial relationship and union was weakened by quarrels and conflict. About the 15th century, as the population of the individual clans increased the people moved to settle in different places (Osei, 2000). As they moved to resettle in different places they began to fight each other upon minor provocation. This weakened their relationship causing them to become subject to attacks, especially at the hands of the Denkyiras. As a result they were conquered by the Denkyiras, their enemies. Nana Obiri Yeboa of Kwaman State made efforts to bring them together but because of selfishness, pride and the desire for power and independence by each of the rulers, these efforts resulted in only a weak union, a confederation. They became subject to another defeat at the hands of the Dormaas in a war where Nana Obiri Yeboa, Okomfo Yamoah and some key rulers lost their lives in 1677 through wounds inflicted by swords during the war. The

defeat of the Asantes by the Dormaas was a great eye - opener to the Asantes so they resolved to have a stronger union to withstand any future possible attacks by other groups. (Osei, 2000). Adu Gyamfi became the regent after the death of Nana Obiri Yeboa (Anti,1971)

4.2 The Immediate Families of the Asantehene

Not much has been written about the wives and children of the Kings during discussions concerning them and so sometimes it is felt that the Kings were never married or were not family men. The information available about wives and children is mostly oral. This may be because the King most often inherited wives of the stool even though he might have had a wife or wives before becoming King. In the Palace therefore, there was the women's quarters where all these wives lived and were taken care of by eunuchs. The Kings, until quite recently, were seldom found in public with their wives because the Asante society then did not have such acts or outings as part of their culture. Again, the Asante culture where maternal inheritance is practised through the Kings sister's children, made the wife and children of Kings not directly relevant in history, except where the wife or child played a prominent role that could not be ignored in history. For example the current Akyempemhene, Nana Edusei Poku, who is the son of the late Nana Opoku Ware II has featured prominently in Manhyia Palace affairs, which could even be attributed to him being both the *Akyempemhene* (Chief of Princes) and a lawyer as well.

Some historians mention some wives and children of some of the Kings, but most often only the male children. The daughters of the king were not recognised in governance as it was only the King's sister's daughters that had a chance of becoming queen mothers, the only culturally significant role for a woman in governance. This work dug into history and found

information concerning some of the wives and children of these Kings. The found information is featured in the discussion under the related King. There was no documentation about others and oral tradition is silent about their wives and children, that is, informants could not provide any such information.

In relation to the acceptance of western education by Asantes, from the reign of Opoku Ware I, education was introduced by the Christian missionaries who came to Asanteland. Some of these Kings took advantage of the opportunity and educated some of their sons and those of other Kings. The roles they played in introducing their people to western and other education are discussed under each of the Kings concerned in this study.

4.3 The Asante Kings

4.3.1 Nana Osei Tutu I (1695-1719)

Nana Osei Tutu I succeeded his uncle Nana Obiri Yeboa as the Chief of Kwaman State (Kwamanhene) which later became the Kumase State, and Okomfo Anokye succeeded his brother Okomfo Yamoah as Chief of Agona (Agonahene). He reigned for twenty-three years. At the enstoolment of Nana Osei Tutu I he promised to unite the Asantes. He called a meeting on a Saturday (Adubofour, 2000) of all the Chiefs of Asante States in Kumase for the purpose, but there was no agreement as to who would be the leader. Okomfo Anokye (see page 55) promised to pray to the ancestors and gods to send a stool from the skies and that whichever of the chiefs upon whose laps the stool landed, would be the King over all the Asantes. They all agreed to this suggestion and six days later, the following Friday “*fofie*” was selected (Adubofour, 2000). Okomfo Anokye asked the Chiefs to fast and pray (perform libation) to their ancestors up to that day. For such an important activity, it was likely that

abstinence from sexual activity was also observed to keep the persons involved clean and pure. On that Friday, amidst drumming and dancing and magical displays by Okomfo Anokye, a golden stool with gold ornaments came out of the sky, descended and landed on the lap of Nana Osei Tutu I, which meant that he had been chosen as the King of the Asante nation. The type of ornaments that accompanied the stool have never been disclosed. This is the first major symbol of the Asante nation. This was followed by a symbolic act of the collection and burning of finger nails and hair pieces from each of the Chiefs. The ashes were smeared on the stool and some mixed in palm wine for the Chiefs to drink. The drinking of the potion was to let them know that they had sworn to the gods to unite under one King. Nana Osei Tutu I swore an oath of allegiance to the stool and also to the Chiefs. The Chiefs swore an oath of allegiance to Nana Osei Tutu I and another one never to rise up against the Golden Stool, as Okomfo Anokye had told them that the spirit of the Asante nation was resident in the stool. The Asante Kingdom was therefore born with Nana Osei Tutu I as its First King in 1697 with all symbolism (Osei, 2000).

4.3.1.1 Okomfo Anokye

Several stories abound about the origin of Okomfo Anokye. Some historians agree that he was born in Awukugua in about 1635 to Ano, his father, and Manubea his mother, and was the grandson of a fetish priest, Obiri Agyei. “He was named Kwame Agyei but the magical powers he had, like holding a talisman in his clenched fist when he was born and only when he fell asleep did his mother draw the attention of his father in Guan language ‘Ano-Kye’ meaning ‘Ano see’ made him earn the name ‘Anokye’ ” (Anti,1971: 8-9)

He travelled to various places and ended up at Kwaman. When he arrived at Kwaman in 1677, Obiri Yeboa had just died and there was a dispute about who was to succeed him. Osei Tutu also arrived in Kwaman in 1680, about 36 years old then. Okomfo Anokye through the

Dwabenhene Akraasi wormed his way up to Osei Tutu. His magical powers were put to test to ensure he was a genuine fetish priest, which he proved by being able to change the colours of two cows put into two different huts before his arrival. Anokye was asked which clan he belonged to, to which he responded as “*Agona*”. The chief of Agona was asked to take him home and accommodate him. He was later given Asante citizenship and became chief of Agona in about 1683. He had also become the chief fetish priest of Asante, hence the claim by some historians that he was an Asante from Agona (Anti, 1971).

Apart from the miracle of the Golden stool, Okomfo Anokye performed several miracles in Asanteland, one being the pushing of the blade of a sword into the earth at the present site of the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH) that no one has been able to pull out till today, from when he planted it in there in 1695. That was the exact point at which the Golden stool descended unto the lap of Nana Osei Tutu I. It is also the place that Okomfo Anokye predicted that it would be a healing place for millions of people. This may be the reason for the siting of KATH at that place. Also due to Okomfo Anokye being the person who pushed the sword into the ground, the hospital is named after him. Although the sword is not on the premises of the Manhyia Palace, it is one of the Palace’s regalia. He also drained out a stream called *Agyempa nsu* which ran through Kumasi and made it to flow again and named it ‘*Suben*’ which today is called by that same name, but spelled ‘*Subin*’. Okomfo Anokye was married to Bukyia Mansa. He died in his sleep in 1719 at Akrofosso at the age of about 84 and he had a son called Agyapa (Anti,1971).

The reign of Nana Osei Tutu I

In 1698 the Asante under the new King Nana Osei Tutu fought against and defeated the Dormaas who had earlier defeated them in a war because they were not united. The Dormaas then became the ‘soul washers’ of the Asantehene (Osei, 2000).

Next was the defeat of the Denkyiras and the capture and beheading of their King, Ntim Gyakari at Feyiase. The golden fetters with which Ntim Gyakari had used to link himself to his wife were taken and attached to the Golden stool in addition to his mask or effigy made in brass . These became symbols of prowess in battle and of everlasting conquest over Denkyira. After this victory Adanse decided to join the Asante Kingdom.

Before this war with the Denkyiras, the Asantes had in an earlier war with the Denkyiras been defeated, so they were serving the Denkyiras and they detested that. They therefore were geared towards winning the war. In their bid, Okomfo Anokye asked them to sacrifice three of their chiefs to ensure victory. The Chief of Adwumakasekese, Nana Asenso Kofo; Chief of Edweso, Nana Dikopim I; and the Paramount chief of Kumawu, Nana Tweneboa Kodua volunteered. Nana Asenso Kofo volunteered to die by being buried alive with his hands appearing outside so that they would hold two brass pans filled with war medicine mixed in water in which the soldiers would bath before going to the war front; Nana Dikopim I volunteered to die by being butchered to death and his flesh thrown away for vultures to pick and take to Denkyira land so that wherever the piece of the meat fell the Denkyira soldiers would become cowards. This was a divine manifestation and so had a spiritual essence. This symbolic act could only be explained by the vultures either being trained to pick the meat and fly straight to Denkyira land or by having some magical spell cast on them so as not to branch anywhere when they flew, but straight to Denkyira. Considering the context, one is inclined to take the latter view as it would be difficult to train the vultures. Nana Tweneboa Kodua volunteered to be armed to lead the soldiers but would allow himself to be shot without defending himself. In addition Nana Osei Tutu was not to lead in that particular battle but stay at home because although the war would be won by the Asantes, whoever led that battle would also not live more than seven days after it ended. Nana Boahen

Anantuo, Chief of Mampong, volunteered to be the leader of the army in place of Nana Osei Tutu I. All the four Chiefs made requests for their people as compensation for volunteering themselves. Nana Asenso asked that after him no one from his town would ever be sacrificed, Nana Dikopim asked same for his clan *Asona* and Nana Tweneboa Kodua also asked the same for people from his state and an additional request that, anytime that the *Ntumpun* drums in any Asante state would begin to be beaten, his appellation would be sounded to entreat future generations to also sacrifice themselves for their state. Nana Boahen Anantuo requested that since he was taking the place of the Asantehene to lead the Asantes to war, his stool would be next to the Asantehene's (Osei, 2000). This is the origin of the Mampong stool being referred to as the Silver stool because the Asantehene occupies the Golden stool. The Mampong stool is the second in command in Asanteland and the Mamponghene acts for the Asantehene whenever the latter is out of Asanteland.

All these acts of self sacrifice by the chiefs, the volunteering of themselves, the things they demanded and the implications became abstract or non-material symbols for the Asante. The demand of Mampong for the silver stool stood as a symbol itself and is an example of how symbolism evolved in Asanteland. Also the hierarchical order of Asante stools emanated from the symbolical acts of the four chiefs.

The Asantes declared war on Denkyira in 1700 and won the war. Ntim Gyakari the King of Denkyira was captured at Feyiase and beheaded and the head was taken to Kumase ((Osei, 2000). Asante also gained possession of the documents of Elmina Castle from the Denkyira and so the castle became the property of the Asantes (Osei, 2000). The Denkyiras took the documents of the castle from the Komenda people after they had conquered them and the

Komenda people also took the documents from the Elmina people after they had conquered them (Ward,1948). Claridge, (1964) however writes that it was the payment of rent for the land on which the Castle stood that was made to the Asantes and not the Castle itself.

Nana Osei Tutu I's reign was the period when the initial solid foundation was laid for the Asante nation. Many laws governing the Asante Kingdom were made during his reign and several symbolisms were evolved. A crest called the *Busumuru cap* as an emblem symbolising unity was made during Nana Osei Tutu's reign because he brought into being the united Asante nation and it was to serve as a form of remembrance for the Asantes to the fact of when, how and who brought Asantes together and hence the need to consolidate that unity (Osei, 2000). The crest is today found in the Asanteman flag.

He instituted a loose confederacy where each state was independent but gave support to each other in time of need. With the help of Okomfo Anokye the states agreed to come together as a nation under one King, bringing an end to the culture of individualism that existed. The first constitution for Asante was made by him, where Asanteman under that constitution was a federal state (Anti,1996).

He introduced the use of guns in war and also ended the culture of using swords for war and reorganised the Asante army into flanks – advance, left, right, rear and the main body with the War General in the middle of the main body, thus protecting the war general. He also integrated conquered states into the Asante Kingdom by giving such conquered chiefs important positions in the Kingdom, which differed from how the Denkyiras treated Asantes as servants when they earlier ruled over them. Nana Osei Tutu I started the celebration of the

Odwira festival which brought all the chiefs together in Kumasi annually to renew their allegiances to the Asantehene. (Osei, 2002).

He however was very lenient with the conquered states by giving them a lot of freedom and allowing them to continue ruling over their subjects rather than appoint leaders who were loyal to the Golden stool. This gave room to Nana Boadu Akefun, the chief who succeeded Ntim Gyakari in Denkyira to wage war against the Asante nation a year after the earlier war but Denkyira was defeated again (Osei, 2000). Nana Osei Tutu I, during his reign, waged and won two wars, the Dormaa war and the Denkyira war.

At the death of Nana Osei Tutu there were 13 states in the Asante confederation - Mampong, Nsuta, Kumawu, Dwaben, Edweso, Offinso, Agona, Kumase, Kokofu, Essumeja, Bekwai, Denkyira and Adanse, the last three having been added during his reign. (Osei, 2000:14).

Nana Osei Tutu was married with multiple wives as attested to by the demand of Ntim Gyakari that he should send his favourite wives to him (Anti,1971). Ward (1949) also states that one of Nana Osei Tutu's wives was called Amanie. Also Adubofour (2000) adds that he was also married to the Queenmother of Ekaase, Nana Ama Serwaa Akyempem from the Twafoohene family of today and Nana Bempomaa from Apagya *fie* of today. Some of his sons were Owusu Afriyie who was one time an Akyempemhene and Nana Oti Awere, the first Otikromhene. Osei Kwadwo was the grandson of Osei Tutu whose mother was Asantehemaa Akua Afriyie, Nana Osei Tutu's niece (Wilks,1975). Again Nana Osei Tutu had two sisters, Bonafie and Kyerema. He had no brother so there was no equal contestant to the stool.

He does not have a black stool as the Golden stool was his stool. Instead, he is represented in the stool house by a bell, as the Golden stool cannot be blackened. The Great Oath, *Ntankese Memenda* was instituted when Nana Osei Tutu died on the battle front (Rattray, 1927).

4.3.2 Nana Opoku Ware I (1720- 1750)

Nana Opoku Ware I succeeded his grand uncle, Nana Osei Tutu I, in 1720 and reigned for 30 years as the Second Asantehene. Although this succession plan was odd because there were older nephews of Osei Tutu like Kusi Obodum who should have succeeded him. The choice was the will of Nana Osei Tutu I (Osei, 2000). The older nephews might have been bypassed because Opoku Ware proved himself as a more capable, mature and competent candidate to be King at that time.

Nana Opoku Ware I continued to expand the territory of the Asante Kingdom through the offering of arms of friendship or waging of wars. He added Sefwi, Bono, Gyaman and Akyem States to Asante Kingdom through wars (Osei, 2000). According to Ward (1967) the boundaries of the Asante Kingdom was in the west up to River Bia, in the north up to River Tain, in the east up to River Volta and in the south to River Pra and Ofin, at the time of the death of Nana Opoku Ware I in 1750. The Akyems tried to take advantage of the internal wrangling in Asanteland, because older nephews were bypassed and he was chosen to become King, to wage war on the Asante. The defeat of the Akyems in the *Ahantan* war made Nana Opoku Ware I gain possession of the documents of the three Forts in Accra (Osei, 2000).

The first Fort, Christiansborg castle (Ursu Lodge), was built by the Swedes in 1645, taken over by the Danes in 1657, 1679 by the Portuguese and was bought back by the Danes in 1683. Through a defeat in war it came into the hands of the Akwamus in 1693 but the Danes bought it back in 1694 and the English in turn bought it in 1850. This castle served as a storehouse for goods from Europe and those bought in the Gold Coast and also accommodation for commercial and military staff living in the Gold Coast. It is currently the seat of the Ghana Government, housing the offices of the President and Vice-President of Ghana (Anquandah,1999). It is bigger than the Ussher and James Forts.

The second, Ussher Fort, was built by the Dutch in 1642 and also called “Creve Coeur”. In 1782 it was in the hands of the English, in 1785 in the hands of the Dutch and it was abandoned in 1816. The Dutch took it over in 1830 and most parts of it were destroyed in 1862 by an earthquake. The English took it over in 1868 (Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti Historical Events 1400-1946) and then renamed it Ussher Fort after the British Administrator who was the key person in the Exchange of Territories Act (Dantzig,1980; Ephson,1970). For sometime it was used as a prison but currently it is being renovated and developed by UNESCO and it will be used as a documentation centre. The third, James Fort, was built in 1673 by the English (Ephson,1970) and it has no eventful history.

During the reign of Nana Opoku Ware I the unity of the Asante Kingdom was also consolidated because he subdued internal revolts. He instituted the *Ntankesie Miensa* oath as one of the great oaths of the Asantes linking it to the circumstances around his birth (Osei, 2000). History has it that the *Ntankesie Miensa* reminds Asantes of the successive deaths of the fathers of Nana Opoku Ware I. It is said that Nana Osei Tutu’s niece, Nyaako Kusi Amoa,

got married to Adu Panin of Amakom. Adu Panin died soon after the marriage when Nyaako was pregnant. The younger brother of Adu Panin, Adu II, married Nyaako. He also died soon after. Adu Kuma, the third brother, married her but he also died soon after Opoku Ware was born. When Opoku Ware grew up and he was told the events, he was disturbed and kept thinking of it. When he became King he instituted the *Ntankesie Miensa* as one of the great oaths of the Asante nation. This is an abstract symbol which came into being during his reign.

Nana Opoku Ware I was interested in western education so in the mid 1740s he sent twelve Asante boys and two girls to the Dutch in Elmina to be educated in Holland but they were rather educated in Elmina (Wilks,1975).

During his reign he maintained the cultural practices introduced by his predecessor and then created some stools, the *Ankobe* and *Ananta*. The *Ankobeahene* commanded the “*Ankobe*” wing or Home Guard to protect the women and children at home and also the State when the rest went out to war (Osei,2000) and the *Anantahene* led a military group which served as the King’s bodyguards, commanded by the King himself as a way of forestalling any attempt by a War General to take over power. The *Ananta* name was given to the guns that the Asantes were using at that time which were sophisticated (Osei,2002). This gun was therefore symbolised with the creation of the stool. It was during his reign that the Bono states were defeated and so Bono weavers, goldsmith and craftsmen were brought to Kumase. Most of them became craftsmen for the King and were involved in the creation of symbols and various art forms for the royals. Nana Opoku Ware I loved music and so brought several musical sets into the palace (Adubofour, 2000).

Nana Opoku Ware I married Denasehemaa, Queenmother of Anowu and Nana Boaduwa Tire from Akyem who bore him a son called Adusei Atwenewa (Wilks,1975) who was the first occupant of the *Gyaasewaa* stool, *Pinankofa* (Adubofour,2000). Also Anti (1996) states that in 1750 he died in the arms of his attendants when he was being carried to his wives. Some of his sons were Prince Adu Kwafeni, Frimpon, Adu Twum and Adusei Kra (Anti,1996).

The mother of Opoku Ware I, Nyaako Kusi Amoa was the daughter of one of Nana Osei Tutu's sisters, Bonafie, and his father was Adu Mensa, Amakomhene. Also Opoku Kwame was the grandson of Opoku Ware I born out of the marriage of his son Adu Twum and the Asantehemaa Konadu Yiadom (Wilks,1975).

He also made the same mistake as his grand uncle, Nana Osei Tutu I, by being lenient with conquered states, by allowing chiefs of conquered states to keep ruling over their subjects. This was a sure sign of re-grouping of the subjects under the chief's supervision to revolt against their masters, the Asantes. His successor, Nana Kusi Obodum, therefore had some problems with the conquered states (Osei, 2000). He joined his ancestors in 1750.

Nana Opoku Ware I has a black stool in the stool house. The stool has a circular boss of gold on the central column, the '*sekyedua*'. It has two bells.

4.3.3 Nana Kusi Obodum (1750- 1764)

Nana Kusi Obodum reigned for fourteen years as the Third King of the Asantes. He was a nephew of Nana Osei Tutu I and an uncle of Nana Opoku Ware I, whom he succeeded. He

was advanced in age when he became the King. He focused on consolidating the gains made by his predecessors and only fought a single war with the Akyems which he won. He stopped executions and only allowed it for major offences to deter people and also stopped human sacrifices. He saw Kumase as sanitarily unclean so he appointed health inspectors to see to it that Kumase was kept clean. He instituted an award of a gold sword or silver whip for clean surroundings and those with unclean surroundings were fined (Anti,1996). He was more interested in internal stability of the Kingdom and so introduced the culture of banishing people as punishment to places where they received training to be better persons instead of executing them (Osei,2000; Osei,2002) He died in 1764. He has a black stool which is kept at Akyeremade (Kumasi).

Nana Kusi Obodum had wives and sons. One of his sons was Apaw Panin (Wilks,1975) and another son, Adabo, whom history indicates that, together with his nephew Osei Kwadwo, broke into the King's harem and outraged his wives (Anti,1996). Adabo was castrated (Kyerematen,1969). Nana Kusi Obodum was the brother of one time Asantehemaa Akua Afriyie (Wilks,1975).

4.3.4 Nana Osei Kwadwo (1764-1777)

Nana Osei Kwadwo reigned as the Fourth Asantehene after succeeding his uncle Nana Kusi Obodum. He was Asantehene for thirteen years, from 1764-1777. He fought and defeated the Wassa and Banda states (Ward,1967). It was in his reign that the friendship and brotherhood agreement of the Asantes and Dagombas began after the Asantes had supported a faction of the Dagombas to defeat another faction in 1775 (the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti: Historical events 1400 AD-1946 AD) in a quarrel over chieftaincy succession, because they

used guns against the spears, bows and arrows of the Dagombas. Dagombaland became a part of the Asante Kingdom and that was when Islam came into Asanteland (Osei,2000; Osei,2002) because the Dagombas were Moslems. This relationship brought about the payment of five hundred slaves who served in the palace, two hundred cows, four hundred sheep, four hundred cotton cloths and two hundred silk cotton cloths annually by the Dagombas to the Asantehene. It also brought about the introduction of the Dagomba drum and other musical instruments, the chief's umbrella, amulets and talismans for the Asantehene and the chiefs, which were all symbolic. Moslem traders visited and lived in Kumasi and brought about intermarriage among them and the royals. The Dagombas also fought alongside the Asantes in the Asante expansion wars (Claridge,1964). He reversed his predecessor Nana Kusi Obodum's culture of internal stability and re-introduced the expansionist culture of Nana Osei Tutu I and Nana Opoku Ware I.

He fought wars and added more lands to the Asante territory. Although he fought the Akyem, Akwapem and Assin and defeated them, Nana Osei Kwadwo could not make them part of Asante Kingdom and so they did not owe any allegiance to the Asante Kingdom. He however brought some significant changes into the system of government in his nation. He introduced the system of appointing wise eloquent citizens as linguists by merit in addition to what existed where linguists were only appointed by inheritance. This ensured that other eloquent persons within the Kingdom had a chance to become linguists. This was the beginning of the system where every new Asantehene appointed his own linguist in addition to the existing ones. (Osei, 2002) He also converted some of the stools of the state of Kumase from being hereditary to appointive and also created new stools like the, *Kyidom*, Rear Guard Chief. He introduced the culture of appointing and posting his representatives to some of the States, for

example, he sent one to Osu and English James Town, both in Accra, which he had annexed, to maintain the King's presence (Osei, 2000).

He instituted the oath *Memenda Kormantine* when his two nieces died from smallpox when he and the Asante army were fighting a war at Kormantine (Anti,1996). This oath is solemn and weighty and it is often referred to as the "great oath" or "the day of the god's punishment" and it is even said in whispers (Claridge,1964).

The culture of religious tolerance was also introduced since the states he conquered in the north were Islamic states and so he had to accept them, and even some of them who were scholars served in his court. These appointments strengthened his administration with men of expertise that were also loyal to him and so made him very powerful. The period of his reign was a revolutionary one. (Osei, 2002).

Nana Osei Kwadwo had multiple wives. This is confirmed by the vow that he made upon ascending the throne, that he would neither enter his palace nor see his wives in comfort until he had disciplined the revolting chiefs by cutting off their heads. He also had sons known as Owusu Ansa, Owusu Afriyie and Owusu Taseamandi (Anti,1996; Wilks,1975). He was the grandson of Osei Tutu whose mother was Asantehemaa Akua Afriyie, Osei Tutu's niece (Wilks,1975).

Nana Osei Kwadwo was Asantehemaa Akua Afriyie's child through her third husband Akyempemhene Owusu Afriyie (Wilks,1975). Asantehemaa Akua Afriyie, Nana Osei Kwadwo's mother, also married Abradehene Opoku Tia, her second husband and had Aberefi Yaa, so Aberafi Yaa was Nana Osei Kwadwo's elder sister.

During Osei Kwadwo's reign he removed the Asantehemaa stool from Kokofu and brought it to Kumase, so Kokofu instituted the Kokofuhemaa stool. Konadu Yiadom, who was earlier married to a Mampong citizen, Apahene Owusu, had to divorce him and move to Kumase to be enstooled the first Asantehemaa to hold office in Kumase. Her sister Serwaa Okuwa was given to Apahene Owusu in marriage. Their daughter Adoma Akosua, born around 1765 later became Asantehemaa. Adoma Akosua had two sons, Osei Kwasi and Osei Kwadwo Kuma (Wilks,1975).

Nana Osei Kwadwo died in 1777. His stool which had a central circular boss of gold with a number of smaller ones on the seat, column, and base, with the design called *Ntrawa – ntrawa*, and two bells has been blackened and it is in the stool house.

4.3.5 Nana Osei Kwame (1777-1797)

Nana Osei Kwame succeeded his grand uncle Nana Osei Kwadwo as the Fifth Asantehene when he was very young, probably a teenager, so a regent Kwame Pete the *Adontenhene* was appointed until he came of age. He was enstooled in 1777 but ruled effectively as King from 1789-1797 (Anti,1996). His period of reign witnessed no wars. Claridge (1964) described him as the merciful King. It was in his reign that the *Atipin* and *Apagya* stools were created to symbolise some events. It was found out that the *Abiremponfo* and Kumase *Nsafohene* were not loyal to the King, so in order to protect him, the stools served as a sort of bodyguard system (Anti,1996). The *Atipin* was created after he ordered the execution of some chiefs who held the Asante nation when he was young and who had taken advantage of his age and campaigned for his destoolment. The creation of the stool signified that 'he had gathered courage to deal with the plotters'. The *Apagya* stool was created to commemorate his 'lifting his head' after the sad days. (Osei,2000). Under the influence of the moslem scholars in the

courts and because he was very young when he became King, he stopped the culture of human sacrifices and executions. He instead introduced the culture of cutting the lips of tale bearers and amputating the wrist of thieves, which are Islamic principles and symbols.

The Asantes saw him as a weak King because he waged no wars. He was also converted to Islam and was introducing Islamic law into the Asante law. The immediate cause for his destoolment however, was when he abandoned Kumase for Dwaben for a whole year because of a woman, Gyanwa, the daughter of the King of Dwaben whom he was in love with. He was de-stooled in 1797 and banished to a hamlet without Gyanwa, but accompanied by one of his numerous wives. He died by committing suicide in 1799 a few months after his banishment (Anti,1996; Osei, 2000; Osei, 2002). Nana Osei Kwame was married to the daughter of Opoku Frefre (Adubofour,2000) but there is no known documentation about his children. Asantehemaa Ama Serwaa was his sister. He has no black stool but he created two stools, the *Atipin* and *Apagya* stools which are symbolic. He was succeeded by his brother Opoku Fofie.

4.3.6 Nana Opoku Fofie (1797-1799)

He reigned for only two years as the Sixth Asantehene. According to Anti (1996) he reigned for only sixty days in 1799. His reign was characterised by the Gyamans and Kong coming together to war against the Asantes in 1797. With guns, the Asante won the battle after fighting for 15 months. He died soon after the war. His time was not peaceful because of the Gyaman War and because he was advanced in age he died early and so could not introduce any cultural changes. (Osei,2002). He was however handsome and youthful - looking, naturally gentle and friendly which his people mistook to be traits for femininity and weakness. He has a blackened stool in the stool house with two bells.

There is no known record about a wife of Nana Opoku Fofie but he had sons, the three key ones being Adu, Apesemakohene Kwame Akyamfo and Atene Akotenhene Adusei Kra. He also had two elder sisters Akua Akrukruwaa and Yaa Dufie and an elder brother, Opoku Kwame from the same father.

4.3.7 Nana Osei Tutu Kwame Asibe Bonsu (1799 – 1824)

He succeeded his elder brother Nana Opoku Fofie as the Seventh King of the Asante kingdom and he reigned for twenty-five years. He earned the name '*Bonsu*' after he swam in the sea at Winneba after defeating the Fantes in the 1805 war and was likened to a 'whale', known as *bonsu* in the Asante language. He further defeated the Fantes again in 1811 and 1814 and so extended the territory of Asantes to the coast that they badly needed, so that they could trade directly with the Europeans, rather than through middle men and also have easy access to the Forts and Castles of which they had documents of possession (the three in Accra earlier mentioned, and that of Elmina) (Osei,2000).

He became friends with the British monarch and so received a British representative in Kumasi. He was also interested in English architecture and town planning and introduced them in Kumasi. In 1820 he built a Fort in Kumase (Fort George) named "Nana Bonsu Aban" and it was the second palace. It was there he kept his ornaments and treasures and it was also his museum. (Osei,2002). More information about *Nana Bonsu Aban* can be found in Chapter Five of this work.

He also in 1818 asked the British to educate some of his sons and also those of his predecessors but this initiative was frustrated by the Gyaasewahene who later explained that

they did that deliberately because if the princes were educated they would find it difficult to cheat the King (Wilks,1975).

In 1817 Thomas Bowdich an English Ambassador was sent to Kumase to broker peace with him (Anti,1996). The peace treaty was brokered between the Asantehene and the British but the contents were not acceptable to the British Governor, Hope Smith. This angered a section of the Asantes. In 1824 war broke out between the coastal states and the British on one side against the Asantes. The battle of *Nsamankow* was won by the Asantes on 21st January 1824 (Anti,1996). The Governor, Sir Charles MacCarthy who had been transferred to replace Governor Hope Smith was wounded in the battle and so he killed himself. His head was cut off by the Asantes and sent to Kumasi as a trophy. The head was kept in the Treasury at Bantama and carried in procession as a signal trophy at every yam festival (Claridge,1964). This victory was however, not sweet and not celebrated because the Asantehene Nana Osei Tutu Kwame Bonsu also died on that day. (Osei,2000); (Claridge,1964). In Nana Osei Tutu Kwame Asibe Bonsu's reign, he re-introduced the Asante expansion policy and so fought and conquered some coastal states. He has a blackened stool in the stool house. The design is a circular gold boss at the point of intersection of a cross and it has two bells.

Nana Osei Tutu Kwame Asibe Bonsu married Asantewaa and had a son called Owusu Koko who was one time the Akyempemhene. In 1816 Akua Yeboah , a sister of the queen mother Dokua of Akyem - Abuakwa was also his wife (Wilks,1975).

4.3.8 Nana Osei Yaw Akoto (1824-1834)

Nana Osei Yaw Akoto became the Eighth Asantehene when he succeeded his brother Nana Osei Tutu Kwame Bonsu and he reigned for ten years. In 1824 Asante fought the combined

coastal forces – Gas, Fantes, Denkyiras, Akyems, Akwapims and Akwamus – supported by the British in Dodowa. They lost to the strength of the combined forces. The battle of Dodowa or battle of *Akantamansu* brought a lot of losses to Asante. They lost the coastal states and forts that were part of the Asante Kingdom, lost the documents on the Forts and Castles to the British and lost the payment of revenues on the Forts and Castles and so made the Asante nation poor. The power of the Asante Kingdom therefore began to decline (Osei, 2000; Claridge, 1964). A Peace treaty was signed in 1831 when Captain George MacLean was Governor. There was relative peace after then as the Asantes promised in the treaty to stop its territorial expansion to the coastal states. Nana Osei Yaw Akoto died in 1834 and his stool was blackened and placed in the stool house. The stool is decorated with a circular boss of gold and strips of gold on the seat base and column called *adaban* and it has two 2 bells.

Nana Osei Yaw Akoto as part of his terms after the battle of Dodowa asked for the release of his wife who was then still a war prisoner at Christiansborg castle in the hands of the Ga chiefs (Anti,1996), implying that he was married. He had a son called Yaw Afriyie (Wilks,1975).

4.3.9 Nana Kwaku Dua I (1834 – 1867)

Nana Kwaku Dua I succeeded his uncle Nana Osei Yaw Akoto as the Nineth Asantehene. He ruled for thirty-three years. Earlier on there had been a civil war between the rest of Asante and Dwaben which made the latter flee to settle in Akyem Abuakwa. His first concern upon ascending the throne was to bring back the people of Dwaben to Asanteland. (Claridge, 1964). This was made possible in 1841. (Osei,2002). For 26 years of his reign there was no

war and he devoted his attention to the development of Kumase. He changed the war culture into a peaceful one and concentrated on making Kumase a trade centre and only fought the British in an inevitable war in 1863 over the coastal areas, which he won. He encouraged paramount chiefs to build and own houses in Kumasi that they could use when they came to attend meetings and festivals.

He tolerated other religions so there was Islam and Christianity in Asante land. He in 1839 welcomed Rev Freeman, of the Wesleyan Mission (Methodist Church) and permitted him to establish the Christian religion in Kumase (Osei,2002).

In 1842 Freeman opened a Wesleyan school in Kumasi and the Asantehene Nana Kwaku Duah I sent two boys and the then Bantamahene Gyawu, sent some of his children to the school. He also in 1843 took part in a Christian worship with the Wesleyan Society although some members of his court were not pleased with that. Some princes, Owusu Ansa, son of Nana Osei Bonsu ; and Owusu Nkwantabisa, son of Nana Osei Yaw who had been schooling in Cape Coast since 1831 under the directive of Nana Osei Yaw that they should not be taken to Britain were in 1836, under the reign of Nana Kwaku Duah I, taken to Britain to continue their education, while in that same year two other princes, Kwame Opoku, grandson of Nana Opoku Fofie, and Kwasi Boakye son of Nana Kwaku Dua I, were taken to Holland to be educated. There was opposition to western education by a majority of the Asantes during the reigns of Nana Osei Asibe Bonsu and Kwaku Duah I, but they allowed some children to attend the Islamic school of Imam Muhammad Al-Ghamba. Owusu Nkwantabisa died early, Kwasi Boakye did not return home after his education so Owusu Ansa was the only one who returned to Asanteland and used his English education to the great advantage of the Asante court (Wilks,1975).

In 1863 however, the Asante fought its fifth war, the *Bobikuma* war, against the British and the coastal states on the other side (Osei, 2000; Claridge, 1964). The Asantes won in this war, and there was no more war until the end of the reign of Nana Kwaku Dua in 1867 when he joined his ancestors. He has a blackened stool in the stool house and it is decorated with a circular boss, surrounded by another circle, the two together known as *Kontokowie* and it has gold strips and two bells.

Nana Kwaku Dua I married Adowaa of Kantinkyiren (Adubofour, 2000) and also Takyiwa and Konadu Sompromo who were daughters of Nana Osei Bonsu (Wilks, 1975). Several of his sons were mentioned in history, which may be explained that they might have held positions of importance in the kingdom. They were Asafo Boakye, Asebi Boakye (also known as Kwame Serebo), Boakye Dankwa, Kwasi Abayie, Kwasi Gyambibi, Krapa, Bempe, Boakye Bobi, Boakye Adade, Boakye Atansa, Kofi Adwene, Kwame Boakye, Dontwo, Kwame Kyerematen, Yaw Boakye, Kofi Boakye (also known as Kofi Subiri) and Yaw Ntem.

Kyerewa Mansa was the paternal half sister of Nana Kwaku Dua I and Akyampon Tia, who was later Nkwantananhene of Kumasi, was his brother. Afia Sarpon the eighth Asantehemaa was also the sister of Kwaku Dua I (Wilks, 1975).

4.3.10 Nana Kofi Karikari (1867-1874)

He succeeded his grand uncle as the Tenth King of the Asante Kingdom and reigned for seven years. His reign was a period of wars. In 1868 he aided the Akwamus to rout the Krepis (Claridge, 1964). In 1872 through 1873 he concentrated on regaining the coastal states. The battles of Assin Nyankomase and Jukwa were fought and the Asantes won (Osei, 2000)

(Claridge,1915). This was the sixth war between the Asantes on one side and the British and coastal forces on the other side. It was in his time that the German missionary Rev Ramseyer, his wife, Rev Kuhne and Monsieur Bonnat a French trader were made prisoners in Kumase for four years(Anti, 1996).

There was another battle in Dunkwa in 1873 between the Asantes and the British, the seventh, but there was no winner. After this the British government decided to subdue the Asantes with a strong force from other British territories in West Africa and Jamaica and the coastal areas. Although the Asantes fought a good battle, the British with superior weapons like rifles, double barrelled guns and “Enfields” (Claridge,1915) and led by Sir Garnet Wolseley were able to conquer the Asantes and so entered Kumase in 1874. The Asantehene and the people of Kumase had deserted Kumase when he got there so he set fire to the town (Claridge,1915; Osei, 2002; Osei, 2000). This was the eighth war the Asantes fought with the British and was won by the British. It was known as the “*Segrenti War*” after ‘Sir Garnet’ Wolseley. *Segrenti War* became a symbolic event in the history of Asante especially with the corrupted name of ‘Sir Garnet’. The same war is sometimes known as the ‘To to War’ after the sound of the British guns (Ward,1948).

The Fort, *Nana Bonsu Aban*, built by Nana Osei Tutu Kwame Osei Bonsu, as a second palace was plundered and burnt in 1874. Before being burnt, the fort contained among other things, silk material, drums, elephant tusk horns, weapons, state umbrellas, solid silver breakfast and dinner sets (crochery), stools and canes mounted in gold, golden trinkets and ornaments, leopard skins, Persian rugs and aggrey beads. It also housed the *Death Drum* with human skulls and thigh bones as decorations. Near the drum were the black stools of the King’s ancestors (Claridge,1964). Nana Kofi Karikari later came back and brokered a peace treaty

with the British in 1874 at Fomena known as the Treaty of Fomena, and signed it in Cape Coast (Claridge,1964).

The Treaty of Fomena was signed by the Asantehene, nine representatives from Kumasi, one each from Juaben, Bekwai, Kokofu, Kuntanase, Nsuta, Mampon and five minor States on 13th February 1874 (Anti,1996). It had seven clauses as follows: An indemnity of 50,000 ounces of gold; the Asantehene renouncing all allegiance from Denkyira, Assin, Akyem and Adansi to him; the Asantehene would renounce Elmina and its allied tribes and all payments from the government in respect of any of the forts; the Asantehene would withdraw his troops from the south-west; trade routes would be kept open; road from Kumasi to the Pra was to be kept clear; the Asantehene would do his best to stop human sacrifice (Ward,1948).

Nana Kofi Karikari re-introduced the war culture, and won a war, Nyankumasi/Jukwa war, against the coastal states in 1873. Asante lost all its territories during his reign. After the *Segrenti* war defeat in 1874, the Asante States of Mampong, Nsuta, Bekwai, Kokofu, Dwaben and Agona broke away from the confederacy. The other non- Asante States that had been captured gained their independence, like the Gyaman, Kwahu, Sefwi, Banda and some northern states (Ward,1967).

Nana Kofi Karikari was destooled and banished from Kumase in 1874 because he raided the royal mausoleum at Bantama and carried away the jewellery of his ancestors and gave them to his wives (Anti,1996). He has no black stool in the stool house but his stool is preserved at Akyeremade (Osei, 2000; Osei, 2002).

Nana Kofi Karikari was also evidently married as it is stated earlier that he raided the royal mausoleum at Bantama and carried away the jewellery of his ancestors and gave them to his wives (Anti, 1996). There is no known written information about his children. He was the younger brother of Kwabena Anin, the elder son of Afua Kobi so Kofi Karikari was Afua Kobi's son. Nana Mensa Bonsu was his younger brother (Wilks, 1975).

4.3.11 Nana Osei Mensa Bonsu (1874-1883)

Nana Osei Mensa Bonsu succeeded his brother Nana Kofi Karikari and ruled as the Eleventh Asantehene for nine years. One of his main aims was to rebuild Kumase and the palace which had been burnt during the reign of his predecessor. Kumase and the palace were re-built in three years by the Asantes themselves, as they no longer had slave labour (Anti, 1996). The other aim was to use dialogue to bring back the States that had broken away from the Asante confederation (Ward, 1967). When this was not successful he declared war in 1874 against the Dwaben, Asokore, Nsuta, Effiduase and Oyoko who had come together (Claridge, 1964). The Asantehene was supported by the Kokofu, Bekwai and Asumegya States and so won the war (Osei Kwadwo 2000:45). He was also not willing to wage any war against the British, because of the past experiences with them, also being part of the reasons for the disintegration of the Asante confederacy. This reason made some of his people who were spoiling for war to be angry with him and it was this same reason that resulted in his destoolment in 1883. Prior to his destoolment he was suspended from carrying out any ceremony for the stools.

He did not bring any new cultural practice except that he rationalised certain aspects of the Asante Law. For example, he made the royal member and the ordinary man to both face

capital punishment for an offence for which hitherto, the royal was set free while the ordinary man was killed. Also the civil war he fought with Dwaben and Asokore caused them to go back to the Akyem Abuakwa area (Osei, 2000; Osei,2002;Claridge,1964). He does not have a black stool because he was destooled.

After the destoolment of Nana Osei Mensa Bonsu there were some unrests in the Asante nation. There were some persons who wanted Nana Osei Mensa Bonsu back, while some other persons too wanted Kofi Karikari, elder brother of Mensa Bonsu, who had been earlier destooled to be re-enstooled, and there was Kwaku Dua who had been earlier nominated by Nana Kwaku Duah I to succeed him but because of his tender age at that time Nana Kofi Karikari was instead enstooled (Claridge, 1964).

There is no documentation on the wives and sons of Nana Mensa Bonsu and Nana Kwaku Dua II who succeeded him but it is most likely that they had families too so it is suggested that another research should be carried out whenever possible to unearth this information.

4.3.12 Nana Kwaku Duah II (April - June 1884)

Nana Kwaku Duah II was eventually chosen to be the Twelveth Asantehene and he was enstooled in 1884. Unfortunately after reigning for only forty days he was infected with small pox and died and so he did not bring any new cultural changes (Osei,2002). He is represented by two bells in the stool house.

After the death of Nana Kwaku Duah II it was agreed that Nana Kofi Karikari be re-enstooled, but he also died of dysentery in the process of decision-making in 1884. Ward

(1948) suggests that Nana Kofi Karikari might have caught an infection resulting in the dysentery when he wandered in the bush after he was defeated in the 1874 war. He however died in 1884 so it is doubtful how he could have lived with dysentery for ten years. Fuller's suggestion that he might have been secretly put to death sounds more convincing (Fuller cited in Ward, 1948). Another person, Kwasi Kusi was also put forward but he also died when plans were in progress for his enstoolment (Claridge,1964). Two persons were then put forward, Yaw Atwereboana, grandson of Efua Sarpon whose other grandchildren were Kofi Karikari and Mensa Bonsu who were earlier Asantehene, the tenth and eleventh respectively, but destooled and then Prempeh, the son of the tenth Asantehemaa Nana Yaa Akyaa, and brother of Nana Kwaku Dua II the late King (Claridge,1964;Ward,1948). The latter was very young but he had strong support so he was chosen to be the Asantehene. (Osei, 2000).

Between June 1884 when Asantehene Nana Kwaku Dua II died and 26th March 1888 when Asantehene Nana Agyeman Prempeh I was enstooled, there was no Asantehene so Owusu Koko, Chairman of Kumasehyiamu acted as Asantehene from June to November 1884; Akyampon Panin also Chairman of Kumasehyiamu acted from November 1884 to 1887; and Owusu Sekyere was Regent from November 1887 to 26 March 1888. (Retrieved May 26, 2011 from http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Ghana_native.html).

4.3.13 Nana Prempeh I (1888-1896 and 1924-1931)

Nana Prempeh I was the Thirteenth Asantehene. He was enstooled on 11th June 1888 at the age of sixteen (Anti,1996) with the name Kwaku Dua III (Ward,1948) but later changed it to Nana Prempeh I (Osei,2000). He reigned for a total of fifteen years with an exile of twenty-seven years in between his first eight and second seven years of reign. He was the fourth

child of Yaa Akyaa and Kwasi Gyambibi (Wilks,1975). Kwasi Kyisi who was the son of Odae, daughter of Afia Sarpon, the eighth Asantehemaa contested the Asantehene seat with Yaw Atwereboana son of Asebi Boakye and Yaa Afere and him, Nana Prempeh. When Agyeman Prempeh I became Asantehene, he prevented men, through an edict, from marrying Yaw Atwereboana's sisters so that their line would be curtailed (Wilks,1975).

It was within this period that Africa was being scrambled for, by the colonialists. The British decided to add Asante nation to its already existing Colony in the Gold Coast. The Asantehene was not in favour of it and so tried all peaceful means to avert it, as he did not want to go to war with the British. After several exchanges of communication between Nana Prempeh I and the British Governor, the Asantehene agreed to come under British rule on 20th of January 1896. The Asante nation had also defaulted in the payment of the 50,000 ounces of gold as was stated in the Fomena Treaty. Thus the Governor insisted that it must be paid in full. When the Asante nation could not raise the total amount because its coffers were empty, the Governor ordered the arrest of the Asantehene, Nana Prempeh I along with 55 others (Ward,1967). The Asantehene along with the people were first taken to Cape Coast Castle, later to Elmina Castle and deported to Sierra Leone on 1st January 1897 and finally to Seychelles Island (Osei, 2000).

The British put Chiefs Kwaku Nantwi, Opoku Mensa and Kwame Afrifa in charge of Kumasi State (Claridge,1964) and in 1896 the other States in the Asante confederacy, Bekwai, Agona, Offinso, Ejisu, Nsuta, Mampon, Kumawu, Bompata, Abodom and Kokofu signed separate treaties for British protection and existed as independent States under the British Commissioner in charge of the Asante kingdom, Major Piggot (Ward,1948 and1967). The

British did this to break the Asante Kingdom apart, destroy their unity and take away the Golden Stool (Claridge,1964).

In March 1900, Sir Frederic Hodgson the English Governor, his wife and officials visited Kumase. At the durbar for him he demanded the Golden stool to be brought for him to sit on. His demand was not granted for it was unacceptable to the Asantes and also an insult to them for such a demand to be made for their very soul, their unifying symbol which was sacred to them. This was the immediate cause of the Yaa Asantewaa war (Anti, 1996). Yaa Asantewaa the queenmother of Edweso led Kumase and their neighbours including Edweso, Offinso, Atwima, Abofo, Bechem, Nkwanta, Adansi and part of Kokofu (Ward,1948) to fight the British in Kumase in 1900. States like Bekwai, Mampon, Juaben, Nsuta, Kumawu, Atebubu, Techiman, Wenchi, Berekum, Wam, Nkoranza, Gyaman and Manso Nkwanta either abstained or were on the side of the British (Ward,1948).

The British had superior weapons like 7.5 millimetre guns, 75 centimetre pounder, swords and bayonets (Claridge,1915) and trained manpower so the Asantes lost the Yaa Asantewaa war, the ninth war the Asantes fought with the British (Claridge,1964). Yaa Asantewaa and 13 others were arrested and deported to join the Asantehene Nana Prempeh I in the Seychelles Island in 1901. Thirty-one others were also arrested and imprisoned at the Elmina Castle (Osei,2000; Claridge,1964).

On the 1st of January 1902, Ashanti was formally annexed and became a Crown Colony (Ward,1948). Between 1901 and 1924 the British appointed chiefs, by election and not by royalty in Asanteland (Claridge,1964; Ward,1948). Kumase was no longer the Asante capital

but only the capital of Kumase State and it became an important centre for trade; most Asantes turned to farming and trading; and missionaries continued to come into Asanteland with the Christian gospel and western education. In 1903 the railway line from Sekondi was linked to Kumase and to Accra in 1923 (Ward,1948). The Asante Kotoko Society joined in the campaign for the education of members of the royal family. The campaign was led by Mr. E. P. Owusu who had benefited from western education and was also a member of the royal family. The Society also campaigned for the return of the Asantehene, Nana Prempeh I. On 11th November 1924 Nana Prempeh I returned to the Gold Coast, after being away in exile for 30 years with 46 people, most of whom were born in Seychelles Island while some of the persons exiled with him to Seychelles had died there (Osei, 2000).

Before Nana Prempeh I's return, the British made it a condition that he would be a private citizen and not the Asantehene (Osei, 2000). However, the people of Kumase petitioned the British to re-instate Nana Prempeh as the Chief of Kumase when he returned. This was granted but the British did not know that the Chief of Kumase was the occupant of the Golden stool and the occupant of the Golden stool was the King of the Asante Nation, so in effect Nana Prempeh I regained his seat as the Asantehene (Ward,1948). In reality he was not destooled by his people, as the Asantes did not consider the destoolment of their King by any other person than themselves as destoolment. Nana Prempeh I continued to rule with the assistance of the Asante Kotoko Society and his nephew Mr. E. P. Owusu. He died in 1931(Osei, 2000).

Nana Prempeh I cared for his people so he accepted banishment instead of war to save the lives of his people. He was the first Asantehene to be literate and also to convert to

Christianity. These were done when he was in exile in Seychelles. Since he became a Christian, all Asantehene after him have continued his culture and become Christians, still maintaining the traditional practices of offering libation on black stools for the sanctification of the soul. He also abolished human sacrifice when he returned to the Asante land (Osei, 2002).

The stool of Nana Prempeh I was decorated with a central boss of gold to represent a star, and a crescent to represent the moon, together called '*srane ne nsoroma*'. It was blackened after his death and is kept in the stool house representing him. Nana Agyeman Prempeh I had multiple wives, some of whom, Abena Kordie and Ama Kwahan, accompanied him into exile as well as his son Kwasi Boakye (Osei, 2002).

Nana Prempeh I's nephew known in private life as Mr. E. P. Owusu succeeded him as Asantehene in 1931 with the stool name Nana Osei Tutu II but he dropped the 'Tutu' in the name and added the stool name of his uncle whom he succeeded to his name, so he became known as Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II (Osei, 2000). He did not use the name Osei Tutu II because the colonial administrators were "troubled by the emotive significance of the name" and so discouraged the proposal (Wilks 1975:370).

4.3.14 Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II (1931- 1970)

Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II was the Fourteenth King of the Asante Kingdom and he reigned for thirty nine years. He inherited a disintegrated Asante nation which was the 1st Asante Confederacy. He was also officially installed as Chief of Kumase and not as Asantehene (Osei, 2002). The restoration of a united Asante nation was his priority so he

petitioned the government on the issue and the matter was referred to the then individual Asante States for their consideration. Out of the 27 States, 17 agreed, 8 disagreed and 2 abstained. The majority won, so the Asante Confederacy was restored on 31st January 1935, with Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II as the Asantehene (Ward,1948). On 31st January 1935, 24 Paramount Chiefs took the oath of allegiance and the rest did so in subsequent days. Thus came into being the 2nd Asante Confederacy, which was commemorated with the creation of the *Nkabom* Stool ((Osei,2000). The name *Otumfoɔ* was added to his name by his people when he was made the Asantehene. However, in a swift move as if in competition, the British knighted him and so gave him the title “Sir” to precede the name *Otumfoɔ* (Anti,1996)

In 1943 the government ceded to the Asantehene all the lands in Kumasi which had been earlier declared Crown land when Ashanti was annexed. The Ashanti Advisory Council was also formed with five government nominees, seven members nominated by the Ashanti Confederacy Council, one member each nominated by the Kumasi Town Council and the Kumasi Chamber of Commerce and the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti as the President (Ward,1948).

The Confederacy existed as a strong unifying force of the Asantes until the movements for self government in the country started and the formation of political parties, later bringing about the shifting of the powers of Kings to the political parties. Eventually the Asantehene became the custodian of the customs and traditions of Asante and only dealt with cases of land disputes and tradition in his Court. Rather than fight this reduction in his powers, he got himself interested in developing the Asante nation and the people to fit into the modern world (Osei, 2000).

He embraced Christianity and it was in his time that several educational institutions from primary to secondary levels were established in Kumase. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) was also established during his reign, initially known as the College of Technology. These were all possible because he led Asanteman to provide land and some financial support. He then encouraged members of the royal family to seek western education, so several of them enrolled in the western schools. Kumase Town Expansion Plan was devised and the Komfo Anokye Hospital established at the spot where Okomfo Anokye had planted a sword and instructed that no one should uproot it.

Modern roads, electrification of Kumase as well as the provision of pipe borne water, all came during the reign of Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II. The Asante Kotoko Football Club was also founded at his time and the Kumasi Sports Stadium and the Turf Club were established in Kumase, as well as the construction of the Kumasi Airport. With these developments, Asante land became a centre of trade and investments making the people financially buoyant. Added to this was the good yield and income from cocoa which was farmed extensively by the Asantes and had become the main export income earner for the then Gold Coast, which later in March 1957 became Ghana. These developments came about because the Asantes had then turned their energies from war to work (Osei, 2000).

The King also crossed the Pra river several times for visits to other areas of the country thereby breaking the convention that an Asantehene should not cross the Pra river for anything except for war (Anti,1996).

One major activity of Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II was the design of the Asante flag which has become a nationally acclaimed Asante symbol. The colours gold, black and green were chosen, signifying the wealth, sovereignty and vegetation of Asanteland respectively. Today, the flag is embossed with a crest called the '*Busumuru Cap*' (Plate 4.2).



Fig.4.1 Asanteman flag

Source: <http://english.turkcebilgi.com/Asanteman>



Plate 4.2 Busumuru Cap crest

Source: Nana Amankwah, Manhyia Palace

This crest is an emblem made for Nana Osei Tutu who brought into being the united Asante nation. It was a very wise decision for that to be used, as it kept the minds of Asantes conscious of the fact of when, how and who brought Asantes together and re-inforced the need to maintain that unity (Osei, 2000). It is used just as a crest and it is never worn.

Since no man is immortal, Nana Osei Agyemang Prempeh II joined his ancestors in 1970. In addition to the several changes and developments he brought to Asanteland, he also restored the Asante Confederacy and, since he was educated, he supported educated persons to be enstooled as chiefs, which brought about the education culture among several Asantes (Osei, 2002). His stool has a design like a circular boss at the point of intersection of a Greek cross. A reef knot, *nyansapɔw*, decorates the column and both its seat and base have smaller bosses of the *Ntrawa-ntrawa* type, like that of Nana Osei Kwadwo and has two bells. It was blackened when he joined his ancestors and is now in the stool house. He was succeeded by his nephew, Mr. Mathew Poku, alias Barima Kwaku Adusei, with the stool name Nana Opoku Ware II (Osei, 2002).

Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II married Lady Mary Prempeh whom Anti (1996) described as ‘fashionable Mary’. The current Atipinhene and Apagyahene are two of his children. The father of Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II was Kwaku Owusu alias Owusu Nkwantabisa.

It is interesting to note that during his reign the strong monarchical system of the Asante people again became important and was highly regarded during the emergence of the party political system in the then Gold Coast. A special correspondent of the **Ghana Nationalist**, a newspaper then wrote that the Asantehene was suggested to be made a monarch, King of Ghana, as was in place in England:

“quoting sources close to the central committee of the Convention Peoples Party, reports to this agency that after secret meetings held last week by high CPP officials and Mr. K.A. Gbedemah, Minister of Finance and Director of operations of the Party, it was decided to send a delegation to Otumfuo the Asantehene, Nana Sir Osei Agyeman Prempeh, requesting him to accept their suggestion to be

made the Monarch of the Gold Coast. This means that if Otumfuo accepts the request, a Monarchical State will be established like Britain and some other Empires, But a Cabinet system of Government will still exist with a Prime Minister at the head” .

Ghana Nationalist (Accra) No 177, 20th October 1954.

Apparently the *Asantemanhyiamu* and the Council of Kumase had other interests which occupied their time and so could not agree to consider this request so that matter was never resolved. This however, may be part of the reason why the Asantehene today is the only recognised ruler in Ghana who has paramount chiefs under him and is seen as a King and addressed as ‘Your Majesty’. The Asantehene was also for a long period the President of the National House of Chiefs.

4.3.15 Nana Opoku Ware II (1970-1999)

He became the Fifteenth Asantehene in 1970 at a time when party politics and democratic political government had eroded much of the powers of the Asantehene. He reigned for twenty-nine years. According to Osei (2000) who chronicled most of the King’s activities during his reign, some Chiefs in Brong Ahafo rebelled against owing allegiance to the Golden Stool while other chiefs in the country started agitating for the Presidency of the National House of Chiefs, before then the permanent position for the Asantehene. As a result of this agitation he stepped down and stayed out of the House and rather sent one of the Paramount chiefs to represent the Asantehene at the National House of Chiefs. It was a period of change from the traditional activities.

In 1970 there were fourteen (14) paramountcies in Asante region. They were Kumasi, Mampong, Asumegya, Adanse, Dwaben, Kokofu, Bekwai, Nsuta, Kumawu, Agona, Offinso, Edweso, Denyase, Asokore. Between 1981 and 1985 Nana Opoku Ware II elevated seven (7) more – Agogo, Obogu, Tepa, Manso Nkwanta, Ofoase, Bompata, Asankare. Also stools in Brong Ahafo elevated were Mim, Sankore, Akyerensua, Bekyem, Yamfo, Ofuman, Nsokow, Gyapekrom, Goaso, Hwediem, Kenyase No.I, Kenyase No.2, Akrodie, Amanten, Sampa and Kukuom. In 1996, to commemorate his Silver Jubilee, Nana Opoku Ware II elevated eleven (11) more stools to paramountcies. They are Beposo, Kwaman, Domeabra, Juansa, Asuboa, Maaban and Gyadam in Asante region and Tuobodom, Tanoso, Tanoboase and Buoyam in the Brong Ahafo region. As at 1996 there were fifty- five (55) paramountcies in the Asante nation, thirty five (35) in Asante region and twenty (20) in Brong Ahafo region (Osei, 2000). He re-introduced the peaceful culture even in the face of provocation from some of the eight national governments when he was King and decentralised the traditional administration by creating forty-one (41) more paramount chief to ensure effective traditional rule.

He reigned during the period when Ghana went through several changes in governance, eight different governments in all, some democratic others military. He was firm but fair to all the governments, commending when necessary and condemning as well when necessary (Osei, 2000). He was also the first Asantehene to travel to the United States of America and England with his retinue. The visits showcased the rich cultural values of the Asante Kingdom to the world (Osei,2000).

Nana Opoku Ware II also created the '*Nkosoo*' stool and asked his chiefs to do likewise for persons who contributed to the development of the chiefdoms, irrespective of whether they

were royals or not. This has been emulated by some chiefs in other parts of the country (Osei, 2002).

In education he continued with the policies of his predecessor and established the Opoku Ware Foundation to fund brilliant but needy students of Asanteman. He also pushed for the establishment of the Medical School in KNUST. In 1995, after building a new Palace for the Asantehene he turned over the old one, which was the Palace built and occupied by Nana Prempeh I, to be used as the Palace Museum for the generation of funds to support the Foundation (Osei,2000; Osei,2002).

His reign experienced some chieftaincy disputes resulting in destoolments of some paramount chiefs. He was able to solve some of these disputes and also enstooled some Chiefs. Some cases were still pending in his court when he was called to join his ancestors on 25th February 1999 after reigning for 29 years (Osei, 2000).

Nana Opoku Ware II was married. He did not take on the stool wives and kept to the wife he had before he ascended the throne, Lady Victoria, which was a deviation from the existing culture. (Osei, 2002). His son is Nana Adusei Poku, the current Akyempemhene. Like his predecessors he had a stool which is now blackened and represents him in the stool house.

4.3.16 Nana Osei Tutu II (1999 – date)

In April 1999 the Sixteenth **Asantehene**, known in private life as Barima Kwaku Dua, was enstooled as the occupant of the Golden stool with the stool name **Nana Osei Tutu II**. Some

people refer to him as “Nana Osei Tutu Ababio”. He is still reigning as Asantehene and has begun several projects towards the development of Asanteland in particular and Ghana in general. He has expanded the Manhyia Palace, modernised all the buildings, beautified the Palace grounds and constructed a wall around the wide compound of the Palace, encompassing all the utility areas of the Palace that hitherto existed with no wall around them. His deeds are not included in this study since it is premature to do so.

4.4 Style of Leadership of the Asantehene

Wilks (1975) classified the style of leadership of the Asantehene from 1695 to 1931 into four types:

i. Divine Kings

Nana Osei Tutu I and Nana Opoku Ware I were leaders of the nation who had attributes of Divine Kings and they executed wars that made Asante an imperial power. For the symbols introduced during their reigns, please see Table 4.3.

ii. Constitutional Kings

Nana Osei Kwadwo, Nana Osei Kwame and Nana Osei Bonsu carried through reforms that transformed Asante from a mainly military power to a civil authority and they were Constitutional Kings. Table 4.3 indicates the symbols introduced during their reigns.

iii. Modern Autocratic Kings.

Nana Kwaku Dua brought in a new style of government described as modernised autocracy, where he broke into the powers of his chiefs and ruled by the mandate of the people and set Asante in the direction of a nation state. He was a Modern Autocratic King. The list of the symbols he introduced during his reign is in Table 4.3.

iv. **Presidential Kings**

Nana Kofi Karikari, Nana Mensa Bonsu and Nana Agyeman Prempeh I reigned like Presidents rather than rulers. They oversaw the affairs of a nation that had to go through compulsory changes. Subsequent Kings, Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II, Nana Opoku Ware II and Nana Osei Tutu II would fall into this category of presidential Kings. Only Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II and Nana Opoku Ware II introduced symbols during their reigns and they are observed in Table 4.3. As stated earlier Nana Osei Tutu II is not being studied in this work so no attention was given to any symbol that he might have created already in his on-going reign.

4.5 Asante Royal Lineages

Wilks (1975) also indicates five Kings, Osei Tutu, Osei Kwadwo, Osei Bonsu, Osei Yaw and Osei Agyeman Prempeh II as coming from the **house/ lineage of Nana Osei Tutu I**; four Kings, Opoku Ware I, Opoku Fofie, Osei Yaw and Opoku Ware II from the **house / lineage of Nana Opoku Ware I**; and five Kings, Kwaku Dua I, Kofi Karikari, Mensa Bonsu, Kwaku Dua II and Agyeman Prempeh I from the **house / lineage of Nana Kwaku Dua I**. He indicated that Kusi Obodum and Osei Kwame were not from any of the houses but did not show from which descent they came from, although Osei Kwame's mother was Akyeama, whose prominence Asante history suppressed, and rather said Osei Kwame was the son of Konadu Yiadom I, who was actually his mother's sister (Wilks,1975). There is no explanation relating to Kusi Obodum.

4.6 Fekuo (Mfekuo for plural)

According to Arhin (2002) the rapid military expansion of the Asante kingdom called for the re-organisation in its administrative processes. This brought about the creation of bands,

mfekuo, by some of the Asantehene when the need arose. The *mfekuo* were the departments or agencies of governance that assisted in the central administration of Asanteman. The leaders of the *mfekuo*, known as *fekutire* acted as the Cabinet of Asanteman. The membership of these *mfekuo* were men who hailed from different places cutting across the customary systems of allegiance, that is, lineage and settlement, with the singular qualification of having allegiance to the heads / leaders of the *mfekuo* who were appointed by the Asantehene himself to administer such groups (*mfekuo*). The following *mfekuo* were created by some of the Asantehene with chiefs, *mfekutire*, installed to lead them as follows:

Nana Osei Tutu I	– <i>Kontire, Akwamu, Gyase, Adonten, Nifa, Benkum, Kyidom, Domakwae and Saman</i>
Nana Opoku Ware I	– <i>Ankobe, Ananta, Kronko, Fante</i>
Nana Kusi Obodum	– <i>Nkonson</i>
Nana Osei Kwadwo	– <i>Asabi, Hyiawu</i>
Nana Osei Kwame	– <i>Apagya, Atipin</i>
Nana Osei Bonsu	– <i>Atene Akoten, Akomfode, Anamako, Apente, Pinanko, Anonomsa</i>
Nana Osei Yaw	– <i>Apesemaka</i>
Nana Kwaku Dua I	– <i>Manwere, Ayebiakyere, Som</i>
Nana Agyemang Prempeh I	– <i>Ampoti, Twidom, Pinkyedomko</i>
Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II	– <i>Nkabom</i>
Nana Opoku Ware II	– <i>Nkosoo</i>

4.7 Asante Nation Formation in War Time

According to Osei (2000), in war time, the Asante nation was divided into the following formation:

1. The Advance guard – *Kontire, Akwamu, and Twafo*
2. The main flank – *Adonten*

3. The left flank – *Benkum*
4. The right flank – *Nifa*
5. The rear flank – *Kyidom*
6. The home guard – *Ankobe*

4.8 Composition of the Asante Regional House of Chiefs

The composition of the Asante Regional House of Chiefs is as follows:

1. Asantehene is the President
2. All Paramount Chiefs of Asante Region
3. 4 Divisional Chiefs of Kumase State

Five (5) members of this House are chosen to represent Asante Region at the National House of Chiefs (Osei, 2000).

4.9 Composition of the Asanteman Council

The Asanteman Council is the highest authority of the traditional Asante system of administration and its president is the *Asantehene*. From the account of Osei Kwadwo , a scholar in Asante history, the Asanteman Council consists of the following members:

1. The *Asantehene* who is the President
2. The Paramount chiefs of the Asante Nation
3. 4 senior divisional chiefs from the Kumase State – *Bantamahene* (Kontihene of Kumase) , *Asafohene* (Akwamuhene of Kumase), *Aseniehene* (Adontenhene of Kumase), *Akyempemhene* (Kyidomhene of Kumase).

The Kings of Asante from Nana Osei Tutu I (1695 -1719) to Nana Osei Tutu II (1999- date) are presented in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 Kings (Asantehene) of Asante Nation from 1695 to date

NO.	ASANTEHENE	PERIOD	REMARKS
1.	Nana Osei Tutu I	1695 – 1719	Died on the stool
2.	Nana Opoku Ware I	1720 – 1750	Died on the stool
3.	Nana Kusi Obodom	1750 – 1764	Abdicated due to illness
4.	Nana Osei Kwadwo	1764 – 1777	Died on the stool
5.	Nana Osei Kwame	1777 – 1797	Destooled
6.	Nana Opoku Fofie	1797 - 1799	Died on the stool
7.	Nana Osei Kwame Asibe Bonsu	1799 - 1824	Died on the stool
8.	Nana Osei Yaw Akoto	1824 – 1834	Died on the stool
9.	Nana Kwaku Dua I	1834 – 1867	Died on the stool
10.	Nana Kofi Karikari	1867-1874	Destooled
11.	Nana Mensah Bonsu	1874 – 1883	Destooled
12.	Nana Kwaku Dua II	1884-1884	Died on the stool
13.	Nana Agyeman Prempeh I	1888-1931	Died on the stool
14.	Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II	1931-1970	Died on the stool
15.	Nana Opoku Ware II	1970 – 1999	Died on the stool
16.	Nana Osei Tutu II	1999 – date	Presently on the stool

Source: Osei Kwadwo (2002) .

It is necessary to provide a table of Queen mothers, *Asantehemaa*, in this study because by Asante tradition the King is selected by the *Asantehemaa* with the assistance of other king

makers. The Table 4.2 therefore shows the *Asantehemaa* of the Asante nation from the beginning of the reign of Nana Osei Tutu I (1695) the first Asantehene to the beginning of the reign of Nana Osei Tutu II (1999).

Table 4.2 Queenmothers (Asantehemaa) of Asante Nation from 1695 to date

NO	ASANTEHEMAA	PERIOD	REMARKS
1.	Nana Nyarko Kusiamoa	1695-1722	Died during Ebiri Moro's Invasion of Kumase
2.	Nana Ntim Nketiah Abamo	1722-1740	Died on the stool
3.	Akua Afriyie	1740-1768	Died on the stool
4.	Nana Konadu Yiadom I	1768-1809	Died on the stool
5.	Nana Akosua Adoma	1809-1819	Destooled and executed for planning to destool the King
6.	Nana Amma Serwaah I	1819-1828	Died on the stool
7.	Nana Yaa Dufie	1828-1836	Died on the stool
8.	Nana Afua Sarpon	1836-1857	Destooled by the King, Nana Kwaku Dua I
9.	Nana Afua Kobi I	1857-1880	Died on the stool
10.	Nana Yaa Akyaa	1880-1917	Died on the stool
11.	Nana Konadu Yiadom II	1917-1945	Died on the stool
12.	Nana Amma Serwa Nyarko II	1945-1977	Died on the stool
13.	Nana Afua Kobi Serwa Apem II	1977 – date	Presently on the stool

Source: Osei Kwadwo (2002).

Some symbols were acquired by the various Asantehene during their reigns that are worthy of mention to make the information about them complete and they are presented in Table 4.3:

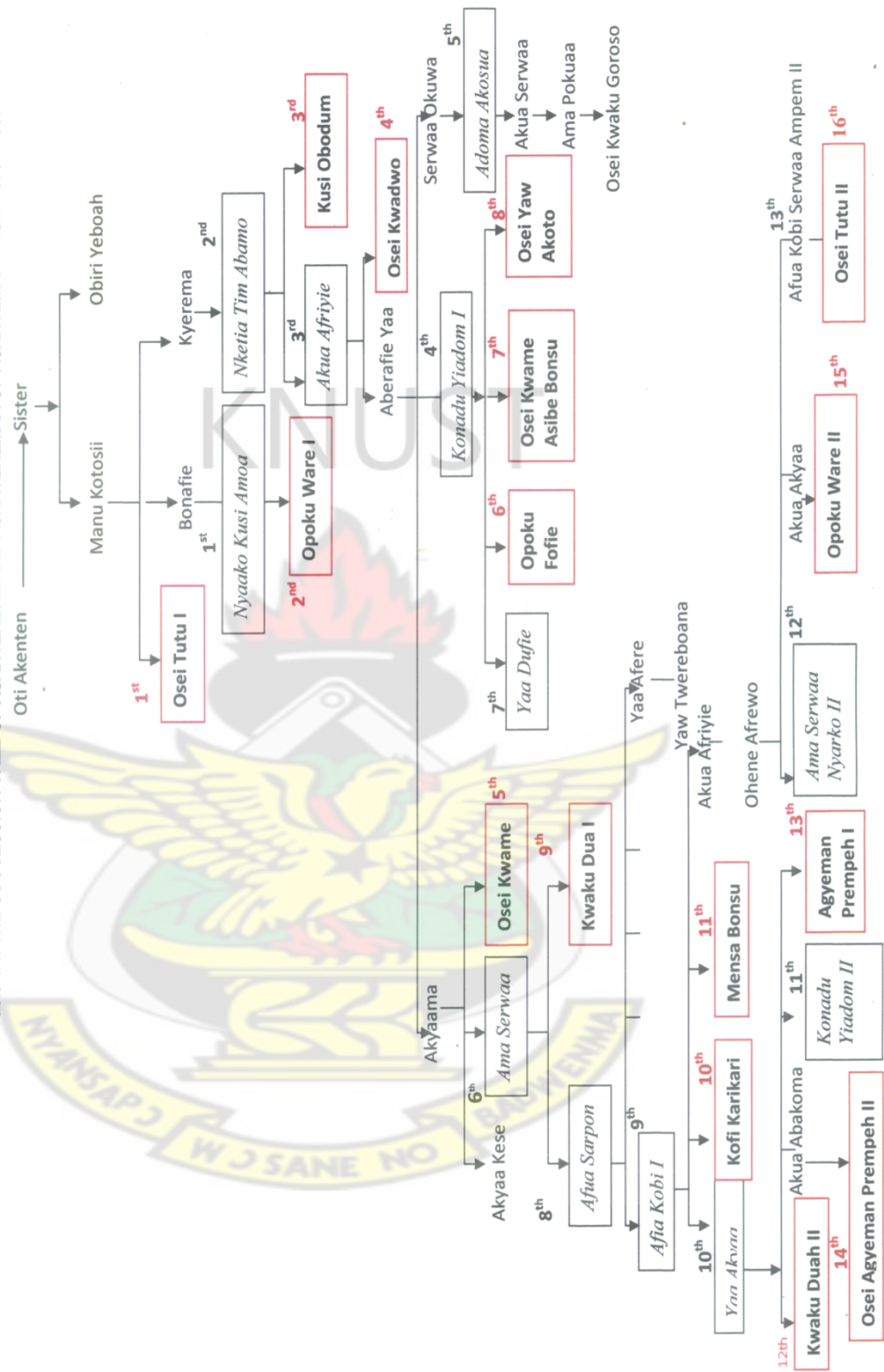
Table 4.3 Symbols acquired by the Asantehene 1695 – 1999

No	ASANTEHENE	PERIOD	SYMBOLS ACQUIRED
1.	Nana Osei Tutu I	1695 – 1719	<p>1. The supreme symbol, <i>Sika dwa Kofi</i>, the Golden stool (see Plate 5.2c, page 111).</p> <p>2. The ‘skull of a mangabey’ is found on two swords. It is believed that these were conjured by Okomfo Anokye from the sky. The skull <i>Kwa Gyadu</i> is found on the Abosomfena sword and the skull <i>Gyagitire</i> on the Asomfofena sword. This is the 1st Keteanofena swords.</p> <p>3. The knotted elephant tusk <i>abosodee</i> originated in 1701 when during the war with Denkyira, Okomfo Anokye sent to a famous rival enemy priest an elephant tusk tied in a knot, challenging him to untie it. The rival enemy priest could not untie it (see Plate 5.4k, page 142).</p> <p>4. <i>Kronti, Akwamu, Kyidom, Domakwae and Saman</i> stools.</p>
2.	Nana Opoku Ware I	1720 – 1750	<p><i>Mponponsuo</i> sword has <i>abosodee</i>, (the symbolic object) that is cast in gold and hangs from its scabbard a gaboon viper, <i>nankabobonini</i> holding a hornbill <i>owam</i> in its mouth. (see Plates 5.4c and 5.4d & 5.4e, pages 131-132). This symbolises patience because of the story behind it. This is an Akrafena.</p> <p><i>Ankobebe, Ananta, Kronko and Fante</i> stools.</p>
3.	Nana Kusi Obodom	1750 – 1764	<i>Nkonson</i> stool
4.	Nana Osei Kwadwo	1764 – 1777	<p>1. The crocodile, <i>Denkyem</i> on one of the Asantehene’s swords represents the totem of his <i>ntoro</i>, paternal social group (see Plate 5.4g, page 137). It is sometimes called the <i>Busumuru Kumaa</i> sword that is ‘young <i>Busumuru</i>’ and it was made in 1765. It is an Abosomfena.</p> <p>2. Human head gold cast, <i>worosatire</i> often represents a decapitated enemy chief or King (see Plate 5.4i, page 138). This is an Asomfofena.</p> <p>3. <i>Asabi</i> and <i>Hyiawu</i> stools</p>

5.	Nana Osei Kwame	1777 – 1797	<i>Apagya</i> and <i>Atipin</i> stools
6.	Nana Opoku Fofie	1797 – 1799	No stools and symbols
7.	Nana Osei Kwame Asibe Bonsu	1799 – 1824	A sword with <i>abosodee</i> showing a warrior with his hands on his abdomen, <i>Ahwehwebaa</i> represents a defeated warrior who accepts food from his captors because of hunger, meaning a man who has been reduced to feminine behaviour, or one who abandons his principles through unavoidable circumstances. This is an Akrafena. 2. <i>Aten</i> , <i>Akomfode</i> , <i>Anamako</i> , <i>Apente</i> , <i>Pinanko</i> and <i>Anonomsa</i> stools.
8.	Nana Osei Yaw Akoto	1824 – 1834	<i>Apesemaka</i> stool
9.	Nana Kwaku Dua I	1834 – 1867	A shield with a sword attached to the front, <i>Kraaku</i> is a symbol of a warrior, valour and fighting spirit. It was made in 1837. This is an Akrafena. <i>Manwere</i> , <i>Ayebiakyere</i> and <i>Som</i> stools.
10.	Nana Kofi Karikari	1867-1874	No stool and symbol because he was destooled.
11.	Nana Mensah Bonsu	1874 – 1883	No stool and symbol because he was destooled.
12.	Nana Kwaku Dua II	1884-1884	1. The bunch of plantain <i>Apem</i> or <i>Kra Kofi</i> indicates the stability and endurance of the Asante royal dynasty, that is, there will never be an end to the Asante royal dynasty . This is an Akrafena. 2. <i>Nimsaakakyi</i> is an antelope with its twisted horns extending the length of its body and is related to the consequences or after-thought “had I known is always last” and does no one any good as what is past is past. It may also be related to the responsibilities of ruling which may be problematic sometimes resulting in some decisions which upon hindsight may not have been taken because of their prevalent consequences. It is sometimes called <i>Bosompra Kumaa</i> , “young Bosompra” This is an Abosomfena.

13.	Nana Agyeman Prempeh I	1888-1931	<p>1. The bearded barrette or <i>asee</i> bird <i>Asee prebuo</i> or <i>Kra Kwasi</i> and its nest carries a message that 'if the nest was not made by the bird himself, he must have inherited it from the mother or one of his ancestors'. Made in 1888. This is an Akrafena.</p> <p>2. A hen and her chicks <i>akokobaatan ne ne mma</i>. This signifies the relationship between the King and his subjects, which is seen in the proverb that "the hen steps on her chicks not to hurt them but to correct their behaviour which means that the King disciplines his subjects to correct them and not to destroy them. This is an Abosomfena.</p> <p><i>Ampoti, Twidom and Pinkyedomko stools</i></p>
14.	Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II	1931-1970	<p>1. A heart resting on a palm fruit <i>abosodee Bemu</i> or <i>Kra Kwame</i> is a symbol meaning the individual kernels are to the palm fruit as the Asantehene is to his ancestral heritage", that is "Those of a common stock share the same origin". The heart stands for the King's commitment to the Golden Stool, that is "he was going to put his heart into the office he had inherited" This is an Akrafena .</p> <p>2. <i>Otwee</i>, Maxwell grey duiker, <i>abosodee</i> indicates the Asantehene's ability to "pull" (<i>twee</i>) his people together . It is an Abosomfena.</p> <p>3. <i>Nkabom</i> stool</p>
15.	Nana Opoku Ware II	1970 – 1999	1. <i>Nkosuo</i> stool

Table 4.4: THE SUCCESSION TREE OF ASANTEHENE AND ASANTEHEMAA OF ASANTEMAN FROM 1695 - 1999



CHAPTER FIVE

THE TRADITIONAL ART SYMBOLS OF THE MANHYIA PALACE

5.1 Overview

The chapter focuses on the identification (what each one is like), description (how it looks like, their design aspects), function (what it is used for) and importance or significance (what it means, does or can do for the society, philosophical meanings, aesthetic and moral values) of the symbols.

The Asante royal court had its own craftsmen who made well designed and finished products. History has it that most of these craftsmen were brought in from Denkyira along with some of their crafts after the Asante conquered them and so they came to practice their crafts in the Asantehene's court. The craftsmen were settled in different villages about fifteen miles (twenty kilometres) from the capital, Kumase. When the Asante defeated the Gyamans, Tekyimans and Akyems they again acquired their crafts and brought the craftsmen to Asante land to serve the Asante court. This is reminiscent of the Romans in about 200 BC, when they conquered the Greeks and so took away their artworks and artists to Rome (Retrieved September 15, 2010 from <http://history-world.org>).

The Denkyiras were said to have brought in the crafts of talking drums, items in gold and silver and carved palace doors (Agyeman-Duah, n.d.). The Tekyimans were said to have brought in silk weaving (Kente weaving), gold and brass casting, using the lost wax process. The Akyems were said to have brought in some forms of gold jewellery. The Gyamans were

said to have brought in some of the drums and other woodwork as well as the art of weaving . Most of the time the chief craftsman was made the chief of the craft village or at worst an immediate subordinate of the village chief, if the village was headed by a palace official already.

The Asantehene's State shields were crafted in Wawasi in the Kwabre District of the Ashanti Region. These state shields fashioned after the war shields which were made from wicker, had wooden central ribs with several flat cane strips attached to them. Additional vertical strips made from another type of cane were sewn with fine canes in decorative patterns. The edges were then trimmed and finished, handles attached to them and part of them covered with leather or fur (Johnson,1979). The Asantehene's umbrella maker was located in Banko in the Sekyere District of the Ashanti Region (Rattray,1927). Another umbrella maker was based in Nsuta (Johnson,1979). Pottery used to be made in Old Tafo during the time of Rattray, (1927) but now is mostly made in Pankrono and Afari. According to Agyeman-Duah (n.d) Mampong was also once a pottery center. Suame used to be a village for royal hammock carriers (Johnson,1979). Blacksmiths made swords, cutlasses, adzes; wood carvers made state stools, staff of office; basket makers made state shields and palanquins.

Development and modernization has now affected court crafts. In addition to the fact that the demand for these crafts is not regular, being faced with economic difficulties, the craftsmen now do several other things to sustain their livelihood.

The above make it clear why one cannot draw a fine line between Asante and other Akan cultures and so more Akan royal regalia and culture is seen in Asante royal regalia and

culture. For example, *Adae* and *Odwira* festivals are celebrated by several Akan traditional political groupings in the country. Although the Akan have different dialects and autonomous traditional political groupings, they believe that they have a common origin which is evidenced in their belonging to common clans across Akanland. Writers like Bowdich, Reindorf, Cruickshank, Sarbah, Ward, Danquah and Boahen have all attested to this fact. The Akans also until quite recently were distinguished from the other ethnic groups by the common court regalia, procedures and etiquette and their drumming and dancing (Arhin, 2002).

The traditional art symbols are found in various forms and on various items in the Manhyia palace. For the purposes of this study the symbols on stools, chairs, swords, linguist staff finial, umbrella finial, and architectural designs in the palace, jewellery, slippers, cloths and apparel of the Asantehene and the Asantehene's musical orchestra were studied. These items have several workers who attend to them (see pages 15-16).

5.2 Stools

Introduction

The traditional stool in Ghana itself is a symbol, as it is regarded as the resting place for the soul of an individual, a group or a nation. The stool is basically a seat but it has a very important political symbolism in indigeneous Akan and Asante form of governance. The stool is also a symbol of continuity among groups and generations; between the living and the dead and that is why the Akans and Asantes see it as the resting place of the soul of the nation, so a King is expected to preserve it for posterity. Stool can mean the carved wood made to be sat on or the office of a chief (Osei, 2002).

Chiefs can have various types of stools. There are also domestic stools used for eating (*didi*), bathing (*adware*) and also ceremonial stools that are beautifully carved and decorated. The symbol of office of the *nkondwasofo*, stool bearers, is the stool.

Description

Any stool normally has three parts and it is used for sitting on. The **base**, which is flat and rectangle in shape, gives it a good firm stability on the ground. It is about one-eighth ($1/8^{\text{th}}$) of the height of the stool (Osei, 2002). The **middle** part comes in different shapes and patterns including symbols that can be interpreted. The middle is about five eighths ($5/8^{\text{th}}$) of the height of the stool and bears the design of the stool (Osei, 2002). It is this part of the stool that bears the symbol that usually speaks or conveys a verbal or visual message with its designs in the form of animals, birds, objects, abstract forms or proverbs carved into the wood and has a meaning for educational and information purposes. The design in the middle can also indicate the type of person who owns the stool. The **top** part is where a person sits and it is about two eighths (a quarter) of the height of the stool which is carved to enable easy sitting. When it is carried it is the top which is placed at the back of the neck (Osei, 2002). It is usually smooth and carved in the shape of a crescent, curved upwards at the edges to support a comfortable sitting and also to enable carrying behind the neck, as that is how the stools of chiefs are carried. This part of the stool is known as the ‘*ɔbaatan awaa mu*’ or ‘*atuu*’ (embrace)

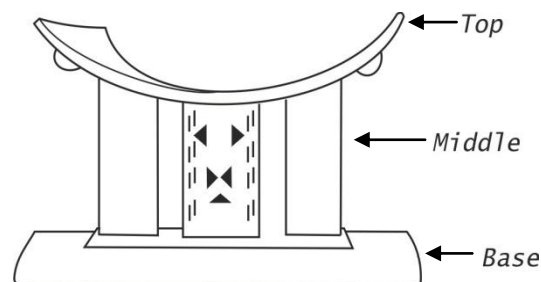


Fig. 5.2a Drawing of a stool

Stools are called *asesedwa* as most often they are carved out of the *Osese*, Funtumia africana tree and also from the *Nyamedua* Altsonia boonei tree usually because they are white and soft and therefore making the carvers work easier and producing cleaner results. Stool carvers, especially for chiefs and queen mothers are men. Tools used by carvers are often chisels, adzes, knives and others. The tools are purified or sanctified by sacrifices and prayers before they are used (Dagan,1988). Sarpong (1974) adds that it is believed, especially by wood carvers, that the good wood for carving has a spirit which has to be pacified before it is felled. For this, the carver needs to observe some taboos and always has to cleanse the tools he uses.

Usually, the stools of the Asantehene are decorated with gold, bronze or silver repoussé metal work. According to Bowdich (1821) the wealth of Asante was seen in the Asantehene's "furniture" which was gold plated in a variety of shapes and patterns. According to Rattray (1927) there were thirty one names for stools, seven of which were reserved solely for the use of the Asantehene.

Types of Stools

There are various types of stools, the key ones being the following:

1. *Ordinary stools* are the ones for Men, Women and Children and can be used by any one in the society.
2. *Silver stools* are ordinary stools that have been covered with silver, and they are not common. It is the queen mother of Asante land, the Mamponghehene and the Techimanhehene who are the only ones who own the silver stool (Sarpong,1971).
3. *Black Stools* are usually stools of chiefs that are blackened when they die and kept in their memory.

4. *Stools designated for the Asantehene*- Sarpong (1971) states that traditionally it is only the Asantehene who owns the elephant stool (*Ɔsonodwa*), Leopard stool (*Ɔsebɔdwa*) and the circular rainbow stool (*Kontonkurowidwa*) (Fig.5.2b). The cross stool (*Mmaremudwa*) is used by the Asantehene and paramount chiefs with the Asantehene's permission; the porcupine stool (*Kɔtɔkɔdwa*) by the Asantehene and his Council (Sarpong 1971).
5. *Stools of Office* are Chief's stool, queen mother's stool, priests stools
6. *Golden Stools (Ordinary)* are modeled after the great golden stool of the Asante but have no gold leaf on them.
7. *Golden Stool (Original)* is the sacred stool of the Asante people and no person sits on it.



Fig. 5.2b Asantehene's stools

Source: <http://hamillgallery.com/ASANTE/AsanteObjects/AsanteObjects.html>

The meanings of the symbols of elephant, leopard or rainbow in stools used by the Asantehene are traced to proverbs and beliefs among the Asantes. Sarpong (1971), writes that the proverb “*wo di ɔsono akyi a hasuo nka wo*”, to wit “when you follow the elephant you do

not get wet” is depicted in the elephant symbol in the stool. This shows the Asantehene as the elephant, which is considered as the strongest animal by the Asantes, and that being under his service or command gives one protection. A similar meaning is given to the leopard symbol *ɔsebɔdwa*, where the leopard is considered as the animal most feared by the Asantes, and so depicts that the Asantehene should be most feared because he is powerful. The symbol of the rainbow, goes with the proverb “ *Kontonkurowi, eda amansan kon mu* “ to wit ” the rainbow is around the neck of every nation” which is said to have two meanings referring to the Asantehene. First, it means that the Asantehene has power over everybody in Asanteland and second, reminds the Asantehene that death is the ultimate for every human being, including him, and so he should rule with kindness and humility.

Functions

The stool among the Akans and Asantes has four functions. First, it is an all-purpose object found in every home. Secondly, it is linked to rites of passage as gifts. Thirdly, it is a sacred object which it is believed that the spirit (*sunsum*) of the owner enters, when he sits on it, so it is placed on its side in the absence of the owner so that no other person sits on it; Fourthly, it is a political symbol (Patton,1979) whereby whoever sits on such a designated stool is the ruler of the people at that point in time.

Significance/Importance of a Chief's stool

It is a symbol of the soul of a people whom the chief rules over and it imbues a sacred and priestly function on the person who sits on it, enabling him to carry out administrative, judicial and religious functions over the people he rules. The soul of the chief resides in his stool, hence only he is allowed to sit on it until his demise, after which the stool is blackened and kept in a room with those of his predecessors. It is the symbol that shows the source of the power and authority of the chief.

The stool is seen as a sacred emblem and is the symbol of office of an Asante chief which represents the community, their solidarity, their performance and their continuity. As Kyerematen (1964:11) says, the stool is “the most important of the chief’s regalia and the sine qua non of his high office”. In Ghana the stool is the august emblem of political, judicial and social leadership.

The importance of the stool in Akan is shown by its use in several phases concerning the King. The King is “enstooled” in office, when ruling he is “sitting upon the stool”, and when he dies it is said that “the stool has fallen” (Patton,1979).

The Chief Stool-bearer of the Asantehene sits behind him in public clad in white cloth. He is supposed to be inhabited by the strength of all the departed Asantehene and so transfers such strength to the current Asantehene when needed. He has the confidence of the Asantehene. He assists the queen mother to enstool the new Asantehene and he also, with the help of his assistants, purifies the stool house after the departed King’s body has been taken to the royal Mausoleum. Usually female stool bearers are responsible for the stools of the queen mothers and males for the stools of the Asantehene.

5.2.1 The Golden Stool

Origin

It came about because King Osei Tutu needed a symbol of unity for the different states that he had brought together through the waging of wars. Okomfo Anokye, his priest and counsellor, promised to conjure from the heavens a stool which would serve that purpose, and in addition be the “repository of the soul of the nation and would have the powers both of bestowing prosperity and of warding off adversity from the Asantes” (Kyerematen,1969:3).

Okomfo Anokye however gave a condition which had to be satisfied and that was that, all the

chiefs in the Asante Kingdom and the King would give up their stools, swords and spears. The only stool left was the stool of the founding ancestress of the *Oyoko* clan. This was in order to clean the past memories of wars and conquests and for them to start on a clean slate. A huge hole was dug at the bank of river Bantama and all the items were buried there. Okomfo Anokye planted a sword at the bank of the river to mark the spot and the river was renamed **Aworoafena**. The spot where the sword was planted is within the compound of the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital today and it is interesting to note that there is no sign today that once upon a time a river ran through there, a sign of human activity gradually drying up the river. The sword is however still at the spot where it was planted, and it has never been possible to uproot it, as was predicted by Okomfo Anokye. He however said that if ever it was removed the Asante Kingdom would come to an end (Kyerematen,1969). It is now housed in a building specifically built to protect it.

On a Friday, the Golden Stool was conjured through incantations by Okomfo Anokye in the presence of all the chiefs and people of Asante, assembled at the meeting place outside the King's palace – *Dwaberem*. It dropped from the heavens amidst thunder and lightening onto the lap of the King. This was nine days before Akwasidae. The Golden Stool is known as “*Sika Adwa Kofi*”. It is said that Okomfo Anokye ‘struck’ the stool with a human being and seven pythons, who all vanished into the stool. An ointment prepared with the nail clippings and hair clippings from the head and pubic areas of the chiefs of the component divisions was rubbed on the stool to indicate that the Golden Stool belonged to the whole Asante nation (Kyerematen,1969).

When the Golden Stool arrived, Okomfo Anokye enacted seventy seven (77) laws (Rattray, 1929) in a flexible constitution with ancient Egyptian and Abyssinian roots (Bowdich,1821). The laws consisted of moral injunctions, civil and criminal codes to the Asante nation with

their prescribed sanctions (Kyerematen,1969). The Golden Stool is not one to be sat upon, not even by an Asantehene. It is not an ordinary stool. It is the shrine of the soul 'sunsum' of the Asante people. It is because of this belief that the Asantes were outraged when in 1900 Sir Frederic Hodgson demanded that it be brought to him to sit on, and so war broke out (Rattray,1916).

It is also sacred to the Asantes. It is said that when on one occasion a King in today's Cote D'Ivoire, then known as Gyaman, made a golden stool for himself, Nana Osei Bonsu upon hearing that, declared war on the King. The King was defeated at Bonduku and killed, his head was cut off, the stool was taken, brought to Kumase, melted and cast into two effigies of the King as masks and hung on each side of the Golden stool (Rattray,1916). A second occasion was when some Asante road makers in the 1920s came across the Golden Stool when it was hidden somewhere. Rather than accord it reverence they stole its gold ornaments and sold them. But for the intervention of the British, the twenty men would have been killed to 'cleanse' the stool, but they were instead banished (Rattray,1916). The Golden Stool was taken along during wars and it was treated like the ark of the Israelites (Osei, 2002).

The Golden Stool in a procession is usually conveyed under its own umbrella, *Nhwehwe kyiniε*, with its own attendants who are usually more than those who accompany the Asantehene (Rattray, 1916).

Physical Description

The Golden Stool is made out of solid gold. It is one and a half feet high from the ground, two feet long and one foot wide (Kyerematen,1969).



Plate 5.2c The Golden Stool on its throne, `Hwedomea`

Source: Manhyia Palace Photo Album

Adornment of the Golden Stool

Kyerematen (1964) states that the Golden Stool has several bells attached to it, however one of them called *Donkese* (great bell) which is made of an alloy of brass and copper is said to have been attached to the stool when it came down from the sky. The *Donkese* is believed to house a charm which attracts people to assemble when it is rung. King Osei Tutu upon instruction from Okomfo Anokye made four more bells, two gold and two brass *Adomire* (dark bells) to hang one on each side of the stool. This was in addition to the two brass bells that came with the stool (Rattray, 1916).

King Osei Tutu also added a pair of copper foot cuffs '*danwerefoo*' being the cuffs Ntim Gyakare bound himself to his wife with, while playing oware when the battle of Feyiase which the Asantes won, was being fought. When Opoku Ware succeeded Osei Tutu he also made similar foot cuffs, this time with gold to signify the actual material that Ntim Gyakare

used. Again, Osei Tutu added a charm, *suman*, made of gold and other precious beads to the Stool's regalia. To this, each subsequent Asantehene added his own charm and *suman*.

King Opoku Ware I who succeeded King Osei Tutu I also added four (4) bells made of gold. One had the design of a bell and the other 3 that of effigies of Ntim Gyakare of Denkyira, Ofosu Apenten of Akyem Kotoku and Abo Kwabena of Gyaaman (Ntim Gyakare was defeated by Nana Osei Tutu I while Ofosu Apenten and Abo Kwabena were defeated by Opoku Ware I). An eighth bell, which is an effigy of Sir Charles McCarthy, then Governor of Sierra Leone and Gold Coast was added after he was decapitated after he had killed himself following his defeat in the battle of Nsamankow in 1824.

The Golden Stool as a living Being

The Golden Stool is called *Sika Dwa Kofi* because it was born on Friday like a human being. It is fed regularly at *Adae* festivals with brown sheep (*odwan kɔkɔ*), yam and alcohol. It is believed that if the stool is starved the Asante nation will be in danger. Hagan (1968:10) sees the Golden Stool as representing "the widest expanse of political authority that enshrines common fundamental values and is the focus of collective Asante sentiments". It is surrounded by great secrecy and ritual and kept in a secret place. It does not touch the ground; no one sits on it and only the Asantehene when being installed has his buttocks lowered by King Makers to only touch it three times. It is only seen in public carried in a solemn procession by attendants on *Adae Kese*, the funeral of the Asantehene, when a new Asantehene is being installed and at important durbars, including when the new Asantehene is being presented to his people (Retrieved October 18, 2008 from <http://www.marshall.edu/akanart/akanpolbeliefs.html>). The Golden Stool has its own throne '*Hwedɔmtɛa*', its own set

of regalia including an umbrella, a shield made of elephant skin and a gold-plated drum and lute as well as its own body guards and other attendants (Kyerematen,1964).

5.2.2 Silver stool

The stool next to the Golden stool which is respected most by the Asante is the Silver stool created by Nana Osei Tutu I for the Mamponghehene, Boahen Anantuo (details of origin have been discussed in Chapter Four). It is the queen mother of Asanteland, the *Asantehemaa*, the Mamponghehene and the Techimanhene only, who own Silver stools (Sarpong,1971).



Plate 5.2d Silver stools

Source : Garrard, Timothy F. (1984)

5.2.3 Black Stool

The Black Stool, originally a ceremonial stool of the Asantehene is made out of “*sese*” wood *Funtumia africana* and embossed with gold leaf decorations (Kyerematen,1964). This ceremonial stool of the Asantehene usually becomes the black stool after its occupant dies,

because it is blackened and preserved in his memory. Each new Asantehene makes one for himself that he uses when on the throne. If he is destooled the stool is not blackened but kept aside to be used as additional ceremonial stool by the successor (Kyerematen,1964). The ceremonial stool is adorned with ornament with meanings.

As at 1969 there were ten (10) black stools – Opoku Ware, Kusi Obodum, Osei Kwadwo, Opoku Kwame, Opoku Fofie, Osei Bonsu, Osei Yaw Akoto, Kwaku Dua I, Kwaku Duah II, Agyeman Prempeh I - and also a bell representing the famous Golden Stool which is taken as the black stool of Nana Osei Tutu, the First Asantehene (Kyerematen,1969). Since Kyerematen's chronology, two more black stools for Osei Agyeman Prempeh II and Opoku Ware II have been added making the total twelve (12) in number.

Significance/ Importance of a Black Stool

A black stool is believed to have the spirit '*sunsum*' of the dead man in it so that the living members of the lineage will be protected by him. This is known as ancestor cult, where at special occasions like the beginning of the year or on some anniversaries, prayers and sacrifices are offered to the stool. The stool becomes the body and the blood, '*mogya*', of the dead person. They are seen as the homes of the dead chiefs in the present/current life.

This is the same principle as found in the black stools of the Asante royal lineage. It is of more historical importance, signifying the reigns of the past Asantehene and serves as a bond between the living, the dead and those to be born, thus also signifying the sentiments of the people.

In Asanteland commonly it is the Asantehene, Asantehemaa, Chiefs, Queen mothers and clan leaders whose stools are blackened and kept when they die. The chief may have several stools

in his lifetime but it is the one that is most used by him that is blackened. Every lineage has a stool which is the symbol of authority of the head. If the head of the lineage is a chief or an elder to a chief, his personal stool is blackened and preserved when he dies and kept in a special room in the family house as a sort of memory of him (Kyerematen,1969). It serves as a link between the living and the dead ruler which makes the living to keep remembering him. The blackened stools represent the ancestors, that is why sacrifices are made and prayers said to them on festive occasions. They are seen as the homes of the dead chiefs in the present/current life.



Plate 5.2e Some Royal Black stools of Asantehene
Clockwise Opoku Ware I, Osei Kwadwo, Osei Bonsu and Osei Yaw

Source: Kyerematen, A (1969)



Plate 5.2f Some Royal Black Stools of Asantehene

Clockwise Agyeman Badu, Kwaku Duah I, Agyeman Prempeh I and Osei Agyeman Prempeh II

Source: Kyerematen, A (1969)

Why a Stool is Blackened

The stools are blackened for specific purposes. They will receive constant sacrifices of blood and drinks at the observation of festivals so if it is kept in its original colour of white it will be dirty and unsightly. It is also to create a fearful respect for the stools as the colour black itself elicits mystery and some fear among people. It is also meant to indicate that the chief is dead, as among the Asantes, black is used as a mourning colour to indicate sadness,

unhappiness and a deep loss and finally to preserve them because the materials used for the blackening have preservative qualities. It is only when a chief rules well and dies while still on the throne that his stool is blackened after death. However, when a reigning chief dies through an avoidable accident like being killed in a place without his bodyguards when they should have been with him or a disease like malaria that could be cured, his stool will not be blackened.

Process of Blackening

The stool is blackened by the Chief of the stool bearers and his assistants. The stool is blackened with a mixture of soot from the kitchen and egg yolk. The name 'black stool' or '*akondwa tuntum*' is therefore derived from the black mixture which is used as the preservation material. The mixture of eggs and soot is smeared on the stool continuously until it is absolutely black. The blood of a sheep is sprinkled on it, the fat of the sheep placed on the stool and then prayers are said. It is likely that the stool will stink for a while until the blood and the fat of the sheep become dry.

5.2.4 The Stool House (*Nkonnwafieso*)

The Stool House is within the palace structures. The room has no window which is a safety measure and only stool bearers, the Asantehene and a few other persons have access to it and only a few persons enter the room wearing their sandals or slippers since it has to be revered and kept clean. Every 42 days the Asante chief, including the Asantehene, go into the stool-house where the stools of their predecessors have been blackened and kept to sacrifice to the ancestral spirits. If the day falls on Wednesday it is called *Awukudae*, if Sunday it is called *Akwasidae*. The stools either lie on blankets on a bed and are covered by part of the blanket or a hand woven cloth called *nsaa*. In front of each stool on the floor is a '*kuduo*' which

contains gold nuggets, which it is expected that the spirit of the King will need it as money in the other world, 'asamando'. It is in this house that these black stools of the Kings are kept and added unto when any successive occupant dies.



Plate 5.2g

The Blackened stools on nsaa cloth on a bed in the stool House. Notice the Kudu in front of the bed and bottles of drinks under the bed and an elder about to pour libation before the stools. Each stool has its own Kudu.

Source: Sarpong, Peter (1971)

Adae festivals are related to the blackened stools where libation is performed, prayers are said, sacrifices and food are offered to the stools. Since 1896 when the Asantehene Prempeh I was exiled from Kumase, no 'Odwira' festival, where the black stools would have been featured, has been held in Asante land. It seemed as if the Asantes had lost interest in the *Odwira* as it was not until 1991 during the reign of Nana Opoku Ware II that it was celebrated (Arhin, 2002).

Another school of thought states that it was Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who as Prime Minister placed a ban on the observance of the ‘*Odwira*’ festival on political grounds from 1952 until he was removed from office in 1966 (Arhin,2002). Today the ‘*Adae Kese*’ or ‘*Afenhyia Adae*’ is held in place of the ‘*Odwira*’.

TABLE 5.1 Description and location of black stools of Asantehene and other key royals from Nana Osei Tutu (1720) to Nana Opoku Ware II (1999)

NAME	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
1. Osei Tutu I 1697 - 1720	Golden Stool . The seat is of two disks. A bell represents it and it is not blackened.	In the Stool House.
2. Opoku Ware I 1720 -1750	His stool has a circular boss of gold on the central column, the ‘sekyedua’. It has two bells and it is blackened.	Stool House
3. Kusi Obodum 1750 – 1764 He was blind.	No description of the stool is given but it is blackened.	Akyeremade (another word for Kumase).
4. Osei Kwadwo 1764 -1777	His stool has a central circular boss of gold with a number of smaller ones on the seat,column and base. Design is called <i>Ntrawa – ntrawa</i> . It has two bells and it is blackened.	Stool House
5. Opoku Kwame . He was never a King but he was on the Akyeremade stool as Akyempimhene.	His stool has only one bell. It is the least of the black stools –‘ <i>Adekan</i> ’	Akyeremade but later put in Stool House.
6. Osei Kwame 1777-1797	Abdicated (destooled) and later committed suicide. He has no black stool	Not in Stool House

7. Opoku Fofie 1797 -1799	He reigned for only 60 days . He has a stool with two bells and it is blackened.	Stool House.
8. Osei Tutu Kwame Asibe Bonsu 1799-1824.	His stool had a circular gold boss at the point of intersection of a cross. The stool has two bells and it is blackened.	Stool House
9. Osei Yaw Akoto 1824 – 1834	His Stool decorated with a circular boss of gold and strips of gold on the seat base and column called <i>adaban</i> . Has two bells. He hated bloodshed so said that his stool should not be treated with sheep's blood. Stool was therefore polished with the fat of a bush pig, ' <i>bisadee</i> ' and soot.	Stool House.
10. Kwaku Dua I 1834 – 1867	His Stool is decorated with a circular boss, surrounded by another circle, the two together called <i>Kontokowie</i> . It has two gold strips and two bells.	Stool House
11. Kofi Karikari 1867-1874	Abdicated (destooled) . He has no black stool but the stool is preserved.	Not in Stool House
12. Mensa Bonsu 1874 -1883	Abdicated (destooled). He has no blackstool	Not in Stool House
13. Kwaku Duah II - 1884	Reigned for only 40 days and died of smallpox. His Stool has two brass bells and it is blackened.	Stool House
14. Agyeman Prempeh I 1888 – 1896, 1924 -1931	Stool decorated with a central boss of gold to represent a star, and crescent to represent the moon and together called ' <i>srane ne nsoroma</i> '. His Stool is blackened.	Stool House.

15. Agyeman Badu	Died in Seychelles so never became King. Just as Opoku Kwame, a stool was made for him. The design is a central boss, bars and crescent all in gold and together called <i>nyankontɔn</i> , rainbow design. The 2 nd of the <i>adekan</i> stools with only one bell. His Stool is blackened.	Stool House.
16. Agyeman Prempeh II 1931 – 1970	Stool design is a circular boss at the point of intersection of a Greek cross. A reef knot (nyansapo) decorates the column and both its seat and base have smaller bosses of the <i>Ntrawa – ntrawa</i> type, like that of Osei Kwadwo. His Stool has two bells attached and it is blackened.	Stool House.
17. Opoku Ware II 1970 – 1999	Stool decorated with a central boss. His stool has two bells attached and it is blackened.	Stool House.

Source: Nos. 1-16 Kyerematen, A (1969); No.17 Manhyia Palace Museum

5.3 Chairs

Chairs also feature among the Asantes as seats. Osei (2002) observed that raffia palm was used to construct lazy chairs, bamboo and cane for chairs. There are three varieties of chairs and these are *Adamadwa*, *Asipim*, and *Hwedɔm*.

5.3.1 *Adamadwa*

Adamadwa is made by carpenters from hard wood and used mostly by women in the kitchen and by children when working at home or at story-telling times. Attendants of the Asantehene also use it to sit in front of him when he sits in state (Osei, 2002).

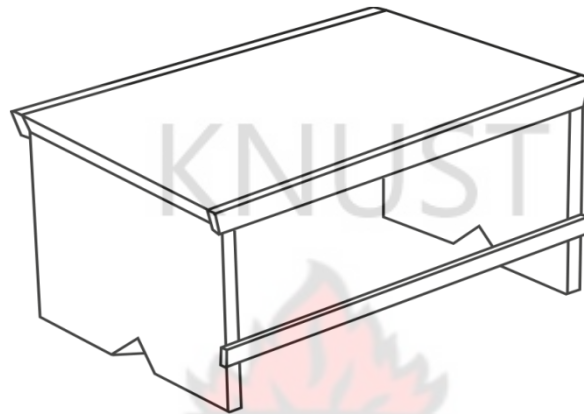


Fig.5.3 *Adamadwa*

5.3.2 *Asipim*

Asipim (Plate 5.3a) is like a table chair but slightly shorter. It is made for the King or the Chief and used in the courts. The top is covered with sheep or cow leather and not wood and decorated with brass strips and nails which are used to fix the animal skin to the seat and back. The brass nails are also decorative. Usually a leather or Kapok cushion is put on it before the King sits on it (Osei, 2002). It is used only by men when they discuss issues in the chief's palace.

The *Asipim* chair usually has a combination of square and circular figures which are known as *Nyame Ntaakyire* (God's spiritual support and protection). When the Asante chief sits on

the Asipim in public, he is in essence asking for continual assistance from God (Sarpong, 1974).



Plate 5.3a *Asipim*

Source: <http://www.imamuseum.org/art/collections>

5.3.3 *Hwedom*

Hwedom chair (Plate 5.3b) is higher or taller than the *Asipim*. Its name means “look at the crowd”. Usually when chiefs sit on the *Asipim* in state, the Asantehene sits on *Hwedom* to distinguish him from the chiefs (Osei,2002). The Golden stool is also placed on a *Hwedom*.

Irrespective of the fact that the Asantehene uses the *Asipim* and *Hwedom* as well as a stool, it is the stool that is blackened ‘when he goes to the village’ and kept in his memory in the stool room.



The Golden Stool



Plate 5.3b The Golden stool resting on a *Hwedom* (left) and a man carrying a *Hwedom* (right)

Source: Manhyia Palace Photo album

5.4 Swords

Introduction

The sword is a very key component of the regalia in the court of the Asantehene. Before the advent of the gun it was one of the key war equipment used by the Asantes to execute several wars. Today the swords used by the various Asantehene are found in the Manhyia palace. Although the various swords will be mentioned in this chapter, it is the *abosodee*, which are the symbols on their hilts and sheaths, which will be given more attention.

Physical Description

The Akan sword has three parts. The **Blade** which is made of iron may be double (*afenata*) or triple (*mfenasa*) edged which are sharp. It may have design symbols or perforated lines. The **Hilt** or **Handle** which can be made from wood or metal may be wrapped with gold leaf

and may also carry symbols or it may be a carved symbol itself. The **Sheath** which is usually made from animal hide material may have an embossment showing symbols communicating information. The lost wax process is used in casting sword ornaments. The average length of an ornament is between 13 – 18 centimetres and can be almost 30 centimetres long.

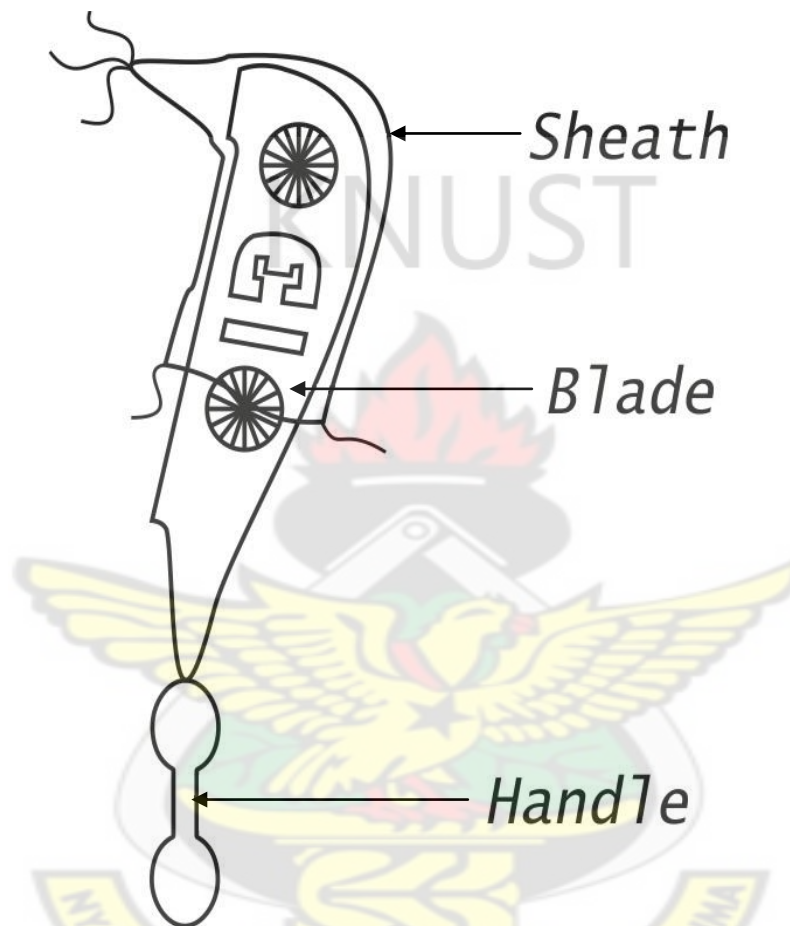


Fig. 5.4 Sketch of the sword

In some of the Akan states these ornaments can be cast in brass or carved in wood and then gold leafed. However, those of the Asantehene are cast in gold. The ornaments may weigh between a half and one kilogram because they are hollow castings. They also have thin walls of 0.15 to 0.03 centimetres and are perfectly made. Often there are triangular or diamond-shaped holes on the ornaments. Red felt or velvet is then stuffed inside it and this brings out a rich colour contrast showing through the holes.



Plate 5.4a Asantehene Sir Osei Agyeman Prempeh II sitting in State with the Golden Stool of Asante on its chair, *Hwedom* beside him, *Mponponsuo* sword on his immediate right, the *Busumuru* sword on his immediate left and surrounded by Sword Bearers and Officials under umbrellas.

Source : <http://sirir-archives.si.edu/ipac20/ipac>.

Most animal ornaments have cast bases and others may have cast loops through which leather straps can be tied. Most often these ornaments are derived from the everyday world of the Asante, both natural and artificial. They observe the environment, how various things function, behaviour of animals, birds or fish and how plants grow. The patience, strength or wisdom of an animal, bird or fish; the beauty, smell or longevity of a plant and how an object may be related to the family, peace or war, may be the basis for the symbols on sword ornaments (Ross,1977)



Plate 5.4b Otumfuo Opoku Ware II with his officials holding Akofena

Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/imknowmadic2/1151677775/in/set-1506641524/>

The hilt or handle is usually made of wood and decorated with gold leaf. Hanging from the leather sheath '*boha*' is the gold cast of something that gives the name of the sword. For instance, the *Gyagitire*, *Nsroma*, *Worosatire* and *Akyikyidee* have casts of skull of a mangabey, star, head of a defeated warrior and a tortoise respectively. The casts may refer to

some historical events or be a symbol of a special message or just a shape. In 1817 Bowdich was the first historian to note the Asante sword ornaments, *Abosodee*. He observed that “wolves and ram heads as large as life, cast in gold, were suspended from their gold handled swords, which were held around them in great numbers”. He also mentioned a gold snake (Bowdich,1819).

Importance

Ross (1977) opines that swords come second to stools in the King’s regalia. They feature prominently in Asante ritual ceremonies. They are used in the political life of Asante such as during the enstoolment of Chiefs, when the Chief-elect uses a specific sword to take the oath of office. Sub-chiefs also use specific swords to affirm loyalty to the newly installed Chief. Different swords are used in rituals to purify the Chief’s soul and black state stools and in several cases swords are used by the official envoys of Chiefs.

Bosman (1907) noted that sword bearers were important court officials who accompanied the King when he was going out to town. In this case the sword is used to indicate the office and military strength of the King. The sword is also carried by bearers in a procession of the King or propped on the bed beside a deceased King when he lies in state.

There are some cast gold *abosodee* (ornaments) for some chiefs in Asante but the Asantehene has most of them, about 19, in the Palace and 4 more in British collections (Ross,1977).

The symbol of office of the *Afenasoafo* is the sword. The *afenasoafo* or sword bearers are the official envoys of Asanteland who convey dispatches and messages. They usually carry messages to highly placed persons carrying a sword whose emblem is a proverb that is

related to the message being carried. If the message is for war, he does not carry the physical sword so that it is not taken by the enemy (Adubofour, 2000).

They were express messengers as noted by Huydecoper (1816) because they sent messages between Kumase and Elmina in record time. They also negotiated for peace and the return of captives. Sometimes, depending on the type of message, the '*afenasoani*' or sword bearer could be sent along with a sword with an '*abosodee*', a gold casting with a symbolic object, which conveyed the meaning or special message that the *abosodee* signified (Adjaye, 1985). For example, if the *abosodee* was a mudfish in the mouth of a crocodile, the message could be that the Chief wanted to convey the message of his supreme power and that of the State.

5.4.1 The *Busumuru* Sword

The *Busumuru* sword is the oldest Asante sword of state and the first of all the *Abosomfena* which represents the king's *sunsum* or "vital spiritual essence". It is always in the custody of the *Waree Adwumakasehene* and is only taken from him when an Asantehene dies and returned to him on the day the new king is being enstooled to enable him lead the procession of other state swords to Pampaso, a key place in the installation of an Asantehene (Bassing and Kyerematen, 1971).

The *Busumuru* sword is always placed to the left side of the Asantehene when he sits in state and the *Mponponsuo* sword placed to the right with the Golden stool in the middle of both of them. Whenever the Asantehene sends for the Bantamahene, the *Busumuru* sword is literally sent because the Bantamahene belongs to the left '*benkum*' division of the Kingdom and when the *Mponponsuo* is used for the Mamponghene, Juabenhene and Asafohene, it is because it is to the right '*nifa*' of the Asantehene where these chiefs belong, *Nifa* division.

The swords themselves are actually not used on the mission or travel but a person who represents the office of *Busumuru* or *Mponponsuo* goes (Adjaye, 1985).

5.4.2 The *Mponponsuo* Sword

Mponponsuo is the largest principal state sword, an *akrafena*, and is used by senior chiefs in swearing allegiance to the Asantehene. The meaning of *Mponponsuo* is “responsibility”. History has it that Asantehene Opoku Ware I who reigned from 1720 – 1750 used this sword to dedicate his life to the service of his people in the war against the Akim Kotoku when he was asked to succeed his grand-uncle, King Osei Tutu who had died on the battle field. As an important sword of the Asantehene, the *Mponponsuo*'s scabbard is adorned with the *abosodee* of a coiled snake with a hornbill bird in its mouth which in Akan is read as *nanka bobonini, meda asase anya onwam* translated as “the python which cannot fly has caught the hornbill bird” (Plate 5.4c). A story related to it goes that the hornbill owed the snake for a long time and had been evading him. After a long drought the snake eventually caught the hornbill at the only remaining waterhole (Kyerematen,1961). It is a symbol of chiefly patience, prudence and circumspection. The scabbard is covered with leopard skin and adorned at certain points with gold. The leopard skin indicates the King's wealth (Kyerematen,1961; Ross,1977). It is however said that the original one was taken from the palace in Kumasi in 1874 (Donne,1977) by the British after they had defeated the Asante in the Sagrenti war and then ransacked Kumase.

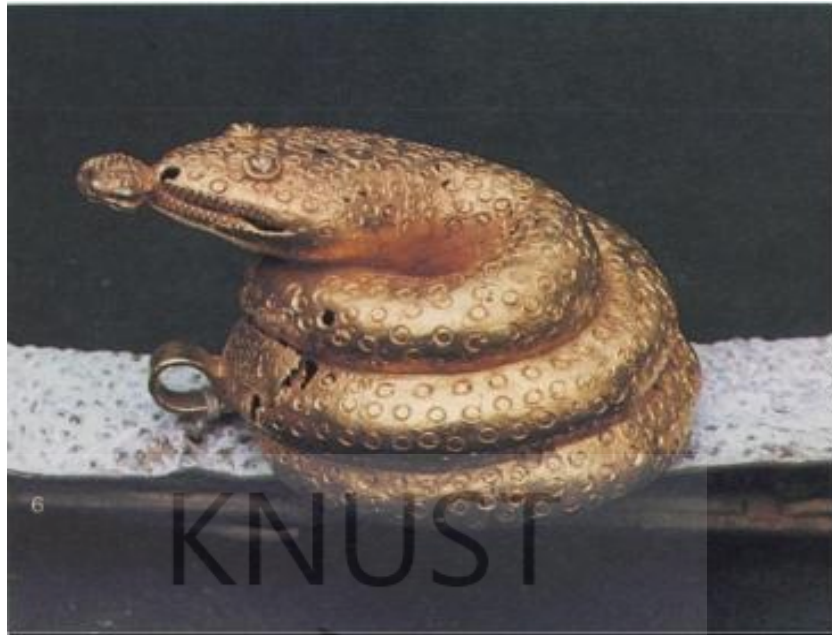


Plate 5.4c

Nanka bobonini meda asase anya ɔnwam Abosodee (the python which cannot fly has caught the hornbill bird) on the scabbard of *Mponponsuo* Sword.

Source: Ross, Doran H (1977)



Plate: 5.4d In this picture *Mponponsuohene* is shown seated to the left (but always on the right of the *Asantehene*) with the *Mponponsuo* sword in hand covered with a leopard skin and the *Busumuruhene* seated to the right (but always on the left of the *Asantehene*) with the *Busumuru* sword in hand.

Source: www.worldbank.org



Plate 5.4e Nana Osei Tutu II taking the oath of office with the *Mponponsuo* sword

Source: http://www.africawithin.com/akan/akan_politics.htm

5.4.3 Classification of Asantehene's Sword

Keteanofena

They are principal state swords borne to the right and left of the Asantehene in a procession. They represent the two kinds of spiritual elements that the King has inherited from his predecessors. To the Right is the *Akrafena* representing the soul. To the Left is the *Abosomfena* representing the personality or *sunsum*.

Akrafena

The *Akrafena* represent the soul and are also known as '*Akofena*' or '*Nsuaefena*'. *Akrafena* are used for stool blackening ceremonies and for political ceremonies like swearing the oath of allegiance by subjects to the king, or taking the oath of office by the king. The *Akrafena*

are carried by the king's messengers to deliver messages. Usually the meaning of the symbol that is embossed on the sheath is the subject of the message. Originally the *Akrafena* among the Akans were military equipment. Today they have been accorded political and ritual functions and display symbols with meanings. They are short swords and portray several symbols signifying leadership. Some are decorated with gold leaf and embossed with symbols (*abosodee*) (Retrieved October 18, 2008 from <http://www.marshall.edu/akanart/akofena.html>).

The *Akrafena* are six (6) in all. *Mponponsuo* with the snake and hornbill as *abosodee*; *Ahwehwebaa*, with a defeated warrior with hands on abdomen as *abosodee*; *Kraaku*, with a shield and sword as *abosodee*; *Apem or Kra Kofi*, with a bunch of plantain as *abosodee*; *Asee Prebuo or Kra Kwasi*, with a nest of *asee* (bird) as *abosodee*; and *Bemu or Kra Kwame*, with a bunch of palm fruit and a heart resting on it as *abosodee*.

Abosomfena

The *Abosomfena* representing the personality or *sunsum* are six (6) in all. *Busumuru*, *Gyagitire* (mangabey skull), *Kwa Gyadu* and *adwira* (a medicinal plant) ; *Denkyem* - crocodile (sometimes called **Busumuru Kumaa**); *Bosompra* - *Kuduo* (treasure casket) and a sheath; *Nimsaakakyi* - antelope with a long horn stretched backwards (sometimes called *Bosompra Kumaa*); *Akokobaatan* - hen with her chicks (sometimes called *Bosompra Amensa*); and *Otwee* - Grey Duiker (sometimes called *Busumuru Amensa*)

Asomfofena

Another set of state ceremonial swords is known as Courier swords, *Asomfofena*. There are five (5) different sets of state ceremonial swords used by state couriers as badges of credence

when going on errands outside Kumasi in order to announce grave matters such as death in the royal lineage, or when accompanied by a herald to declare war on an enemy state.

Types of *Asomfofena*

These are *Gyagyitire* - skull of a mangabey; *Nsroma* – star; *Worosatire* – Worosa chief of Banda's head or a defeated warrior's head; *Akuma* – an axe, a symbol of peace but on its refusal, of destruction; and *Akyekyede* - a tortoise.

Nfenatene

This is another set of three (3) long state ceremonial swords that accompany the principal state swords, (*keteanofena*) and courier swords, *asomfofena*. They are used in place of courier swords when performing purification rites. They have symbols at the top but have no sheaths.

Types of *Nfenatene*

These are: *Nkatehono* - gold cast of groundnut shells suspending from its sheath; *Prentoa* - gold cast of a bottle suspending from its sheath; *Afenata* - twin blades

5.4.4 Okomfo Anokye's Sword

One of the miracles of Okomfo Anokye was the pushing of a sword into the ground at a spot near the present Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital during the reign of Nana Osei Tutu I. (See Plate 5.4f). It has not been pulled out till today. It is said that no one has been able to pull it out after several attempts, but another school of thought opines that this may be as a result of fear or reverence, bearing in mind what nearly happened to some six persons who found the golden stool in a hiding place and stole some of its ornaments during the time Nana Prempeh I had been exiled and there was no Asantehene. If it had it not been for the British officials who intervened and changed the death sentence to imprisonment and banishment they would

have been decapitated (Rattray,1916). The sword cannot be seen, save for the hilt above the ground.



Plate 5.4f Picture of the building housing the sword, the protective wall and the handle of the sword that is buried in the ground at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH)

Source: A Guide to Manhyia Palace Museum (2003)

Although the sword is not on the premises of the Manhyia Palace it is one of the Palace's regalia. The location of the sword brought about the naming of the teaching hospital after Okomfo Anokye.

5.4.5 *Abosodee* (Sword Ornaments)

Most of the '*Abosodee*' are linked to Asante proverbs, sayings or metaphors. For instance the lion, *gyata* symbol is a metaphor indicating bravery, the fighting spirit of the King, reminiscent of the British monarch, King Richard the Lion Heart.

The abosodee of a shield with a sword attached to the front (*Kraaku*) is a symbol of a warrior, valour and fighting spirit. It was made for **King Kwaku Dua I** in 1837. This is an *Akrafena*.

A warrior with his hands on his abdomen, *Ahwehwebaa* Abosodee represents a defeated warrior who accepts food from his captors because of hunger meaning a man who has been reduced to feminine behaviour, or one who abandons his principles through unavoidable circumstances (Kyerematen 1961). The sword was made for **King Osei Bonsu**. This is an *Akrafena*.

The crocodile, *Denkyem* on one of the Asantehene's swords originated with **King Osei Kwadwo** who reigned from 1764 – 1777 and it represents the totem of his '*ntoro*', paternal social group, and is sometimes called the '*Busumuru Kumaa*' sword, that is '*young Busumuru*'. It is an *Abosomfena* (Plate 5.4g).



Plate 5.4g *Denkyem Abosodee*
Source: Ross, Doran H (1977)

A palm fruit *abosodee*, (*Bemu or Kra Kwame*) (Plate 5.4h) was commissioned by King Osei Agyeman Prempeh II who reigned from 1931 -1970 as his *Akrafena* . As explained by Kyerematen (1961:12) “ the individual kernels are to the palm fruit as the Asantehene is to his ancestral heritage” , that is “ Those of a common stock share the same origin”. The heart stands for the King’s commitment to the Golden Stool, that is “ he was going to put his heart into the office he had inherited”.



Plate 5.4h *Bemu Abosodee*
Source: Ross, Doran H. (1977)

The golden axe *abosodee* (ornament) is on one of the courier “*Asomfofena*” swords. It is a symbol of peace and not of war. Kyerematen (1961:8) states that this *abosodee* has two meanings, first it “was meant to announce that the Ashanti wanted a peaceful solution to any differences between them and an enemy state, since an axe, it was said, could cut through or unravel any knot” and secondly “it was however to be a warning to the enemy that if they refused the peaceful negotiations they would be killed by being hacked to pieces with an axe”. The real Golden axe of the Asantehene usually accompanied diplomatic errands and was used to settle disputes. According to Ellis (1883) and Claridge (1915) the actual Golden axe was presented to the British in 1881 to allay the fears of its misinterpreted meaning.

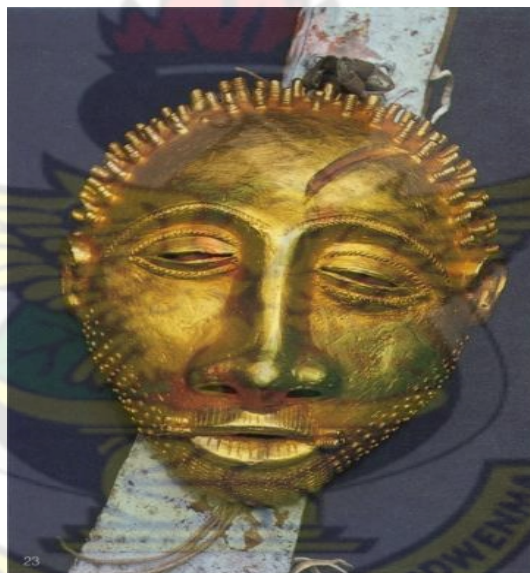


Plate 5.4i *Worosatire Abosodee*
Source: Ross, Doran H.(1977)

Human head in gold cast *Worosatire*, (Plate 5.4i) often represents a decapitated enemy chief or King. It is said that a Chief of the Banda State known as *Worosa* was killed by the Asantehene Osei Kwadwo in retaliation for murdering some Asante traders (Reindorf, 1895) around 1765 (Wilks,1975). The first *Worosatire* was taken from Kumasi in 1874

(Kyerematen 1969/70) after the *Sagrenti* War and is part of the Wallace Collection as indicated and illustrated by Fagg (1974). A replacement of the 1st *Worasatire* adorns one of the Asantehene's courier, "*Asomfofena*" swords as *abosodee*.

The "*Kuduo*" *abosodee* is an indication that the Asantehene is responsible for the material needs of his people (Kyerematen, 1961) as the *kuduo* is supposed to be the King's treasure casket. This sword has a silver sheath and it is used when the Asantehene sends a message to the Queenmother, Asantehemaa. It is an *Abosomfena*.

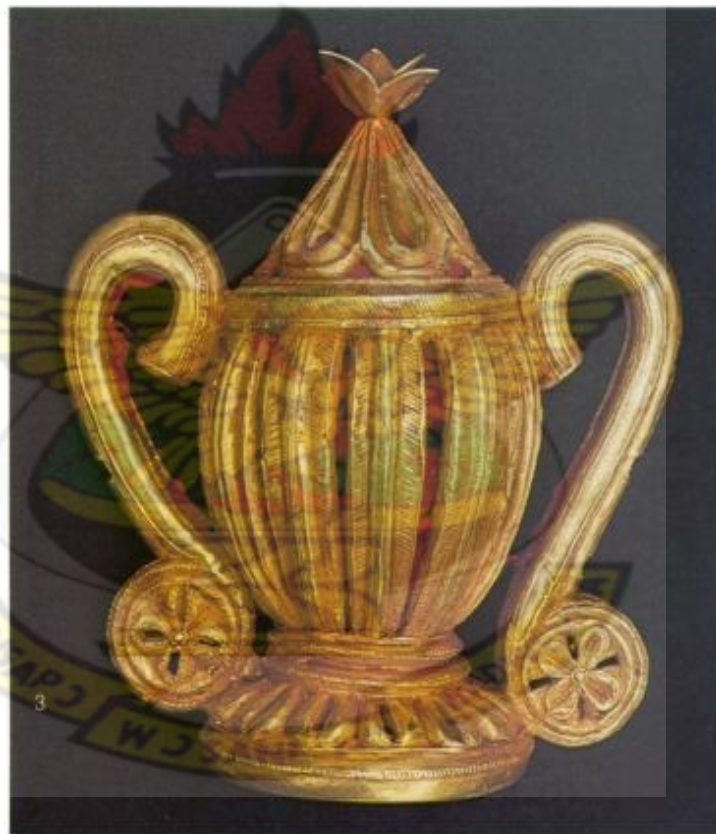


Plate 5.4j *Kuduo Abosodee*
Source: Ross, Doran H.(1977)

Some *abosodee* motifs indicate the unity of the royal family and the continuity of the family's rule. Three of the Asantehene's *abosodee* refer to this.

The bearded barbette or “asee” bird (*Asee prebuo or Kra Kwasi*) and its nest. Kyerematen (1961:12) indicates that “ its message is that if the nest was not made by the bird himself, he must have inherited it from the mother or one of his ancestors. It was the *Akrafena* of **King Prempeh I** in 1888.

The bunch of plantain (*Apem or Kra Kofi*) indicates the stability and endurance of the Asante royal dynasty, that is, there will never be an end to the Asante royal dynasty (Kyerematen, 1961). This is an *Akrafena* and it was made for **King Kwaku Dua II** in 1885, who reigned for only 40 days. This meaning is similar to the one given to the palm fruit.

The star (*Nsoroma*) *abosodee* is a symbol of constancy as they saw the star as more constant than the moon. The ornament itself looks like a long spiral shell with star-like projections encircling the body of the shell. It is an “*Asomfofena*” or courier sword.

A hen and her chicks (*akokobaatan ne ne mma*) . This signified the relationship between the King and his subjects, seen in the proverb “the hen steps on her chicks not to hurt them but to correct their behaviour” (Kyerematen,1961), which to wit meant that the King disciplines his subjects to correct them and not to destroy them. This sword was made for **King Prempeh I** and is an *Abosomfena*.

An antelope with its twisted horns extending the length of its body (*Nimsaakakyi*) was made for **King Kwaku Dua II** and is related to the consequences of the afterthought, “had I known is always at last” and does no one any good as what is past is past. It may also be related to the responsibilities of ruling which may be problematic, sometimes resulting in some decisions which upon hindsight may not have been taken because of their present

consequences. It is sometimes called *Bosompra Kumaa*, “young *Bosompra*” and it is an *Abosomfena*.

Maxwell Grey Duiker, (*Otwee*) *abosodee* was added to the Asantehene’s regalia by Prempeh II. It indicates the Asantehene’s ability to “pull” (*twee*) his people together (Kyerematen 1961:14) . It is an *Abosomfena*.

Tortoise with a fly on its back (*Hrue si akyekyede akwi kwa*) *abosodee* signifies the King’s invincibility since it is an attempt in futility, for a fly to draw blood through the back of a tortoise. This is an *Asomfofena*.

The skull of a mangabey is found on two swords. It is believed that these were conjured by Okomfo Anokye from the sky (Kyerematen,1961). The skull *Kwa Gyadu* is found on the *Abosomfena* and the skull, *Gyagitire*, on the *Asomfofena* swords. This is the first *Keteanofena* sword and it was made for **King Osei Tutu I**.

Mponponsuo sword has its hilt and blade encased in sheath made of leopard skin with gold adornment at certain points. Its *abosodee*, is a gaboon viper, “*nankabobonini*” holding a hornbill “*owam*” in its mouth. This symbolizes patience, circumspection and honoring one’s promises, because of the story behind it (Kyerematen,1961). This is an *Akrafena*. (See page 130-131 of this work for the story and pictures).

The knotted elephant tusk *abosodee* is said to have originated in 1701 when during the war with Denkyira, Okomfo Anokye sent to a famous rival enemy priest an elephant tusk tied in a knot, challenging him to untie it. The rival enemy priest could not untie it (Rattray,1929)

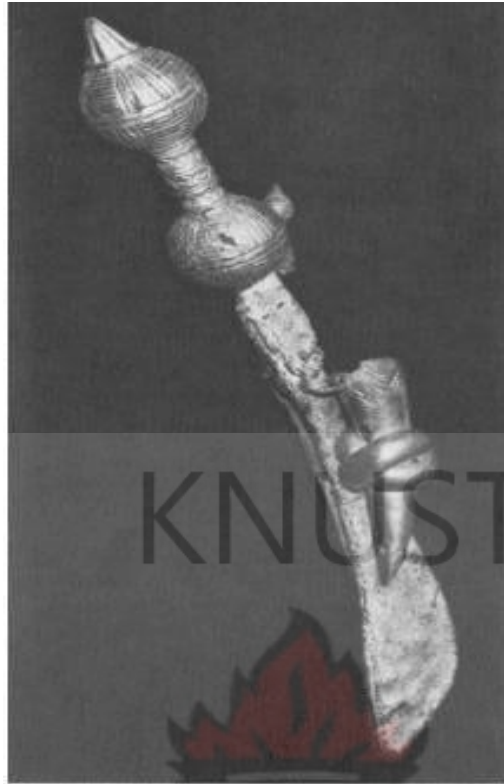


Plate 5.4k Knotted elephant tusk *Abosodee*
Source: Ross, Doran H. (1977)

It is worthy to note that each of the principal state swords is attributed to the reign of a specific King (Kyerematen, 1961). After the reign of Opoku Ware I in 1750, each succeeding Asantehene commissioned two new swords with *abosodee*, *Akrafena* and *Abosomfena*, but this according to Fraser (1972) was not rigidly followed.

It can be deduced from Kyerematen (1961) that eight Asantehene had twelve swords but only four chiefs had the customary two swords *Akrafena* and *Abosomfena*. This means that the age of each sword and its *abosodee* can be determined if one relates it to the period within which the king who commissioned it reigned. It is however, difficult to know whether the swords

and *abosodee* seen today are the originals or whether they have been replaced because of wear and tear or even due to them having been stolen.

The beauty of Asante culture is further enhanced by the public display of these swords alongside other regalia of the Asantehene during special festivals to signify the history, wealth and proverbial lore inherent in these regalia, of which further probing of the deep meanings within these symbols will inform and educate people.

5.5 Linguist Staffs (Akyeampoma) Finials

Introduction

Linguist staffs are found in the courts of Kings and Chiefs in Ghana. They are also used by clans. Linguist staffs are used for political and judicial purposes. A Linguist, '*Okyeame*' may carry a linguist staff when he is sent by the chief to deliver a message. Usually the symbol (s) of the linguist staff carries a meaning related to the message to be delivered. Such symbols may mean peace, justice, war or arbitration. For example, the finial which is an egg means that the owner/clan/chief is careful and patient and seeks peace as the egg is fragile and needs careful and patient handling. Again a linguist staff with an emblem (finial) of *a keg of gunpowder* means that the state is ready to fight if it becomes necessary; if the emblem is *a tortoise and snail* then it means the state has no war intentions against the other state. (Adubofour, 2000)

It is necessary to know who the Linguist, '*Okyeame*', is to enable one to better understand the role of the linguist staff in the King's Palace.

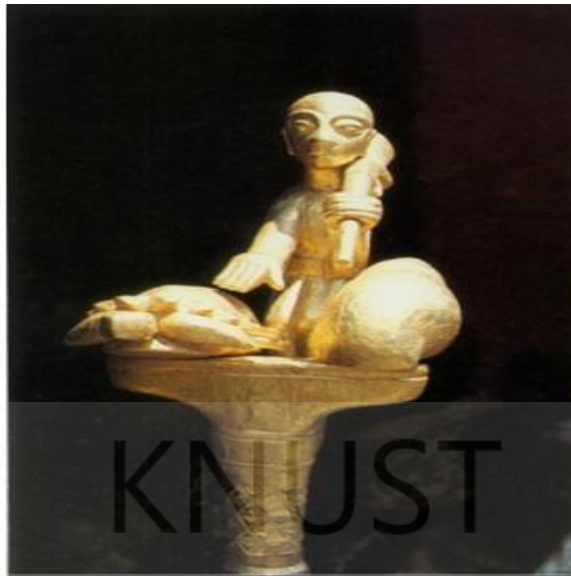


Plate 5.5a A tortoise and snail finial

Source: Ross, Doran H.(1982)

Description

Linguist staffs are often wood carvings. There is the sculptured finial and the shaft that are gold leafed after carving. Sometimes the shaft will feature motifs. The top, which is the finial, most often has a symbol that conveys a specific meaning. The most common is a square of reef knot known as *nyansapo* (wisdom knot), an aphorism ‘*nyansapo wɔ sane no badwenba*’ meaning ‘only the wise man can untie the wisdom knot’. Another is the multi-linked chain which implies that family links are never broken.

Identification

It is a stick with a carved finial which most often represents a proverbial saying which may also have metaphorical associations that refers to objects, situations or subjects. For example a finial with a tree with several birds on its branches “*Anomaa nua ne nea one no da dua koro*” that may be interpreted to mean “Birds of the same species roost in the same tree” indicates unity and solidarity within the state and the royal family(Ross,1982) .

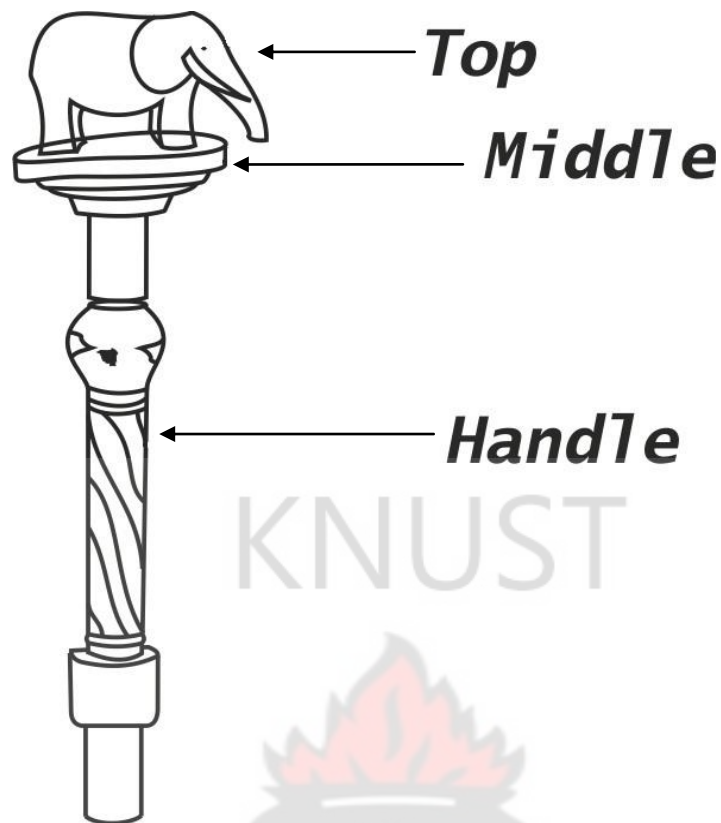


Fig. 5.5 Sketch of a linguist staff

Function

The linguist staff is the *Okyeame's* insignia of office but the meaning of the finial always relates to the chief and state. In effect then the linguist staff is a political art form. It may also be right to say that the linguist staff plays a very vital role in the political activities of the Asantehene's palace, in that it can depict the perpetuity of the ruling family and kingship; the political supremacy of the King and the state; the responsibilities of the king and also those of his subjects.

Significance/Importance

The *Okyeame* or Linguist has the staff as a symbol of his office and it is known as the Linguist staff.

Relating to the perpetuity of the ruling family and Kingship, a linguist staff of the Asantehene has a finial of two men sitting with a table with food on it between them. One is eating while one sits looking on. This depicts a proverb “*Dee adee wɔ no na odie na enye dee ɔkom de no*” translated to mean: “The food is for the man who owns it and not for the man who is hungry”, which is interpreted as meaning that the throne belongs to the rightful owner or heir to the stool and not someone who thinks he is popular or has wealth. This was commissioned as a result of disputes which sometimes came up concerning the right person to ascend the throne.



Plate 5.5b *Dee adee wɔ no na odie na enye dee ɔkom de no* finial
Source: Ross, Doran H. (1982)

Relating to the political supremacy of the King and the state, one of the Asantehene’s linguist’s staff finials features an elephant standing on an animal’s trap (Plate 5.5c). The proverb which goes with this is: “*Ɔsono tia afdie so a enhwan*” meaning ‘when the elephant steps on a trap the trap does not capture it’ .

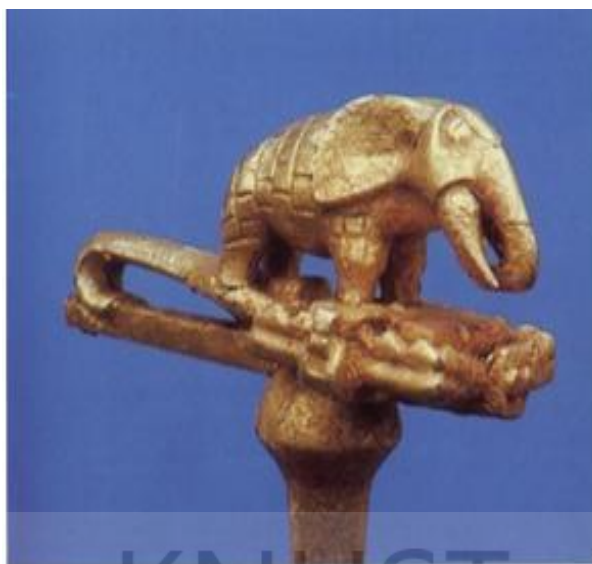


Plate 5.5c *Osono tia afidie so a enhwan* finial
Source: Ross, Doran H. (1982)

Another of the Asantehene's linguist's staff (Plate 5.5d) which carries the finial of a crocodile on a fish trap relates to the proverb "*Denkyem nyini apa a ɔkata mpa so*" literally meaning "The crocodile is too strong for the fish trap". This is interpreted to mean that the power of the Asantehene is supreme and great.



Plate 5.5d *Denkyem nyini apa a ɔkata mpa so* finial
Source: Ross, Doran H. (1982)

The oldest linguist staff of the Akyeamehene in the Asantehene's palace is like an elephant but carved in an abstract form (Plate 5.5e). It is called "*Asempa ye tia*" "the truth is brief". It is also known as "*fentemfrem a emene sono*" literally meaning "the bog that swallows an elephant". This finial has two interpretations. To the Okyeame it means that he needs to be diplomatic to ensure peace and stability and so use carefully chosen words and truth in resolving conflicts. To the Asantehene, it enforces his supremacy and then also tells him that however much powerful he is, the Golden Stool has much supremacy than he has. (Cole and Ross,1977).



Plate 5.5e *Asempa ye tia* finial

Source: Ross: Doran H.(1982)

Yet still other linguist staffs of the Asantehene portray his supremacy. One finial showing two trees has the proverb "*ndua nyina be wo so ma aka abe*" associated, meaning "All trees but the oil palm tree will shake in the wind" (Plate 5.5f).



Plate 5.5f: *Ndua nyina be wo so ma aka abe* finial
Source: Ross: Doran H.(1982)

Another finial showing a frog and a mudfish with the proverb “*Aponkyerene da nsuom ye kese sen ara a one pitire nnse da*” means that however much the frog stays in water and grows fat, it can never surpass the mud fish, which is seen as the King of freshwater fish; this portrays the supremacy of the King (Plate 5.5g).

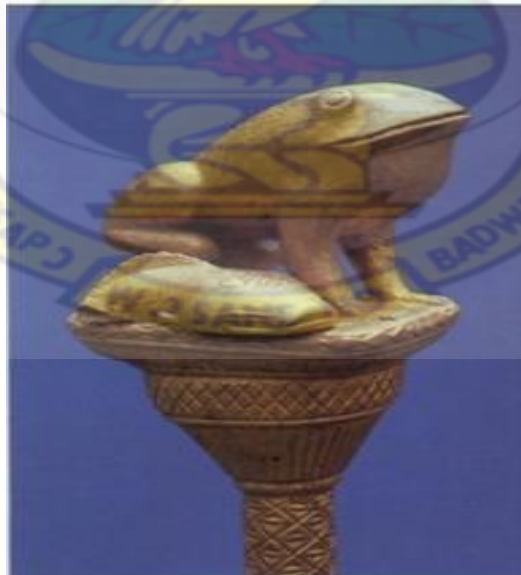


Plate 5.5g *Aponkyerene da nsuom ye kese sen ara a one pitire nnse da* finial

Source: Ross: Doran H. (1982)

Again another finial, (Plate 5.5h) has three men, backing each other with a thick collar encircling their necks. It has the proverb “*Kontonkurowi eda amansan nkon mmu*” meaning “the metal collar is around peoples neck”. The symbol of the rainbow, goes with the proverb “*Kontonkurowi, eda amansan nkon mu*” to wit, “the rainbow is around the neck of every nation”. This is said to have two meanings referring to the Asantehene. First, it means that the Asantehene has power over everybody in Asanteland and second, reminds the Asantehene that death is the ultimate for every human being, including him, and so he should rule with kindness and humility. All these portray the fact that the Asantehene has a lot of power, he is supreme and invincible.

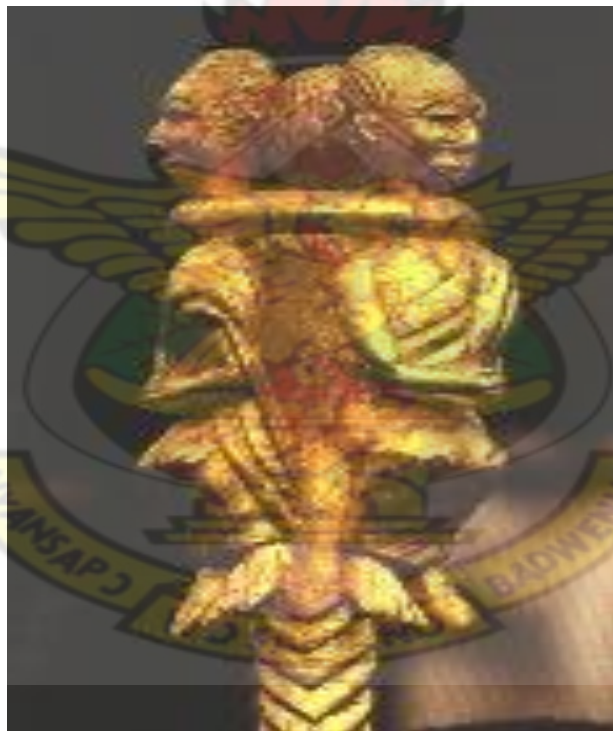


Plate 5.5h *Kontonkurowi eda amansan nkon mmu* finial
Source: Ross, Doran H. (1982)

Relating to the responsibilities of the Asantehene, which include consulting his elders as he swore to do when taking office, a finial showing two leaves put together (Plate 5.5i) has the

proverb “*sɛ ahahan mmienu ka bɔ mu a ɛɛ den*” which means “when two leaves are put together they become strong or thick”, This is interpreted as meaning the Asantehene relies on elders and people for support.



Plate 5.5i *Sɛ ahahan mmienu ka bɔ mu a ɛɛ den* finial
Source: Ross, Doran H.(1982)

Relating to the type of linguist staff on the responsibilities of subjects they may depict social truths, folktales or historical events, negative behaviour and their consequences.

5.5.1 The *Okyeame* (Linguist)

Okyeame (singular) or *Akyeame* (plural) are linguist(s). The Adansi’s had *Akyeame* (linguists) before Asantes adopted the practice. It was Awirade Basa, the second chief of Akrokyere

and the first Akan chief, who instituted the position of *Okyeame* (Adubofour,2000). Nana Kwaku Dua I appointed Amankwaa Kuma as his *Okyeame* (Adubofour,2000).

Muller (1673:108) was the first to identify the position of the *Okyeame* correctly when he called him “*Obcjammi*” and said he was the “first royal advisor”. Wilks (1975:471) saw the “*Okyeame* as a counselor, advisor, judicial advocate, military attaché, foreign minister, prime minister, and political troubleshooter”. He further explains that the “*Okyeame*’s judicial role distinguishes him from other members of the Kings court”.

One could conjecture that the name “linguist” was given to the *Okyeame* by English language speakers who saw him as the mouthpiece of the chief to people and vice versa. He often repeated what the chief spoke to the people and what the people spoke to the King. In the process, he would add proverbs and metaphors to the statements, buttressing what Rattray (1927:277-8) wrote that “if a town becomes broken, it is the fault of the *Okyeame*, if a town stands (firm) it is due to the *Okyeame* (*kuro ebo a, efiri Okyeame, kuro gyina a, efiri Okyeame*)”.

The court crier ‘*Esen*’, the sword bearer ‘*Afenasoani*’ and the *Okyeame* were and still are the Asantehene’s emissaries. The *Esen* would be sent to enemy chiefs often to declare wars, which might have caused him to lose a finger, or fingers or even his head, the reason for which he enjoyed several privileges in the King’s court. In some cases the Asantehene referred to him as his “wife” because of how close he was to him. The *Okyeame* carried very important messages across states. Usually when the message was for war, he would not go with his staff for fear of it being seized by the enemy (Adubofour, 2000).

Duties of a Linguist

The Linguist is:

- an elder of the Asantehene's palace who conveys what the Asantehene wants to say to his people, as the Asantehene is not expected to shout or speak loudly in order to save his speech organs. There are several linguists of the Asantehene. The Asantehene has thirteen senior linguists, or counselors (*Akyeame*) three junior linguists or counselors and a chief linguist or chief counselor, *Akyeamehene*. It is interesting to note that it is only the Asantehene of Asanteland who has this number of *Akyeame*. There was no reason provided for the odd numbers of the different levels of linguists. Most of the paramount chiefs have at most eight *akyeame*;
- a spokesperson for any delegation of the King, either for peace or war, to consult deities, to announce deaths etc;
- an advisor to the King; and
- the link between the King and the people, who books appointments on behalf of the people, takes them to the King, presents the matter of the people to the King and conveys the King's response to the people, so both the people and the King speak through him (Osei, 2000).

The *Okyeame* often walks in front, ahead of the Asantehene's procession, and stands next to or sits immediately in front of the King when the latter sits in state.

5.6 Umbrellas and their Finials

Introduction

Fynn (1971) writes that after the Asante war with the Denkyiras in 1701, the then Dutch Vice Governor, David Van Nyendael presented an umbrella to the Asantehene, Nana Osei Tutu. This was the first time an Asantehene would own an umbrella.

In 1707 Sir Dalby Thomas, an Englishman, requested that the English send umbrellas which were made from “scarlet cloth, embroidered, lined and well fringed. A bird or beast on the top of the stick...the stick is to be 7 foot long and the spread 5-6 feet broad” (Garrard,1980:92). The English again in later years presented a 2.7 metre scarlet cloth umbrella with a gilt elephant finial to the Asantehene (Bowdich,1819).

In 1708, the Dutch again presented an Indian umbrella gift which was lined with calico to the Asantehene (Garrard,1980) and in the early nineteenth century presented another large gold fringed umbrella gift to the King (McLeod,1977).

It was therefore not strange when in 1816, the Dutch envoy, William Huydecoper on his first visit to Kumasi, himself carrying gifts of a staff and umbrella, saw several opened umbrellas in the Asantehene, Nana Osei Bonsu’s party waiting for him (Huydecoper, 1816).

Originally the designs for umbrella finials came from Western Sudan but they were adapted by the Akans and Asantes as they similarly adapted other art forms related to status, power and authority.

Among the Asantes the umbrella finial indicates a proverb or an aphorism (Appiah, 1979), with the meaning relating to leadership. They are seen as political emblems of chiefs (Cole and Ross, 1977; Antubam,1963).

The umbrella finial is a key political emblem for Chiefs in West Africa. The umbrella is huge, about eight to ten times bigger than the standard umbrella, and it is most often made of silk fabric.

The Asantehene's umbrella and its finial both serve as symbols and a covering. It protects the king from the heat of the sun and is a symbol of the protection the king is believed to provide for his kingdom. Fraser(1972) indicates that “these huge objects are both practical sunshades and symbolic, quasi-architectural, space-defining forms that help express the Chief's role as a ruler”. It is in line with this that when the King dies it is said “ *Nana etu ne Kyinie, awia na ebehye yen*” translated into English as “ Nana has removed his umbrella, the sun will scorch us to death”. The finial of the umbrella is known as the “*ntuati*” (umbrella top ornament) and it is the symbol that carries a message, that is to be looked at in this part of the study.

The Asantehene owns twenty-three umbrellas whose finials are always gold plaited. He also usually appears with three umbrellas at durbars. However, during the rites for his enstoolment, he is made to use the small black umbrella used by village/town chiefs as a sign of humility (Kyerematen, 1969/70). On other occasions as well, the Asantehene uses umbrellas that speak of the specific events. For example when Sir Garnet Wolseley got to Kumasi in 1874, he met the Asantehene Nana Kofi Karikari seated under a large red umbrella, which is a colour the Asantes use to symbolise great loss, great grief and grave situations (Reindorf,1895; Antubam, 1963; Ramseyer and Kuhne, 1875).

Description

The umbrella is usually between 2.44m – 3.04m high with a diameter of between 1.83m and 2.44m or even 3.66m (Freeman,1898) and has a mechanism along its column known as *kokopuo* which moves along its vertical support and then pushes the conical configuration of the wooden spokes which in turn extend the main radial shafts. The stretchers for the cloth are held by a peg that is pushed through a hole in the vertical support (stick), (see Plate 5.6a).

At the top of the umbrella is a fixture that has a flange known as “*gyinae*”. The cloth is attached after the wooden skeleton has been completed (Freeman,1898; Rattray,1927). The shaft is made of “*twafoyeden*”, Harrisonia occidentalis (Rattray1927:271) or “babadua”, Thalia geniculata. The babadua is dried before it is used.

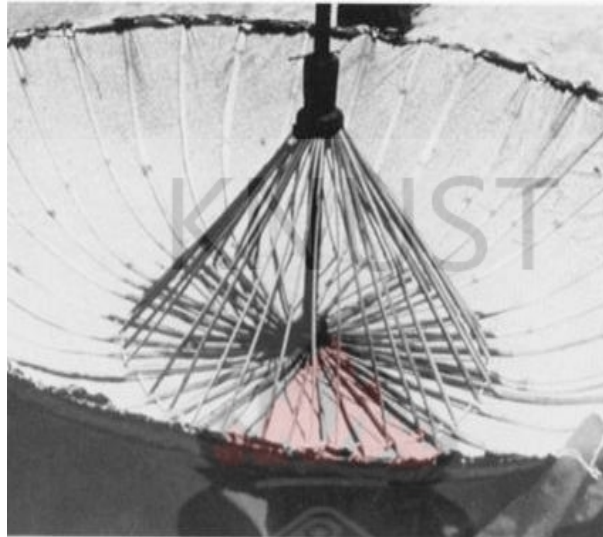


Plate 5.6a Partially constructed umbrella showing wooden spokes and shaft. Kumasi, 1976

Source: Patton, Sharon F. (1984)

The umbrella usually is covered in bright scarlet and yellow colours of rich multicoloured fabrics of patterned cloth, silk, damask or velvet cloth. Some of the dome-like shaped umbrellas with top cover display, scalloped and fringed valances, others are roofed in leopard skins and stuffed animals as the finials or crowned with images of beasts covered with gold (Bowdich, 1819). An umbrella usually displays a variety of colours, patterns, textures and designs.

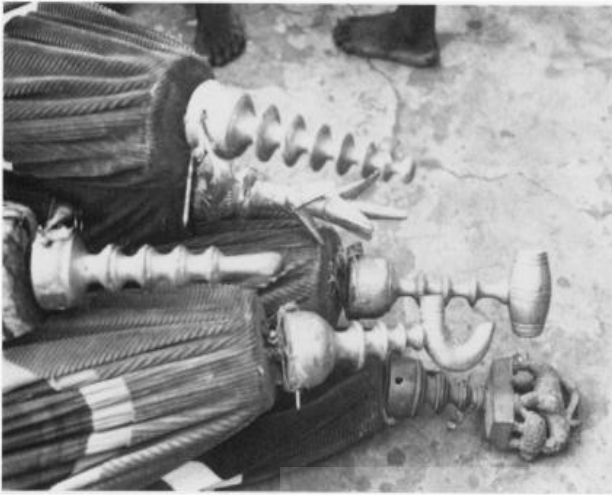
The type of cloth used for the umbrella is also of significance. For example there are different types of cloth for the exterior, interior, around the finial and the valance. The types of cloth as well as the design for the exterior are different from those of the interior. The

exterior features the better quality material, as it is the area which is more easily seen as it is exposed to public view. For example, the exterior of the *Nyankontɔn* (rainbow) umbrella dome is covered in several broad horizontal stripes of golden yellow, emerald green and black velvet.

Usually a red valance known as *nkrawoo* is featured. However, in the nineteenth century there were other types of valances that were fringed, scalloped, crenellated, serrated or appliquéd (Bowdich, 1819). Today what is common is the plain broad valance.

According to Norris (1926) in the early twentieth century, paramount chiefs could use silk for their umbrellas with the permission of the Asantehene. Nana Osei Tutu therefore granted those of Mampong, Dwaben, Nsuta, Bekwai, Kokofu and Kumawu (Wilks, 1975). Nana Kofi Karikari granted Nkoranza and Wam, while Nana Agyeman Prempeh I granted Ejisu and Offinso (Ellis, 1887). Today most paramount chiefs use silk for their umbrellas.

Most often the umbrella finial or *ntuatire* is carved out of wood and may be covered with gold or silver leaf or just wood. The ‘*babadua*’ wood, of the bamboo species is used for the finial because it is a strong and resilient material. This quality of wood is also a metaphor for the strength and resilience of the king and the kingdom. Sometimes there are metal-covered finials and only paramount chiefs could use metal-covered ones (Ellis, 1887). The *ntuatire* often features objects or animals that are fixed to the top of the umbrella. The finial is usually 25-30 centimeters high.



1.



2.

Plate 5.6b Umbrella Finials

1. Babadua, akoben and atuduro (war horn and gunpowder keg), otwee (antelope) finials.
Source: Patton, Sharon F. (1984)
2. Aya (fern), akoben (war horn), pot on hearth, babadua and akoben (war horn).
Source: Garrard, Timothy F. (1984)

Some of the objects are *akokobaatan* (mother hen), *prekese* (a seed which has a strong sweet aroma and so is used to signify power and strong leadership), *osono* (elephant), *akoben* (war horn), *abe* (palm fruit), *adwa* (stool), *tiri* (human head), *sankofa* (a bird with its head turned backwards), *adwetakyi* (bird with a cannon) and *nankanini* (puff adder). The most common motif as *ntuatire* is however the *babadua* (a symbol for action and volunteerism) and the *akoben* (war horn), followed by the *aya* (fern leaf, a symbol for perseverance, endurance, being resourceful since the plant can endure even hard grounds and flourish). (Cole and Ross, 1977).

Identification

The Asante umbrella regalia usually come in three shapes, horizontal, conical and domical.

The **horizontal or flat shape** umbrella design has its origins in Egypt where it was used as religious and ceremonial regalia and it came to West Africa through the Muslims in the eighth century (Crawford, 1970). However it was in 1817 that Bowdich saw them and made an

illustration of one of them in 1819 (Bowdich,1819). The Golden stool and other ceremonial stools of the Asantehene are shielded by the horizontal shaped umbrellas. (McLeod, 1981). See Plate 5.6c.

The **conically-shaped** umbrella is usually used during funeral occasions, especially for a King's predecessor's one year funeral ceremony. It is designed with patch- work or appliqué cloth and is often not put on public display. It is also used for oath swearing occasions.

Nsaa Kyinie is one of the Asantehene's umbrellas which provides a covering for the Golden stool. The *Nsaa* cloth, made of camel hair, is used for it. It has a finial like the "original form of a stool, the *foa*" (Kyerematen,1961) similar to the *forowa*, a circular stool which was a predecessor to the rectangular stool. The *Katamanso* (The Covering of the Nation) is used interchangeably with the *Nsaa Kyinie* (Ramseyer and Kuhne ,1875)

Function

The finial communicates messages from or about the Chief to the people, often relating to leadership, encapsulated in proverbs or aphorisms (Antubam, 1963; Cole and Ross, 1977). It shows the status and prestige, dignity, and power of the Asantehene and is an insignia of traditional political rank and so an important item in the regalia of the chief. It indicates the authority of the Asantehene and is used by paramount Chiefs and the Asantehene at durbars, oath-swearing ceremonies and funerals of important personalities as a show of political superiority.



Plate 5.6c Horizontal or flat shaped umbrella in the forefront of the top picture and domical shaped umbrella in the bottom picture

Source: Manhyia Palace Photo Album

Before Ghana's independence, the hegemony of the Asantes as well as its hierarchical society were re-emphasised by regular display of this regalia. Today when it is displayed, apart from its aesthetic beauty, it also reminds the Asantes of their glory and power in the pre-colonial era.

The umbrella was used to shield the Asantehene at the war front, when he was walking or seated. Usually about three umbrellas are used to protect the Asantehene from the sun's rays when he sits in state.

The umbrella is also used to shade the Asantehene from the heat of the sun even when sitting in a palanquin in a procession. It is also opened to serve as a canopy over a bed when the funeral rites of the Asantehene are in progress. According to McLeod (1981) the umbrella was used to help the chief to be physically cool, but again it served to promote a condition of spiritual peace and coolness and also created some symbolic space around him.

Significance/Importance

The umbrella is not only used to shield the Asantehene from the scorching rays of the sun but it is also used as a symbol of high political office and prestige. This function was particularly made evident when the Dutch envoy, Huydecoper, visited Kumase and the Asantehene Nana Osei Bonsu in 1816. The umbrellas were opened, and the Asantehene was seated under them, even though it was dark and lamps had been lighted (Huydecoper, 1816).

It is a very important political emblem in that it is mostly used by kings and chiefs, hence the aphorism that *nea kynie si ne so na ɔye ɔhene*, to wit, “The person who has an umbrella over his head is King”. Similarly to the finials, it shows the status and prestige, dignity, and power of the Asantehene. It is an insignia of traditional political rank and so an important item in his regalia that indicates the authority of the Asantehene. It is used by paramount Chiefs and the Asantehene at formal activities like durbars, oath-swearing ceremonies and funeral activities of important persons, to show political superiority.

5.6.1 Umbrella makers

Umbrellas are also made by some Asantes too. According to Bowdich (1819), Asantehene’s umbrella makers were found in a village which was northwest of the Asantehene’s Palace and Rattray (1927) mentions one such person living in Banko village. Currently some umbrella

makers can be found in Sewua and Ntonso. Today, there are only a few local umbrella makers who make umbrellas for chiefs, because it is not a lucrative business, as their demand is not high, since umbrellas for chiefs are preserved over the years rather than discarded.

5.6.2 Some Umbrellas designed for some Asantehene

The *Nhwehwe Kyinie* which is flat, is also used to cover the Golden Stool. Its valance has four attached mirrors (Kyerematen, 1958). This umbrella was designed by the Asantehene, Nana Osei Bonsu as a state umbrella for the Golden Stool. It has the *akofena* umbrella finial (Kyerematen 1961).

The *Dyokoman*, a dome-shaped state umbrella has the *ahwepan*, a warp-stripe textile. It was made for Asantehene Nana Osei Tutu I. It sports the oldest type of *ahwepan* with a silk textile in green, red and yellow colours warp stripes (Lamb, 1975; Kyerematen, 1964). It bears the *Dyokoman* umbrella finial.

The *Nankanini* umbrella with the python finial has a blue damask cloth, and it was designed for Asantehene Nana Osei Kwadwo. This is often used during adjudications. See Plate 5.6e.

The *Prekese* umbrella, with the *prekese* finial, was made for Nana Opoku Ware I (Kyerematen, 1964). The *Boaman*, (conqueror of nations, striker of nations) has a velvet cloth, partly dark crimson, partly black with gold trimming. It is displayed at formal state ceremonies. It has a crimson and black patchwork with gold ornaments on the dome and valance. It was made for Nana Osei Bonsu, the Asantehene to signify his bravery as he was eulogized as “he who brings to his knees his enemies” (Kyerematen, 1969/70:24). Rattray (1927:130) states that it is the Asantehene’s “Great State Umbrella”. The umbrella is used

often, even today. It is about 7 feet in diameter with several appendages, made of leather and cloth with square and round knobs, a lion's claw that is fastened to the ribs inside and outside the umbrella. It has a *babadua* finial. It is an important part of the Asantehene's regalia which is not shown to the Asantehene-elect until he is enstooled (Kyerematen, 1969). State umbrellas are impressive to look at, especially when the umbrella carriers twist and twirl the umbrellas to the sound of beatings of drums.



Plate 5.6d *Dyokoman* umbrella with *akoben*(war horn) Finial
Source: Patton, Sharon F. (1984)



Plate 5.6e: Nankanini umbrella Finial

Source: Manhyia Palace Photo Album

The *Akokɔbaatan* umbrella which has a finial with a mother hen and her chicks has a proverb associated with it, translated as “the mother hen steps on her chicks not to kill but to correct”, which stands for the benevolence and motherly nurture of the Asantehene in exercising his powers and responsibilities in a motherly manner (Kyerematen 1961:10). This umbrella spots silk damask or velvet narrow vertical strips of embroidery which look like a multicoloured *Kente* cloth. It is called *Nwomu* cloth, made for Nana Osei Kwadwo, and appears during adjudications (Kyerematen, 1964).

5.7 Cloths

Introduction

Asante cloth as wearing apparel usually is the hand woven *Kente* or the appliqué *akunintam* or the block-printed *adinkra*. These types of cloth speak, as well as beautify and cover the body. According to Domowitz (1992:85) Akan cloth can be described as ‘proverb’ cloth

because it “offers an accessible public voice to those who are constrained to silence”. In the same vein, Yankah (1995:81) says that it is a “textile rhetoric” in its design and its mode of wearing may be “not just to praise political heroes, to commemorate historical events and to assert social identities, but also as a form of rhetoric – a channel for the silent projection of argument”.

In the olden days *Kyekye* was a type of cloth made from cotton woven into single strips and sewn together. Another was *Kyenkyen* cloth which was made from the bark of the *Kyenkyen* tree which was beaten with stick until it became a soft cloth. Smocks were made out of the *Kyenkyen* cloth. These types of cloths were used by ordinary people.

The *Adinkra* cloth was later introduced when the trade with Europeans began in the eighteenth century. The patterns in *Adinkra* are stamped whilst those in *Kente* are woven and those in the *Akunintam* are embroidered or designed cloth patches sewn unto a base cloth.

It is important to note here that among the Asante males the style of wearing the cloth carries messages. A style of wearing, the ‘*Akyanfoɔ*’ or ‘*ɔbrempon*’ style, which is most often adorned by Asante chiefs, is where the cloth is pulled over the shoulder and the two ends on both the left and right arms are gathered together into a lump and pressed into the left armpit. The left arm then holds it into place. Again, the ‘*Koha*’ style which is where the cloth is wrapped around the waist, with a piece hanging to the left side of the waist is commonly used by traditional chiefs about to swear an oath of allegiance and also the person who holds the Asantehene or the chief’s umbrella (Padova, 2003).

Yet another, “*me yere besi*” (my wife will wash it) exists, where the tail end of the cloth drags on the floor usually worn by people who want to boast about their status in life.



Plate 5.7a “*me yere besi*” (my wife will wash it) style

<http://www.ghanaculture.gov.gh/>

Colour is also symbolic in Ghanaian cultures, especially the Akan and Asante culture and so is used extensively in weaving or stamping the cloth. For example, **Gold/Yellow** means royalty, prosperity, maturity, presence of God; **Black** for mourning, devil, evil, deep sorrow; **White** for purity, victory, virtue; **Green** for fertility, newness, growth and **Red** for anger, crisis, violence (Sarpong, 1974).

The cloths of the Asantehene featured here are the *Adinkra*, *Akunintam* and *Kente*.

5.7.1 The *Adinkra*

Adinkra used to be made in Asokwa but is now mostly made in Ntonso. The adinkra cloth depicts aspects of Akan knowledge, beliefs and values, some of their history, attitudes and behaviours towards their sacred beliefs and their society in general. The colours and symbols of adinkra cloth depict complex ideas and concepts which are related to moral and ethical behaviours such as a person's responsibilities to the society, education of the people and the political organization of the society. Most of the symbols show social changes occasioned by internal and foreign influences.

Description

For the adinkra, the *Kyɛkyɛ* or *Kyenkyen* cloth was used as the base cloth but with stamps of several designs, most of which were traditional art symbols. When the trade with Europeans became buoyant, cloth made in Europe, especially the plain white ones were bought and dyed with brown or black colour for mourning. These brown or black cloth were also stamped with the Adinkra designs. *Adinkra* cloth is used when Akans are in mourning. There are also several symbols that are used for the *adinkra* cloth. For example, 'a ram's head and horns' is a symbol for innocence, guiltlessness, as the sheep is seen to be so and for that matter it is used for sacrifices; or the 'foot of a chicken' is a symbol of a strict parent which is linked to the proverb, "*Akokobaatan tia ne ba so a enkyere ...*", which expresses complete confidence in God (Sarpong, 1974).

The adinkra cloth is printed using the block-printing method. The blocks, which are also known as stamps carry symbols carved out of calabash. It is the carved symbol which constitutes the design in the cloth (See Plates 5.7b and 5.7c). Usually the carved symbols are related to proverbs and folk tales, social changes and development of technology over the

years and also historical events that have brought about the changes in Asante Kingdom. An example of such introduction of change or imported culture is the use of the gun (*etuo*). The gun is used for several functions in Asante culture, hence its use as a symbol in adinkra cloth. Specifically, the gun is used to begin and end the funeral of a chief. It is fired early in the morning to announce the beginning of events for the day and when the sun sets it is fired to end the funeral for the day. This is what Nketia (1969: 144 fn 2) describes as “the gun salute, that it is an important means of announcing the event of death, and the journey of the deceased to both the living and the dead, near and far”. The gun as a symbol in adinkra cloth is very appropriate as the name ‘adinkra’ means farewell or ‘parting ways’, which is akin to one of the functions of the gun.



Plate 5.7b Adinkra Cloth

Source: <http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/dbcourses/item>.



Plate 5.7c Nana Osei Tutu II on the left in *Adinkra* cloth

Source: Kojo Yankah (2009)

5.7.2 The *Akunintam*

Akunintam is the appliqué picturesque cloth and it is said to be a type of cloth worn by great people.

Identification

The cloth consists of imagery, which is the combination of a proverb and a visual image; in effect, pictures and ideas are used. Usually proverbs are used as designs in the cloth and the trained eye and mind can read and interpret the messages being displayed.

Description

The appliqué technique is used to design the *akunintam*. By this, it is meant that decorative portions of cloth are sewn onto another cloth. Usually these decorative portions are firstly of different colours, patterns and designs which are then sewn together. When these decorative

portions are sewn or embroidered onto plain cloth they create a beautifully patterned piece of cloth. They may also contain indigenous motifs which may be animals, objects or flowers and are brightly coloured. The cloth, as shown in Plates 5.7d, 5.7e. and 5.7f., is often used by chiefs to make a statement of their authority.



Plate 5.7d *Akunintam*

Source: <http://www.imamuseum.org/art/collections>



Plate 5.7e Nana Osei Tutu II on the left in *Akunintam* cloth

Source: Kojo Yankah (2009)



Plate 5.7f. Nana Osei Tutu II on the right in *Akunintam* cloth

Source: Kojo Yankah (2009)

5.7.3 The *Kente* Cloth

Introduction

Kente cloth is hand-woven and it has symbolic ascetic and expressive values. Among the Asante it is known as *nwentoma* (woven cloth) to differentiate it from *adinkra* or *akunintam*. However within *nwentoma* there are various types. There is the *ahwepan* (plain weave), the *topreko* (plain weave with simple weft inlays) and *faprenu* (double weave method which hides the warp threads).

The largest made Kente which measured 12 x 20 feet was the one Ghana presented to the United Nations in 1960 when it joined it. It was named *tikoro nko agyina* meaning “one head does not constitute a council” or “two heads are better than one”

The *Kente* cloth is mainly woven by the Asantes and the Ewes. Towns like Bonwire, Adanwomase, Ntonso and Woonoo are the key weaving areas in the Asante Kingdom whilst Kpandu, Kpetoe, Klikor, Denu and Agbozume are the Ewe areas that practice the *kente* weaving industry. The designs from the Asante and Ewe areas are different, especially in the weft designs, the use of colours and the actual weaving process.

It is interesting how names of *Kente* cloth may change with changes in historical and political events. For example, *Fathia Fata Nkrumah* “Fathia suits Nkrumah” was a Kente cloth made when the 1st President of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, married Madam Fathia from Egypt. Soon after Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s government was overthrown in 1966, the name of the Kente cloth changed to *Obaakofo mmu man* ‘one man does not rule a nation’ although some people still use the original name. The Asantehene also could commission *Kente* to be woven to mark some historical, social and political events in the Asante kingdom. As if Nana Agyeman Prempeh I had had a premonition of what was going to befall him, he had a *Kente* cloth called *Obi nkye obi kwan mu si*, meaning ‘it does not take long for one to stray into another’s path’. Asantes also act or speak symbolically with *kente* cloth in several situations. As can be seen in Plate 5.7g, Nana Agyeman Prempeh I, even in the time of sadness, acted symbolically by putting on that kente cloth when he was being exiled, because he had strayed into the path of the British. This kente design is a symbol that stands for forgiveness, pacification, tolerance, patience, and fairness and reminds one that it is human to err and so one should be conciliatory when one is offended as sooner or later one may be the offender to the other.



1. In 1896 while in Elmina on his way to the Sierra Leone Nana Agyeman Prempeh I, the Asantehene wore a kente cloth called "Obi nkye obi kwan mu si" (It does not take long for one to stray into another's path).



Plate 5.7g *Obi nkye obi kwan mu si*

Plate 5.7g *Obi nkye obi kwan mu si* design today

Source: Claridge (1964)

<http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>

In the olden days, *Kente* cloth was worn by people of high social status, especially chiefs who could commission special designs to be made for them. As the economic fortunes of non-royals improved they began to also own some of the designs of the royals. It is said that one specific design of *Kente* cloth called "*wo nya wo ho a wonnye dehyee*", to wit, "becoming rich does not make one a royal", was designed for some royals to draw a distinction between them and the 'nouveau riche'.

The *edwene asa* 'knowledge is finished' designs are the *Kente* cloth named *Oyoko man* 'Oyoko nation', *Mmaa ma* 'females children' and *obi te obi* so 'someone sits on another one'. The *edwene asa* *Kente* cloth has an intricate weft design. The length of the cloth is filled with weft floats which hide the warp threads. Several motifs are skillfully used to fill the

whole length of the cloth. This design ‘separates the boys from the men’ in the art of weaving and was mostly worn by royals in the past. For example, the Kente cloth worn by His Excellency. J. A. Kufour when he was sworn in as President of Ghana in January, 2001 was called *dako yesere* meaning “one day we smile”. This is an example of how Akans could convey messages through kente, because his party since 1993 had been in opposition and even its members were sidelined in the earlier military regime, but in 2001 they gained power to rule and so were joyous.

Art employs a language which is set in patterns to express the artist’s ideas. Art is employed in the weaving of the *Kente* cloth, a ceremonial cloth used on joyful occasions. Signs like **Chevron** meaning new growth or vitality of fresh growth, **Spiral** meaning frailty, peace and mercy and **Zigzag** meaning prudence and application of political wisdom, often also used in palaces, on chairs, stools, linguist staff and other art objects (Sarpong, 1974), are used in weaving *Kente* cloth. In years gone by, only the Asantehene could wear the ‘adwinasa’ Kente cloth.

Description

Kente cloth is woven on a narrow horizontal loom with usually four heddles “*asanan*” although the heddles could be up to six or seven “*asasia*”. It is woven in narrow strips known as *ntomaban* or *bankuo* and is about three to five inches wide and five to six feet long. Several of these strips are then sewn together to become the cloth. Usually about twenty-four of such strips are used to make the cloth for a man, and for a woman there may be eight to ten of such strips sewn together to constitute each of the three pieces.

The name and meaning of the *Kente* cloth is derived from the methods used to lay the warp threads, just as is done with the weft designs or motifs. Most often the names or meanings

have a place in Akan beliefs, norms, historical events and any thing of substantial importance.

In years gone by the thread used to weave *Kente* cloth was made from yarn spun from locally grown cotton. Yarns were dyed with the desired colours. Today, that is not done. Imported yarn which may be cotton, silk or rayon is used to weave the *Kente* cloth.

Significance/Importance

The *Kente* cloth was, and still is, the most important of all these cloths and has become the national cloth of Ghana in international and local arenas.

Kente comes in different colours and designs. The Asantehene and chiefs usually use the “*faprenu*” (double-weave) of the *Kente* which makes it rich and heavy. Today, in spite of the infiltration of different cultural dressings into Asanteland, the Asantehene and the chiefs still wear cloth, be it, *adinkra* or *kente*, to functions.

Fathia fata Nkrumah / Obaakofo mmu man kente cloth pattern

This design (see Plate 5.7h) literally means “one person does not rule a nation.” It indicates the Akan system of participatory democracy governance. The nine squares represent *mpuankron* (nine tufts of hair), a ceremonial haircut of some royal functionaries who help rulers make decisions. When the pattern was first created it was named *FATHIA fata NKRUMAH*, which means “Fathia suits Nkrumah” as wife. After 1966 when the military overthrew the government of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the original Akan meaning of *mpuankron* (participatory democracy) was applied to suit the then political atmosphere although the original name, *Fathia fata Nkrumah* is still used by some people. The design of the cloth is a symbol for warning rulers against being autocratic (Retrieved October 30, 2007 from <http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>)

Fa wo hia kɔ twere Agyeman cloth pattern

The design, *fa wo hia kɔ twere Agyeman*, meaning ‘lean your poverty on Agyeman’ depicts the welfarism of the Asantehene, Nana Agyeman Prempeh I towards his people. It is said that he was so benevolent that he took care of the poor and as such, benevolence is expected of every Asantehene. This design again represents the rise of the bureaucracy in Asante in the 19th century. Several men chose to serve in the king’s court rather than stay poor as village farmers(See Plate 5.7i) (Retrieved October 30, 2007 from <http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>).

Oyokoman na gya da mu (crisis in the Oyoko nation) cloth pattern

This is a symbol of internal conflicts, warning against internal strife, need for unity in diversity, and reconciliation. The name of this cloth commemorates the civil war after the death of Nana Osei Tutu between two factions of the Oyoko royal family. There were two factions, one faction was headed by Opoku Ware and the other by Dako (see Plate 5.7j.) (Retrieved October 30, 2007 from <http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>).

Apremo (Canon) cloth pattern

This is a symbol of resistance against foreign domination, superior military strategy. This design represents the superior military strategy with which the Asante defeated the Europeans who had superior ammunition. An Asantehene is said to have said that “The whiteman brought his canon to the bush but the bush was stronger than the canon” (Plate.5.7k) (Retrieved October 30, 2007 from <http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>).

Adwinasa kente cloth pattern

This literally means “all motifs are used up.” It is said that the designer of this cloth, attempted to weave a unique cloth to please the Asantehene. In the process he used all the motifs then known to weavers. In the end he remarked that he had exhausted all the motifs known to Asante weavers. The cloth was, therefore seen as one of top quality, and the best of kente cloths, aside the ones woven exclusively for the Asantehene. In times past it was worn by only kings and people of high status and wealth. The design of the *Adwinasa kente* cloth is a symbol for royalty, elegance, excellence, wealth, perfection and top quality craftsmanship (Plate 5.7l) (Retrieved October 30, 2007 from <http://www.kentecloth.net/category /kente -cloth-designs-meaning/>).

Kyeretwie kente cloth pattern

Kyeretwie literally means “the one who catches a leopard”. The cloth was designed to commemorate an incident during the reign of Nana Kwaku Dua (1838 -1867) who wanted to test the courage of his warriors and so ordered them to go and catch a leopard alive. Since then the appellation. *Kyeretwie*, has been appended to the names of some of the Asante Kings whose bravery and leadership qualities were comparable to the courage that the warriors had to catch a leopard alive. The design spots black vertical warp stripes which represent the black spots in a leopard’s skin. This cloth was in times past worn only by the Asantehene or by other chiefs with the permission of the Asantehene. The *Kyeretwie* design is a symbol for courage, exceptional achievement in all areas of life and for inspiring leadership (Plate.5.7m) (Retrieved October 30, 2007 from <http://www.kentecloth.net/category /kente -cloth-designs-meaning/>).

Akyempem kente cloth pattern

The literal meaning of this design is “a thousand shields.” And it refers to shields used by the well organized militarised thousands of men and women who defended the Asante Kingdom against external aggression. According to the military strategy of the Asante Kingdom, the chief of the shield bearers, the *Akyempemhene* and the rear guards of the King are his own sons. Shields once used as military weapons are now used in royal ceremonies to symbolize and commemorate the military prowess of the Asante Kingdom. The cloth symbolizes military prowess, unity through military strength, bravery, political vigilance and spiritual defensiveness(Plate5.7n). (Retrieved October 30, 2007 from <http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>).



Plate 5.7h *Fathia fata Nkrumah / Obaakofo mmu man*

Source: <http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>



Plate 5.7i *Fa wo hia kotwere Agyeman*

Source: <http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>



Plate 5.7j *Oyokoman na gya da mu*

Source: <http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>



Plate 5.7k *Apremo (Canon)*

Source: <http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>



Plate 5.7l *Adwinasa kente cloth pattern*

Source: <http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>



Plate 5.7m *Kyeretwie kente cloth pattern*

Source: <http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>

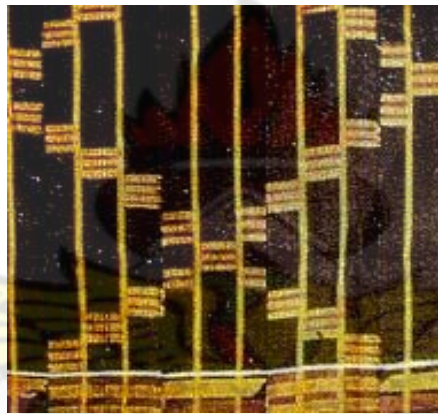


Plate 5.7n *Akyempem kente cloth pattern*

Source: <http://www.kentecloth.net/category/kente-cloth-designs-meaning/>

5.8 Jewellery (Agudee)

Introduction

Akans use a lot of jewellery. Some are used for enhancing the beauty and social status of a person. Others, however, are for religious and ritual purposes. Jewellery for religious and ritual purpose are worn for specific reasons and beliefs.

Most of the jewellery of the Asantehene are made by master goldsmiths and they are very important accessories in the dressing apparel of the Asantehene and several of his courtiers. Traditionally the Asantehene has had his own skilled goldsmiths who created designs as and when he needed or commissioned. The Asantehene's regalia includes several different kinds of jewellery, from rings to elbow wears, head bands, neck wear, ankle wear, and bracelets. All these are made of gold and used by the Asantehene on all public occasions, sometimes in multiples and other times, singly. Jewellery of the Asantehene in the context of this work will include rings, bracelets, neckwear, headbands/ headgears.

Rings, *mpatea* on the finger are part of a Chief's regalia among the Akans. A king like the Asantehene may wear two or three rings on each hand at a time. The weight of the king's ring may be between 30 and 50 grams and the inner diameter between 1.5 and 2.3 centimetres. The hollow casting technique of lost wax casting was mostly used and so the rings were often made from cast gold. (Abercrombie, Cochran and Mims, 1997).



Plate 5.8a Porcupine design on a ring
Source: Ross, Doran H. (1977)

The significance of the rings of the Asantehene is that they convey several meanings through proverbs or other expressions which talk about power, supremacy of the king, bravery, moral behaviour etc,. They also indicate how he rules. For example, the ring with a porcupine

design, (Plate 5.8a) means “ *wo kum apem a apem beba*” literally meaning “if you kill a thousand a thousand will come”. This is because the Asantes believe that when the porcupine shoots out its quills in self defense the quills are soon replaced by new ones. This depicts the responsibility of the King to his people and that of the people to the King.

The *nsoroma*, ‘star’ or ‘starburst’ design (Plate 5.8b) depicts the Asantehene as the shining star who lights the way for his people.



Plate 5.8b *Nsoroma* design on a ring

Source: <http://www.imamuseum.org/art/collections>

Another example is the Asantehene’s ring with a bird and cannons which represent his military strength. Here, the body of the bird has the shape of a square knot, a symbol of wisdom and the ability to solve problems. It means ‘ only a wise man can untie the square knot’ *nyansapɔ wɔsane no badwenba*.

Yet another example is the symbol of Siamese twin crocodiles joined in the stomach, *denkyem funtunfunafu* which means that all belong to one but each struggles for recognition and satisfaction. This is worn by the Asantehene (Plate 5.8c.) and it symbolises the belief of Asantes in democracy.

Bracelets and wrist bands (*Nsakɔndee*) are also forms of jewellery. Most times the bracelets are hollow and cast in either two pieces or a single piece. In Plate 5.8c below, at the extreme right, is a *bamfea* which can be worn as a bracelet or on the elbow.



Plate 5.8c Jewellery - ring and bracelets

<http://www.lindakreft.com/akanart.html>



Plate 5.8d: Jewellery- bracelets and rings

Source: Manhyia Palace Photo Album

The bracelet in Plate 5.8d (extreme left), portrays two symbols, the ram's horns and fern leaves. The ram's horns represent strength and wisdom and the fern, which is a hardy plant, is

a symbol of the Asantehene's endurance and awareness of the thoughts and actions of his enemies.

Headbands, *abɔtire* and Neck-wear, *ayannee* or *akomudee*, feature very prominently in the dressing of the Asantehene. Some of the symbols like *Nsoroma*; *Obi nnka obi a obi nka obi* (Plate.5.8e) are used often to convey messages and moods of the wearer. For instance, *obi nnka obi a obi nka obi*, 'if no one disturbs someone else, no one will be disturbed by anyone else' means there will be peace as long as someone does not go out of his way to deliberately invite trouble from another person. Plate 5.8f also displays some bracelets and rings.



Plate 5.8e Headgear : Obi nnka obi a obi nka obi

Source: Manhyia Place Photo Album (abridged)



Plate 5.8f Otumfuo Nana Osei Tutu II fully bedecked with jewellery- headband, neckwears, bracelets and rings.

Source: Manhyia Palace Photo Album

5.9 Musical Orchestra

The Asantehene's musical and drumming ensemble consists of the *Ntumpan* (Talking drums); *Nkofo* (Horns); *Ntamera* (Horns); *Kokwanannya* (Horns); *Nkontwema* (Drums); *Mpebi* and *Nkrawiri* (Drums); *Kwadowom* (Minstrels); and the *Durogya* (Reed flute) (Nketia, 1963).

5.9.1 Horns

The horns are made from elephant tusks and come in different sizes. The blowing is done through a hole at the smaller end. They can be used to speak about anything relevant to the community. Usually a set of horns is seven (7) *mmenson*, although the *abentia* or *mmentia* can be used alone or together. These horns are usually used along with some musical instruments (Plate.5.9a)

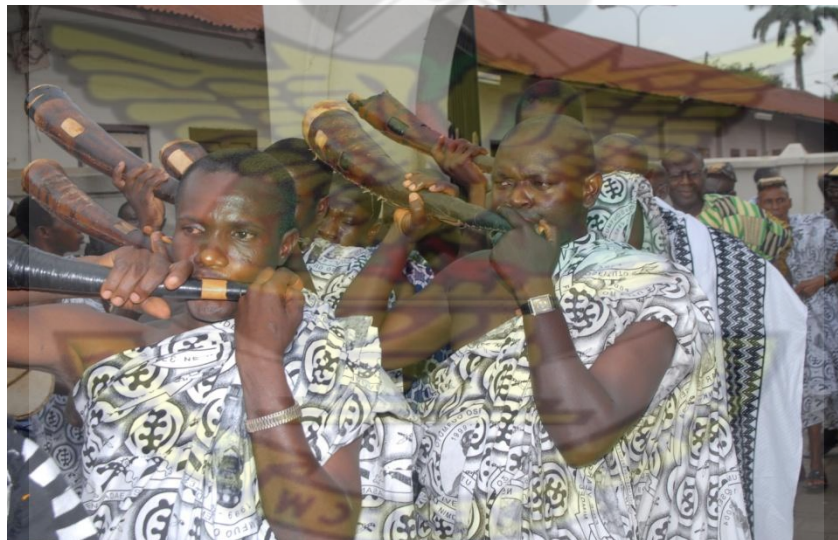


Plate 5.9a Mmentia and their blowers

Source : Photograph taken by the researcher

The *Nkrawoben* are decorated with red felt and the *asikaben* are gold-plated but not played. The *Nkrawoben* horns and the *Nkofo* horn are solely owned and used by the Asantehene (Sarpong, 1974) whilst the *Amoakwa* and *Ntamera* horns are owned by the Asantehene,

Kokofuhene, Juabenhene, Mamponghe, Bekwaihene with the Ejisuhene only having the *Ntahera*.

Nana Osei Tutu I created the *Mmentia* (short horns) Plate 5.9a and *Ntahera* Plate 5.9b (Sarpong, 1990).



Plate 5.9b Ntahera and their blowers

Source : Photograph taken by the researcher

Sets of Horns and Flutes

These are as follows: *Nkofo*; *Ntahera*; *Kwakwrannya*; *Amoakwa*; *Nkrawoben*; *Mmentia*; *Nkontwewa*; *Durugya*; *Atenteben*. It is only the *Durugya* and *Atenteben* that are made from bamboo with smaller circumference but longer than the other horns. Also air is blown into them downwards as against the other horns into which air is blown side ways. They, in addition, ‘speak’ much longer than the others.

Mmentia consist of the *Asokoben* and *Aseseben*. They can be played alone or together. They are made from small tusks. The *Sesee* call the other horns to order and is usually covered with

a cloth, *Nsaa*. The *Agyesoo* answer the call of the *Sesee*. The *Afre* plays the bass and the *Bosoo* plays the tenor. An ensemble or orchestra consists of seven horns which are one (1) *Sesee*, two (2) *Afre*, three (3) *Agyesoo* and one (1) *Bosoo*. The biggest sized horns are *Nkofe* and next to them are the *Ntahera*.

In a procession, the *Nkontwewa* leads, *Ntahera*, *Kwakwrannya*, the *Nkofe* come immediately before the Golden Stool as well as the *Nsenie* with the *Kete* just in front of the *Nkofe*. The *Mmentia* comes immediately behind the Asantehene (Sarpong, 1990).

Players of the Horns

Players of horns come from different clans and villages in Asanteland. Players of *Mmentia* come from Asawasi, Atafua, Tarkwa, Daabaa and Ohwimasi; *Amoakwa* and *Nkrawoben* from Asokwa, Bomso, Ekyee, Abira, Konkromase, Gyinyase and Apatuda, and Bare for the *Amoakwa* horn. The *Nkontwewa* is played by people from Fankyenebra; *Ntahera* by those from Dekyemso, Nyankyerense, Kokobiriko, Behenease, Pampatia, Dumanafo and Adanwomase. The *Nkofe* is played by people from Pankronu, Patase, Ampabame, Mpasaatia, Twedee, Feyiase, Adwease, Dida and Atrama and the *Kwakwrannya* by people from Sabronu. Players are selected from different clans from villages when they are very young and taken through rigorous training for about 3 years. They usually are nephews or sons or brothers of current players. Each of the groups has a leader, the *Ohene* of the group. All horn players are known as *Asokwafo* and all drum players, *Akyeremade*, but each group maintains its individuality and so can relate to the Asantehene directly without passing through the *Asokwahene*. In times past because they were close to the King and considered as the Asantehene's 'wives' they had privileges, such as them using the horn to say anything libellous but not being charged for that. They could wear their slippers and were not required to 'Koha' (wear off their shoulders, under the armpit) their cloth when in the presence of the

Asantehene, as they were not being monetarily rewarded for their services. Since Nana Opoku Ware II's time however, they are given some monetary payments (Sarpong, 1990).

Uses of the Horns

The horns are used to indicate the status of a King, for instance the Asantehene has more horns than any of the chiefs. They are used to praise the Asantehene or the chief, sympathise or condole with the Asantehene when bereaved, to call people to attention to prepare to observe some activities or events. For instance, the *Kwakwarannya* calls to the King to get ready for the *Adaε* festival and the *Ntahera* and *Nkofo* are used to end the *Adaε* festival. The horns are also used by the players to plead for forgiveness from the Asantehene when they wrong him; to remind the King of his duty and responsibility to his people in times of trouble; as a sign of royalty and authority; and as a form of check-and-balance for the King to rule effectively. In view of the fact that they were immune from prosecution, they also said things that would improve the society without fear or favour and they also used the horns to narrate historical events (Sarpong, 1990).

It is important for a horn blower who wishes to be successful to be well versed, among other things in the history of Asante, the nature and habits of particular creatures; the quality and uses of some objects; colours and their meanings, the use of idioms and words and also proverbial language (Sarpong, 1990).

5.9.2 Drums

Drums have a wooden base made from the tweneboa or cedar wood, *antandrophragma* with their top covered with the skin of elephant, monkey, sheep or goat.

***Ntumpan* (Talking Drums)**

The *Ntumpan* (see the big drums in Plate.5.9e.) are a very important pair of drums in Asanteland that are beaten with two curved sticks. They are known as male and female drums. They are of medium height and a rounded middle with leather at the top. These have several functions but especially serve for conveying messages.

In the pre-colonial era they were used to summon people to war since the drummer knew how to play such ‘invitation to war’ messages. Several messages from chiefs and the Asantehene were also sent through the *Ntumpan*. They are also used to sound the appellations of the Asantehene, Chiefs and sometimes individual people. In addition, they are used in *Adowa* and *fontomfrom* dances. Many people understand the language of drums, sometimes beaten in proverbial language. For example, when the proverb “*Obi nka nkyere okanni ba se onto nkyene ndi*” meaning ‘no one will tell an akan to buy salt to eat’, is sounded on a drum in a school, it serves as a call to meal time. The *Ntumpan* are used to give signals, communicate messages in Twi through phrases or proverbs and as an alarm. They are talking drums. Of the pair, the male drum has a higher pitch. The messages they carry are deciphered by those who understand, that is those who have ‘trained ears’ to easily understand the messages. These drum tones are used to invite chiefs for meetings, to announce deaths, war or danger, and, in the Asante Empire, to assemble people to war.

The *Fontomfrom* is used to recite proverbs, convey wise sayings, for praising, calling and congratulating and sometimes as well, for insulting people. The *Donno* is used to accompany songs or as a part in a drum ensemble (Sarpong, 1974).

According to Osei (2002), the different musical orchestras of the Asantehene consists of the following:

i. Kete Orchestra

It is the Asantehene who allows other chiefs to have the *Kete* Orchestra as traditionally, it is restricted to him, unlike the *Adowa* Orchestra that anyone can organize. The orchestra has one *Kwadrwum* (a drum on which two sticks are used); one *Apentemma* (two hands are used by the drummer to beat it); one *Aburukua* (two sticks are used to beat it); one *Donno* or Two *Nnonno* (placed under the armpit and played with a specially carved stick.); and one *Dawuro* (a gong and a short rod used to strike it - this instrument dictates the rhythm of the whole orchestra).

This orchestra usually plays when the Asantehene is mourning or in grief and also at festivals. The King, paramount chiefs and members of the royal family dance to this. All others who wish to dance to it, do so barefooted, with males lowering their cloth to the waist level.



Plate 5.9c Otumfuo Kete Orchestra Instruments and drummers playing at a royal funeral at the Manhyia Palace

Source : Manhyia Palace Photo Album

ii. ***Mpintin* Orchestra**

This orchestra (Plate.5.9d) is originally from Dagombaland and it became part of the Asantehene's and other chiefs in Asanteland's orchestra, when the Dagombas became friends with the Asantes. The *Mpintin* is used in several activities of the Asantehene, mostly to provide rhythm for walking, marching along with him when he is walking and to sound his praises. They are played with both hands, except, for the *donno* which is played with one hand.



Plate 5.9d *Mpintin* Orchestra Instruments and their players

Source : Manhyia Palace Photo Album

It consists of three sets of drums as follows:.

Mpintintoa – which is a big calabash covered with leather and cloth. There is a cloth string tied to the two sides which enables the drummer to hang it around his neck with the side resting on his abdomen as he plays with his two hands whilst moving.

Gyamadudu – it is a long drum with leather at both ends hanging at the shoulder and it is also played with both hands.

Donno – it is an armpit drum, also with leather at both ends and played with a curved stick. The leather is held tightly in place with several parallel strings which determine the sound of the drum. These donno drums are usually not less than two, where one dictates the rhythm and the other is an accompaniment.

iii. *Fɔntɔmfɔm* Orchestra

The *Fɔntɔmfɔm* orchestra is known as the Asantehene's orchestra. Only paramount chiefs are also allowed to use it. The following instruments are used in this orchestra:

Fɔntɔmfɔm - These are two drums, which are tall and large. One is called *Bommaa* (*Bommaa*) but when the two are together, they are called "*fɔntɔmfɔm*". The top is covered with leather and the rest of the body is carved from wood. There is a drummer for each of the drums who drums with two curved sticks.

Ntumpan – These are two drums also covered with leather at the top. One person plays the two drums with two sticks.

Nonno (Ampit Drums) – These are similar to those used in the *Mpintin* orchestra discussed above. A single one is called '*Donno*' and when they are two or more they are called '*Nonno*'.

Adenemma Drum – This is not a big drum, It is played with sticks on its surface.

Nnawuro(Gongongs) - These are two and when they are struck they dictate the rhythm of the orchestra. The *Fɔntɔmfɔm* orchestra is only danced to; no singing accompanies it.



Plate 5.9e *Fɔntɔmfɔm* Orchestra Instruments and their players

Source: Photographed by the researcher

iv. *Penpensiwa* Orchestra

The *Penpensiwa* Orchestra is used for dancing accompanied with a lot of singing. It is liked by a cross section of the society, old and young, especially because of the ability of the songs to praise, castigate or cast insinuations on people.

The orchestra consists of the following instruments:

Penpensiwa - This is a rectangular wooden box with a hole at one of its large sides. In this hole, three light flat metals that are capable of bending are placed. Any desired sound is made depending on how the player strikes the metals.

Nnawuta – These are two double gongs.

Nnawuro – These are two single gongs.

Frikyiwa (castanets) – These may be one or two.

From enquiries it was found out that the *Penpensiwa Orchestra* is not one of the very popular musical assembly at the Manhya Palace now, therefore no picture of it , not even from the Manhya archives could be accessed.

v. *Sikyi Orchestra*

This orchestra is used for *Sikyi* dancing. It is accompanied by singing and anyone can have this orchestra. The instruments used are as follows:

Sikyi Drum – This is one tall drum with leather at the top and the rest consisting of wood. It is played with the hands.

Apentemma Drum – This is a short drum with leather at the top and it is also played with the hands.

Adenmma Drum. This is one small drum also with leather at the top and played with two sticks.

Donno (Armpit Drum) – These can be one or two and played with curved sticks whilst the drum is held in the armpit.

Tambourine Drums – These are three different sizes of square drums with leather at the top, played by the hand.

Metal Gong – This is small and it is played with a rod.

Frikyiwa (*castanets*) - This pair is played with the thumb and a finger.

Bamboo Sticks – These are played by striking the bamboo sticks together.



Plate 5.9f Sikyi Orchestra Instruments and their players

Source: Photographed by the researcher

5. 10 Palace Architectural Designs

Introduction

The traditional architecture of the Akan is elaborate and strong. Even in contemporary architecture this concept is still prevalent. It portrays varied forms and designs as well as symbols in bas-relief/plinths, banisters or walls communicating information. For example , the “*fihankra*” (compound house) is a building style that has a central quadrangle with rooms on all of its four sides, or a rectangular building with several rooms and an open courtyard. This building concept depicts security, protection and spirituality and reinforces the idea of close family ties and unity, as such the *fihankra* symbol means security or protection. The open courtyard (*adi ho*) is the public place which has several public uses; the empty room(*danpan*) is semi-private and can be used to receive visitors and for laying the dead in state at funerals. The private rooms are living and bedrooms.

The art symbols, '*fihankra*' (compound house) '*mframadan*' (well-ventilated house) and *Nyamedua* (God's altar) all originated from traditional Akan architecture.

In times past only palaces of Kings and shrines were decorated with symbols but today several public and private buildings feature symbols on them for aesthetic purposes and to enhance the significance of those buildings. Symbols such as *Osiadan Nyame* (God the builder); *Anantuo* (calf) originate from the proverb "*se anantuo so sene sere a na yadee wo mu* (when the calf becomes bigger than the thigh then it is diseased); *Biribi wo soro* (there is something in heaven); *Obaa ne oman* (a woman is the nation); *Assenua* (the cross); *Gye Nyame* (except God) as well as several other symbols, depending on what the owner of the house wishes to signify or portray, be it for aesthetic value or for sending a message, these are used in Akan architecture. (Retrieved October 18, 2008 from www.marshall.edu/akanart/akanadansie.html). Most of these symbols adorn the walls and buildings of the Manhyia Palace.

It is interesting to note that most Kings in other parts of the world, upon ascending their thrones, decide to upgrade their palaces. The Shah of Iran Nasir al-Din Shah (1848-1896) rebuilt and redecorated his palace between 1867-1892 with modern European architectural designs without demolishing key buildings which played key roles in the rituals of his people's kingship (Scarce, 2001). A similar approach has been adopted by the reigning Asantehene, Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu II, who has renovated the Manhyia Palace but has left the ritual houses undemolished because they also play key roles in rituals of kingship.

Description

Palace architecture in Asanteland has existed even before 1819. The original palace which was situated close to the current site of the Ghana Military Museum was destroyed by the British in the 4th Anglo-Asante War in 1874 (Retrieved May 20, 2007 from Ghana-net.com). The 1st Palace was built with earth and stone on a five acre land. It had several courtyards with verandas and over 60 rooms with steep thatched roofs. Its exterior walls had rich decorations (Britannica Online 2009). Bowdich (1819), described in great detail the palace of the Asantehene including the residence of the women in the household. The palace of the Asantehene was built in clay which was a very impressive occurrence in traditional Asante architecture, similar to the temples of their traditional gods.

Asantehene's palace in 1896 was built with stone and was "Moorish in style as in Cape Coast with flat-roof rooms upstairs". In 1843 the Asantehene's curiosity shop displayed books in many languages and a copy of the London Times of 17th October 1843. In 1817 the palanquin of the Asantehene had cushions and pillows covered with taffeta for his comfort (Anti,1996)

The Palace of Nana Kofi Karikari was at the centre of the town, well protected by a high wall in front and almost surrounded by swamps. It was on a hill with sloping sides. The main entrance was arched and had big wooden doors at its entrance (Anti,1996). The sides were thick with the forest which might have served as a passage of escape for the King and his household. South of the palace was the Harem, *Mmaamu* where the Kings wives lived. Opposite the palace, near to the market, a bit removed from the palace was *Mogyawee*, the Okum tree, where human sacrifices took place and criminals were beheaded (Anti,1996).

The centre of the palace had an European architecture stone building which was a courtyard, about 10 square metres. A staircase situated at a side of this courtyard led to the upper storey

where the Asantehene's crockery, clocks, guns, pillows, cloths and caskets were kept. The other side of the courtyard had a big store room where the Asantehene's umbrellas were kept. Another section of the palace was of traditional architecture which had several court room extensions or alcove *dampan* with seats. Here the drums, king's chairs and stools were kept. The Asantehene had his private quarters within the palace grounds which was downstairs.

There was an open court where there was the sacred *Onyame dua* Altsonia boonei holding a brass pan with holy water as well as other sacred religious materials (see Plate 5.10a).



Plate 5.10a Courtyard showing Nyamedua on the left in the forecourt, 1923

Source: Hess, Janet Berry (2003)

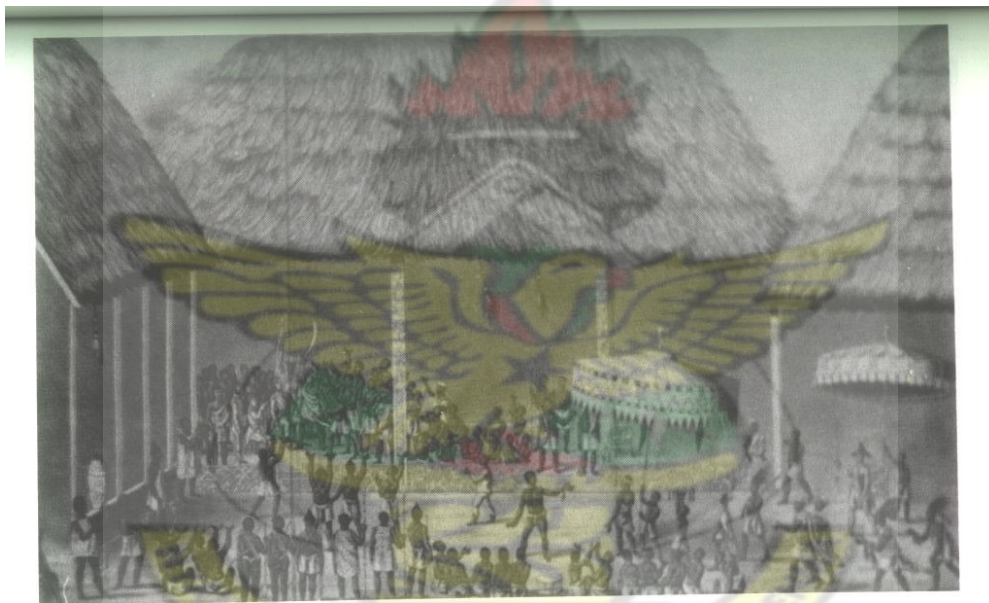
At the sides of this open court were small open rooms containing royal chairs for the king to use in relaxation and also to receive visitors. One of these rooms, *Odanpan* contained special gods, charms, amulets and other protective medicines of the King. It was a sacred room that had a door which opened into the Asantehene's bedroom (Anti, 1996).

The Asantehene's bedroom was about 10-by-8 feet square. On the left side of the room, near the wall, was a beautifully carved oak bedstead with a curtain, stuffed with *nsaa*- spread. Along the wall close to the foot of the bed, were weapons like Danish muskets, English snider, rifles, swords and an English sword with the inscription, "from Queen Victoria to the King of Asante". Opposite the bed was the King's couch which was wide enough to accommodate two people, stuffed with beautifully designed silk material and pillows. In the wall of the room was a window leading to his wives chambers (Anti, 1996).

One went through several doors, each of them opening into a court yard. Each of these courtyards had a slightly raised mound, about two or three feet long and was always white-washed. One could not know the contents of the mounds. The western side of the Palace had a narrow path that led to *Asaman*, quarters of ghost, about an acre away, an open space where decapitated bodies were thrown to rot, causing skeletons of human beings to be always found there (Anti, 1996).

The sacred grove at Bantama was a place where people were executed for religious purposes. The *Adumfo* were responsible for religious purposes executions while the *Abrafo* were the 'policemen' who were responsible for all other executions. They had a room near *Asaman*, which had a sacred temple filled with magic-medicines that they bathed in after execution to prevent the ghost of the executed persons from haunting them. *Asaman*, a shaded valley, occupied a side of the market. From the palace walking westwards after crossing the the *Asaman* lane and about a hundred metres away, was the main street, Bantama road, where Kumase military Fort is found today. Going further to the north-west of this road is the Bantama Mausoleum where the skeletons of the Asantehene are kept. It was dangerous, at the expense of one's life, to be found even a hundred metres close to the building, much

more to enter it. Only the Asantehene and specially designated people could enter the building, then. Today, however, people can walk in front, within even less than a metre of the building, without any fear of harassment or death,(Anti,1996) as it is next to the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital where people pass to and from the Hospital every time of the day. The Palace complex covered about 5 acres and was at the eastern quarter of the city. The *Aban* which was the only stone building, was situated at the northern side (Wilks, 1975). The long passageway from the main entrance of the palace ended in a large yard with several big rooms by it. There was the *Prama Keseso*, Great Court, where the Council of Kumase met in the early 1870's (see Plate.5.10b).



x1 Kumase: the Great Court ca. 1820

Plate 5.10b *Prama Keseso*, Great Court
Source: Wilks (1975)

The Palace had rooms and areas which included the Treasury '*foto*', Kitchens, '*sodo*', bathrooms '*adware*', Harem '*mmaamu*' and the King's private rooms. Around the palace, except to the east, were the seventy seven wards that Kumase was divided into. The South of the Palace was the Adum Ward where the Adumhene lived, two to three hundred yards west to the palace lived the Gyaasewahene, head of the Exchequer (Sanaahene), Bantamahene at

Bantama to the north of the palace and Asafohene at Asafo to the south -east of the palace (Wilks,1975).

Dwaberem, (Plate 5.10c) was used to receive Asantehene's guests as well as for military reviews, and also as a marketplace with no permanent stalls. Immediately to the south of the *Dwaberem* was *Asaman* or *Asamanpomu*, Bush of the Ghosts (Wilks,1975).



Plate 5.10c *Dwaberem* in the 19th century
Source: Wilks (1975)

5.10.1 Nana Bonsu Aban – 2nd Palace of Nana Mensa Bonsu

Nana Bonsu Aban (Plate 5.10d) was a big two-storey building made of stone. It was built by Osei Tutu Kwame Bonsu when he came back to Kumasi after his coastal campaign in 1806 and completed in 1820. It had a flat roof in its front overlooking the street and behind it were other houses. It was a big building with over twelve courts leading from one to the other. The fort could accommodate a thousand men, with its main court capable of taking two hundred more persons. The door to the King's bedroom was heavy and had plaques of gold and silver

stamped on it in a chess-board design. Inside the bedroom was a big bed covered with silk. In 1874 several things were stored in the fort including silk material, drums, elephant tusk horns, weapons, state umbrellas, solid silver breakfast and dinner sets (crockery), stools and canes mounted in gold, golden trinkets and ornaments, leopard skins, Persian rugs and aggrey beads. It also housed the Death Drum with human skulls and thigh bones as decorations. Near the drum were the black stools of the King's ancestors (Claridge, 1964). It was destroyed by the British in the Yaa Asantewaa war. After Nana Prempeh I was exiled, the British reconstructed it and named it 'The Kumasi Fort'.



Plate 5.10d Nana Bonsu Aban

Source: Wilks (1975)

5.10.2. The Manhyia Palace Museum

It is housed in a building which was built in 1925 by the British Government for Asantehene Prempeh I as his private residence after he had returned from exile in the Seychelles Islands in 1924 as a replacement for the Asantehene's palace at Adum that was destroyed during the Yaa Asantewaa war. However, since the Asantes still recognised him as their King, they paid for it and it became the 'Ahenfie' (Palace). It was still the Manhyia Palace during the reign of Sir Osei Agyeman Prempeh II. Since 1970 when the last occupant (Sir Osei Agyeman

Prempeh II) died it was left unoccupied. It was renovated and made the Manhyia Palace Museum on 12th August 1995. It houses the historical and rich cultural history of the Asantes as well as their Kings in photographs, artifacts and statues that are communicated to the world (Plates 5.10e and 5.10f) and it is itself an exhibit. (The Otumfoɔ Opoku Ware Jubilee Foundation and the Manhyia Palace Museum Booklet 1995).



Plate 5.10e: Manhyia Palace Museum in 2001

Source: Kojo Yankah (2009)



Plate 5.10f Manhyia Palace Museum today

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/zug55/1898282464/sizes/m/in/photostream/>

Similarly, not only Ghana has a museum within a palace. The Shah of Iran Nasir al-Din Shah 1848-1896 built a museum in his palace to house his artistic collections (Scarce,2001). This is akin to what Otumfoo Opoku Ware II, the Asantehene, did at the Manhyia Palace in 1995.

5.10.3. Manhyia Palace Today

A new palace was built in 1972 by Asanteman for the Asantehene. There have been regular improvements of the palace and its grounds.



Plate 5. 10g Front View of the Asantehene's Palace Today

Source: Kojo Yankah (2009)



Plate 5.10h SideView of the Asantehene's Palace Today

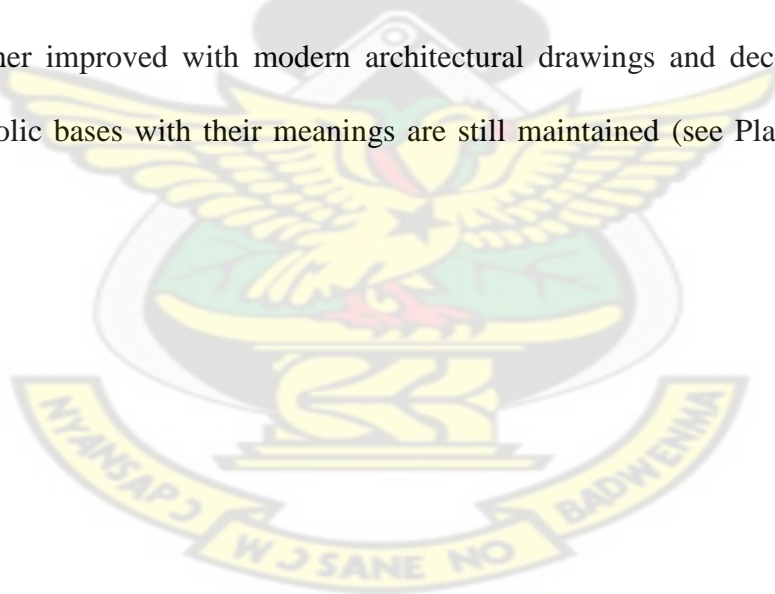
Source: Kojo Yankah (2009)



Plate 5.10i Front View of the Asantehene's Office building at Manhyia Palace today

Source: Kojo Yankah (2009)

Today it is further improved with modern architectural drawings and decorations but the traditional symbolic bases with their meanings are still maintained (see Plates 5.10g, 5.10h and 5.10i).



CHAPTER SIX

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Overview

This Chapter provides analysis and discussion of the questionnaire administered to persons of different age groups, occupations and sexes to know about their understanding of the symbols in the Manhyia Palace and whether they are useful as a means of education and for information dissemination. As a result of the nature of the research population, most of whom were very busy people and therefore understandably would be reluctant to spend a lot of time in answering a long questionnaire, very limited but essential questions were given to assist in arriving at relevant and definite conclusions. Two hundred (200) copies of the questionnaire were administered, of which one hundred and seventy-two (172) were returned, representing a response rate of 86%.

Objectives of the Study

The first objective of the study was to find out “the extent to which the art symbols of the Manhyia Palace have been used to educate and disseminate information in the society”. To realise this objective, the questionnaire was used to elicit responses. The responses received clearly proved this objective as the respondents gave examples of what the symbols do for the society including bringing about unity among the people, teaching people to know values and virtues to guide behaviours to be able to live peacefully among people. They also enable good decision-making and serve as an important tourist attraction through which the nation can earn foreign exchange through informing and educating the tourists.

The second objective was to find out “the type of information, depth of interpretation and education they carry”. To realise this objective, Chapter Five analysed the symbols stating the hidden meanings the symbols carry. For instance, the symbol of two persons sitting with food in front of them and only one eating could be interpreted to mean the other man is not hungry and so does not want to eat, but the hidden meaning conveys the message “*nee adee wo no na ɔdie*” directly translated as, “it is the real owner of the food who eats it”. This in turn has a deeper meaning referring to the fact that only a royal from the direct lineage can rule. Ordinarily eating of food does not relate to kingship, but this study has unravelled a deeper meaning to this simple act and therefore helped in educating and informing people.

The third objective was to find out “the effect of such education and disseminated information on societal attitudes and behaviours”. This has been realized by this work through the responses from the questionnaire. For example, while the symbol of three heads joined together, ‘*tikro nko agyina*’ reminds people about the value of consultation in decision-making; the viper and the horn bill bird in its mouth “*nanka bobonini, meda asaase anya owam*” reminds people to honour their promises as nemesis will catch up with them one day, if they do not do so. Another symbol of the frog and the mudfish featured together ‘*Aponkyerene da nsuom ye kese sen ara a ɔne pitire nnse da*’ interpreted as meaning that however much the frog stays in water and grows fat, it can never surpass the mud fish. The mudfish is used in reference to the King, because it is considered as the king of freshwater fish. This serves to remind people about the supremacy of the King, keeping in mind that however much one may be rich or fat or have influence in society, the King is always supreme. The meanings of these symbols enjoin people to respect authority and to put up societally acceptable behaviours and attitudes.

6.2 Analysis

6.2.1 Sample

The copies of the questionnaire were administered to ten (10) persons in each of twenty (20) categories or occupations as follows – University teachers, University administrators, University undergraduate students, University post graduate students, Primary School teachers, Senior High School teachers, Lawyers, Medical doctors, Librarians, Security Service personnel (police, prisons, military), Civil servants, High School students, Health workers (nurses and pharmacists), Media workers, Church workers, Bankers, Pastors, Business Executives, Judicial Services (Judges, Court Staff) and Akan Traditional rulers, all in the Ashanti Region.

Eleven (11) categories had a response rate of 100%, that is, all the ten copies of questionnaire given to them were returned as completed. The least response was recorded from two categories – Medical doctors and Traditional rulers, from which 40% each of the questionnaire was received. For these two categories one may explain that the Medical doctors were too busy to respond or that they did not know what to write because 50% of those who responded did not know much about the symbols in the Manhyia Palace. Medical Officers were included in the sample to ascertain if they spared time in their very busy schedule to learn about the symbols. The result showed that they had very little or no time to spare. It was also expected that the Traditional rulers, who knew much of these symbols would readily answer the questionnaires. With this group one could infer that they might have been so familiar with the symbols that they did not see the need to respond or they felt that everyone ought to know the symbols and their meaning as they did, or just did not want to volunteer information. The few who responded gave a lot of enlightening responses expected from them.

One hundred questionnaires each were given to males and females. Of the one hundred and seventy-two completed questionnaires returned, ninety-four (54.7%) were from males whilst seventy-eight (45.3%) were from females. Out of the 172 completed questionnaires, 136 (79.1%) respondents indicated that they knew about the symbols in question.

6.2.2 Age Group and Gender

Five age groups were identified – 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 and over 60. For ages 20-30 there were 66 respondents, which was 38.37% ; for ages 31-40 there were 38 respondents, which was 22.10% ; ages 41-50 had 28 respondents, reflecting as 16.28%; ages 51-60 had 24 respondents ,reflecting as 13.95% and those over 60 were 16 respondents which reflected as 9.30%.

Out of the 66 persons in the 20-30 age group that responded there were 56 persons, (84.84%) 30 males and 26 females who knew about the Manhyia Palace symbols and 10 of them (15.16%) comprising 4 males and 6 females did not know; for the 38 persons who responded within the ages 31-40, there were 24 persons (63.15%) comprising 10 males and 14 females who knew about the Manhyia Palace Symbols while 14 persons, comprising 10 males and 4 females did not know; out of the 28 persons in the 41-50 age group that responded all the 14 males and 14 females constituting 100% knew about the Manhyia Palace symbols. There were 24 respondents out of which 16 persons (66.67%) comprising 10 males and 6 females in the age group 51-60 knew about the symbols, while 8 persons, 4 males and 4 females did not know about the symbols. Out of the 16 persons in the over 60 age group that responded, 12 persons (75%), 8 males and 4 females knew about the Manhyia Palace symbols, while 4, all males, did not know about the symbols.

These results make an interesting visual spread as shown in Figure 6.1

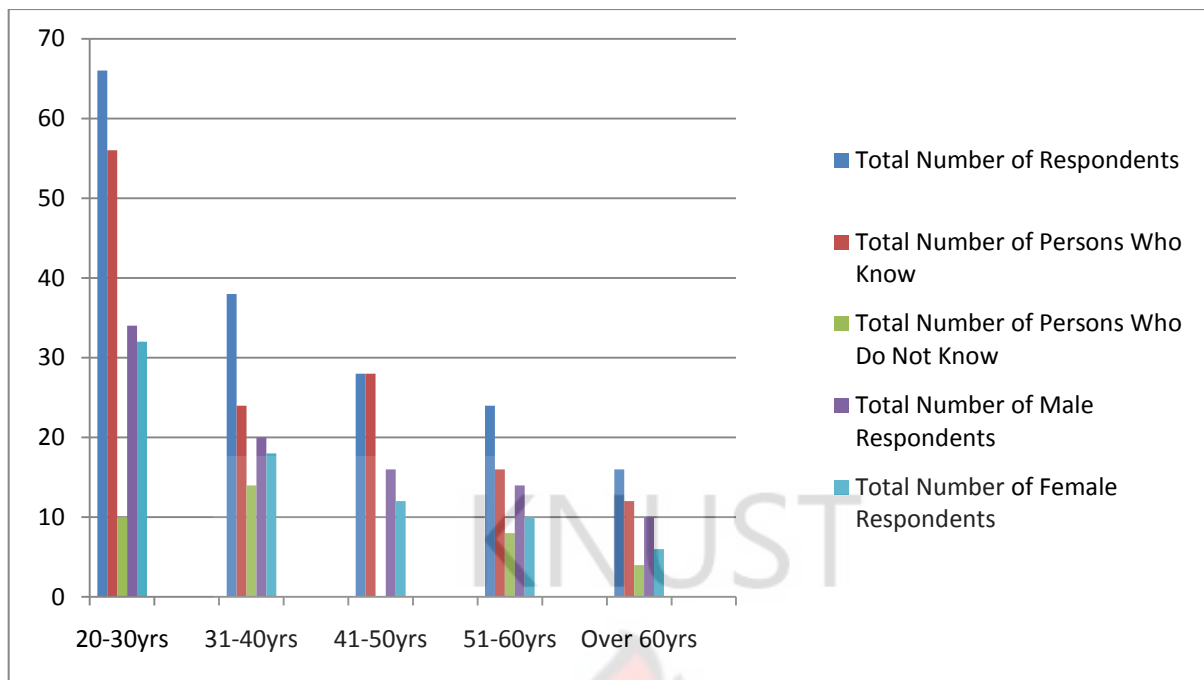


Fig. 6.1 Age Group and Gender

6.2.3 Ethnicity

Kumasi is a cosmopolitan city where people from several ethnic groups including Akans reside. It was therefore necessary to know how many non-Akans responded to the questionnaire in order to know how much they knew about the Manhyia Palace Symbols vis-à-vis what the Akans knew to assess the possibility of influence of these symbols in the lives of non-Akans.

Of the 94 males respondents 68 (72.34%) were Akans and 26 (27.66%) were non-Akans. Out of the 68 Akan males, 58 (85.29%) of them knew about symbols and 10 (14.71%) did not know.

Out of the 26 non-Akans males, 16 (61.54%) of them knew about the symbols whilst 10 (38.48%) of them did not know. This was expected as it would be normal for more Akans to know about their own traditional art symbols than non-Akans.

Out of the total 78 female respondents, 56 (71.79%) of them were Akans and 22 (28.21%) non-Akans. Of the 56 Akan females, 42 (75%) of them knew about the symbols and 14 (25%) of them did not know. Of the 22 female non-Akans, 16 (72.73%) of them knew about the symbols while 6 (27.27%) of them did not know.

Based on the percentage recorded, the non-Akan females came very close to the Akan females who knew about the symbols. This could be explained by female non-Akans having more interest in knowing about the traditional art symbols of the Akans as compared to their male counterparts. The situation is seen displayed in Fig.6.2.

It is relevant to know the number of persons who speak or write Asante Twi. This is because the meanings of the symbols are in Asante Twi and if someone does not speak or write it, there will be difficulty in understanding what the symbols stand for. One hundred and sixty-four (164) respondents (95.35%) spoke Asante Twi and 108 respondents (62.79%) wrote Asante Twi, indicating the greater likelihood that there would be more people who spoke and wrote Asante Twi and who knew about the symbols in the Manhyia Palace than those who did not speak or write Asante Twi but also knew of the symbols under study.

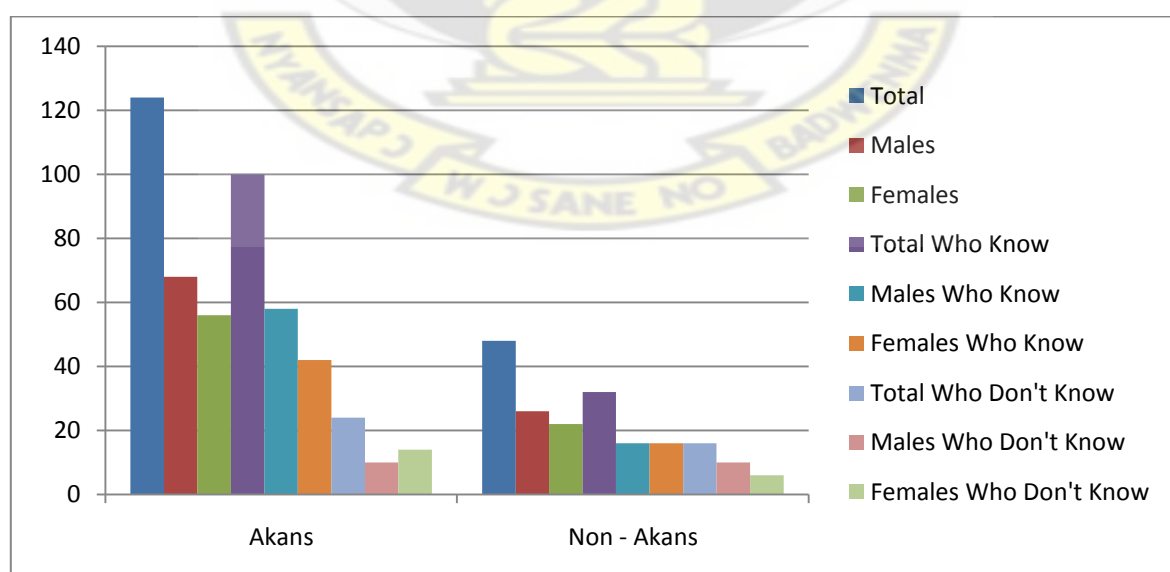


Fig. 6 2 Ethnicity

6.2.4 Domicile

There were 86 persons (63.2%) out of the 136 who confirmed knowledge about the symbols who had lived in the Ashanti Region for over twenty years. The remaining 50 persons had lived in the region from one month to nineteen years.

Concerning those who had lived specifically in Kumasi, 84 persons (61.8%) out of the 136 had lived there for over twenty years.

From the results available it can tentatively be suggested that there is a close relationship between the length of time spent in the Ashanti Region and Kumasi and knowledge possessed concerning the Manhyia Palace symbols.

6.2.5 Educational Qualification

Relating to the educational levels of the respondents 16 persons had Middle School Leaving Certificates (MSLC), 56 had Secondary School certificates (WASCE/SSSCE), 54 had a First Degree, 36 had a Masters degree and 10 had PhD.

Out of the 16 persons with MSLC 8 (50%) knew about the symbols while 8 (50%) did not know. Of the 56 with WASCE/SSSCE, 42 (75%), knew about the symbols while 14 (25%) did not know; of the 54 with first degree 44 (81.48%) knew about the symbols, while 10 (18.52%) did not know. Out of the 36 persons with Masters degree 28 (77.78%) knew about the symbols, while 8 (22.22%) did not know. Finally out of the 10 persons with PhD degrees 6 (60%) knew about the symbols while 4 (40%) did not know about the symbols (see Fig.6.3).

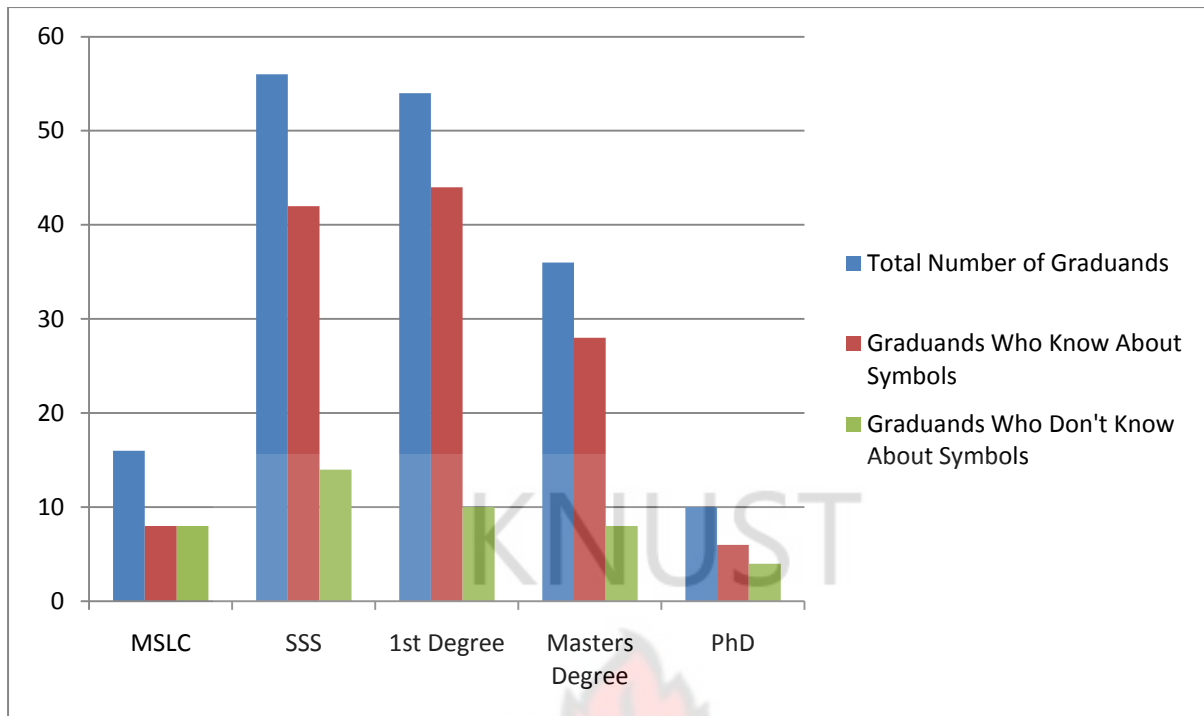


Fig. 6.3 Educational qualification

From the responses one can see mostly that the Secondary School leavers and First Degree and Master's Degree holders, out of the 172 respondents, knew more about the Manhyia Palace symbols while more of the MSLC holders 8 (50%) and PhD holders 4 (40%) did not know about the symbols. This may be explained by the ed

ucational system during the MSLC time (most of whom would have been PhD holders now) that did not have social studies in the curriculum through which some of these symbols would have been taught. The social studies course was introduced in the curricular when the first degree holders and WASSCE /SSSCE holders were in the Secondary School.

6.2.6 Knowledge of Asante History

It is relevant to have an idea of how many of the respondents have knowledge of Asante history as one comes across most of these symbols in Asante history. It was therefore found

out that 142 (82.56%) of the 172 respondents knew some Asante history. Eighty –five point one percent (85.1%), that is eighty of the males, knew Asante history while 14.9%, that is fourteen males, did not know any Asante history; 79.5%, that is, sixty two of the females knew some Asante history while 20.5% that is, sixteen females, did not know any Asante history. This gave the impression that males were more likely to know some Asante history than females.

Each respondent was asked in the questionnaire to tick as many options as were relevant to him/her. It was assumed that options “a – e” applied to all the respondents so the percentage was calculated in each case from the 172 respondents. In line with this, to the question posed concerning the source of knowledge of Asante history yielded the following answers:

- a. Taught in school had 112 (65.12%) respondents.
- b. Told by friends had 38 (22.09%) respondents
- c. Told by parents/guardian had 50 (29.07%) respondents
- d. Heard through the electronic media had 42 (24.42%) respondents and print media 52 (30.23%)
- e. Other means like visit to the Palace and Museum had 8 (4.65%) respondents.

From the above, the most common source of knowledge concerning Asante history was through being taught in school.

6.2.7 Knowledge of Asante art symbols

Out of the 94 males who responded to the questionnaire, 72 (76.6%) of them knew about the symbols at the Manhyia Palace while 22 (23.4%) had no idea. Out of the 78 females who responded to the questionnaire, 64 (82.1%) of them knew about the symbols at the Manhyia

Palace while 16 (17.9%) had no idea. This painted a picture of there being more females than males who knew about the symbols.

It was also relevant to know the number of respondents who had knowledge of Asante art symbols, some of which are found in the Manhyia Palace. It was found out that 136 (79.07%) of the 172 respondents knew about Asante art symbols. Here too, each respondent could respond positively to more than one option, that is, they were not limited. It was also assumed that “a – f ” applied to all respondents and so the percentage must be found from the 172 respondents. To the question posed concerning the source of knowledge of Asante art symbols the following results were realised :

- a. Taught in school had 80 (46.51%) respondents.
- b. Described by parents/guardians had 34 (19.77%) respondents
- c. Described by friends had 20 (11.63%) respondents
- d. Heard through the electronic media had 34(19.77%) and print media also 34 (19.77%) respondents.
- e. Visit to Museums and galleries had 34 (19.77%)
- f. Other means like in cloth that is bought had 8 (4.05%) response.
- g. From the above, the most common source of knowledge concerning Asante history was through being taught in school.

The results showed that most respondents (46.51%) were taught Asante art symbols in school. This confirms the earlier discovery that more Secondary School leavers and First Degree and Master’s Degree holders knew about Asante art symbols because they were taught in school.

6.2.8 Understanding of the symbols in the regalia

The respondents were asked if they understood the symbols in the regalia in the Manhyia Palace. To this 102 respondents (59.30%) said they did, and out of this number 32 (31.4%) were non-Akans; 70 respondents (40.70%) indicated that they did not understand them and out of this number 52 were Akans. Those who said they did understand the symbols in the regalia gave examples of their understanding as showing authority; means of communicating information; having a specific meaning or message; providing socio-cultural knowledge; showing the rich culture, power, royalty, security, soul and spirit of the Asantes; beautifying the Manhyia Palace; the symbols being sacred; displaying and explaining the secrets and wisdom of Asante Culture as well as the values and traditions of the Asantes. In addition, they said they understood the symbols as a source of pride to the Asantes ; showing the power of the Asante Kingdom in pre-colonial Ghana; some spoke about the unity of the Asantes and others said the symbols told the history of the Asante Kingdom.

The respondents were asked if they had been to Manhyia Palace before. This was to know if their having been to the Palace would have had any effect on their level of knowledge of the symbols in the Palace. One hundred and sixteen (116) (67.44%) of them indicated they had been there while 56 (32.56%) said they had not. Of the 56 persons who had not been to the Manhyia Palace, eighteen (18) of them said they had not had the opportunity yet; ten (10) said that they had not had the time to visit; ten (10) had no reason for not having been there; eight (8) said they thought that one could go there only by invitation; six (6) said they had nothing to do there and four (4) said they came to Kumasi just recently. Out of the 116 respondents who had been to the Manhyia Palace, 48 persons, (41.38%) of them went there to witness durbars or festivals; 34 (29.31%) on official duty and 34 (29.31%) for an excursion or a tour.

Further analysis showed that out of the 102 persons who understood the regalia in the Manhyia Palace, seventy-four (74) persons had been to the Manhyia Palace. Those who had not been to the Manhyia Palace but understood the regalia were twenty-eight (28). In effect, those who had visited the Manhyia Palace were more, indicating that when one visits the Manhyia Palace, one is more likely to understand what the symbols found in there mean.

The 116 respondents who had been to the Manhyia Palace before indicated the symbols they saw there as Adinkra symbols, stools, palanquins, drums, swords, umbrellas, linguist staff, 'Nyamedua', jewellery, slippers, talismans, cloths and outdated cars. They also indicated that they saw these symbols when they went to the Manhyia Palace on official visits, excursions, or to witness *Akwasidae*, *Adaekese*, funeral rites of a late Asantehene, enstoolment of an Asantehene and Asantehene's court proceedings. Some however could not remember their reasons for being at the Manhyia Palace.

6.2.9 Observation of symbols in the regalia

It is possible for persons to observe symbols on the Asantehene's regalia whether they visit the Manhyia Palace or not since the Asantehene moves out of the Palace now and again to attend functions and people passing by the Palace may also have a peep into the Palace.

The questionnaire therefore sought to find out if they had observed any art symbols in the Asantehene's regalia. Eighty-two respondents (47.67%) said yes, while 90 (52.33%) said no. The 82 persons indicated that they observed symbols, such as, elephant on linguist staff, adinkra symbols on cloth, carefully designed symbols on wearing apparel, different types of jewellery, a stool with an animal symbol, adinkra symbols on crown/headgear of the Asantehene, gold ornaments on paraphernalia and distinct cloth patterns (*akunintam*). They did not identify musical instruments, slippers, stools, swords, umbrellas, the buildings

though, probably due to they not considering them as part of the regalia, because many people assume that ‘regalia’ was exclusively a wearing apparel.

The majority of the 90 respondents who had not observed the symbols in the regalia indicated that they either had no interest, no attraction or were more interested in the event where the Asantehene was present rather than his regalia. This points to the fact that there is need for more education as to what the symbols represent, for the benefit of the society.

Those who had observed the regalia, 82 in number, were asked to give reasons why they thought the symbols had been used in the regalia. The key reasons indicated were that they showed the importance of the rich Asante culture, authority, power, leadership, rank and unity among the Asantes; conserved Asante culture, educated people on the history of the Asante kingdom; conveyed messages and proverbs hidden in the symbols; and showed people the means of communication among the Asantes, before education, reading and writing with alphabets came into being.

6.2.10 Understanding of the meaning of the symbols in the regalia

It is one thing recognising a symbol and another, understanding its meaning. One can understand a symbol through describing its features and designs without necessarily knowing what it stands for. The respondents were therefore asked if they understood the meaning of the symbols. Sixty-eight respondents (39.53%) indicated that they understood while 104 (60.47%) persons said they did not understand. This is contrary to when 102 persons said that they recognised the symbols but 70 said they did not in the earlier question. This is in line with the assertion that one could understand the features of the symbols without understanding their meaning.

The sixty-eight (68) persons who indicated that they understood the meaning of the symbols, gave some correct examples as follows; *Gye Nyame*- omnipotence and immortality of God; *Obi nnka obi a obi nka obi* – unity; *Fihankra* – safety and security; *Sankɔfa* – learn from the past; *Dwenin mmen* – strength and wisdom; *Akokobatan ne ne mma*- duty of leader to protect and defend his subjects; *Denkyem funtunfunafu* – all belong to one but each struggles for recognition and satisfaction; *Tikrɔ nkɔ agyina*- two heads are better than one', value of consultation; *Kɔtɔkɔ* – power, bravery and strength of the Asante nation; *Ese ne tekyerema* –peaceful co-existence; Elephant– power and authority of the King; Linguist staff – authority.

Some meanings that were interpreted incorrectly were as follows: *Gye Nyame* – only God can defeat me, accept God; a man being pushed up a tree – unity is strength; *Ɔdɔ nyera fie kwan* – a lover never loses his/her way; Aya (fern) – I am not afraid of you; *Ɔhene tuo*- defender and protector of the King; *Adinkra*- goodbye to the dead; bows, arrows and swords – show how hard the Asante fought to attain their Kingdom; *Funtunfunafu* – need for cooperation; Afena – sword of authority; umbrella – the position the chief occupies in the society. The incorrect interpretation of these symbols strengthens the argument that there is the need for more education into the meanings of the symbols today as most of the respondents either interpreted the symbols literally or translated the name of the symbol directly into English . It is also interesting to note that persons between the ages of 41 – 50 had more problems giving the correct meanings of the symbols while those from ages 51 to over 60 had no problems at all as all their interpretations were to a large extent accurate.

6.2.11 Usefulness of the symbols

On the usefulness of the symbols, 118 (68.60%) respondents said they believed they were useful, while 54 (31.40%) either said they could not say so, or they did not know if they were

useful or not. Some of the reasons given as to the usefulness of the symbols were that they preserved and showcased the rich culture and identity of the Asantes; provided useful historical findings, events and information; elaborated the unique cultural heritage and lineage of the Asantes; imparted/taught knowledge and shared the rich Asante culture to generations and preserved for those yet unborn; was a means of communication; taught traditional values; helped Asantes to learn more about their culture and brought meaning to the identity of Asantes; served as tourist attractions; upheld and inculcated Asante virtues; helped people to know about Asante history and Asantes to remember their heritage as well as distinguished Asantes from other cultures; motivated people to learn about Asante culture and as constant reminder of their past, to unite them in the present and encourage progress into the future.

6.2.12 Relevance of the symbols

Something can be useful, but not relevant to a cause so the relevance of the symbols to the nation was sought in the questionnaire. One hundred and twenty four (72.09%) respondents indicated that the symbols were relevant while 48 (27.91%) could not say if they were relevant or not or had nothing to say. Those who indicated that the symbols were relevant to the nation cited the following to support their stand that they served as- important tourist attraction; they identified Asantes and their unique culture in the country; means of earning foreign exchange through tourism; guided leaders and youth in decision-making; guided behaviours and taught lots of lessons in life; made Ghanaians distinct and unique in the world especially when they were worn and so promoted national unity and identification and served as a means of national identify; they served as precautions to power holders with the wisdom embedded in their meanings; and a means of communication, authority and cultural heritage

of a nation; showed what Asantes could offer the nation in terms of culture and also helped to sustain our history and tradition amidst the infiltration of western culture into our culture; they showed what Asante ancestors produced; helped people to learn and teach Asante symbols and culture; helped Asantes to know their roots and so unify them while sustaining their history and culture. The symbols preserved the nation's culture; provided avenues for virtues and morals to be exercised; assured Asantes of perpetual security and helped the people to remember the meanings of their culture and heritage as well as represented the uniqueness and authority of the Asantehene. The symbols added to the rich cultures and traditions of the nation.

Two respondents indicated specifically that the Asante symbols were not relevant to the nation as other ethnic groups also had their symbols. This work studied the Asante art symbols in the Manhyia Palace that some people saw as useful and therefore should not be useful to only Asantes as ethnic symbols, but rather symbols that should be useful to the nation. However the symbols of the other ethnic groups should be also useful, so it is important that they are studied in another work to determine how useful they are to the nation.

Some suggestions on how the symbols could be more useful or relevant to the society were made by 116 respondents. Fifty- six respondents did not give any. These suggestions have been summarized and will be presented in Chapter Seven as part of the recommendations.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Overview

This final chapter features the summary, the conclusions and the recommendations arrived at from the findings of the work.

7.2 Summary

This research set out to examine the assertion that the traditional art symbols in the Manhyia Palace are a means for education and information dissemination for the development of the nation. The responses to the questionnaire indicated among other things that the symbols teach morals and how to behave in society. A review of related literature was therefore done to identify information that was directly or indirectly related to the topic and also to assist in realising the objectives that had been set. Chapter Four narrated the history of the fifteen Asantehene bringing out their acts which were symbolic to the Asante kingdom. Chapter Five analysed the questionnaire where it was found out that 128 (74.41%) out of the 172 respondents knew about the Manhyia Palace symbols and most of them saw the symbols as a means of communicating information and also for providing socio-cultural knowledge. The valuable suggestions form part of the recommendations in this chapter. The study used two types of data, primary and secondary.

The primary data were collected by the use of questionnaire, interviews, photographs and observations at various events such as Adaye and durbars at the Manhyia Palace where most of the symbols were outdoored or put on display. Some of the photographs taken were at a

distance and so were not too sharp or clear when they were printed, so those in books and on the internet were mostly used.

7.3 Objectives

The objectives of the study were to find out the extent to which the art symbols of the Manhyia Palace have been used to educate and disseminate information in the society; the type of information, depth of interpretation and education they carry; and the effect of such education and disseminated information on societal attitudes and behaviours.

7.4 Test of Research Question

The research question of this study is that ‘Akan royal art symbols are not merely artistic but they do disseminate information for the good of the society’. It is known that the Manhyia Palace art symbols are synonymous with Akan art symbols because most of the symbols being used by the larger Akan ethnic group originated from Asanteland. Most of the symbols were also commissioned by various Asantehene and manufactured by their craftsmen. Initially such symbols were for the sole use of the Asantehene and his Palace, but over the years some of them have been used by the general public.

Chapters Four and Five on the History of Asante Kings and the Analysis of the Symbols respectively in this study provide useful information and pictures which prove that the symbols are aesthetically beautiful to behold and that they also educate and provide information that are disseminated to improve the behaviours, attitudes and general good of the society.

7.5 Principal /Major findings of research as contribution to knowledge

- It is important to state that a comprehensive review of literature was made to find out if there had been any study on the topic. Some related ones were found in the process.

There was however, no study which had been done earlier with a subject the same as

this one. This therefore means that this study and its results are a new contribution to knowledge in general.

- There are related works in which some of the symbols are studied separately. For example only the linguist's staff, or only stools or only swords are covered. These studies have mostly looked at the aesthetic aspects and not delved deeply into their educational and informational values for the society. This work therefore, having studied several different symbols of the palace, together as a whole, seems to be the first time or the first attempt to have these different symbols studied together with reference to the history of the Asantehene who commissioned or used them. It will therefore serve as a 'one-stop shop' for persons looking for information about the different symbols of the Palace.
- Another aspect of this study's contribution to knowledge is that it has shown that although these particular symbols are Akan in origin, people from other ethnic groups in the country have learnt about them and so, in effect, the symbols are useful for the nation as a whole, and by extension, even to other nationals, since several tourists patronise the works made out of them.
- Yet another contribution to knowledge is that it was assumed before this study that people mostly thought about the aesthetic value of the symbols without necessarily attributing any deep meanings that could influence the behaviour of the society positively. The responses to the questionnaire indicated that this was not wholly the case and that some people do know that the symbols have some deep seated meanings that caution, direct or applaud the behaviours of people. It further re-emphasises the fact that the traditional Akan society, even before the introduction of western

education, governance and values, had these symbols that guided them to comport themselves well in the society.

This study also unearthed some information that adds to existing knowledge that:

- most of the symbols in the Palace are made of wood and metal and then gold plated, so not all the symbols are made of pure gold. Most often people believe that the symbols are made of solid gold. Some even swear to back up their belief. However, the umbrella finial, linguist staff finial, sword ornaments at the Manhyia Palace were found to be gold plated. Only the jewellery is made of solid gold.
- most of the symbols we see now are replacements because the originals have either been worn out or stolen. This study found out that contrary to the belief of most members of the society that the original symbols made centuries ago by the respective Asantehene are the ones still being used, due to wear and tear caused by ageing, constant use, the corrosive nature of metal, the work of natural agents on wood and the handling of the symbols, it became necessary to order replacements as necessary, but then care was taken to make the replacements look like the ones being replaced, so the ordinary person would not see the difference.

7.6 Conclusions

The art symbols of the Manhyia Palace beautify the palace and add to the regality of the Asantehene. Such symbols are seen in the environment of the Palace, displayed at major festivals and durbars and are worn by the Asantehene. Most of the symbols have been created by the various Asantehene from Nana Osei Tutu I to Nana Opoku Ware II to mark occasions and events. Some have also been suggested by the various craftsmen who have served and still serve the Palace.

This research set out to find out if these symbols only had aesthetic values, or whether they had other aspects that educate or inform the society. It has been found that the symbols have aesthetic values and they also have proverbs and wise sayings in addition to long stories and specific events, associated with them through which they convey and teach the historical background of the Asante people, how they have come to where they are now traditionally, the values and norms that they have held high which are embedded in the symbols that have enabled them to live with one another peacefully and cordially . These findings have answered the research question of this study.

The effigies of Ntim Gyakari, Worosa and Sir George McCarthy attached to the Golden stool have event close to the heart of the Asantes, attached to them. The various stools, swords, linguist staffs and umbrella finials, jewellery all have meanings and sayings associated with them. These also educate and inform people about the history of the Asantes and also the Asante norms and values, cultural beliefs and activities.

This study has attempted to document some of the symbols used in the Manhyia Palace and also by the Asantehene which are available for public scrutiny with the view of bringing out their informative and educative roles which would be useful and relevant for national development because of how they build the moral values of the people.

The symbols also perform a unifying role, as several ethnic groups in the country now recognise them and use them. For example, the adinkra symbols are used by almost every ethnic group in the country, as design motifs on their manufactures such as jewellery, textile, pottery, wood work, including the meanings that the Akans attach to them.

The economic aspect of the symbols to the nation cannot be overlooked. Some of the symbols are used in the manufacture of jewellery, paintings and carvings, that are sold to local and foreigner buyers alike. The sales yield income to the manufacturers. The Precious Minerals Marketing Company (PMMC) of Ghana uses the designs of the symbols in several of their jewellery which are patronised by local buyers and also for export as foreign exchange earners for the country.

One cannot underplay the fact that the symbols have come to be identified with this country or its nationals outside its shores. When one sees the symbol displayed in whatever mode outside the country, upon enquiry one gets the response that either a Ghanaian or a foreigner who had either lived or visited the country lives there or owns the place. Many a time too, black people in the diaspora identify themselves with the symbols and through their use, with the country and its people. This is the extent to which the symbols have gone international.

In the olden days, the manufacture of these symbols was the sole preserve of only males commissioned by the Asantehene to produce them for the sole use of the palace. In recent times however, anyone, male or female, who has the gift and talent to manufacture the symbols for whatever use does so without any fear or hindrance or permission from the palace. This is the reason why the symbols have become very popular and owned in whatever form by individuals, rich or poor, royal or commoner, Akan or non-Akan, thereby unifying the people.

It has also been known through the discussion of the findings that there is the need for the meanings of the symbols to be made easily accessible, to enable a great number of people to

learn from them and apply what they learn from them to their lives. Furthermore, several suggestions have been made as recommendations in this study, which if taken seriously will further increase the number of people who understand the meanings of the symbols and hence their ability to apply them to their lives.

The Akan art symbols, typified in what are displayed in the Manhyia Palace really do contribute to the education and information of citizens of the country on how best to live fruitful lives and ensure good neighbourliness while contributing, through good morals and virtues towards the development of Ghana.

7.7 Recommendations

Since, as the Asante put it, '*tikro nko agyina*' that is, "two heads are better than one", it was important to consult in order to ensure good decision-making. The questionnaire administered for this study produced some very useful suggestions that could be added to the recommendations for further action to ensure that maximum use of the art symbols are made for optimum education and dissemination of information for the good of the society. The recommendations are made thus:

- A day should be set aside annually by the Manhyia Palace to display the symbols, like an Open Day or Exhibition Day, to inform people of the meanings and importance of the symbols. Such an open or exhibition day should not attract any fees for attendance so that people would be encouraged to attend.

- More traditional art museums also need to be established by the Museums and Monuments Board, to support what the Manhyia Palace Museum offers. This will enable more and easy access by the public to these symbols, so that the public will learn more about the values and norms that they carry. Currently, patronage of the Manhyia Palace Museum is very low . Although it is open to the public at a small fee people are reluctant to visit it as they think it is difficult to have access to it, because it is located in the palace compound and likely to have limited access. Effective publicity needs to be embarked upon as well, by the Manhyia Palace Museum staff to inform the public about the museum's accessibility since history portrays a fearful image of the Palace. The Palace needs a new public image to disabuse the minds of the public.
- The Ministry of Education should include the study of the Akan symbols as well as symbols of other Ghanaian ethnic groups in the education curricular and taught from the Primary to High School levels as well as authorities of the Tertiary institutions teaching them at first year level, so that the youth would be well-versed in their values before they become adults because they would then have internalised them This would then serve as a guide for them in their adult life to aid them in promoting national peace. It should be made compulsory up to the Junior High School level as a subject, and as part of the Social Studies course at the Senior High School level. In the tertiary institutions it should be part of the Communication Skills or African Studies courses.

- The symbols should be better promoted in cloths, not only as symbols but with their meanings included. Some fabric designers like Akosombo Textiles Limited have been using the symbols in their black-and-white, black, red and also brown funeral cloths by indicating just the symbol and the proverb or caption connected to it. The Textile Companies need to go further by including the real meaning of the symbol along with the symbol in the cloth.
- Parents and guardians should be encouraged to teach their children and wards at home to complement what they are taught in school. This is very important as it will confirm to the children that what is being taught in school is very relevant to their lives. In doing so the parents will also become more enlightened as they would be sure to have correct information themselves in order to teach the children correctly.
- The media, especially the visual media, should be encouraged to present programmes regularly on the symbols to further educate and inform the people. These can be actual lessons taught by persons well - versed in the symbols and their meanings, quiz programmes with rewards attached to them, screen shots featuring the symbol, its proverb and meaning, in between programmes and especially at the beginning of highly viewed programmes during prime time. For example, Garden City Radio in Kumasi has a weekly programme broadcast on Saturdays from 3.30pm to 6.00pm called “*Ahenfie Asueye*” where the activities held at the Manhyia Palace that week are presented. Through this programme the researcher has learnt a lot about the happenings at the Palace like Court sessions, Asanteman Council sittings and other

activities where some of these symbols and their meanings are referred to and explained.

- Efforts should be made to step up the exposure of the symbols to tourists, especially as finished goods with good quality finishing, to increase income generation. Currently some of the symbols are finished poorly, so one can hardly decipher the symbol not to talk about knowing its meaning. Giving them a good finish will attract a lot of patronage.
- Youth organizations should include the study of the symbols in their activities. Since most often they organise periodic events, be they town based, school based or subject based, such occasions can be used to educate and inform the youth about the symbols.
- All members of the society need to be educated and informed about the art symbols and their meanings and so booklets featuring the symbols, their meanings and importance should be produced and made available to schools, libraries and sold/distributed to the general public as soon as possible. It was found to be true that some adults did not know about the symbols on analysis of the responses of the questionnaire for this study. Such booklets could be made available to them and placed at vantage points, especially in libraries, so that they can read them in their leisure time or when travelling long distances. This will make them more informed so that they will be able to teach the young ones effectively.

- The symbols need to be properly documented and patented by the Manhyia Palace, along with their meanings to ensure that the information going out is authentic, so that people will learn the correct things. It will also prevent non-Ghanaians or opportunists from copying and making money out of them at the expense of the original owners. Currently some Chinese textile companies are producing cheap and low quality fabric in *kente* and *adinkra* designs and the untrained eye is being ripped off by cheats who sell them to unsuspecting buyers for the price of original woven or stamped cloth.
- School children should be given regular and easy access to areas in the Manhyia Palace that are not sacred for excursions so that they learn about the symbols through direct observations, because at that stage they learn better by hearing and observation at the same time. Currently, not many school children are allowed into the Manhyia Palace to freely look around. Only a few are given such opportunity and even then they see only a few places, out of those places considered as not sacred. These visits therefore are not significant and make very little impact on them and on their lives.
- The Asante art symbols and their meanings, alongside those of other Ghanaian ethnic groups, should be displayed on the Ghanaian currency. Everyone uses the Ghanaian currency to transact some kind of business daily. The symbols and their meanings need to be featured prominently on the currency, especially that of paper, so that people will by all means see them when they use them. Artists will need to be encouraged to use them widely in their art works.

- Persons wishing to use the art symbols for commercial purposes should be made to pay for it as a means of generating income to preserve the symbols. Currently the symbols are copied and used virtually for free. No one checks or queries their usage, so good money is lost in the process, while the commercial entities make a lot of income out of their usage. This might be because the symbols are over hundred years old and so they fall outside the copyright restriction of up to seventy years after the death of the owner/author.

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As a conclusion to this chapter, the recommendations made above are relevant towards enhancing the value of the Manhyia Palace art symbols for the good of the society. It is the hope of the researcher that attention will be given to these recommendations by people in relevant positions of power and influence and by stakeholders, to put in the necessary structures so that increased education and dissemination of information about the symbols will be done to ensure that the society benefits greatly, not only from their aesthetic values but also from the messages being conveyed in the proverbs, wise sayings, events and history embedded in the Manhyia Palace traditional art symbols.

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KNUST



APPENDIX

MANHYIA PALACE ART SYMBOLS QUESTIONNAIRE

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (KNUST)
COLLEGE OF ART & SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL ART STUDIES

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a Ph.D Student from the KNUST carrying out research on the topic “Manhyia Palace art symbols as a medium for Education and Information Dissemination”. This information that is required from you is purely for academic purposes in partial fulfillment for the award of the PhD degree in African Art and Culture. I will therefore be pleased if you can kindly use a few minutes of your time to express your views in this questionnaire.

Thank you.

MANHYIA PALACE ART SYMBOLS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tick (✓) the answer or write the answer where appropriate.

1.Age:

- a. 20 – 30 ☐ c. 40 – 50 ☐ e. Over 60 ☐
b. 30 – 40 ☐ d. 50 – 60 ☐

2. Sex: a. Male ☐ b. Female ☐

3. Ethnic Group: a. Akan ☐ b. Non Akan ☐

4. Educational Qualification: (Highest qualification) Please tick(✓)

- a. Middle School Leaving Certificate Holder ☐
b. Secondary School Certificate holder ☐
c. Bachelor's Degree holder ☐
d. Masters Degree holder ☐
e. PhD Degree holder ☐
f. None (no educational background) ☐

5. Marital Status: a. Single ☐ b. Married ☐

6. Do you speak Asante Twi? Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, which language (s) do you speak?

7. Do you write Asante Twi? Yes ☐ No ☐

a. If no, which language (s) do you write?

8. How long have you lived in Kumasi?

9. How long have you lived in the Ashanti Region?

10. Do you know Asante history? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, how? (please tick)

a. Taught in school ☐

b. Told me by Parents/Guardian ☐

c. Told me by friends ... ☐

d. Heard in the media- (electronic ☐ or print ☐

e. Read from history books ☐

f. Other (please specify)

11. Do you know about Asante art symbols? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, how?

a. Taught in school ☐

b. Described to me by Parents/Guardian ☐

c. Described to me by my friends ☐

d. Heard about them through the media: electronic ☐ print ☐

e. Read about them ☐

f. Visit to museums/galleries ☐

12. What is your understanding of the symbols on stools, linguist staff, cloths etc in the regalia at the Manhyia Palace?

13. Have you ever been to Manhyia Palace Yes ☐ No ☐

a. If yes, what did you go there for?

b. If no, why haven't you gone there

.....

14. If you have been to Manhyia Palace before, write some of the traditional art symbols (eg. stools, linguist staff, cloths etc) you saw there?

.....
.....

15. On which occasions or events did you see these symbols? eg. Akwasidae, Aday Kese, Kete dancing etc

.....
.....

16. Have you observed any of the art symbols on the Asantehene's regalia? Yes ☐ No ☐

a. If yes, which of the regalia?

b. If no, why haven't you observed the regalia?

c. If yes what did you observe in the regalia?

.....

e. What do you think are the reasons why the symbols are being used on the regalia?

.....
.....

17. Do you understand the meanings of the symbols you saw? Yes No

a. If yes, please briefly give the meanings of 3 of the symbols. ☐ ☐

.....

18. What do you think is the usefulness of the Manhyia Palace symbols to Asantes ?

.....

19. What do you think is the relevance of the symbols to the nation?

.....

20. Please give suggestions as to how the Manhyia Palace traditional art symbols could be more useful to society.

.....

Thank you for your time!

Helena Asamoah-Hassan