

**SIGNIFICANCE OF ANIMAL SYMBOLISM AMONG THE AKANS OF AKYEM
ABUAKWA TRADITIONAL AREA,**

By

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DECLARATION

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

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to discuss the significance of Animal symbolism among the Akans of Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Area; touching on the background history of the people, their culture, aspects of their culture within which these symbols can be located, their philosophical, educational and the socio-cultural significance. These symbols have so many lessons and wisdom to be learnt, yet the people are ignorant about them. This problem can be linked to urbanization and the influence of foreign culture, in addition to over dependence on oral history, for so long a time without proper documentation. The researcher therefore seeks to identify and categorise the various aspects of culture within which these animal symbols can be found, discuss them and explain in detail codified meaning, socio-cultural and philosophical meanings inherent in them. Descriptive research method, coupled with questionnaire and interview guide were the research tools used to find information, while related literature were also reviewed.

The next item is presentation and discussion of findings. The research revealed that, there are a lot of symbolic animal forms within some aspects of the culture of the Akans of Akyem Abuakwa which have a lot of lessons to teach the people yet most of these animal forms have not received considerable attention. People are ignorant about them.

It was also observed that, lack of detailed study on these animal forms has resulted in the lack of knowledge on the teaching and learning of it. People are not willing to learn these symbolic animal forms from the elders who are the custodians of these animal forms. Recommendations are made to that effect.

(LF)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

Chapter one brings to bare, the background to the study, statement of the problem, hypothesis and the objectives of the study as well as the importance of the study. Also the scope and limitations of the study, as well as the operational definition of the terms used in the study have been discussed.

1.1 Background to the Study

Mention cannot be made of the Ghanaian culture, without making reference to the visual art forms which include animal symbolism.

It has been observed that, images of animals are fundamental in every culture on earth. Beginning with prehistoric cave paintings, animal forms have invariably graced man's interior environments. Animal forms can be divided into three major categories: domestic animals, wild animals and mythical beasts.

Images of *domestic* animals are useful for areas where a sanctuary is desirable: children's bedrooms, playrooms, and family rooms. Domestic animals symbolize peace, loyalty and service. The thrill of freedom embodied in innumerable depictions of wild animals is undeniable. They can serve as; powerful symbols of strength, flexibility, speed, courage and independence, when strategically placed in an office or home. (<http://www.livingarthor originals.com/infoodesignpsych.htm#art>) Mythical beasts exist in the realm of the imagination. They represent future potential and magical, unlimited

resources. Images of mythical beasts can be utilized in homes or offices to enhance one's future goals and career objectives.

Animals of the world have earned great respect and sacred symbolism in many cultures. In their relationships with the human world, they have served as predator, prey, food, companion, messenger, and beasts of burdens. They also hold great lessons for those who are willing to observe them and share their energies. As man has grown to view himself above the beasts of the fields, he has also lost touch with his own divine intuition. It is the animal world, however, which lives by its natural instincts, and has not learned to doubt them. By observing animals and working with totem animal spirits, we listen to the wisdom they offer. By utilizing their energies and characteristics we can learn to utilize their teachings within our own lives. No individual has just one totem spirit for his entire life, although one may maintain a lifelong relationship with one, if he chooses so. As man learns to grow, so may his needs change? The guiding spirits may change with him depending on what he will benefit from learning. In the life of the Akan, spider and ant have helped them to see beyond the veil, revealing the magic which is all around them. Spider's energies have taught them the connectedness of all things.. The many birds who have graced our life, have taught us to respect freedom in all forms, and how to nourish and express our love for life.

Today, men have observed and acknowledged the wisdom of all creatures, large and small. When the morning birds greet us, we are grateful we have been given another day and sing back a tune to share the joy. When one watches the squirrels in the forest begin to bury their nuts, we are reminded to start saving up money. Again when we watch the

ants in both our neighbourhood and the forests begin to burry food in their holes, we are reminded to start storing up food for the upcoming rainy season. This symbol of the Akans relates to what Solomon, the son of David, said in Proverbs 6:6-8, “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest”. King James Version. The Akans portray the ant as busy, industrious, planner. One that is prepared or preparing for the future

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1.3 Animal symbolisms form an integral part of the history, culture and the philosophy of the Akans in Akyem Abuakwa traditional area in the Eastern Region of modern day Ghana.

These symbolisms which are mostly found in their clan totems, proverbs, indigenous music, tales and stories, chieftaincy regalia and their attributes to God play key roles in identifying construction of individual clans and ethnic groups. The ideology and rituals of sacred kingship portray animal symbols. From the ancient Ashanti kingdom in Ghana to the Dande villages in Zimbabwe, animal metaphors convey the power of the king and the royal ancestors.

Animal images in artistic traditions, especially those that show the qualities of leadership and relate to rituals have not received considerable attention in the study of indigenous tradition. Our ancestors selected various animal species as the central feature of their traditional state emblems. The origin of some of these state emblems is lost in antiquity; however, they helped to distinguish the various clans, communities and their

characteristics. The emblems served as symbols of unity and influenced the actions of the people on festive and other ceremonial occasions. Many people who live in the cities and large towns believe that urbanisation and western lifestyle constitute progress and self-development.

For these reasons, most inhabitants of Akyem Abuakwa Traditional area including the educated folk are ignorant about these clan totems and animal symbols and the wisdom and the knowledge system they hold, their socio- cultural and educational significance.

There is therefore the need to study the significance of the animal symbolism of the people of Akyem Abuakwa, so as to help educate and restore their cultural identity and heritage.

1.3 Hypothesis

The documentation of animal symbolism among the people of Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Area will have socio-cultural, philosophical, metaphorical and educational significance.

1.4 Objectives

- 1) To identify and describe the animal symbols of the people of Akyem Abuakwa.
- 2) To highlight their literal, philosophical, aesthetic, socio-cultural and educational significance

1.5 Assumption

It is assumed that, animal symbols may be found in the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Area.

1.6 Importance of the Study

The study will serve as a contribution to knowledge.

The study will also serve as a reference material for future researchers.

The study will also serve as a medium for teaching moral and social lessons in schools.

The result of the research will reawaken the people of Akyem Abuakwa Traditional area to be conscious of the wisdom and knowledge system embodied in these symbolic animal forms.

1.7. Delimitation

The study is limited to animal symbols found in visual art forms, chieftaincy institutions, clans, in religious ceremonies wise sayings, myths. The target group are the chiefs, elders, knowledgeable men on the culture of the people who are able to interpret these symbols .However occasionally some elements of neighbouring cultures appear in the report but it is strictly narrowed to the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Area.

1.8 Limitation

One of the setbacks encountered by the researcher in course of the research that affected the state or quality of the research is stated below:

1. Because the researcher is not a native of of Akyem Abuakwa traditional area, some respondents refused to give detailed information on certain issues because they were either sacred or warned against giving such details. This therefore limited the researcher to giving a comprehensive report on most of the symbolic animal forms within the culture of the people.

1.9 Definition of Terms

This part of the thesis covers the meaning of words, phrases and abbreviations the researcher used. The researcher used books, and the internet to come out with the operational definitions for the thesis under study which are listed below.

- Symbolism The use of symbols to represent ideas or something
- Symbols An image or object that suggests or refers to something else. For instance the cross is a symbol of Christianity
- Philosophy A way of thinking by the people of Akyem Abuakwa .
 their attitudes and way of behaving
- Chieftaincy traditional institution of chiefs or leaders.
- Regalia they are objects or things used at the chiefs palace
 including clothes, drums umbrella stools, sceptre etcetera
- Codified hidden
- Paramount chief The head of the chief in a traditional area.
- Sacrificial imaginary

- Mythical ancient imaginary story concerning the early history of a people.
- Indigenous the native people of Akyem Abuakwa Traditional area.

1.10 Terms in the traditional Language

- *Ɔsono*elephant
- *Ɔsebo, ekyem, Kurotweamansa, Ɔkrɔbɔn*...are all appellations for the leopard.
- *Kɔtɔkɔ*.....porcupine
- *Kwaɛ*.....forest; comes from the proverb , *ɛkaa akyekyedeɛ ne nwa nko ara anka etuo rento wɔ kwaɛ mu da*
 ”If it were left with the tortoise and Snail alone, there would not be any gunshots in the forest”
- *Etuo*.....gun
- *Akyekyedeɛ*.....tortoise
- *Adwene*.....wisdom
- *Kyiniɛ*.....umbrella
- *Ananse*,.....spider
- *Akɔdaa,(singular)*.....a child
- *Kwantenpɔn*.....highway

1.11 Organization of the Rest of the Text

Chapter two mainly deals with the review of related literature and has been arranged in chronological order beginning with the oldest publication to the most current one

Chapter three deals with the methods of research and the various research tools employed by the researcher in undertaking the research laying emphasis on the population for the study, description of sampling techniques, instrumentation, library research, internet research, validation of questionnaire. It also includes the administration of instrument, sources of, data collection procedure and data analysis. Illustrations are used to enhance easy comprehension of text.

Chapter four deals with the presentation and discussion of findings with analyses presented through description with illustrations and photographs supporting facts.

Chapter five summarises all the findings in the study with conclusions and recommendations drawn from it

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the history of the Akyems, their beliefs, practices and taboos. The discussion is followed by the culture, beliefs, practices, taboos, proverbs and totems of the Akans.

The researcher has reviewed related literature on the significance of animal symbolisms among the Akans of Akyem Abuakwa Traditional area. This includes the writings of Davidson (1965) Fosu (1994), Sarpong(1971), Sarpong (1974), Garrand (1980), Todd John Mbiti.(1990), Best (1981.), Conrad Philip Kottak(1991), Edward Ezewu(1983), Indagi (1984), Lucy C. J. and Asger (1990) Conrad Philip Kottak(1991), E. Laing(1987), Acheampong(1992), Sharp et al(2002), T.N. Quarcoopome(1987), Nkansa Kyeremateng(2001), Akuffo BS(1976), G. F. Kojo Arthur and Robert Rowe - 1998-2001, Edmund Smith-Asante November 2002,

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akyem>"Categories://www.livingartsoriginals.com
<http://www.123helpme.com/preview.asp?id=infodesignpsych.htm#>, <http://www.123helpme.com/preview.asp?id=infodesignpsych.htm#>

2.2 Background of the Akyems(Akims)

Studies show that, the term Akyem(Akim) is used to refer to a group of three traditional "nations" (Akyem Abuakwa, Akyem Kotoku and Akyem Bosome) which are located primarily in the Eastern region of modern day Ghana. It is also used to describe the general area where the Akyem ethnic group clusters. The Akyem ethnic group make up

only 3-4 percent of Ghana's population but, the Akyem are very prominent and over represented in politics and other areas of significance.

["http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akyem"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akyem)*Categories.*

History, has it that the **Akyems** were believed to be one of the first Akan tribes to migrate southwards, after the fall of the ancient **Songhai Empire**. The Akyem states, commonly known as "**Akyem Mansa**", consists of three main independent states, all grouped in the Eastern Region, with a common language, culture, customs and historical background.

The states are:

Akyem Abuakwa - the largest of the states in terms of land, size, population and natural resources **Table-1**

Akyem Kotoku - the second largest.

Akyem Bosome - the smallest of the three.

Historically, the Akyems, were a part of the then all powerful **Adansi Kingdom**, the first nation to build mud houses in their kingdom at that time; hence the name "**Adansi**" (**Builders**). The then Ashanti Kingdom emerged, and under the leadership of Nana Osei Tutu, they fought and defeated the Adansis about the 14th Century and absorbed the Adansi Kingdom into the growing Ashanti Kingdom. (ibid)

The Akyem nations which were then part of the Adansi Kingdom, broke away and crossed the River Pra to settle on its banks to avoid becoming subjects of the Ashanti's. Nana Osei Tutu decided to pursue them across the River Pra to teach them a lesson. That was a great miscalculation! While crossing the river with his army, he was shot by the Akyems who had laid ambush on the other side of the river. He fell dead into the river.

This was on a **Saturday**; hence, the great oath of the Ashantis, ("**Meka memeneda**"- **I swear by Saturday**). For this, the Akyem who carried out this defeat became known as "**Abuakwanfo**" or "**Abuakwafo**", (Guerrilla Fighters). The Ashanti retreated and this tragedy made it a taboo for any Ashanti King, up to the time of Nana Prempeh I (CIRCA 1900), cross the River Pra to the South, except their armies. The Akyems are matrilineal people. This history of this ethnic group is that of brave warriors and industrious people. For the purpose of this research, the researcher is dealing with Akyem Abuakwa.

Akyem
Total population
1,000,000
Regions with significant populations
Eastern Region Ghana
Language(s)
Twi
Religion(s)
Christianity , Traditional
Related ethnic groups
Akan

Table-1. Statistics of the Akyems Credit .www.okyeman.com

2.3 Beliefs,

The Akyems, like any of the Akans, share the belief that, the universes that exist is the handiwork of the creator, Twedumpon-Kwame. The Akans believe the mother earth 'Asaase Yaa Amponyinamoa' as the primeval source of matter from which everything was created. (Arthur C.2004)

Aside this the Akans also believe in life after death. In fact, they share with most creeds and cultures that the body is an empty 'tin' from which the soul will eventually leave for 'Asamando' Eternity. (Osei K 2000).For this reason, the Akans refer to everything on earth as vanity. Among the Akyem's for instance, they have their beliefs which determine their way of worship. The material and equipment used by the various religious groups are all form of artifacts. For example the traditional worshipers use things like talisman cowries, charms, and others which are all creative works of man.

2.4 Practices

The Akyems, like all the Akans, practice polygamy. Again they practice traditional African religion and some of them are also Christians. They practice puberty rites. They are also into pouring libation to invoke the spirits of the ancestral world.

2.5 Taboos

Studies show that, a taboo is any action or practice that is considered contrary to the accepted norms, and moral values of society or town. (Sarfo BK). Some of the major taboos of the Akans in Akyem Abuakwa are as follows;

- Adultery
- Stealing,
- Murder,
- Incest (*mogyafra*),
- Rape (*monaatoɔ*)
- Having sex in the bush (*Ahahantwɛ*)
- Teenage pregnancy just a few to mention

2.6 Symbolism

Animal symbolism is rooted in the culture of the people of Akyem Abuakwa.

Kottak (1991) observed that, a symbol is something verbal or nonverbal, within a particular language or culture that comes to stand for something else. There is no obvious, natural, or necessary connection between the symbol and what it symbolises. He further observed that, symbols are usually linguistic, however there are also nonverbal symbols such as flags which stand for countries. In this sense certain words could create symbolic meanings of the mind of people within the group who understand the symbolic meaning of such words.

The above definitions clarify that, a symbol is something that stands for, or represents, something else. *To Kottak*, Symbolic thought is crucial to humans and to culture

2.7 Culture

Laing in 1987 *J.B. Danquah* Memorial Lecture, as cited by The Academy of Arts and Sciences states; Culture may be regarded as the totality of peoples way of life; its way of organising its affairs,, of viewing the natural and man made world of meeting universal human needs; its hierarchy of values or criteria that determine its behaviour and thought- in brief a peoples view of the world, its social heritage (*Laing1990*)

Acheampong in his 1992 JB Danquah Memorial Lectures, quotes other anthological meaning ‘the total pattern of human behaviour and its product embodied in thought , speech , action, , artefacts and dependent upon man’s capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge, to succeeding generations through the use of tools, system and abstract.

To Ezewu(1983:66), “the word culture emerged from the German word Kultur, which means civilization and a cultured man was synonymous to a civilised man. Tylor, as cited in Ezewu, discussed that, culture was that complex whole which included knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws customs and any other capabilities acquired by a man as a member of society. According to this view, each society does not have a discrete culture but a general culture, created and developed by mankind as a whole.’’ This implies that, every ethnic group has some symbols that they use in communicating although such symbols may be distinct from that of other ethnic groups.

Reuter (1950), as cited in Ezewu, shared the above view, when he defined culture as the sum total of human creation, the organised results of a group experience up to the present time, adding that culture included all that man has made in the form of tools, weapons shelter and other material goods and all that he had elaborated in the way of attitudes and beliefs, codes and institutions, arts and social sciences, philosophy and social organization. The word “philosophy” as used in this statement is pertinent to this thesis because, in the African sense, symbols have philosophical meanings understood only by the people concerned. With the above working definitions, **culture** can be defined as The accumulated habits, attitudes, and beliefs of a group of people that define for them their general behaviour and way of life; the total set of learned activities of a people, learned behaviour of people, which includes their belief systems and languages, their social relationships, their institutions and organizations, and their material goods - food, clothing, buildings, tools, and others.

With the above definitions and discussions on culture, one can conclude that, ***Culture is universal because*** every human society whether traditional or modern, developed or under-developed has its own culture. For example, there is no society without a language and norms. No society is cultureless but then, culture differs from society to society ***Again, one can assert that, culture is learned because*** we are born into a society and we consciously or unconsciously learn the culture of the society. For example, a *Voltarian* may learn the Twi language when he stays in the Ashanti society. When a child is born he is anomous, (that is he knows no norms) but learns the cultural norms and values of the society.

Besides this, one can also assert that, Culture is transmitted: The child for instance, does not learn the culture any how. There should be a continuous and a deliberate effort to transmit it to the child or the inexperienced person. Because culture is transmitted, whenever an individual finds himself in a different environment, he has to learn new things like language, dressing and the like, in order to be integrated or accepted into the new society in which he finds himself.

From the above discussion of the characteristics of culture Kneller, as cited by Esau(1983), maintains that culture can only be transmitted or learned through education.

2.8 Education

Kneller, as cited by Ezewu (1983), defines Education as the process by which society deliberately transmits its cultural heritage through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions. Kneller's view of education excluded the educational process in school-less societies yet the fact still remains that, school and school-less society transmit their cultural heritage. It means that until recently, the traditional system of education has been the means by which culture and philosophy are passed on to the new generation.

O'conor, on the other hand writes that, the educational system of any society is a more or less elaborate mechanism, designed by society to instil in individuals certain skills and attitudes that are judged to be useful and desirable in that society. To O'conor the motive of education is to develop the individual as a person and prepare him to function effectively in society.

Milton J. as cited *by Ezewu* is also of the view that, one can not relate culture to education without considering the concept of education in the first place. To *Milton*, education is that which prepares a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices, either at war or in peace.

Sarpong (1971) opines that, wealth of knowledge can be found in the art of Akan stool carvings which are full of symbolic animal forms.

Oral literature and other verbal forms have codified meanings and metaphorical interpretations. (Salm and Falola ?) Umbrella finial carved out of wood encodes aphorisms or proverbs, the meanings of which are related to leadership. Umbrella finials are, therefore, cited as political emblems and indicators of chiefly status (*Antubam*, 1963; *Cole and Ross*, 1977). What are proverbs then?

2.9 Proverbs

Proverbs are believed to be wise sayings handed down from earlier generations. Proverbs are not taken literary or on the surface value but considered beyond that to unearth the philosophical underpinnings. In spite of the variations in their origin, proverbs are not limited to any specific ethnicity but could be applicable to any ethnic group or individual globally. Proverbs are intricately wise speeches. Nkansah Keremateng describes it as the diamond among words or salt, sugar or onion that improves on the taste of food.

2.10 Clans

Clan is a group of people that share a common blood. That is to say, people with a common ancestress. They are thus referred to as '*Abusua*' family. Obeng E.E. (1986 p1) Obeng defined '*Abusua*' as, "a group or groups of people descended from one great-grandmother on the maternal side." And clan as a "federation of four or five different groups of *abusua*" (Ibid p2)

Arthur C. (2003p1) opines that, people within a clan due to blood relationship are not permitted to intermarry. It was a taboo punishable by death in the olden days. Some researchers maintain that, the Akan clan system is consisted of seven by combining Bretuo and Agona. Obeng E.E. (1986). He is supported by Osei A. (2005p66) who asserts the existence of unspecified sub groups beside the seven major ones. However the combination does not disprove the existence of any of the eight.

Ampadu-Agyei. (2003) disclosed that Members of almost every clan or ethnic group and even the entire nation has a totem. He further observed that, each of the eight clans of the Akan tribe of Ghana has a totem called "Atweneboa," which means animal leaned on or relied upon for spiritual inspiration.

2.10Totems

According to the Country Director for Conservation International, Ghana, Okyeame Ampadu-Agyei(2003), the term totem comes from a North American Indian language which refers to vegetables or animals which are revered by individuals, particularly group of people or a tribe as sacred. A totem can be an animal, a plant or any other natural

object believed to be ancestrally related to a tribe, clan, or family group as a tutelary spirit. For this reason, the members do not eat, kill or trap such animals or birds or fish. When a totem dies or is sold, members of the tribe it represents would show respect by for example, mourning and burying it as in the case of a human being.

Quarcoopome (1978) sees totemism as the link or dealings existing between a person or group of persons and animal objects or group of persons and an animal, object or a group of animal objects. It has been used basically to preserve humanity, in that it has in more ways than one culminated in the conservation of other life forms bequeathed to man on whom he is dependent.

2.12 Totemism in Practice.

According to *Asante*(2003), Studies have shown that the Bakwena tribe of Botswana is named after Kwena, the crocodile, whilst the Batlounge in Botswana also are named after Tlou, the elephant. In order to honour the totem animal, it was forbidden that anyone from the tribe, clan or group, hunts or harms it. As the Bakwena protected the crocodile, they also did not hunt the antelope it preferred for food. They feared offending their totem animal by depriving it of its favourite food. In this way they reduced the chances that the crocodile would attack their goats or children.

The Batlounge, it has also been learnt, protected the rhinoceros and the hippopotamus, which were traditionally regarded as the elephant's cousins. In return it was believed that none of these potentially dangerous creatures would harm members of the Batlounge, clan. It has been noted too that in India the conservation of many plants and animals in their

jungles is a part of the culture of the Warlis tribe. The protection of these totems, it has been learnt, is embedded in and perpetuated by customs and religious beliefs.

Furthermore, the sacred groves of the Adivasis and Hindus, research has shown, have turned out to be the few remaining areas in India with climax forests and wide species diversity, since no animal or plant could be harmed in them.

2.13 Totemism in Ghana.

In Ghana for instance the use of totems cut across all the cultures. For instance, the practice of totemism can be found among the indigenes of Buabeng Fiaman in the Brong Ahafo Region, whose deep respect and admiration for monkeys has brought about the now famous monkey sanctuary. Again the people of Old Ningo can not be ruled out, they consider turtles as gods and so have made their area a safe haven for the marine creatures.

Okyeame Ampadu-Agyei (2003) in a paper he presented at the conference on the bushmeat crisis in Ghana, held recently, postulated that, any wildlife species are regarded as totems due to their historical or socio-culture significance as well as their symbolic quality.

He further disclosed that for instance each of the eight clans of the Akan tribe of Ghana has a totem called "Atweneboa," which means animal leaned on or relied upon for spiritual inspiration. Each of these Akan totems has a symbolic quality, which chiefs and clan members are expected to adopt or emulate. Totems are found in almost all the communities of the Akans, conspicuously displayed at the entrance of or inside the chief's palace. When the chief sits in state, the linguist (spokesperson) holds the chief's

staff with the totem at top. The stools used by the chiefs have all symbolic animal forms carved in them.

Quarcoopome(1987)supports the above discussion by saying that animals are chosen as totems because the animals are said to have qualities which the clan members would want to emulate therefore such clans identify themselves with such animals .The totemic symbols of the eight clans among the Akans are shown in the table below, in **Table-2** and pictures of *Aduana, Bretuo , Agona, εkoɔna* and *Asona ‘mmusua poma’* family staff **are found in Plate-1A and 1B**. Each clan ‘*abusua*’ is identified both by its proper name and its common emblem, totem or symbol. *Arthur and Rowe* (2006)

Clan (Abusua)	Totem (Akraboa)	Significance
Bretuo	ɔsebo / Leopard.	Symbol of bravery and skill
Ayokoɔ	Akorɔma / hawk	Symbol of Patience and self-confidence
Agona	Ako / parrot	Symbol of Eloquence and frankness
εkoɔna	εkoɔ / Buffalo	Symbol of Uprightness
Asakyiri	Kɔkɔsakyi /Vulture, ɔkreɛ/ Eagle	Symbol of Intelligence/stamina.
Asona	Kwaakwaadabi / Crow	Symbol of Purity of heart and eloquence
Aseneɛ	Apan (Bat)	Symbol of Bravery and diplomacy
Aduana	ɔkraman/Dog, Apɔnkyerene/ Frog	Dog is symbol of humility and friendliness

Table-2 Clan totems of the Akans and their Significance



Agona Abusua Poma



Asona Abusua Poma



Bretuo Abusua Poma

Plat-1A: Pictures of Family Staff of Agona, Asona, and Bretuo



Aduana Abusua Poma



ekona , Asokore or Adonten Abusua

Plate 1B: Pictures of Family Staff of Aduana and ekona

2.14 Traditional State Emblems

Studies show that our ancestors deliberately selected the various animal species as the central feature of their traditional state emblems. (*Asante E.2003*).

The origin of some of these state emblems is lost in antiquity; however, they helped to distinguish the various tribes, clans, communities and their characteristics. The emblems served as symbols of unity and influenced the actions of the people on festive and other ceremonial occasions. For instance the Akyem Abuakwa state emblem is the leopard on whose back sits a stool with a crown, a sword, the proverbial '*asona wo*' and a tree.

2.15 Totems in the political and social realm

Totems are significant in the social, political and spiritual realms of the society. At the international level, many countries have totems. Ghana uses the Tawny eagle as a totem and emblem in her Coat of Arms.

Cote d'Ivoire uses an elephant; Gabon has a bird whilst the United States has an eagle. In the same way many political parties in the world particularly in Africa have totems and use them as symbols for their campaigns during elections. Like the Republican Party of the USA, the New Patriotic Party [NPP], which forms the current government of Ghana, has the elephant as its symbol. (E.Asante.2003)

Totems are also used widely by other social groups and organizations in Africa. Certain animals are used to symbolize the process of football soccer teams. In Cameroon, the national football team, is called the "Indomitable Lions" whilst in Nigeria, the national male football team is known as the "Green Eagles and their female counterparts, the "Falcons".

In Senegal the national team is similarly named after the lion. Togo and other countries similarly use animals as totems for their national teams. At the club level, many football clubs similarly use animals. The *Asante Kotoko* football club of Ghana has "*Kotoko*", the porcupine as its totem as mentioned earlier. (ibid)

The elephant is commonly used as a symbol of a King or of some great power and strength. Even the Zulus are known to address their king as the "Great Elephant", "Powerful Elephant" etc. In Asia, the Buddhists consider the elephant to be an appropriate symbol of their founder or spiritual leader Guatama Buddha. (ibid)

Davidson (1965) found that, the sacred ram was a symbol of the supreme god of the pharaohs of ancient Egypt, the Bebes of the Sahara and other parts of Africa. The python for instance was honoured in ancient Meroe, the capital of the African empire of Kush on the middle Nile, more than two thousand years ago and other African lands. To Davidson, the traditional sayings and proverbs of West Africans are full of much symbolic, moral and practical wisdom. The traditional wisdom and religious beliefs of the Akans are expressed in proverbs most of which are witty comments on people's behaviour. He observed further that, when a great number of mice dig a hole, ran the proverb, it does not go deep. To him, there are innumerable tales and stories of the Akans with symbolic animal totems in them

The Akan tale about Ananse indicated that,

“**Ananse** collected all the wisdom in the world shut it up in a gourd. Then he begun climbing a tree, so as to keep this precious gourd safe at the top but he got into difficulties only half-way up because he had tied the gourd to his

front , and it hampered his climbing. His son Ntikuma, who was watching at the bottom call up; ‘father if you really had all the wisdom in the world up there with you, you would have had the sense to tie the gourd on your back’.

His father saw the truth in this, and threw down the gourd in a temper, it broke on the ground and the wisdom in it was scattered about. Men came and picked up what each of them could get and carry away.” The presence of Ananse in the story has got a lot of symbolic meanings which includes trickster, wisdom.

(Davidson. 1965 p159)

Though Davidson wrote comprehensively on Akans tale of Ananse, he has not told us their symbolic meanings. However, the statement above is related to the third objective of the study.

Sarpong (1971) opines that, wealth of symbolic meanings can be found in certain visual art forms of the Akans which include stool carvings with many artistic designs. He pointed further that, the *ɔsono* stool and the *ɔsebɔ* stool bearing figures of the elephant and the leopard at the middle are symbols of the great powers of the king of the Asante. The animals are considered to be the strongest and the most feared in Asante as seen in **Plate2 and Plate-3.**

Sarpong was also of the view that, symbolic meanings can be traced to certain sayings and proverbs of the Asantes such as “*ɔsono nni wuram a, anka ɛkoɔ ye bɔpɔn* (but for the presence of the elephant in the bush, the buffalo would be a huge animal). This shows how the exalted position of the king of Asante overshadows the prominence of the chief of Kokofu. Another saying of the Asantes which is symbolic is “*wodi ɔsono akyi a hasuo nka wo*” (when you follow the elephant you do not get wet) meaning to follow the

owner of the stool with the figure of elephant, one is free from any unlawful and external provocation and attacks. The Asante here is described as elephant in the above sentence, to praise the chief of Kokofu who is one of the great paramount chiefs of Asante. Aside this, the use of the porcupine stool by the great paramount chiefs consisting of the king and the Priests are very symbolic. Based on the porcupine's long, large and sharp quills, it is believed to be invulnerable to any animal no matter how carnivorous and strong it may be.

The Asante believe and say that, it does not only shoot the quill at its attackers in self defence but also, it is believed that, as soon as one quill is shot off another grows in its place. With this, the Asante see in the porcupine, a specimen of their own moral, physical and numerical invisibility in war. Due to this the Asante for centuries had as their national motto; *Asante kɔ́kɔ́ wokum apem a, apem beba* (Asante porcupine if you kill a thousand a thousand will come. *Kɔ́kɔ́* has become synonymous with the Asante hence the restriction of the stool to the council of the king, it signifies the power at the disposal of the king to repel any enemy who seeks to destroy the Asante as a nation.

Sarpong (1974) observed that, Animals of the world have earned great respect and sacred symbolism in many cultures. Among the Akan, sheep is considered to be a very docile, peaceful, sacrificial, breakthrough and achievement. The sheep however, is used as a sacrificial animal on many occasions. He further observed that, within the Akan society, persons who break taboos are made to sacrifice a sheep to pacify the gods and ancestors. Aside the uses of sheep, fowls are used for ritual purposes symbolising protection and the commonest oracular media for predicting future occurrences.



*Plate-2 The Elephant Stool (ɔsono Gwa) of the Asante
Picture Credit www.hamillgallery.com/.../AfricanStools.htm*



*Plate-3 The Leopard Stool (ɔsebo Gwa) of The Asante
Pict. Credit www.hamillgallery.com/ools.h.../AfricanStools.htm*

He also noticed that, the tortoise and the snail symbolise peace because they are encased in their shells and do not offer any resistance to those who capture them hence the Akan proverb '*ɛkaa akyekyede ne nwa nko a, anka etuo rento wɔ kwaye ase da*' Left to the tortoise and the snail, no one would ever hear the sound of the gun shot in the forest. Among the Akans, fish symbolise wisdom because the Ashanti word for wisdom 'adwene' is the same that is used to refer to fish in general.

Mbiti (1990) is of the view that animal's contribution to humanity is obviously great and important as they constitute human food, and their importance is obviously great whereas many Africans have religious associations with them, some of which are linked with the concept of God. Cattle, sheep and goats are used for sacrificial and often religious purposes and examples are found all over the continent. Many people have a sacred attitude towards their animals. He observed further that, the Herero regard all cattle as sacred, and having originated from their 'mythical tree of life' from where human and other life come. They eat them only when sacrificed in religious ceremonies. For the Dinka, every bull or ox is ultimately destined for sacrifice. They believe that cattle and children belong to God and that he gives them to men only as gifts from him. Everyday, the Nandi pray to God for the safety and prosperity of their cattle.

He further observed that creeping animals feature more in religious concepts than do other wild animals where the snake is thought by some people like the Vugusu and the Bidamo to be immortal. Others have sacred snakes, especially pythons, which may not be killed by people. Again, he observed that, many societies associate snakes with the

living-dead or other human spirits, and such snakes are given food and drink when they visit people's homes whereas in other myths too the lizard and chameleon serve as messenger who brought news from God. Chickens are also used in most societies as sacrifices either to God or to the lower spiritual beings and the living-dead. The spider though a very small creature appears in many myths of the Akans symbolising 'wisdom' and for that reason, God is given the title of 'Ananse Kokroko' which means the great wise spider.

GF Kojo Authur and Robert Rowe (1998-2001) believe that, finial encodes aphorisms or proverbs which meanings are related to leadership. The umbrella is an important political emblem for Akan chiefs. The umbrella indicates who the king is among a gathering of people as reflected in the aphorism: '*Nea kyiniε si ne so na ɔye ɔhene*' - He who has an umbrella over his head is the king.

Fraser as cited by Robert and Authur (1972) notes that umbrella as huge objects are both practical sunshades and symbolic, quasi-architectural, space-defining forms that help express the chief's role as ruler." Mentioned was made of finials with animal symbols. The first one was a finial with snail and tortoise denoting the expression, '*εkaa akyekyedeε ne nwa nko ara anka etuo rento wɔ wira mu*' Left with the tortoise and the snail there would not be any gun shots in the forest they only gave the meaning to be a symbol of peace but failed to bring out the deeper meaning and highlight on its educational and socio-cultural significance. **Plate-4**

Secondly, mention was made of a finial with a child and snake expressing the proverb: '*Akɔdaa na ohu ɔwɔ a, ɔe εye ahoma*' It is the untutored child who considers the snake

as mere rope to be a symbol of innocence, harmlessness, ignorance, and being untutored

Plate-5



Plate-4 A snail and a tortoise
Picture credit Arthur & Rowe 2006



Plate-5 A Child and a Snake
Picture credit Arthur & Rowe 2006

The author also wrote on a finial with a symbol of hand holding the head of a snake which is rooted from the expression *‘wosɔ ɔwɔ tiri mu a, deɛ aka nyinaa ye ahoma’*. When you capture the snake by the head, the rest of it is mere thread but failed to highlight on the philosophical, educational and social significance. **Plate-6**

Again the two authors wrote tremendously on *‘sankɔfa’* go back and retrieve, from the aphorism *‘se wo were fi na wosan kɔfa a, yenkyi’*. There is nothing wrong with learning from hindsight. Unlike the three symbols the author talked about, they went further by explaining that, the symbol is based on a mythical bird that flies forwards with its head turned backwards. This reflects the Akan belief that the past serves as a guide for planning the future, or the wisdom in learning from the past in order to build the future. The Akans believe that there must be movement with times but as the forward march proceeds, the gems must be picked from behind and carried forward on the march. In the Akan military system, this symbol signified the rear-guard, the section on which the survival of the society and the defense of its heritage depended. The symbolic significance is wisdom, knowledge, and the people's heritage.

Fosu (1994) is of the view that certain artistic paraphernalia of some traditional chiefs in Ghana feature symbolic animal connotations. The linguist staff (**Akyeampoma**), featuring carved animal representations and reliefs of symbolic abstract motifs with profound interpretations that relate to the historical origins or religious principles of groups or communities whereas some animated symbolisms on some artefacts like carved drums are symbolic of the figures they represent. Aside these, there are certain stools with emblematic motifs of symbolic significance that metaphorically evoke

particular qualities of certain animals of which the state is identified. He observed further that, the leopard stool (*ɔsebo adwa*) is adopted for its ferocious nature and the elephant stool (*ɔsono adwa*) is for strength, whereas the porcupine stool (*kɔtɔkɔ adwa*) for courage and fighting spirit.

Garrand as cited in *Fosu (1994)* noticed that, **Bowdich** was the first to bring to light by 1817, weights which were fully developed art forms including very neat brass casts of almost every animal, fruit or vegetable known in the country. Although certain weights depicting men, animals and other items were found to be much more common than others, animal and plant life dominated much in the Akan reproduction of weights and most of the wide range of human artefacts known to them with a few subjects.

Animal symbolism plays a vital role in the culture of the people of Ghana. Each animal that we have in our culture has its special meaning; we connect ourselves to these animals because they have similar symbolisms to our own personality, each animal is different in meaning and sometimes we find that as complex people, we will have more than one animal that shows our own personality.

One of the symbols of interest is the *swastika* of which several names and explanations have been given. It is alleged that, it came from the Muslims, others also hold the view that it was brought long ago by the French. The swastika among the Denkyiras was known as '*futuro-bo*' which was found in almost every collection of weights. In northern Ghana, the swastika was known to be commonly marked on stones as a symbol of protection against thieves. Among the Dogon of southern Timbuku, the swastika was known as *Marque de Diew* which are normally found on the Arab and Tuare leatherwork

which they regarded as lucky sign (*signe benefique*) whereas in Mauritania it was used as a sign of magical symbol in the form of bars and crosses.

Among the Akans the Swasticka is known as '*ɛfo sa*' which was normally found in the chiefs treasure chests and fowls were sacrificed over it. They hold a belief that, when they use the symbol on the chiefs treasure chests, it will bring more gold. This supports the fact that, the significance of the swastika was to serve a magical purpose. **Plate-7**

Gold weights and animals were used at the chiefs courts for weighing out fines imposed under customary laws depending on the type of offences committed. These fines might be imposed for many reasons and they differ from place to place. For instance, "in more recent times, the penalty among the Fanti for adultery with a married woman was a "banda" of gold (*two ounces*), to be paid to the injured husband, whereas in Sehwi Traditional area, adultery with a married woman was regarded as a serious case and for that reason *three pereguan(ntansa, £24)* would be paid including two bottles of schnapps, two sheep slaughtered aside which the offender had to pay an arbitration fee of *sua ne domma(2£, 8s)* Besides this the author was told that, at a palace of the *manhene* of Sehwi –Bekwai, *asuanu nsano (£4, 13s)* was payable for altering an insult or for having intercourse in the bush; aside which a sheep had to be also slaughtered



*Plate-6. A finial with a hand holding the head of a snake
Picture credit Arthur & Rowe*

Juudy Decker (no date) maintains that, the dove is a universal symbol of peace and innocence. "In ancient Greek myth, it was a bird of Athena which represented the renewal of life. In the Bible it was a dove released from the Ark by Noah which returned with an olive branch to show that the Biblical flood was over. Ever since, the dove has symbolized deliverance and God's forgiveness. According to legend, the devil and witches can turn themselves into any bird shape except the dove. In ancient Japan, the dove was sacred to Hackiman the god of war, but it was a dove with a sword that announced the end to war.

Another School of thought states that, lions are powerful animals and seen as the king of the jungles, yet it is noted for its slyness, deceitful tendencies and as a blood thirsty creature that is ruthless and threatening.

<http://www.123helpme.com/preview.asp?id=132044>.

There is another assertion that, the lion symbols enjoy positive depiction so many years ago in cultures across Europe, Asia and Africa as the strong but gentle 'king of the jungle or king of the beast' hence lions are popular symbols of royalty, stateliness, and symbol of bravery. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lions_in_popular_culture"

Categories: Lions / Animals in popular culture

Lion images were widely used in ancient sculptures and statuary to depict a sense of majesty and awe mostly on public buildings, the entrance of cities and sacred sites. Notable among this is the lion gate on Ancient Mycenae in Greek (ibid) **Plate-8 and Plate-9.**

Todd Hemmes opines that, as people, we tend to view the natural world as having symbols and meanings far beyond what we can understand at our human level. As such, company name generators have subconsciously assigned meanings to certain animals that help us understand what people are trying to say when they use the specific wildlife to describe their business. Here are the top seven animal symbols image consultants use:

1. ***Wolf*** - Wolves stand alone above the other predators of the desert. They are independent, strong and smart. They don't need anyone else and rely on the instincts to get things done. A wolf is confident, vibrant and solid. With its brand names such as Wolf Brand Chili or the famous Timber wolf Lodge; wolves add a lot to our professional market place and the usage is popular among company name generators.

2. ***Bee*** - You would not ordinarily think that company name generators would think an insect that can sting you as a positive thing; however bees have an important place in our cultural psyche as a symbol of busy behavior and work ethics. We think of bees as tireless workers, gathering pollen, making honey and protecting the hive. That kind of activity is something we admire. Examples are found in local childcare facilities such as "Farm Bee" "Busy Bee Daycare" or "Bumble Bee Candy".

3. ***Eagle*** - The Eagle is the national symbol of pride, nobility and powerful presence. It carries with it a symbol of patriotism and freedom as well as amazing beauty and self reliance. For company name generators, the Eagle remains one of the most well used animal symbols in America on everything, from football teams to American Eagle

outfitters (an outdoors store). Eagle brand milk, and Eagle tires are even more examples of this strong animal symbol.

4. **Fox** - Known for its cunning and ingenuity, Company name generators often use the fox to show a company or business more than they can get things done in an assertive or creative way. Although the fox symbolism runs the risk of people thinking of the idea of "sneaky", most people find them to have the ability to creatively assert themselves and find intelligent solutions. Fox News, Fox Bakery, Fox Fm in Ghana, and even the internet server Foxfire all illustrate the point.

5. **Owl** - Anyone who has watched Winnie the Pooh or Harry Potter knows that owls are revered for their wisdom, patience and the amazing capability to stay up late. From coffee shops called "Night Owls" to the many company mascots that use an owl as part of the packing, owls are a favorite among company name generators when promoting a business that helps people to be steady, wise and patient with the challenges ahead.

6. **Cow** - Perhaps it reflects these countries' amazing relationship with dairy products, but cows have been used by company name generators as spokes-animals and mascot for years. People see cows as gentle, generous and solid so they respond to businesses and products with confidence and ease. 'Cowbell', 'Brown Cow Chocolate Milk', 'Top Cow Comic Books', and 'Purple Cow Book Publishers' are just a few of the hundreds of business names that utilize this docile farm animal.

7. **Dogs** - From Dog the Bounty Hunter to "Top Dog Appliances", man's best friend is by far one of the most popular animal symbols used by company name generators. People

think of dogs as being friendly, loyal, loving and energetic. Dogs can help human beings through service or make their lives better. It is no wonder so many of our businesses use dogs as name sake. From the "Stray Dog Bar and Grill" to "Black Dog Carwash" people use the image of the dog in many ways to convey their expertise and meaning.

Not every business is suited to use an animal symbol as part of its name. However, wise company name generators have found that when an animal's name, mascot or logo can be used, the turn out is positive as people relate to the best qualities in animals and want to think the businesses they patronize have them too.

Mbiti (1990) is of the view that animal's contribution to humanity is obviously great and important as they constitute human food, and their importance is obviously great whereas many Africans have religious associations with them some of which are linked with the concept of god. Cattle, sheep and goats are used for sacrificial and often religious purposes and examples are found all over the continent. Many people have a sacred attitude towards their animals. He observed further that, the Herero regard all cattle as sacred, and having originated from their 'mythical tree of life' from where human and other life comes. They eat them only when sacrificed in religious ceremonies. For the Dinka, every bull or ox is ultimately destined for sacrifice. They believe that cattle and children belong to God and that he gives them to men only as gifts from him. Everyday, the Nandi pray to God for the safety and prosperity of their cattle.

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Bidamo to be immortal. Others have sacred snakes, especially pythons, which may not be killed by people.

Again, he observed that, many societies associate snakes with the living-dead or other human spirits, and such snakes are giving food and drink when they visit people's homes, whereas in other myths too, the lizard and chameleon serve as the messenger who brought news from God, and chickens used in most societies as sacrifices either to God or to the lower spiritual beings and the living-dead. The spider though a very small creature, appears in many myths of the Akans symbolising 'wisdom' and for that reason God is given the title of '*Ananse Kokroko*' which means the great wise spider.



**Plate-7 The Swastika
(Funtumfunafudenkyāmfunafu**



**Plate-8 the Lion Gate (detail) of
Mycenae Picture Credit
<http://en.wikipedia.org...>**



**Plate-9 Lion statue in front of Brunswick Cathedral (referring to Henry the Lion) Picture
Credit <http://en.wikipedia.org...>**

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter outlines the various research tools employed by the researcher in undertaking the research, stressing on Research Design, Library research, Population and Sampling, Primary and Secondary Sources of Data, Data Collection Instruments, Validation of Data Collection Instruments, Administration of Instruments and Data Analysis Plan.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed historical and descriptive research approach. Historical research deals with explanations of the records of the past events, essentially for the purpose of gaining a better and clearer understanding of the present, and making more reliable predictions of the future. This method was used to access data on past records of animal symbolisms. This includes the background history of animal symbol, its philosophical meaning and educational significance.

Ndagi(1984) defines descriptive research as, “the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing conditions prevailing practices, beliefs, attitudes, on-going processes etc.” This discovery of meaning is very vital in descriptive research. It involves verbal description and it is characterised by non-qualitative data. According to *Best and Khan(1981)*, qualitative studies involves the gathering of data by participant observation, interview and examination of documentary materials.

Sharing similar view, Lucy Cheser Jacobs and Asghar (1990) confirm that in qualitative studies, the investigator is the data gathering instrument. He or she talks with people in the setting, observing their activities, reading their documents and written records, and recording this information in field notes. The data collected from qualitative studies make it possible to describe in detail all that goes on in a particular activity or situation rather than on comparing the effects of a particular treatment (as in experimental research). The above characteristics fit into what the researcher was doing, therefore descriptive method was employed in this thesis to identify, examine, explain and record the existing information on animal Symbolisms, looking at their philosophical meaning and educational significance.

3.2 Sampling

Best (1981) explains population as any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. The population may be all individual of a particular type or more restricted type of a group.

Sharp et al (2002) refer to population in research as all the elements in a well defined collection or a set of values whereas a sample is any subset of values from the population. Aside this, Sharp is of the view that, the population to which the researcher intends to generalize his findings is the target population.

Therefore the population of the Akans in Akyem Abuakwa traditional area comprises the knowledgeable elders, clan heads, chiefs, traditional craftsmen, traditional priests, linguists and experienced and knowledgeable teachers who have taught culture and customs for a long time.

3.3 Data Collection. The researcher started collecting the relevant data related to the research. In the process of collecting data, the researcher also conducted random preliminary interviews whenever he went to the area of study so as to assess the feasibility of the research. In addition to this, the researcher made personal observation in the course of gathering data for the thesis.

3.4 Library Research

For the purpose of collecting information from books, internet, journals, magazines and the like, to support facts and for further clarification and understanding of events, a library research was conducted.

Frequent visits were made to the KNUST library from August 2007 to the day of completion and lots of books were read from the undergraduate section, the Ghana collection section, and the reference section. Lots of useful and interesting textbooks, periodicals, magazines, as well as thesis of past students were read and useful ideas and information relating to the thesis were extracted from them. The researcher also made intensive use of the College of Art library and that of the Post Graduate Library of the Department of Art Education. The researcher also made extensive good use of the thesis of the past students. On September 2007 thereabout, the researcher also made frequent visits to the Ashanti Library, at the cultural centre-Kumasi where a few useful textbooks were read and the relevant information extracted for the literature review.

The researcher made a couple of visits to the Library of the University College of Education Winneba, Kumasi campus on the 15th and 16th of April 2008, and a few books that had related literatures to the thesis were read and relevant information was

extracted to beef up the review chapter of the thesis. By March 2007, the researcher was able to submit part of chapter two for vetting. At certain points in time, the libraries of some individual friends were visited. On the 29th of April, 2008 the researcher visited the Okeene's palace, which is Ofori Panin Fie Library. Useful materials were extracted. The researcher visited, Kyebi Presbyterian Training College and browsed through a few papers, journals and periodicals but no related literature were found. The researcher also had relevant information from his personal library.

3.5 Online Research

Internet surfing played a major role in the research. The researcher made frequent visits to the Graduate School Internet Café and the College of Art and Social Sciences Library Café where a lot of useful articles, research papers, online books and documentaries on significance of animal symbolism were reviewed.

3.6 Instrumentation

The researcher made use of the following research tools for data collection; questionnaire, interviews, focus group discussion and personal observation.

According to *Leedy(1974)*, Questionnaire is a common instrument for observing data which is beyond the reach of the researcher. It is well organised and presented on paper, and then administered to the prospective respondents. There are two types of questionnaire; postal questionnaire and self completion questionnaire. For the purpose of safe and convenient delivery of questionnaires to respondents, self-completion questionnaires were used by the researcher for collecting data. The questionnaire helped

the researcher to collect information from the chiefs, elders, clan heads, fetish priest, the chiefs' linguist and knowledgeable men on the topic in Akyem Abuakwa Traditional area. The researcher also embarked on focus group discussion and interviews which were question and answer given, to obtain information for the research.

3.7 Validation of Instruments

Research instruments are tools employed by a researcher for collecting data. Questionnaire, interviews and personal observations were the research tools adopted for this research. Validation of instruments is the process of subjecting research tools to scrutiny to correct mistakes in them. For the purpose of making the research instruments error free, the researcher in consultation with fellow researchers prepared a checklist after which it was sent to his supervisor for review and approval. The research instruments were very simple, brief and designed to fulfill specific objectives of the research. The instruments used were sufficiently flexible and allowed respondents to respond in a way relevant to their own experiences. Also, the format of the items in the four data collecting instruments, the questionnaire, interview and observation was determined through the background of the study, the importance of the study, research hypothesis and the review of related literature. In addition, the coverage of the content area (content validity) and the extent to which the items in the questionnaire, interview and observation could measure specific traits was also assessed by the researcher.

3.8 Pre-testing of Questionnaire and interview questions

On the 14th day of April, 2008, the researcher pre-tested and restructured the interview questions and questionnaires for the research. The pre-testing took place at **Asiakwa, Kyebi**; the district capital, **Apedwa, Nsutam, Anyinam, Maase** because these are the six urban towns where targeted literate population could be reached. Ten questionnaires were given out in each town making a total of fifty questionnaires. Four were retrieved at **Asiakwa**, five at **Kyebi**, four at **Apedwa**, three at **Nsutam**, four at **Anyinam**, and three at **Maase**. The poor performance was linked to the fact that, most of the respondents mostly clan heads who were civil servants and farmers had tight busy schedule and never had enough time answering the questionnaire. This compelled the researcher to embark on more interviews and focus on group discussions.

3.9 Conducting Interviews and Administration of Questionnaire

Within three weeks, starting from 4th May 2008 to 25th May 2008, the researcher was able to do the administration of the questionnaires, conducting of interviews and the holding of focus group discussions concurrently. In all, fourteen towns and villages were visited within the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional area covering the length and breadth of the traditional area. *See Table-3*

The researcher interviewed all categories of people in each of the villages, he signed up with people ranging from elders, chiefs, clan heads, linguists, and traditional priests. The researcher embarked on more interviews than the administration of questionnaires and focus group discussions due to the fact that, the target audience were busy people with

tight schedules and also because most of the indigenous people could not read and write in the English language.

In all, a total of 56 interviews were conducted, 31 copies of questionnaire were administered and 8 focus group discussions were held in all the 14 towns, and villages the researcher signed up with. With the 56 interviews, 43 was successfully recorded and later transcribed. 22 out the 24 interviews were successfully recorded on and later transcribed 23 questionnaire were retrieved successfully out of the 35 distributed, while 8 could not be retrieved and 4 retrieved questionnaire were not answered.

The towns and villages visited were

1. Apedwa	2. Apapam
3. Kyebi	4. Sagyimase
5. Maase	6. Akyem Adukrom
7. Asiakwa	8. Kwabeng
9. Osiem	10. Nsutam
11. Atukrom	12. Asafo
13. Anyinam	14. Saman

Table-3 The Towns and villages the Researcher visited.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter which is the heart of the thesis embodies the presentation and discussion of the data gathered on selected animal symbolisms among the Akans of Akyem Abuakwa Traditional area. Each of the selected nineteen animal symbols drawn from proverbs, chieftaincy regalia's, traditional myths and clan totems, were discussed under sub headings to bring to the fore the **background study, philosophical, historical, socio-cultural and educational significance**. Plates are used where necessary to clarify textual discussion and to emphasize significant relationships. This is to expand data in visualized form in order to facilitate easy understanding. With the above discussions, the following are a few of the symbolic animal forms that were found by the researcher.

4.1 *Wode botire ma nea ese no a, ema akoma tɔ*"

Literal meaning; if you give the head of a slaughtered animal to the one deserving it peace prevails.

Background history; "Botire" is the head of a slaughtered animal. This proverb means that, if someone deserves something and it is given to a different person, there is bound to be distractions. History has it that, this proverb emerged from the culture of the Akans of sharing slaughtered animal at the chiefs palace during enstoolment of a new chief where the meat is shared according to positions held at the palace. The grandchild of the kurontihene does the slaughtering of the sheep at the palace, share the meat among the chiefs and his elders. The head and the skin are given to kurontihene, the family takes the

waist, the okyeame (linguist) takes the (yan); the ɔhenemahene takes the lower part of the abdomen (ayaase); Ankɔbea and Apeɛɛmakahene takes the right thigh and the right arm respectively (srɛ nifa ne basa benkum) Dɔmkwaa and Kyidɔm also takes the left arm(basa benkum) and left thigh(srɛ benkum) respectively Akraguarefohene takes the liver(mmerɛbo) and nsɛnɛfohene also takes the lungs(n'ahrawa ana n'ahurututu ne ade)

The philosophical meaning of this proverb is that, when the right thing is done peace prevails. What belongs to someone should not be taken away from him. The Akans mostly use this proverb when it comes to issues relating to inheritance to restore peace and harmony.

Social significance: Again, the Akans in their political hierarchy use it to reposition those deserving certain key positions.

Educational Significance: The Akans use this proverb to teach their children the need to do the right thing.

Moral significance: the proverb seeks to instill moral uprightness into children

4.2 *'Abrewa hwe akokɔ na akokɔ ahwe abrewa'*

Literal Meaning; The old lady feeds the fowl for the fowl to feed her. The meaning of this proverb is that, in every work you find yourself, if you put in your best and work hard, you will get good results.

Background history ;The Akan who are hardworking people, at their old age still engage themselves in free range system of rearing fowls and other animals at home. They believe that when these animals are properly kept and fed, they can get meat to prepare food for the household and even sell some to raise funds to keep the home running. That is to say, the fowl depends on old lady for food to grow, and the old lady in turn depends on the fowl by getting meat to prepare food, and then by selling some to get money.

The philosophical meaning of this proverb is interdependency. The Akans mostly use this proverb when they are investing in their children to conscientise them to know that they have a responsibility to perform so as to propel them to work hard to become good and responsible adults, so that they can in turn look after them when they are old and can no more do any active work to make a living.

The social significance is that, it brings to bare, the Akans belief in social responsibility that, we are our brothers keeper.

For education and training, this proverb seeks to train children to be responsible adults. This complements what the Bible said in Proverb 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it”

4.3 ‘Adeɛhia kurotwiamansa a, ɔwe wura’

Literal Meaning: When the leopard is hard pressed it eats herbs. The word kurotwiamansa, ekyem, aboa fufuo ɔkrɔbɔn are all appellations for the leopard among the Akans.

Background history of the above proverb is that, the leopard is a carnivorous animal which eats the flesh of mammals, but when it is hard pressed and cannot get any animal to pounce on, it does not starve itself to death but eat herbs to survive.

The philosophical meaning of this proverb is the need for man to adopt himself to certain situations and be content with himself, hence the proverb *‘frɔm frɔm nte hɔ daa’* life is not rosy all the time. This lay emphasis on the Akan belief that, life is full of ups and downs.

Educational significance: This proverb is used to encourage and boost the confidence of people who are going through hard times and to remind them of the ultimate within this present unseen moment. It is also used to encourage him that all is not lost, so as to find a substitute.

4.4 *‘Kɔsakyi kasa kyere obonokyerefo(pataku) a, xe no abebuo mu’*

Literal Meaning: When the vulture speaks to the wolf it understands it proverbially.

Background history: The Akans have a mythology about this proverb which states that once upon a time all animals were living peacefully together in the forest. Anytime any of the animals was bereaved, the entire animals would come in their numbers to mourn with the bereaved animal. When the animals are mourning, they do not eat nor take their bath. One day the wolf’s mother fell sick and died. Wolf carried the mother’s mortal remains and hid it under the buttress of a big tree. As all the animals were mourning, wolf would secretly sneak to where the mother’s body was kept and enjoy some of the flesh. Coincidentally, vulture noticed all that wolf was doing and called out; ‘wolf, let’s take our

bath and find something to eat.’ wolf being intelligent realized that vulture had seen all that he was doing so he gave heed to what vulture said. If wolf had passed any comment, vulture would have revealed to the other animals of the rude behavior of wolf. This myth brings to bare some of the cultural practices of the Akan when a family is bereaved. No cooking is done at the house where a dead body is laid in state. All they do is to sing dirges, drinking of hard liquor and palm wine and chewing of kola nut, but secretly they eat. The Akans use this proverb to counsel someone they know very well against putting on a behaviour which is not accepted by society.

The philosophical meaning is, a word to a wise is enough.

The educational significance is the need to refrain from the desire and delight for evil which quickly wipes out our true affections.

4.5 ‘Dua a, Ananse adi awuo no, ntikuma nkɛtena asee ntɔ nko’

Literal Meaning; Ntikuma does not sit and nod under the tree whose fruit killed the father, Ananse. This proverb means that, the wrong that someone has done, you don’t have to follow suit.

The philosophical meaning is to do the right thing. The Akans believe that, if Ananse with all his wisdom and experience could eat a mere fruit and die, then what would happen to his son Ntikuma who is a toddler If he should repeat what the father did. The Akans use this proverb at the time when someone does something or puts on a behaviour which is not accepted in society, especially when someone else has done the same thing

before and has got into trouble. It is used as a sign of caution against bad social behaviours.

Educational significance; the proverb seeks to deter young people from putting up certain behaviours which are not accepted by society.

4.6 ‘Akokɔ bideε nim adikyeε nanso otie firi onini ano.’

Literal Meaning; the hen knows it is dawn but it leaves the pronouncement to the cockerel.

The philosophical meaning is that, the authority entrusted in man by God is superior to that of women. The Akans believe that, women are not supposed to engage in bravery deeds, captioned in another local proverb ‘*ɔbaa twa bɔmaa a, etwere ɔbarima dan mu.*’ Again, the Akans believe that, man is the head of every family and for that matter, certain key decisions and responsibilities are the sole duty of the man as captioned in another proverb, ‘*yensan kokromoti ho mmɔ pɔ*’ *one cannot bypass the thumb to make a knot.* The Akans have a well structured political hierarchy where the paramount chief is the head and there are other sub-chiefs under him. Certain key decisions and pronouncements are the sole duty and responsibility of the paramount chief.

The Moral lesson learnt here is the need for one to know his status and position in society

4.7) *‘Obi ntɔ n’akokɔnini mma no nkɔɔn obi akuraa*

Literal Meaning; No one buy’s a cock for it to crow in another person’s village. The cock in the proverb signifies an important or precious thing. That is to say, the **philosophical meaning** of the proverb is that, no one would mishandle something expensive, precious or dear to his heart as captioned in another proverb “*obi mfa n’adeɔa ndi agorɔ.*” No one would mishandle his property. This proverb is applicable at the time when someone wants to take advantage of you to mishandle something expensive and precious to you.

The socio-cultural significance of this proverb is that the Akans use this proverb to counsel people against the habit of hoodwinking.

Educational significance; its implication for public education is to train their children to refrain from cheating.

4.8 *‘Ahunu bi pɛn nti na aboa aserewa (sunbird) regye ne ba agorɔ a, na wayi n’ani ato nkyɛn’*

Literal meaning; the literal meaning is that, practical experience caused the sunbird to look aside when playing with ‘her baby” An Akan mythology has it that, once upon a time, there lived a sunbird who was barren and could not bring forth. One day, the bird consulted a traditional priest who helped her to bring forth a baby. One day, after the mother bird had finished feeding the baby bird and was playing with it, incidentally, the beak of the mother bird stung the eye of the baby bird and it died. The mother bird

consulted the traditional priest again for another help and fortunately it brought forth again. The sunbird learnt a lesson from the unfortunate ordeal she went through.

Educational significance: This proverb teaches us the lesson of learning from our mistakes. Applying our past experiences in solving current problems,

4.9 ‘Okusie a ɔbetena kwantenpɔn mu no se onni mmirika a na ɔwɔ akokoduro.’

Literal meaning; the rat that decides to live along a highway is either a fast runner or very brave.

Background; Rats are eaten by the Akans, it's very rare or uncommon to find rats basking along major paths or roads, especially during the day in the Akyem farming communities, therefore if one is seen along any of these heavily patronized paths, then its potentials must not be under rated.

Educational values; It teaches a lesson of self consciousness and alertness.

The economic lesson here is that, one should assess him/herself before throwing up any challenge in life since strength and weaknesses differ with each individual.

The moral lesson it offers is that, never leave anything to chance if you are not too sure.

4.10 ‘Sɛ ɔkwakuo ne wo yɛ aka a, na w’aburofuo ho na atɔ no.’

Literal meaning: “when the monkey is at loggerheads with the farmer, his maize farm is forever saved.

Background: monkeys are very notorious to maize farms, since they feed on it. Meanwhile they move in groups. So if a group realizes a maize farm, it is possible the farmer may not get any harvest that farming season. It is however believed that, when one attempts trapping them and they discover the plan, they may decide not to bother the farm again. This, the Ashanti believe or interpret as the group being at loggerheads with the farmer, hence the adage above.

Educational values: it is not advisable to move in the company of ‘parasitic friends’. One enjoys more freedom when these friends decide to find other sources of living when their tricks are found out.

Economic lesson is, resources are better guarded as one gets wiser.

The moral lesson is that, as one gets wiser, it is likely to lose witty friends. This should not be misconstrued as being rejected by society. It should rather be considered as a step in one's own advancement.

4.11 ‘*Sɛ nwa hunu ne ho so hwɛ a, onyini yɛ otope.*’

Literal Meaning: The snail that is able to keep itself well from being found out or trapped by a hunter grows into a bigger snail. Snails form part of the staple food of the ordinary Akan. These are however hunted in the forest not by any hazardous means hence; the longevity of a snail's life is dependent upon how well it is able to hide itself away from human tracks.

Educational Values: The proverb seek to teach children and those under authority to adhere to the accepted norms or the ‘dos and don’ts’ of society if they are to stay clear of trouble.

Economically, the future of every nation depends upon its youth; therefore if through disobedience a society loses its young ones, then the future of the society is threatened.

Morally it educates children and for that matter, those under authority to be obedient and conscious of themselves in order not to fall into trouble.

4.12 ‘Sε asomrofi dwo a, enna ɔkraman nya dabre’

Literal Meaning: It is only when the fireplace is cool that a dog gets a sleeping place.

Background: Dogs play very vital role in the lives of the Akans. They serve as security at day time and night. They are also used for hunting expeditions, yet they are not properly fed, neither are they provided a permanent sleeping place. In the traditional Akan homes dogs are normally fed with the leftovers and are left to sleep in the open compound. However, due to the low temperature at nights they find themselves warm place to hide for comfort and the only place for such warmth is the traditional fireplace. The hearth is available to them only when the coals have waned in heat and completely out. On the other hand, since they serve as security at night they can only rest when there are no intruders or thieves so to speak.

Philosophical meaning: one can only have a sound rest in a peaceful environment.

Educational side of the proverb is that, those who provide us with security are more often than not given little or no attention at all. Another side of it is that, development is the measurement of growth in every society. However, it thrives well only when there is no chaos because the elders usually say ‘pillow offers alternatives to problems. This one can only be achieved through sound sleep.

Moral side of the proverb is that, sound living is possible only in a peaceful environment.

4.13) ‘Ohurie si akyekyede akwi kwa.’ *The tsetsefly can only rest at the back of the tortoise*

Background; the tsetse fly is a bloodsucking insect that pinches very painfully on its victims. Meanwhile in the course of feeding on the blood of its victim, it transmits a disease called trypanosomiasis(sleeping sickness) through a parasite it carries within its system also called trypanosomiasis. However, due to the nature of the tortoise shell, it is impossible for the tsetsefly to cause any harm to it even if the former rests on the back of the latter.

The philosophical meaning is unproductive venture.

The educational significance is that, the Akans use this proverb to advise their children to desist from engaging in unproductive ventures.

4.14 ‘Sankɔfa’- go back and retrieve; from the aphorism ‘Sɛ wowerɛ fi na wosan kɔfa a yenkyi’

Literal meaning: There is nothing wrong with learning from the past. The symbol is believed to be based on a mythical bird that flies forward with its head turned backwards. This reflects the Akan belief that the past serves as a guide for planning for the future. In the Akan military system, this symbol signifies the rearguard, the section on which the survival of the society and the defense of its heritage depended.

Philosophical meaning is that, our past experiences can help us to properly plan for any future occurrences. It symbolises turning back and making amends so as to start over in life. "It is alright to make a fresh start in life, so long as you recognize and learn from your mistakes."

Education and training: One can consult an expert for advice to solve a problem no matter his or her status in society. The Akans use this symbol to encourage someone who has failed in life. Among the Akans, it is not a taboo to start life all over again when disaster strikes hence the saying, “*bosom anim, yɛkɔ no mpɛnsa.*” The shrine must be visited thrice before one can give up. The Akans believe that one can only lose hope when he has continuously failed in archiving something for three times. **Plate-10.**



Plate-10, Traditional Linguist staff with Sankofa symbol. Picture credit Arthur & Rowe 2006

4.15 A linguist staff denoting a snail and a tortoise; ‘*ɛkaa akyekyedeɛ ne nwa nko araa anka etuo rento wɔ kwaɛ mu da*’

Literal meaning; if it were only the tortoise and the snail, there would be no gun shots in the forest. One does not need to fire the gun to catch the snail or the tortoise.

The philosophical meaning; the Akans believe that peace is paramount to national development therefore, the Akans look at the humble and peaceful nature of these two animals and imbibe these character traits. These two animals are used to stand for peace and harmony among the Akans.

The social significance is that, it portrays the chief as a peaceful ruler at social gatherings.

The educational aspect is that, it seeks to teach us to learn to live in peace and harmony with our neighbors.

4.16 A linguist staff with a hand holding one egg ‘*Mekuta me man mu sɛ kosua*’

Literal meaning: Power is like an egg, when held too tightly, it might break, or fall and break when held loosely. A successful ruler must be both sympathetic and firm. In the Akan sense, they consider eggs as an important item in their day to day lives. They use eggs to reward children who perform creditably in the traditional society or when a child does something extraordinary, eggs are used to motivate him or her. Again, in the Akan community, when someone survives an accident or ailment eggs are offered to him to pacify his soul. Eggs are also offered to the gods and ancestors during traditional festivals like Ohum. Looking at the importance attached to eggs by the Akans and its fragile nature,

one must always handle it with care because when it falls and breaks you can not have it back.

The philosophical meaning is that when something precious or important is entrusted in your care, one must always take absolute care of it. It also seeks to teach the need to create balance in exercising power entrusted in our hands.

The social meaning is the need to protect our social status.

The educational value is that it seeks to teach us to be flexible but firm

The economic significance is that, one must always manage his resources wisely, as goes the saying ‘you cannot eat your cake and have it.

4.17 'Pot on hearth with the head of an Animal; 'Aboa ti nyera wɔ nkwan mu'

Literal meaning: the head of an animal never gets lost in a soup.

Background’; the Akans believe that, the meat of every animal can only be identified by the head and for that matter great importance is attached to it. Again, they believe that, man is the head or the leader of every family and for that matter he must enjoy the head of a slaughtered animal. The Akans attach great importance to their leaders. Chiefs and Clan heads are well respected and for that matter all eyes are on them wherever they go. Akan Chiefs by their position are not permitted to be seen in public alone.

Philosophical meaning is that, anybody of significance does not easily get lost in the crowd; anything of significance does not just vanish. Anything of importance stands out in its own merit.

Educational significance: it portrays and teaches good leadership. **See Plate-11**

4.18 Asakyiri family staff denoting Eagle(*Ɔkɔrɛ*) and Vulture(*kɔkɔsakyi*) as their clan totem.

Background History: They are believed to have been driven from Timbukutu by the Moslems through Cote D' Ivoire, to establish the Asakyiri kingdom with Fomena as their capital. They have the eagle and vulture as their clan totems. Nkansah Kyeremateng(2001) These animals are considered as deity. They represent our souls and for that matter the people adore them.

Socio-cultural significance: The Akans see in the *eagle* a specimen of divine power, enlightenment, strength, virility and stamina in life. The people imbibe the good deeds of these animals in their social life.

The **vulture** among the Akans is a symbol of **death** and **rebirth** and represents purification.

Educational significance of the Eagle; The Akans believe that, with the eagle's ability to fly high over the mountain and forests seeks to teach us of having a broader view of life and also return focused on what is really important in our lives.

Secondly, the Akans believe that, just as opposing winds cause an eagle and the vulture to soar higher and higher, so do adversity strengthens godly people. When adversity comes your way, don't let it get you down. Let it push you up as you draw closer to god. In fact, the eagle really boosts the confidence of the Akans and reminds them of ultimate within this present unseen moment. The eagle seeks to teach us to face life with confidence and stamina.

The educational significance of the Vulture; as the *vulture* is seen soaring above limitations, soaring without using much energy, and also riding its thermal winds instead of flapping, seeks to teach the Akans how to use their own energy in their day to day activities powerfully and efficiently.

Also because the vulture eats dead animals and leftovers from the incinerator, it teaches us the sense of smell and aromatherapy

The economic significance of the vulture is that, it seeks to teach the Akans how to use their resources wisely and efficiently.



*Plate-11, Linguist Staff with Animal head on a pot
on heath
Picture credit Arthur & Rowe 2006*

4.19 The Akyem Abuakwa State Emblem ‘Susubiribi’

Background history; the Akyem Abuakwa State Emblem can be traced to the origin of the *Akyeman* group. Long before the transformation of people into states, the Akans lived in clan groups such as; *Asona, Aduana, Nyoko, Agona, Asakyirri, Bretuo and Ekona* in the Adansi area in the present day Asante. The greatest and most numerous of the Akan clans was Asona whose celebrated leader was *Atta Apeaning Kwaforo Amoah*. The other clan leaders looked up to him for both protection and succour. *Atta Apeaning*, being courageous, shrewd and indomitable, led his people from **Adansi Akrokeri Kokobeanti** to the present **Akyeman Kyebi**.

The State emblem of *AkyemAbuakwa*, comprises a leopard (*ekyem*), whose back sits a stool with a crown, lying in a dormant position. The other symbols include the ‘**wirenyimadu ne awanfi**’ sword, the proverbial snake ‘**Asonawo**’ which lay emphasis on the royalty and superiority of the Asona clan., the pan for prospecting gold, mattock, and yellow background. *Atta Apeaning* was known as *ekyem* (leopard) which is a well-known parent capable of protecting his little ones so expertly that, no one can touch them without attracting his parental wrath. The leopard represents the greatness of the **Akyeman** State.

Susubiribi is the motto of the Akyem Abuakwa State. The magic of this motto is that as an Akan word, it evolves several interpretations which are;-Aim at something worthy; Aim high and let the star be your limit, think positively; Have regard for what is worthy and honourable; Be cautious of what you do or say.

The Social significance; the leopard represents the king of the animals of **Kwaebibirim** signifying the power and authority of the **ɔkyehene**. The leopard in its relaxed and dormant position, with the face looking towards the observer, looks peaceful, still, gentle when not provoked. Provoke it, and you have yourself to blame.

Shakespeare's immortal lines, explains this philosophy better, "in peace there is nothing so becomes a man (a state, a nation) as modesty, stillness and humility but when the blast of war blows in your ears, then imitate the action of the tiger; stiffen the sinews and summon up the blood." He vigilantly guards and protects the wealth of the state.

It is also perceived to have the power to protect the thick forest of the Akyem Abuakwa State. The Akyem Abuakwa (ɔkyeman) in Ghana is endowed with large forests and other natural resources, which are being degraded by illegal logging and farming, bushfires and other threats to the environment. To complement and expand the aforesaid social significance of the ɔkyeman state emblem and to address the aforementioned environmental threats, the ɔkyehene, ɔsagyefo Amoatia Ofori Panin, initiated programmes such as environmental education campaigns, the formation of the **Okyeman Environmental Brigades** and the establishment of the **Okyeman Environment Foundation (OEF)**, to enhance biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of renewable natural resources in Akyem Abuakwa, using community-based resource management approaches, especially by working with the traditional authorities

The snake signifies the beauty and wisdom of the royal Asona clan members.

Educational significance; it educates people on environmental issues, to empower them to become active agents on the campaign for sustainable and equitable development.

Secondly, the education empowers the people and gives them protection against ignorance and inferiority complex. *See plate 12*



Plate-12
The State Emblem of Akyem Abuakwa.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This chapter summarizes and draws conclusions on the findings of the whole research. It also makes suggestions and recommendations to the conclusions arrived at.

The research was aimed at finding out the significance of Animal Symbolisms among the Akans of the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional area. In view of this, the following objectives were identified, which when deeply delved into, would help to curtail the problem. There was an assumption in line with the problem. This assumption was due to the fact that;

- Animal symbolisms offer numerous inspiring lessons to be studied yet people are ignorant about them.
- Secondly, these important symbols are absent in the school curriculum.

Questionnaires, interviews and personal observations were the research tools adopted for this research; while related literature was reviewed in line with the objective of the research.

The response to the questionnaires and the interviews was not encouraging at all. The data collected was an indication that, the number of literates in the area who have good considerable knowledge of symbolic animal forms was few. This was an indication that, many of the educated youth in the area cannot interpret these animal symbols found in the various aspects of their culture. Since the targeted literates in the area, failed to respond to the questionnaire as suggested, it implies that, this group of people has very

little knowledge about the symbolic animal forms featuring in the various aspects of their culture.

The reasons for this lack of knowledge may imply their lack of interest in learning about these symbolisms from their elders who are the custodians of these cultural forms. This supports *Akyeame Ampadu-Agyei's* assertion, as cited by *Edmund Smith-Asante(2002)* *that*, many people today, deliberately distance themselves from their past because they believe that traditional culture is backward or retrogressive. He further explained that, many people who live in the cities and large towns believe that urbanisation and western lifestyle constitute progress and self-development. They are alienated from the traditional beliefs and the rural environments, where both nature and these customs play a far more meaningful part in people's lives.

5.2 Conclusions

Most importantly, the research revealed the availability of some symbolic animal forms which have been described in detail in chapter four of this research. Respondents were able to give the literal meanings to only those they were familiar with.

However, it was observed that, the underlying factors for the use of symbolic animal forms were;

- i. The symbolic animal forms are used to teach the philosophy of the people, personal philosophy, good moral and social lessons, attitudes, knowledge and wisdom.
- ii. That, it shows the political authority of the king and his people

- iii. For the physical representation of abstract ideas.
- iv. To attract the spirit of the gods to come and dwell in these animal symbols and give them the functioning ability.
- v. The emblems served as symbols of unity and influenced the actions of the people on festive and other ceremonial occasions.
- vi. They are a connection to the realm of spirits and the gods. This connection is seen through their use of sacrifices, as well as their search for secrets and wisdom.
- vii. Divination of future events and past wisdom can be gained through the proper use of animals.
- viii. Very powerful opponents take the shape of animals, for extra power. Spirits and supernatural beings also take animal forms, often, temporarily, before being reborn to guard a land or clan and, thus, its fertility. Therefore, animals symbolize the essence of fertility and vitality among the Akans.

In view of the above lessons and benefits derived from symbolic animal forms, it has been observed that, there are a lot of symbolic animal forms in the traditional area which have not received considerable attention, in spite of the numerous lessons they offer. It is also equally true that lack of detailed study of these animal symbols has resulted in the lack of knowledge and teaching of it by teachers.

5.3 Recommendations

Considering the above conclusions, the following recommendations are made.

- 1) That, symbolic animal forms should be explained and documented and possibly, placed at community libraries for people to have access to them.

- 2) Since these symbolic animal forms play pivotal role in the culture of the people, it should be included in our school curriculum, so as to teach students the socio-cultural and moral lessons inherent in them.
- 3) That, people must be encouraged to learn these symbolic animal forms from our elders who are the custodians of these symbols
- 4) While it is understandable that traditional beliefs are declining, "people should appreciate our socio-culture legacy that has protected the flora and fauna, supporting the ecosystem upon which our survival depends."
- 5) Totems can thus be exploited as a tool to galvanise or bring about solidarity in the human societies, particularly in Ghana, and Africa in general, for biodiversity conservation.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,
KUMASI**

NAME OF RESEARCHER:

FRANCIS LUMOR

TOPIC:

**SIGNIFICANCE OF ANIMAL SYMBOLISMS AMONG THE AKANS OF
AKYEM ABUAKWA TRADITIONAL AREA.**

1) Status /Title:

- Clan head [] (b)
- traditional priest[]
- Chief[] (e)
- Linguist [] (f) Traditional Artist []. (g) Other [] Please
Specify.....

2) **Ethnic Background**

- Akyem []
- Akuapem[]
- Asanti[]
- Fante[]
- Other []. Please Specify.....

3) Please what is your personal understanding of animal symbolis?

.....

4) Which clan do you belong?

5) Do you have any form of animal symbols? Yes[], No[]

6) What is the name of the animal?.....

7) Into which category does the animal fall?

(a)Wild Animal []

(b)Domestic Animal []

(c)Mythical Beast []

8) What is the literal or direct meaning?.....

9) What are their symbolic or metaphorical meaning?.....

10) Which other aspect of your culture can you find animal symbols?

- Traditional Art forms []
- Proverbs and wisdom sayings[]
- Tales and stories[]
- Regalia[]
- Traditional religion [].
- Other [] Please Specify.....

11) What are the names of the animals in 10 above?

(a).....(b).....(c).....(d).....(e).....(f)

12) Please what do these animals stand for?

13) What are their symbolic or metaphorical meanings?

(a)..... (d).....

. (b)..... (e).....

. (c)..... (f).....

14) Where are these animal symbols used?

(a) During religious ceremonies []

(d) For Shrines []

. (b) For funeral rites []

(e) other []

. (c) Used by chiefs []

Please specify.....

15) What role do you think these animal symbols can play in the education of our children?