

# **The impact of indigenous religious practices on the art of dompim No.1.**

**By**

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**FACULTY OF FINE ART, COLLEGE OF ART AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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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 or 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

Most religions in the world especially the indigenous religion of the people of Dompim No1, Ghana and the rest of Africa have influence on the people's arts. The arts such as religious sculptures, paintings, textiles and others, serve as instruments of power through which the gods or divinities could be communicated to for favour and also as a link between the supernatural and the natural worlds. The artistic creativity in Dompim No1 is bound up with religious beliefs and practices. Divine inspiration is commonly invoked as a motivation for artistic expression, technique and styles.

Based on the above, it was identified that religious practices and beliefs including the production of religious art are incapable in the lives of the people of Dompim No.1, yet most of the people do not seem to understand and appreciate the impact the religion has on the art of the people of Dompim No.1, hence the need for the research. The problem of the research was identified as well the research question which happens to be the impose of this thesis.

The methods which were adopted were descriptive and historical and the qualitative research method was also used. The target population was the chief and elders, priest, clan leaders and some leaders. The stratified sampling method was adopted. The research instruments used included interviews and observation and primary and secondary data were collected and analyzed.

The putting off, of unattended fire was as a result of the wearing of Abownda Awie mask in the dry season by the assistant of the chief priest of Dompim No.1. The cult artists of

Dompim No.1 were believed to have been directed by the deity to produce ritual art forms, such as ancestral figures and almost all the figures look alike, which gives the notion that the artists do copy art.

With regards to the above findings, some of the religious practices and beliefs have gotten most of the people economically unstable, thereby forcing them to leave the town to the city centres in search of non existing jobs. Some also kept the people on their toes with regards to social vices such as theft and others.

The study indicated that a strong relationship exists among art, ancestors, divinities, spirits and the living. The religion has impact on the art of Dompim No 1, therefore affect the socio-economic lives of the people. This research which is a body of knowledge is intended to benefit researchers of African art and culture and the people of Dompim No.1 who do not seems to have any written document concerning their community. Indeed, the indigenous religion of Dompim No.1 has influence on their art.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1. 0      Introduction**

A close study of the people of Dompim No1 shows that religion and art are the roots of their cultures and determining factors of life as evidenced by the cave paintings and sculptures of the Paleolithic era. Being basic to human expression, art was and has been one of the means through which man has been expressing his beliefs and practices (religion). The creation of religious art is believed to be both a hereditary vocation and an art of devotion, an offering to the gods. But the precise date of art and religion is what appears not known. (Drewal; 1984) Probably the first known religion was traditional religion which was first known in the Garden of Eden as revealed in the Bible, Genesis Chapter (1; 1-31),(Again in Genesis chapter 1;1-35) God is believed to be the greatest artist as he designed and made the universe and everything in it.(MEE,2005)

In the later Bible verses (Genesis 1:1-31), Man first used leaves to cover his nakedness when he acknowledged that he had sinned. In this sense, the leaf which was shaped by man is a "body art". Therefore God started art by creating, and man covered his body with what God created.

Governance is believed to have started from the Garden of Eden when God put man in charge of all creations. Also, the giving of names to things and human beings such as, trees, animals, sea, Cain and Abel and others, may be said to form part of religious

practices and beliefs.

Furthermore, sacrifices and offerings were made in acknowledgement of God's blessings and protections. It appears the development of religion and art began from here where dresses were worn by the first man, sacrifices and offerings made and farm tools employed in man's developmental process. Art objects which may be regarded as souvenirs may have developed during the stone age era due to man's quest for tools and things in order to live comfortably, Bows and arrows for hunting were manufactured, it is believed that man sought the permission of the tools before they were used, because of their religious practices and beliefs in the spirits believed to be inhabiting in the tools. It is said that the user would be secured if their permission were sought and the rites performed. In the upper Paleolithic era, tools of bones, ivory, wood and others became common for use by man. According to Christians the angels in heaven bowed before God and the indigenous religious people of the upper Paleolithic era believed the spirits also bow to God before anything could be done by them. ( Charles, MEE 2005)

### **1.1 Background of the study**

The researcher, once a teacher was posted to Dompim No 1 in the Western Region of Ghana, in the Mpohor Wassa East District by the Ghana Education Service in the year 1998. He was inspired by the kind of art produced by the artists in the community. Even though not an indigene of Dompim No1 he found the cultural life of the people most interesting and educative. The researcher decided to probe into the production of the arts. In spite of the interesting and educative nature of the arts he learnt that most of the youth

in the society appeared not to realize the importance of the interesting and educational aspects of the Religious practices and beliefs on their art. Most of them were not prepared to study the art and the practices in order to develop socially and economically but were ready to seek greener pastures in the cities for non existing jobs. This was due to the fact that most of them lack the strong sense of cultural ingenuity taught by the religious values and practices of their art forms. Also, those who were ready to stay and work were faced with some taboos (such as the ban on not going to farm or bush on Thursday a day set aside for the gods) in connection with the acquisition of materials.

Therefore some understanding and awareness are needed to let time realize the need to stay and help build the community. The ceremonies associated with the *Apaho Afahye* festival of the people and their cycle of life heightened the researcher's curiosity.

Oral Tradition has it is that, Dompim No1 community from the 1970's was once the leading community with high sense of indigenous Religious practices, beliefs, morals and values which imparted positively on the art industry in the Mpohor Wassa East District in the Western Region of Ghana. This saw the community producing large numbers of artifacts such as sculptures, ceramics, textiles, and others. There were lots of development in the living standard of the people and they had a high sense of moral values. Now the situation is not the same, the place is almost deserted and robbed off its arts through mass migration of the youth to the city centers in search of non – existing jobs Another significant factor is the depletion of the forest due to bad farming practices and indiscriminate burning of the bush leading to near desertification.

The introduction of Abrahamic religions (Islam and Christianity) and insufficient monies paid to artists, craftsmen, have also led to the reduction of art and the value for indigenous practices and beliefs in the area. In order to check and improve on the art industry in the community, certain measures need to be taken.



First and foremost there is the need for awareness creation to educate the formal educators (those in the government schools) and indigenous craftsmen and women (those learning as apprentices) on the impact of blending the two groups of artists under the tutelage of both art teachers and chief craftsmen and women who are the heads of both groups. This will eventually help to revive the industry and see to the improvement in production of art works to meet international taste.

Secondly, the exploration of non traditional materials such as bondo,(auto body filler) glass, and others could be introduced to check the environmental problems associated with the traditional material such as wood, cement, Plaster of Paris, ivory and others. Also the artists must be made aware of the usage of art pieces by the Abrahamic religions, for example by the instruments, chairs, pictures, designs in the rooms, panel doors and others are artworks. This in effect will help artists appreciate and acknowledge their importance in the societies. It will impact positively on the economy of the community and reduce unemployment and check migration that leads to most social vices

in the city centers. For this reason some of the taboos concerning the acquisition of the art materials, the usage of some art forms and their associate practices need to be changed to improve on the creative abilities of both male and female artists in order to widen the scope of production to increase the living standard of the people

Dompim No.1 people are part of the ethnic group in Ghana called Wassa Fiase in the Western part of Ghana. They have played a central role in the twentieth century history of the people of Wassa Fiase and Ghana as a whole. The people of Dompim No.1 belong to the Akan people who inhabit Ghana. According to a legend, during the latter part of the sixth century, the king Gyankokra had to lead his people from Akyem in the Eastern Region to the west in search of home and peace.

The chief relocated his three kinsmen to Dompim No.1, Tarkwa Banso and Asousa. Each Kinsman was independent from one another and made his own decision under the presiding presence of elders. Dompim No.1 society individualistic, great tolerance, a deep aversion toward rigid political structures and lack of age classes. Everyone, including slaves participated in decision making. It is an egalitarian society.

The people of Dompim No.1 are agriculturists. They cultivate yams, maize, cocoyam, rice, cassava and cocoa. Oil palms are their major cash crop. The importance of the cassavas demonstrated in their biennial *Afahye* (festival) in which the first harvested cassava is symbolically offered to the deity Winnie whose veneration is a prominent

aspect of Dompim No 1 religion. Cassava was offered because it was believed to be the people's staple food when they came from Akyem Auakwa in the Eastern Region. Apart from farming, the people embark on fishing.

The foundation of Dompim No 1's social and political institutions is matrilineal lineage, paternal descent is recognized, and certain spiritual and physical qualities are believed to be inherited. Religion is founded upon the idea of immortality of the soul. The art of Dompim No 1 is very sophisticated and stylistically diverse. Agriculture is their economic power which serves the need of the people. The people have seen a lot of infrastructural developments in the community. Such developments are in the areas of education, health, roads, (reference could be made to plate 1) electricity, water and others. Atta Kwesi a stranger in Dompim No.1 believes that the place is worth living because there is total peace and harmony there. This background knowledge led to the in-depth probing of the cultural fabric of the community.



**Plate: 1. The main road from Dompim No.1 to Krofotrom**

**Source: Researcher's field survey.**

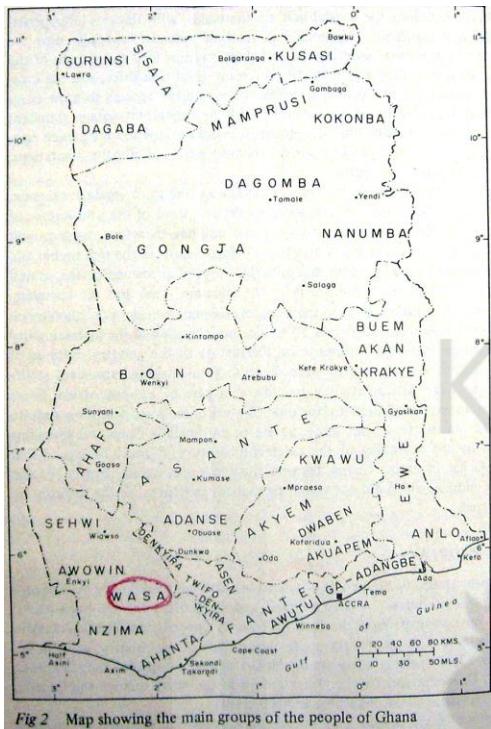
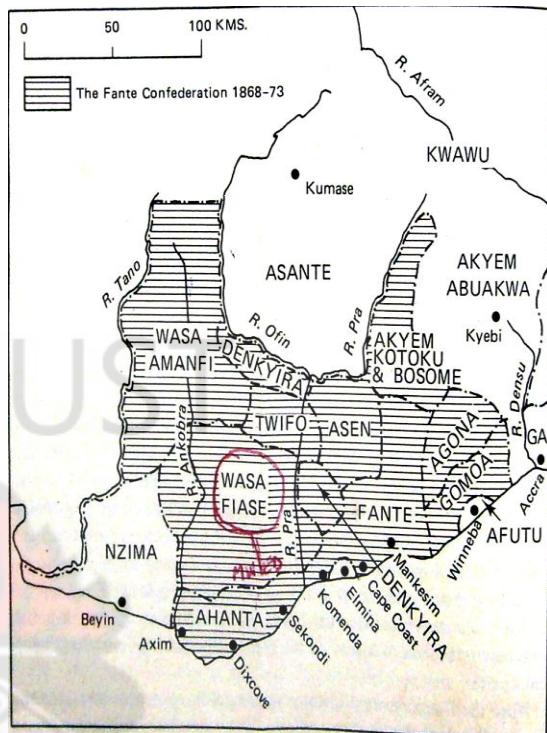


Fig 2 Map showing the main groups of the people of Ghana

**Figure:1.1 The map of Ghana.**

**Fiase**

**Source:** Wassa Fiase Traditional council.  
council



**Figure: 1.2 The circled area is Wassa**

**Source:** Wassa Fiase Traditional

### Definition of Religion.

Religion has been defined in a wide variety of ways. Some sources have tried to use formalistic doctrinal definitions while others have emphasized experiential motive, initiative and ethical factors.

Sociologists and anthropologists tend to see religion as an abstract set of ideas, values or experiences developed as part of a cultural matrix. For example, in Linbeck nature of doctrine, religion does not refer to belief in God or a transcendent absolute. Instead Linback defines religion, “as kind of cultural and or linguistic frame work of medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought...”<sup>(1)</sup> It is similar to an idiom that makes possible

description of realities, the formulation of beliefs and experiencing of inner attitudes, feeling and sentiment According to the definition it refers to one's primary world view and how this dictates to one's thought and actions.

Some religious scholars have put forward a definition of religion that avoids the reductionism of various sociological disciplines that reduce religion to its components. Religion may be defined as the presence of belief in the sacred or the holy. For example Rudolf Otto's idea of the holy formulated in 1917 defines the essence of religious awareness as awe, a unique blend of fear and fascination before the divine. Frederick Schleiermacher in the late eighteenth century defines it as a "feeling of absolute dependence".<sup>(2)</sup>

The definition above states in a common understanding that , religion is a set of belief's and practices often centered upon specific supernatural and moral claims above reality, the Cosmos and human nature and often codifies as prayer, ritual and religious law. It again encompasses ancestral or cultural traditions with a lot of arts such as painting, writings, history, mythology, sculpture and others as well as personal faith and mystic experience.

In summary, it may be said that almost every culture has religion in the above sense of depth dimension in cultural experiences at all levels- a push whether ill defined or conscious toward some sort of intimacy and transcendence that will provide norms and power for the rest of life. When more or less distinct patterns of behavior are built around this depth dimension in culture, this structure constitutes religion in its historically

recognized form.

Therefore, religion is the organization of life around the depth dimension of experience.  
(MEE 2002)

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem.**

Indigenously, religious practices including the production of religious arts are indispensable in the lives of the people of Dompim No1. The people have adapted some artistic traditions such as pottery, sculpture, weaving and others. Most of the artists appear to have been subjecting themselves to beliefs and practices relating to the productivity of some art forms, acquisition of materials and handling and usage of some artifacts. For instance, women are not allowed to carve, see some ritual art forms, handle, some tools meant for carving and smiting, whereas men are not allowed to do pottery. These serve as limitation to artists who want to express themselves artistically. However, religious practices have a significant impact on the art of Dompim No1. Such an impact could be seen in the areas of production of art forms, handling and usage of some artifacts which are meant for religious purposes and others.

Regardless of the obvious impact stated above, the interaction between the religious practices and the art remains noticeably misunderstanding by a section of the people of Dompim No 1 and outsiders. How has such situation of misunderstanding come about? The research seeks to find out whether indigenous religious practices of Dompim No1 have impacted positively or negatively on their art and how the findings could be used in

African art and culture.

### **1.3 Objective**

To study the indigenous religion of Dompim No1 in order to find out the positive and negative impacts which the religious practices and beliefs have on the people's art.



### **1.4 Research Question:**

Do the indigenous religious beliefs and practices in Dompim No 1 have positive and negative impacts on the art of the people of the town?

### **1.5 Delimitation or Scope**

The research is limited to the religious practices which have influence on the art of the people of Dompim No 1 from the 1970's to the present day. The researcher decided to work along religious beliefs as well, since it is through the practices the belief is realized.

### **1.6 Methodology**

1. Descriptive
2. Historical

### **1.7 Research Tools**

1. Observation
2. Interview

### **1.8 Study Variables**

### **1.9 Results and Analysis**

## **1.10 Limitation of the Study.**

It was difficult to take either pictures or draw some of the art objects which are deemed sacred. Sacred and mystical objects are said to be forbidden to be seen publicly. The Chief of Dompim No.1 and his elders were said to have sworn an oath of secrecy that compel them to up hold and defend their customs. Some of the pictures in the thesis are not clear because they were taking without aiming at the figures. If the custodians of the arts were to have seen the researcher taking photographs, it would have amounted to breaking a taboo and the out come would have been unbearable. An enculturation belief hinders access to some information of facts which would have further enriched the cultural appreciation of Dompim No.1, and beef – up the historical data of the district as well as Ghana through information elicited.

## **1.11 Purpose of the Study**

1. To bridge the gap between females and males in the production of art and again thesis afford both sexes the ability to improve upon their creative thinking and express themselves artistically in Dompim No 1.
2. The thesis will help some of the youth in Dompim No 1 to develop economically in order not to leave home for the cities in search of non existing jobs.
3. The study will help bring valuable information on religious practices and beliefs in order to heighten the understanding of knowledge of the people interested in history and culture.
4. The study will assist to shape the skill of the artists in Dompim No1 and beyond,
5. The thesis can be used as a reference material in research by students, and researchers

## **1.12 Organization of rest of the text**

### **Chapter One**

This is an introduction to the study. It dealt with the background to the study, definition of religion, delimitation, purpose of the study, statement of the problem and research question. Subsequently, it gave room for objective, limitations, research methodology, justification of research methods, research tools, study variables, results analysis, organization of text and summary of discussion.

### **Chapter Two:**

A Review of Related Literature. This was in two parts. The first part highlighted on the following: the impact of religion outside Africa, the religious inspirational themes outside Africa, religious practices on some Shinto art forms, the impact of Islamic religion on art, religious impact on architecture and Islamic architecture. The second part also dwelt on the impact of indigenous religion on sculpture, paintings, costumes, architecture and some others in some African communities. The following are sub-sets of the main heading.

The impact of indigenous religious mask s as mediators, divinities and their impacts on some sculptures, religious costumes, religious paintings on the body, religious shrines and summary of discussions.

### **Chapter Three:**

The chapter three dealt with the methodology of the thesis which includes the research method (Descriptive and Historical Methods), Justification of the Research Method,

Research Tools (observation and interview) study variables, results and analyses summary of discussions.

## **Chapter Four;**

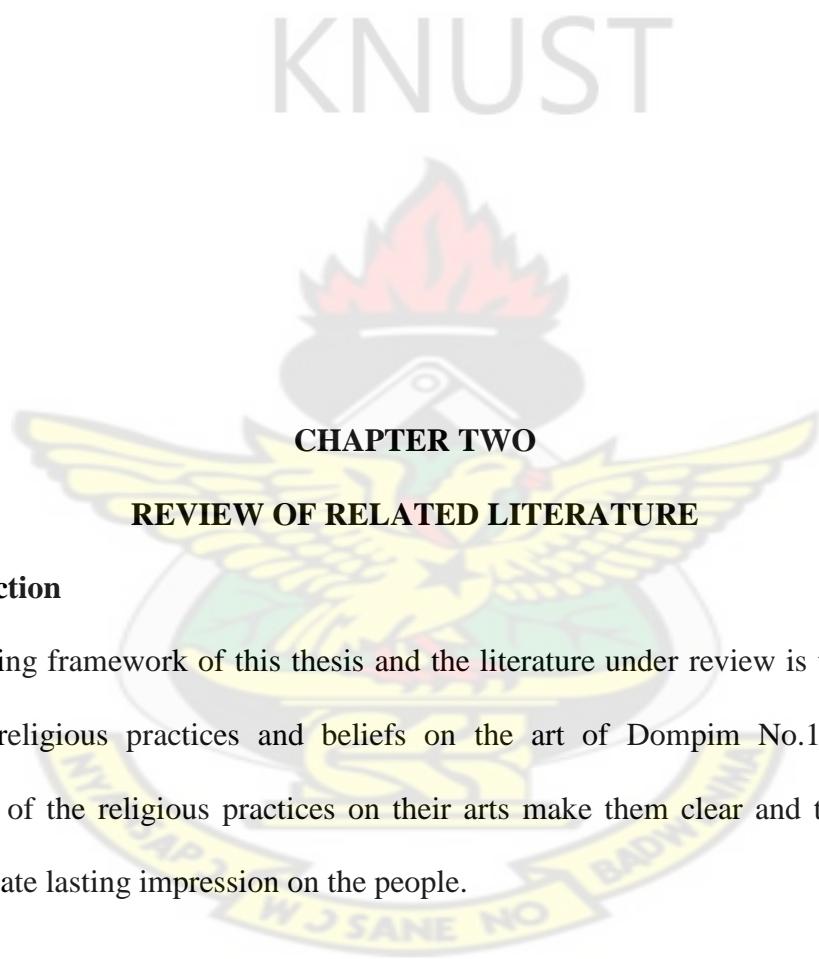
This chapter begins with an introduction and follows with the identification of the art which feature in the Religion of the people of Dompim No.1, various objects found in “Winnie Temple”, indigenous religious impact on textiles, religious impact on body arts of Dompim No1, the indigenous religious impact on architecture (the temple of Winnie, the temple of ancestors, and the house of the black stools and a fertility figure), and the indigenous religious impact on performing arts. The negative and positive attributes of the indigenous religion on the arts of DompimNo1 and summary of discussions.

## **Chapter Five:**

Chapter five entails discussion of findings, conclusions, recommendations summary of discussions and references. The referencing was compiled according to the respective chapters.

### **1.13 Summary of Discussions.**

This chapter one of the thesis covered introduction, the study background, scope, purpose of the study as well as statement of the problem. Also, it considered the objective and research question. Again it puts forward the limitations to the study and finally the organization of text.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

The underlying framework of this thesis and the literature under review is the impact of indigenous religious practices and beliefs on the art of Dompim No.1. The visual appearances of the religious practices on their arts make them clear and thus have the ability to create lasting impression on the people.

Various derogatory statements have been made about African indigenous religion and its art by some westerners. On this note Opoku (1977) confirms that:

Leo Frobenius stated that, he read from a German Magazine which says" before the introduction of genuine faith and higher

standard of culture by the Arabs, the natives had neither political organization nor strictly speaking any religion. Therefore, examining the pre - Mohammedan condition of the Negro race, we must confine ourselves to the description of the crude, fetishism, the brutal and often cannibalism customs, their vulgar repulsive idols... none but the most primitive instance determines the life and conduct of the Negroes who lacked any kind of ethical inspirational any form of religion.

With this under statement in mind, some Africans sought to believe and they specifically attached themselves to what seemed to them as 'crude', 'pagan', 'backward', 'barbarous', 'uncouth', 'heathen', 'rituals', which proved the supposed disjunction between African and European minds.

Again, the Europeans did not appreciate the fact that familiar, religious beliefs and practices found here in Africa were indigenous. These misconceptions are not only with Europeans or non -African writers, but with some African students, scholars, Christians, Muslims, who do not want to see eye - to -eye with the practices and the beliefs of the indigenous religion and the arts involved in it. Hefner (MEE, 2005)

This thesis is much concerned with the impact of religious practices on art in a way in which one can say " the aesthetic values of art and religion are useful". What is of interest is the effect of religion on art. Hence, the literature under review is classified into two parts under the following headings:

1. The inspirational themes-this discusses the subject matter and identifying religious art works such as, religious architecture, religious sculptures and paintings in some areas outside Africa, Africa and their production.

2. The effects of indigenous religion on some sculptures, paintings, costumes and architecture in some African communities.

## **2.2 The impact of indigenous religion on art in some part of the world outside Africa**

A philosopher in the nineteen century once stated that, the highest purpose of all art is to teach and enforce true religion. Some of the most important functions of arts are to uplift the spirit, inspire the mind and bring beauty to the home. (Hackett, 1996). In the troubled times one finds oneself, there certainly can be no doubt that, our spirits often need to be uplifted. The pressures of daily lives are ever- present. Just getting through the business of each day can be exhausting and depressing. Many of us turn to various means to escape. Some methods may uplift others. Many others cause further depression and even anguish.

In this environment, there are great needs for the minds to be inspired with fine attributes that life has to offer. The philosopher sums it up with this comment. “All fine arts from painting to pottery fulfill its noblest mission when it breathes the spirit of religion and administers pure pleasure and social comfort to man’s heart” <sup>(1)</sup> (Hackett, 1996), the next sub-heading talks about the religious inspirational themes on art.

## **2.3 The religious inspirational themes on arts outside Africa**

The impact of religion on the art has been strong in every period of time and in every instance of culture. Today, we are impressed with the carving and paintings of ancient

times. People are astonished about the energy and force with which those pre- historic artists expressed their beliefs and practices to convey the concepts of man's position in the world and his relation with the forces surrounding him. Even then oral tradition has it that, the artist's work drew the viewer to the visions of the meaning of life and his relationship with the divine.

As the researcher reviews the art of ancient civilization he realizes an obvious link between the religious practices and beliefs which molded the daily lives of the people. The art provided the visual means to first educate and then to constantly reinforce the religious practices and beliefs of the culture.(Seiber and Walker,1967)

According to Speed (1992), “the diverse religious sentiments of the middle East, India, China, and Japan all find their expression in their art works from ancient times to the modern days.”<sup>(2)</sup> Given this great force that religious beliefs and practices have always had on art, how is this force working in people’s lives today?

Brown (1975) asserts that; “the religion of the western world focuses mainly on the teachings of the bible, which encompass the Judaic and Christian beliefs and practices.”<sup>(3)</sup> For the culture, it appears there is no other source that inspired the minds of the artists as much as the Bible. For thousands of years, the teachings of the Bible have been rendered in a myriad of styles, each testifying of its power to touch the human heart and provide energy for the creation of the works of art that bring hope and beauty to lives.

The great tradition of religious practices on art flows through the catacombs of Rome, to the majesty of the great Gothic Cathedrals to the glory of the Renaissance, and even our own age of science and technology. Most art works created during the middle ages and into the Byzantine period reflected purely on religious themes, the portrayal of which was often un-naturalistic. Human figures were flat and long exhibiting no sense of weight and settings were super-natural with golden backgrounds and halos on religious figures. This unnaturalistic way of rendering the religious figures was based on the people's belief shaped by the biblical injunction which forbids the making of graven images (Exodus 20:3-4)

Beginning in the late middle ages with Giotto and being perfected as the Renaissance progressed, paintings and sculptures were marked by a classical influence called humanism, and themes, especially religious subjects, became increasingly realistic and naturalistic. Jesus was presented naturally to the point of being able to see the individual hair on his head in some works rather than being unrealistically super-natural. Paintings were less symbolic and catered for the everyday aspects of human life that could be related to mankind's religious beliefs and practices. (Adams,1999).

In Da Vinci's notebook, (The virgin of the Rock) he defends 'the art of painting as surpassing all human works through the portrayal of the philosophy of nature because it is a subtle invention which with philosophical and ingenious speculation takes as its theme and all the various kinds of forms, air and scenes, plants animals and grasses and

flowers which are surrounded by light and shade.”<sup>(4)</sup> The sciences and especially philosophy became increasingly important in humanist education during the Renaissance and da Vinci often exhibited these traits on a religious premise.

His virgin of the rocks perfectly encompasses all elements. He stresses that only painting can portray and give us an extremely realistic and deep portrayal of the virgin, the Christ child, the infant John the Baptist and angel all connected to each other in some way through gestures (Brown, 1975) (see plate:2.1).



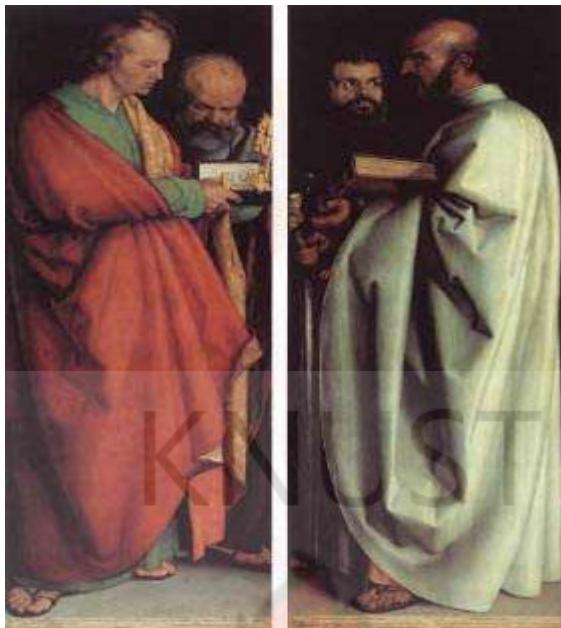
**Plate: 2.1.The virgin, the Christ child, and the Infant John the Baptist and the Angel.**

**Source: Wikipedia. Org**

In religious paintings and sculptures the drama and emotion were expressed in human term. Man was painted or sculpted as a creature with power, energy, and gravity. Women

were generally omitted from such characterization. These re-emphasizes that most of the art produced during that period were on religious themes. Good examples of these works are the sacrifice of Isaac, the meeting of Solomon and Sheba on the east door of the Florence Baptistry. (Adams, 1999).

Durer, an early supporter of Luther, arguing that salvation came through grace and faith alone based on his understanding of a biblical teachings, symbolically portrayed his doctrine in his painting, “Four Apostles,” a striking naturalist portrayal of Peter, John, Paul and Mark. More importantly his work is filled with deep expression of the new reformist beliefs and practices. John the Evangelist and Saint Peter appear on the left hand side of the panel (see plate2.2); they have been placed in such a way that, John is in front of Peter who represents the Catholic Church. On the right are Mark and Paul, John and Peter reading from the Bible which is opened at John’s gospel in the New Testament. It looks as if John is sharing the Bible message with Peter, undoubtedly emphasizing that the only source of religious truth is the word of God. (Adam,1999). The extreme naturalism with which the four Apostles are portrayed has an almost psychological effect on the viewer, in that, like other naturalistic religious themes, works of the Renaissance, the viewer can relate to the figures as real people not just as men from the Bible. As religion is believed to be in most communities and ethnic groups, so it is with the Shinto in most parts of the world. Therefore, the next subheading will talk about Shinto as a religion and it has impact on art.



**Plate: 2.2 The Four Apostles.**

**Source: Wikipedia. Org.**

#### **2.4 Religious practices on some Shinto Art forms**

Purification is an essential element in Shintō. The Shintō elements that provide purification are water, salt, fire, sand, and sake (alcohol). Before praying to the Shintō deity, worshippers and casual visitors are asked to purify themselves (*Harai*) of impurity. The act of cleansing or exorcising impurity is called *Misogi* or *Misogi Harai* and the actual washing of hands with water is called *Temizu*. Due to this religious practice most large shrines have a stone wash basin (sculpture) in plate 2.3 where worshippers and casual visitors rinse their mouth and hands before approaching the deity.



**Plate: 2.3 Purification Font**  
**Source: Wikipeadia. Org.**

Sometimes, in the shrine compound, there will be a fire burning, and people will waft the smoke over their heads (reportedly to catch the blessings of the deity or to burn away impurities), the flame from the fire has changed the actual color of the sculpture base on their religious practice of fire burning (see plate 2.4).



**Plate:2.4 Purification Font.**  
**Source: Wikipeadia. Org.**

Similarly, based on the people's religious beliefs, a pair of *Shishi* (lion-dogs; also called Koma-inu) in plate 2.5, traditionally stand to guard outside the gates of most Japanese Shintō shrines. In contrast, Buddhist temples are typically guarded by the [protectors](#), although it is not uncommon to find *Shishi* guarding temples as well. Furthermore, on the eaves of both shrine and temple roofs, one can frequently find carvings of this mythical beast. As guardians outside the shrine gate, one *Shishi* is depicted with its mouth open (to scare off demons) and the other with its mouth closed (to shelter and keep in the good spirits). Since Shinto religion has impact on their arts so it is with the Islamic Religion. The next subheading is the Islamic religious impact on art.



**Plate: 2.5 Guardian Animals.**

## **2.5 The impact of the Islamic Religion on Art**

As a religious practice, Islamic religion still forbids the representation of figures and so, naturally, to call any art which contains figural representation "Islamic" is erroneous and offensive to Moslems (believers). Muslims view Arabic as the sacred language and the writing of the Word as the highest form of art. Calligraphers hold a place of honor among Islamic artists. Two basic types of script are utilized in decoration: *kufic*, a very stylized, rather angular type of lettering and *naskhi*, a rounded cursive, flowing and easier to read. The Islamic Hadith or Religious Traditions forbade the use of animal or human figures for religious art as stated above. Instead, Islamic artists created rhythmic patterns of script, geometric designs, or abstracted plant and floral forms. One way to stylize vegetation was to render it flattened, without light or shadow based on their religious practices.

Also famous throughout the world were Islamic textiles, especially silks, these rich fabrics were celebrated for their texture, colors and woven patterns, which included calligraphy, abstracted plants and vine scrolls. Gold and silver thread often played a significant role amongst a riot of rich colors (see plate 2.6).



**Plate: 2.6 A religious design and naturalistic motif.**  
**Source: Wikipeadia. Org.**

In the Islamic world designs are created with rather religious aspirations; to enrich the practices and to enhance sacred structures and objects. They seek to enhance rather than to dominate. Islamic artists are not trying to reveal their own personality or to create art which tells a story of its own. These arts willingly take a secondary role because to Muslims, the lead roles were cast long ago. Allah is the personality of Islamic art and the Quar'n is the story. (Wilson,1998)

In their basic designs, there are explosions, twisting, bending and many others. The most famous Islamic motif, the arabesque, is a highly stylized version of a popular classical ornament, abstracted from the leaf of acanthus, based on a religious subject matter.(Drewer, 1974). This attitude led to unique and more decorative forms which were highly different from those of the western world. The difference in western art of the middle

Ages is evident from the developments during the Renaissance and the magnificent works of arts of the period which have had a profound influence on art since religion and art are inseparable. Most religions have a place of worship therefore, the impact of religion on religious architecture.

## **2.6 Religious impact on Architecture.**

Works of art exhibiting Christian themes and structures designed for Christian worship were created relatively soon after the death of Jesus. Most of them date from the fifth to the sixth centuries A.D.

Religious structures in the Neolithic period in England had a sacred significance and Plato, writing in the fourth century B.C considered the circle to be the perfect geometric form linking it with divinity (Langer, 1993). The circle was believed to be the divine property in the near Eastern and Byzantium religions. This was believed to have reflected in the churches and mosques, the dome ceiling which symbolized heaven. The architectures of the early Christian and Byzantine churches have their plans based on the Greek cross. To the Christians, the cross protects them from evil forces. In Early Christian architecture a distinct emphasis was placed on the centralized plan, which was of round, polygonal, or cruciform shape. Baptisteries and memorial shrines (martyria) were based on the people's religious beliefs. Martyria were erected on sites connected with certain events in the life of Jesus and other places held to be sanctified by the sacrifice of the martyrs. In such buildings as Saint Peter's in Rome and the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, where the worshippers worship and keep their religious items,

the martyrium structure and basilica were combined, creating a new formal synthesis of great significance for the religious architecture of the medieval period. Most of the Christian architectures have the symbols of cross on top. These symbolize the power and protection against evil forces and also as a sign of hope where there is no hope. (Beckwith, Early Christian and Byzantine Art 1970.) These architectures are meant to serve religious purposes. Therefore, the next sub-heading talks about the impact of religion on Islamic architecture.

## 2.7 Islamic Architecture

Arabic Calligraphy is used to enhance the interior of a building by providing quotations from the Qur'an chapter 35:4. Islamic architecture has been called the "architecture of the veil" because the beauty lies in the inner spaces (courtyards and rooms) which are not visible from the outside (street view). Furthermore, the use of grandiose forms such as large domes, towering minarets, the arch on top of their buildings where the star is said to represent the prophets and the half moon which stands for Mohammed who came out of the stars to out shine the rest of the stars, and large courtyards are intended to convey power (plate 2.7). ("Islam", the New Encyclopedia Britannica 2005)



**Plate:2.7 The Sultan Ahmed Mosque in Istanbul**

**Source: En. Wikipeadia. Org**

Buddha's life from the Jataka Tales; the highest level has no relief or decorations whatsoever but has a balcony, square in shape with round walls: a circle without beginning or end. Here is the place of the ninety-two Vajrasattvas or Dhyani Buddhas tucked into small stupas. Each of these statues has a mudra (hand gesture) indicating one of the five directions: east, with the mudra of calling the earth to witness; south, with the hand position of blessing; west, with the gesture of meditation; north, the mudra of fearlessness; and the centre with the gesture of teaching. Besides being the highest symbol of Buddhism, the Borobodur stupa (The House of Worship) is also a replica of the universe. It symbolizes the micro-cosmos, which is divided into three levels, in which man's world of desire is influenced by negative impulses; the middle level, the world in which man has control of his negative impulses and uses his positive impulses; the highest level, in which the world of man is no longer bounded by physical and worldly desire but religious desire.

It is a devotional practice to circumambulate around the galleries and terraces always turning to the left and keeping the edifice to the right while either chanting or meditating. In total, Borobodur represents the ten levels of a Bodhisattva's life which he or she must develop to become a Buddha or an awakened one ( plate: 2.8).



**Plate: 2.8 Devotional practice of circumambulating around the galleries and terraces.**

**Source: En.Wikipeadia. org**

Also, [Inari Shrines](#), which are dedicated to [Inari](#) (the god/goddess of agriculture), the shrine is typically guarded by two [Kitsune](#) (foxes), one at the left and one at the right. The fox are messengers of [Inari](#). At [Hie Shrines](#), which are dedicated to the mountain kami [Sannō](#), the shrine is typically guarded by two [monkeys](#) to ward off evil forces against the devotees (plate2.9).



**Plate: 2.9. Fox guardians outside the gates to the Inari Shrine (located inside Tsuruguoka Hachiman Shrine in Kamakura city)**

Source: En. Wikipeadia. Org

## **2.8 The impact of indigenous religion on sculpture, painting, costumes, architecture and others in some communities in Africa**

According to Mbiti(1997), Africans are notoriously religious and each ethnic group of people has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. These beliefs and practices have impacts on the production of art in each locality. This simply means most aspects of the African religious art especially the mask have varying designs with the characteristics of animals and humans. All face and head ornaments for African rituals and ceremonies fall into one of the following four categories, the ancestor spirit, the mythological hero, the combination of ancestor and hero, and the animal spirit ,and these African artists convey in their art. In accordance with the above the next sub-heading is going to consider the impacts of indigenous masks as mediators in some communities in Africa.

## **2.9 The impact of indigenous religion on masks as mediators**

Religious masks demonstrate the widespread significance of masking in most communities in Africa especially in the Sub-Saharan area. Maskers are believed to be visible manifestations of unseen spirits. Using their creative imaginations, humans give these spirits form, substance, style, movement, sound, color and texture. These can be seen in one of the ancestor's mask in Cameroon. The swelling organic volumes, rough texture and gaping mouth with interlocking teeth evoke spiritual power. This mask base on their religious beliefs, serves as a runner announcing the masking community's decrees in the market place. It also precedes community members on their day and night mission warning of their approach and enforcing proper behaviors. Bascom (1973).

There are animal images on top of the mask which are believed to be leopards. Leopards are a widespread of symbols of royalty and divine in the grass lands of Cameroon where a king is even addressed as "leopard". Indeed all of the leopard's qualities-pride, strength, speed, cunning, power and bravery. According to 'Bascom (1973), most kingdoms in Cameroon have masking regulatory societies closely aligned with the indigenous religion and the palace. The spiritual leader and any of the societies carry out their functions using the anonymity of mask and the cover of night both of which create an aura of power and secrecy.

The mask is believed to be used during rain festivals. The mask has slit eyes and nose which evoke a powerful and watchful presence. There are white colors on the face which

connotes the sacred realm of the ancestors and gods. The mask has raffia interlaced to join the headdress to signify power and fertility. Oral tradition has it that, it has always been the religious practice to keep the mask at an open place near the shrine when not in use. The mask appears to be at the mercy of the weather. During the rain festival a lot of religious dramatic and artistic performances such as painting of the body, drumming and dancing and singing are pressed upon to invoke the spirit of the deity concern.

With respect to the indigenous religion of the Baule of La Cote d'Ivoire a masquerade ritual called 'forth for celebrations'. This mask which, generate fear is intended to combat evil forces in times of danger. Such is the sacred Bonu Amwie simply shaped animal composite mask related to the horizontal helmet of the Gur and Mande speaking people who live north of the Baule of La Cote d'Ivoire. This mask is activated and empowered by sacrifice under the instructions from their spiritual leaders. The masker of Bonu Amwine comes out during the dry season festivals and for funerals of spiritual leaders such as the chief, the priest and the chief council members. It comes out earlier than the festival when something threatens village order. When worn by a spiritual leader at a funeral it is believed to help to banish death from the community just as analogous Senufo composite mask and even the more complex Dogon drama.

The Buffalo horn on the mask is believed to be the voice of Bonu Amwine masker with costumes of forest materials such as raffia, woven cane and a robe carry whip and lance to terrorize the crowd menacing people with wild erratic behaviour. The mask is believed to protect the community from hidden or overt dangers such as witchcraft, disease or

threat of welfare or catastrophe. When it is worn by the priest on Thursdays which is also a religious practice it is accompanied by drumming, dancing, which are artistically performed (Werner 1984). The mask is sprinkled with goat blood mixed with gin to evoke the powers of the spirit concern during the rituals

## **2.10 Divinities and their impact on some sculptures**

In most of the indigenous religious sculptures, ancestors and divinities are always in connection with each other. In the people's religious beliefs they represent most of their sculptures in human and animal forms as stated earlier. The sculptures are believed to be spirits and can see from both physical and spiritual world therefore, they are carved differently from European realism. They are abstracted in geometric forms, elongated in certain parts, stylized, distorted in forms and exaggerated in parts to the specification of the divinity in question. These are based on the dictates of the divinity through the *dibia* (the priest). For instance, the Gure have wooden figure call *mi iri ni* meaning (small wooden people) They are dedicated to the shrine to protect a spirit called *zuzu Mi iri ni* which gives people dreams in which the *zuzu* make known their wish and help the individual solve different problems. It is stated that, the priest pours drink onto the art piece and performs appellations amidst drumming and dancing with the devotees

Most African religious sculptures and paintings have the whole body stylized. They have interplays of angular and round forms that produce a rhythm and have three dimensional forms because the divinity wants it to be done in that way through divinations or dreams. They often have an erect posture just like a fertility goddess. For example the Nail figure,

of Congo people of Zaire called *minkisi minkondi* (*sing,nkisi nkondi*) is an essential container for powerful medicinal ingredients (*bilongo*). The iron blades, nails, screws, and, in this example, machine parts are driven into the figure during use.

In respect of the people's religious beliefs an *nkisi nkondi* may be used for many purposes. For example, upon concluding peace between two warring villages, representatives from both sides would first take a religious oath before the *nkisi nkondi*, and then each party would hammer iron wedges or a knife into the figure and fire a salute. Or, an oath sworn before the *nkisi nkondi* would make a title search on real estate unnecessary because with the driving in of a piece of iron, the title to the land would be secured through the generations (Laman, 1957). Or, a blade could be driven into the figure to activate its medicinal powers. If any of the parties goes against the ruling, misfortune befalls him (see plate 2.10).



**Plate: 2.10 Nkisi Nkondi Nail Figure from Kongo, Zaire.**

In Africa most religious sculptures are often decorated with some materials and their users put on costumes. Religious costumes are also part of art therefore the next subheading will consider costumes.

## 2.11 Religious Costumes

Generally Costumes are used as a means of protection against bad weather and to cover one's nakedness. However, in most African countries many costumes have spiritual connotations. Some dresses are stuffed with charms and amulets to protect the wearer from evil forces, enemies, and bad omens. For instance the talismanic smock of the priest of Dompim No1 protects him from all bad omens when performing his religious duties such as healing, arrest of witchcrafts and others. Also, some costumes may indicate the weaver's social position and religious domination. For example, the *Bamana* people of Mali have *N'domo* dance mask. This mask is worn to show others in the village that a young man has joined the *N'domo* religious society. The mask is worn from the head to the toe which means the mask covers the whole part of the wearer. The wearing of the religious mask and the drumming and dancing are artistically performed and are all believed to be religious practices.

Also the *Chokwe* people of Angola have a *Cikunza* mask which represents a grasshopper, and grasshoppers represent fertility. The same mask has a long

tapering cone shaped headdress represents the horn of an antelope, a symbol of power and virility. This religious mask is made of backcloth stretched over a wooden frame. The *Cikunza* costume is knitted of black, white, and red fiber. It covers the entire body including the hands and the feet to give the impression of a spirit presence. (Chanda, 1993).

Among the Bamana of Mali, paired male and female headdresses appear in *Chi-Wara* religious ritual performance. The headdresses express many levels of meanings. For example, the animals carved on the headdresses are composite of different species of antelopes (plate.2.11). These animals are said to be champion farmers. The male is said to represent the sun and the female the earth. The fiber costumes worn with the headdresses represent water. As there must be a union of water sun and earth for plant to grow. There must also be cooperation between men and women possessing the requisite physical qualities to ensure agricultural processes. The *Chi-Wara* activities are done with drumming, dancing, and singing artistically to employ the deity of agriculture in their festival. (Seiber and Walker, 1988).



**Plate: 2.11 A *Chi-Wara* Mask**

**Source: En. Wikipedia. Org.**

The Akans of Ghana, for example the Asantes, Wassa, the Bonu and others believe and practice religious rites on behalf of women in disassociating themselves from their dead husbands. The rite is done to protect the widows from the *sasa* (the spirit of the dead husband) of their late spouses. The widows use special costumes in performance of the rite such as wreaths of a plant called *asuani* (*Cardiospermum grandiflorum*) which are passed over the shoulders and crossed, onto the body. Similar wreaths are worn on the head. On their heads are small brass basins. Again they are stripped to the waist, wearing skirts of a russet brown. On top of their elbow joints are bound strands of *edowa* (palm fibre) these are believed to be accompanied with some dramatic artistic performances such as drumming, dancing and singing and these are based on the understanding of their religious practices and teachings. The body arts such as paintings on the body, scarifications and some

others are parts of body adornment with religious connotations. For this reason the next sub-heading considers the body arts. (Sarpong, 1974)

## **2.12 Religious Paintings on the Body**

In Africa, most religious body paintings are done with pigments of different media such as clay, vegetables oil, Kaolin, and others which some may be based on the instruction of the spirits concern. It may be for religious embellishment, healing, mourning and protection. These may be done during festivals or any time according to their purposes. For instance, the Chokwe of Angola and Zaire have a special religious ritual used to initiate boys into adulthood. The closing of the boy's initiation camp is marked by religious rituals and ceremonies. One of such rituals is the passing out ritual. The initiates' bodies are painted in special geometric patterns in red and white colors. The colors and the patterns are to disguise the boys and protect them against evil forces. The initiates are believed to be taught the religious songs, sacred dance and the secret of the cult. The songs and the dances are said to evoke the spirit of the divinity concern. These are done based on the understanding of their religious doctrine. (Fisher, 1984).

Also the Chewa of Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique have a masked association (*nyau*) which demonstrates important symbolic and religious ritual connotations between the initiates and the death. The priest commissions artists to come out with three different *nyau* marks. The initiates' bodies are painted with the designs of the three masks. In his study of the *nyau* as dramatic performance, Ntonga (1979) sees

the religious ritual as re-enactment of the Chewa primal myth. The paintings on the bodies and on the masks provide a context for the temporary reconciliation of humans with the animals and ancestral spirit that emerges from the bush. After the religious ritual, fire is used to destroy the masks which are believed to be the properties of the initiates and that of the belongings of the deceased. This religious practice is to recall the role of changing the original condition of the cosmos. It also serves to mark the end of the liminal period when individuals pass from one condition to another. (Hackett, 1996).

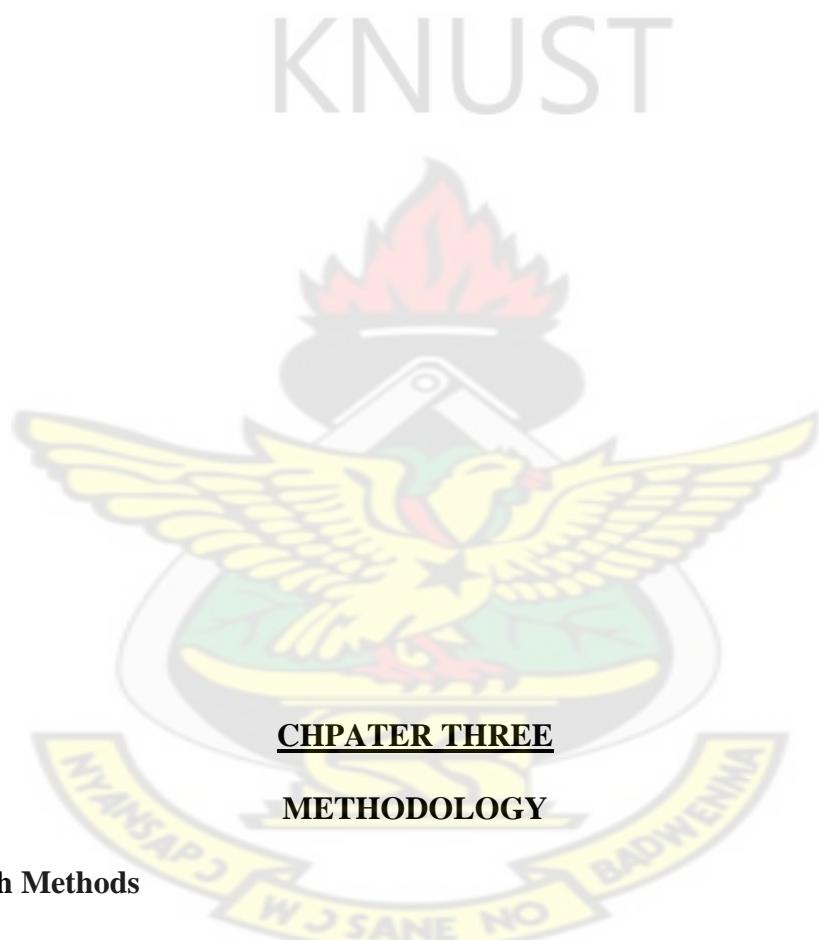
### **2.13 Religious shrines (Architecture)**

Religious architecture successfully incorporates spiritual, artistic and cultural influences. The centerpiece of a shrine is to house the religious artifacts for rituals purposes. For instance the *mami wata* shrine in Togo and Benin are painted both inside and outside the walls images of *mami wata*. She is depicted with long flowing tresses, covered in medallions and manipulating snakes above her head. As the lower half of her body is concealed. She is believed to be half woman and half fish. In the shrines are pots, cloth sculptured figures, paraphernalia such as comb and jewelry. There are also religious ritual items such as candles, incense, powder, drinks and others which are said to be used in religious healings, protection and others. It is believed that it has always been the religious practice that men do the paintings or women who do not menstruate anymore for the simple fear of neutralizing the shrine's potency. (Adam, 1985).

In Nigeria, *Olukun* the important deity of the waters in the Edo Kingdom of Benin has strong association with creativity. Many of his devotees are spiritually directed into artistic activities such as the paintings, arrangement of figures and fixing of any damaged part of the shrines. They are found in the village and the urban homes of the chief and priests. Hackett (1984) believes that, some people are chosen through divination to serve as decorators and hang a large piece of cloth behind the altar, some of the devotees create elaborate abstract design in the shrine, for instance squares, circles and triangles using ground kaolin to beautify the space all in the name of religion. The pureness and whiteness of the kaolin are believed to be important to *Olukun* worship and the various patterns are believed to be assigned designers of *Olukun* likewise its figures molded by artists.

## **2.14 Summary of Discussion**

The impact of religious practices on art has been strong in every period of time and in every instance of religion. Therefore, in this chapter attention was paid to religious inspiration on art of some part of the world including Africa and its environs. Identification of some religious arts such as sculptures, ceramics, paintings, architecture, body art, and others were also highlighted.



### **3.1 Research Methods**

This chapter deals with the research design which includes the qualitative, descriptive and historical methods. Again the research tools (observation and interview) were adopted in the research. Furthermore, primary and secondary data collections were administered, library research was used and data collection analyses and stratified sampling methods were also employed.

### **3.2 Qualitative Method**

The research area was visited. The qualitative method involves exit poll interview of the chief and some of his council members, Traditional Religion custodians, priests and spiritual rulers. The qualitative approach is one which the observations made are subject to vivid descriptions and not merely expressed in quantitative terms, Best (1981). With the qualitative method, the researcher made use of the rich description of the people, objects, events, the place, conversation and others. The idea was to point out a holistic picture of the art and the religion.

**3.3 Descriptive Method:** this method was very much used for this research as it helped to describe specific rituals scenes, art objects and events.

**3.4 Historical Method:** Historical method was also employed since most of the information was based on oral history and the literature reviewed were also documents written by scholars of the field.

### **3.5 Justification of Research Methods**

The descriptive method was chosen, because the researcher wanted to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena to describe “what exists” with respect to religious beliefs and practices and the art in order to come out with a history.

Also, the historical method was necessary to be employed by the researcher whose interest was to report events and or conditions that occurred in the past. There will be an

attempt to establish facts in order to arrive at a conclusion concerning past events, build the present, and predict future events.

**3.6 Research Tools:** The researcher employed the non-participant observation and the face-to-face interview for the research. The non-participant observation was used because pictures and drawings were not allowed to be taken and for this reason, most of the facts were based on descriptions which needed maximum concentration in order to get the facts right. The personal face-to-face interview was administered. Major informants were interviewed. They include family heads and cultural custodians. This was to ascertain the impact of indigenous religious practices and beliefs on the art of Dompim No.1. With this type of interview, the researcher traced and contacted the respondents and carried out the interview in which respondents and the researcher sat together, saw each other, observe each other's expressions and reactions to questions and answers. In the process, the researcher and interviewers developed very personal friendship, rapport, collaboration and exchange of information beyond the specific interview.

### **3.7 Justification of Research Tools**

The observation brings the researcher into contact in one way or the other with the phenomenon being studied. In this way, it becomes an effective means of recording what is observed more precisely and with a greater reliability because judicious observation directs the attention of the researcher to what to select, what to admit, and what questions are relevant to ask in specific research questions relating to particular research problem being investigated. The researcher used interview technique since it has a wider

application and questions can be explained.

### **3.8 Study Variables**

The researcher adopted both dependent and independent variables. Dependent variable critically analyses and identifies the arts used in the indigenous Religion in Dompim No.1. The independent variable sought to find belief, and practices of the indigenous Religion of Dompim No.1.

**3.9 Primary and Secondary data collection.** The primary data involves the information elicited from the field of research and the secondary fact findings are one of the goals of the present research. The objective was also that of assembling and utilizing available facts in the interest of critical analysis for the data like monographs and letter from the palace, clinic and schools in Dompim No. 1 on the subject were utilized to further inform the researcher .Data was also acquired from libraries in Sekondi Takoradi, Daboase which is the district capital. Other libraries such as K.N.U.S.T and university of Cape Coast were also used. National archives in the Western Region and the metrological service Department of Sekondi were consulted. Wide range of internet information was employed. Finally, analyses of the variables, considering pictures, were used to validate the information.

**3.10 Stratified Sampling:** The chief and elders, priest, clan leaders and some other people were the target population and they were grouped according to their status in the community.

### **3.11 Results and Analysis**

The findings of the project are presented in the form of analytic comparison and recommendations. Workshops will be organized for the stakeholders after the thesis has been approved by the educational body concern.

**3.12 Summary of Discussion:** This chapter answered the following questions: the research methods which included qualitative research, descriptive and historical methods. It again dealt with justification of research method, research tools and its justification, study variables, primary and secondary data collections, stratified sampling, results and analysis.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.0 PROJECT ANALYSIS**

The religion of Dompim No1 has made a significant impact on the art of the people. The identification of the various arts that play prominent roles in the religion of the town. The

arts are classified into visual, body, performing, and verbal art.

That is, it has influenced the creation and treatment of various forms of art including sculptures, ceramics, textiles, architecture, and performing arts.

The people of Dompim No1 employ religious art in their indigenous religion. The art which feature in the people's religion include environmental arts (visual arts). With regards to the visual arts, according to Osei Agyeman (1990) they "are the arts that we perceive with the eyes. They fall into two main groupings: the graphic arts (flat or two-dimensional surfaces) and plastic arts (three dimensional).

#### **4.I Plastic Arts. (Sculptures)**

The plastic arts include sculptures, some of which are ancestral figures mainly used in Winnie's "Temple". The sculptures are mainly in the round and a few in relief forms. The figures are made in clay and can be found in round forms. They are said to be used by only the elders of the clans in Dompim No1 and the chief priest and his assistant. The figures have their hands on their laps indicating humility. They are flanked by two sculpted cats which are believed to be the eyes of the ancestors. ( Kwabena Nkotah, the chief priest of the town) The two cats are also made in clay. The chief priest is believed to seek their assistance in times of trouble and also serve as a guard to the ancestors. (See plate:4.2 pp51). There are other sculptures in the Temple which were made of wood. These arts represent high standing ancestors of the various clans in the community. The figures are said to be made in wood called *sese*. There are also ancestral stools found in the stool room. They have been patinated with sooth. The stools are also made in *sese*

wood. According to Nana Wonkye an elder from Dompim No1, the *sese* tree is believed to possess some potent forces which surpass the powers of all other trees in the forest except *odum* and it said to be the abode of benevolent spirits.

There is also an *akuaba* (fertility doll) made in wood and can be seen in the ancestral room. It is meant for fertility and it also called *akuaba* in Asante and *abaduaba* in Kwahu (Osei Agyeman, 1990). Also on the pillars of *Besiwdan* Temple are relief sculptures made in geometric forms, such as circular and block. These religious arts are made in wood.

Other sculptures which are utilized in the place are drums such as *dondo*, *atumpan* (talking drums), *fotumfrom* and others. Another sculpture found in the Temple is a mask, and it is made of clay and fired. It is known as *Abownda Awie*. The mask's tongue protrudes out of it's mouth and two metal rings run through the nose. It has a beard and protruding round eyes with a snakelike design passing through the nose as well and ending right beneath the eyes. With regards to this mask reference could be made to (Plate 4.3, p 52).

#### **4.1a Ceramics**

Other plastic arts that function in the people's religion are stone, clay and iron beads put together. The chief priest asserts that the art is known as *Etia Nframa*. It is known by that name because the mask (*Abownda Awie*) is said to work through the wind. The clay for

this particular art was baked to look like stones. The beads are in the round form for the simple reason that in the people's religion all round objects are said to be divine. The beads are again called suman.(charm) (See Plate: 4.6 p56)

#### **4.1b Metal Arts**

Beside the ceramics and the sculptures found in Winnie's Temple, there are metal arts such as amulets, bracelets, necklaces, finger and toe rings. These are made of metals which are said to be worn mostly by the chief priest and his patients. Due to the people's religious practices most of these arts are seen to have been patented but on the normal circumstances they are not. (See plate 4.4, p 53). There are also two bronze bracelets in the shrine of Winnie one of which has the head of a man and two fishes and the other a human head and a fish combine. Subsequently, there are precious beads and gold ornaments in the temple which are worn by the priest as necklace when he is summoned by the wife of the chief of the community to naturalize any antagonistic powers which may challenge the powers of the priest and protect the woman from evil forces and bring blessing and good results such as child bearing, good harvest and long life.

#### **4.1c Architecture**

Beside the art mentioned above, there are also religious architectural structures. In the community there are three basic architectural structures which are used religiously. According to the people, the very most important of the Temple is the one which houses the accoutrements of the chief priest and those of Winnie, the deity of the community. This particular Temple was built of mud and is in the round form. The temple was said to

have been built by the people in the community through communal labour. This sacred house is roofed with raffia. The style and the technique used in building the temple are believed to have been prescribed by the deity Winnie. The people believe that, the circle or round nature of the building is a true manifestation of divine authority. The building is known by the people as *abosomdan*. It is in this temple that the chief priest does his secret consultations and divine intercessions. It is again used for healing and worship. The erection and consecration of the Temple reportedly involved some religious rituals and ceremonies.

Apart from the Temple mentioned above, there are two other temples one of which is called *Baamudan* as the researcher was made to understand. This temple is square in form and built of blocks. The last is the one in which the chief, his elders, the chief priest and his assistant meet on every Thursday to investigate what the future has in store for them. The pillars of the shed are carved in relief figures in geometric forms. The shed is roofed with raffia.

#### **4.1d Textiles**

Other classifications of the visual arts are textiles which are classified as body arts when worn on the body. The religious costumes are believed to be used mostly by the chief priest and his assistant. The costumes are mainly in two forms. They are a smock and a raffia skirt. According to Kwaku Badu, the chief priest's assistant, the smock was brought from the Northern Region of Ghana. This pre-supposes that, the shrine of Winnie, the supreme deity of Dompim No1 was brought from Northern Ghana because that place has the custom of building circular houses as it is with that of the deity. As part of the chief

priest's costume, a raffia skirt. As already stated the raffia is said to be divine.

#### **4.1e Pottery**

Another category of the arts, used in the religion of Dompim No1, and which should not be forgotten, is pottery. There are three main pots which perform different functions. They are made of clay and placed in Winnie's Temple. (See plate: 4.4, p 53 )

#### **4.1f A Mirror**

Regarding divination, the chief priest of Dompim No1, asserts that there is a mirror in the Shrine which reveals the level of one's life force and the intensity of one's sickness. (See plate:4.4, p 53 in the lower right corner)

#### **4.1g Body Arts**

In spite of the body adornments, stated above, the researcher learned of other body arts such as scarification, inoculation, body paintings, and shaggy hair. These kinds of art are found mostly on the body of the chief priest, his assistant, and *Kaya*, (born-to-die child).In view of the people's religion, there are body paintings done on the body of the chief priest, the priestess and the chief priest's assistant. It is also done on devotees who seek for healing and protections.

#### **4.1h The charm (*suman*)**

There is also a principal charm in the shrine known as *ngyirwaho sumam*. It is made of

wood and wrapped in a leopard skin. This charm embodies numerous other charms which are small in size. The functions of the *suman* are taken care off in chapter four.

#### **4.1i Performing Arts**

Also some areas of arts worth noticing are music, and dance. These arts are known as performing arts because they are performed by artists. Music that features in Dompim No.1 religion is both vocal and instrumental, accompanied with clapping. The musical instruments employed in the religion have already been mentioned above. The words of some of the vocal music are: *nana danda woho*, *nana teiteiabrew*, *nana buwomu*. (nana turn round, nana walk majestically, nana bend down) It is the shrine orchestra that plays the music. The religious dances are normally performed in conjunction with the music. Various types of religious dances are performed in respect of the worship of Dompim deities and in connection with the veneration of the town. The dances performed in connection with the worship of the deities include *ntwaaho*, *ntwaatum*, *asimpa*, and others. Those performed in connection with ancestral veneration *asimpa* and *ntinwa* dances. The dances are characterized by gestures which are usually understood by spectators. Like the vocal music the dances can be performed by both religious devotees and spectators.

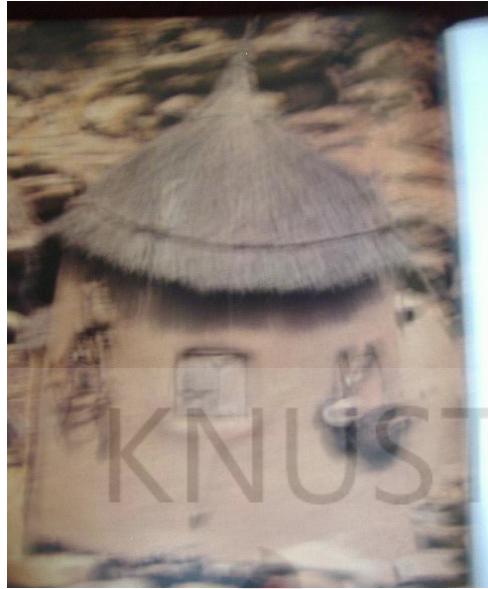
#### **4.1j Verbal Art**

Some categories of arts which feature prominently in the people's religion are verbal arts. The verbal arts stated here mean religious artistic expressions, such as idioms, proverbs, and poetic invocation used in prayer and libation. Some of the proverbs and idioms are:

*Fa eguan fitaa otua dua na ye fa pata nana* (bring a sheep for sacrifice) A typical poetic stanza uttered in the prayer and in connection with libation are “*asaase yaa nsa nie*”, “*twedaipon Kwame nsa nie*”(Earth god, this drink, Omnipotent God this is drink)

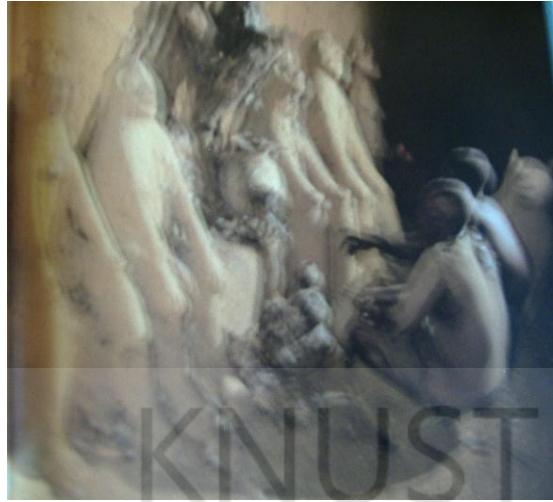
#### **4.2 Various Art Objects In Winnie’s Temple**

Based on the people’s religious beliefs, the royal family, with the assistance of the chief priest of Dompim No 1 has constructed a Temple which contains various art objects, some of which are shrines, into which Winnie and her offspring (also being deities) are invoked during worship and other occasions(see Plate 4.1). The art objects include small ancestor figures made of clay and flanked by two cats also modeled in clay, a mask dedicated to Abonwonda Awie one of the off spring of Winnie and a specific pot containing water mixed with chicken blood and *nyenya* leaves which is known as Winnie, the principal deity of Dompim No 1 and other two pots. Other art objects found in the temple are figurines in a brass bowl, which are used for divination, a pair of bronze bracelets, and one incorporating of a head of a man and two fishes and the other a human hand a fish combined.



**Plate: 4.1 The shrine of Winnie**  
**Source: Researcher's field Survey**

The ancestor images, produced as a result of the people's religious beliefs are believed to help the people to solicit the power and protection of the ancestors and to aid communication between the living and the dead. Also, as a result of their religious beliefs any time a crow dies in the town, the elder of the *Asona* lineage (being the royal family) presents a sheep to be sacrificed upon the ancestral figures. In addition, when a person of a high standing status dies in either the royal or the chief priest's family an ancestral figure is sculpted in wood and is added to clay figures for the purpose of veneration by the family members. Also, during the *Apaho Afahye* (agricultural) festival celebrated biennially, the elder sacrifices sheep upon the ancestral figures. Similarly, if any citizen or resident of Dompim No. 1 accidentally kills a crow, he or his family present a sheep to be sacrificed upon the ancestral figures (plate 4.2).



**Plate: 4.2. Ancestral figures in Winnie's Temple**

**Source:** Researcher's field survey

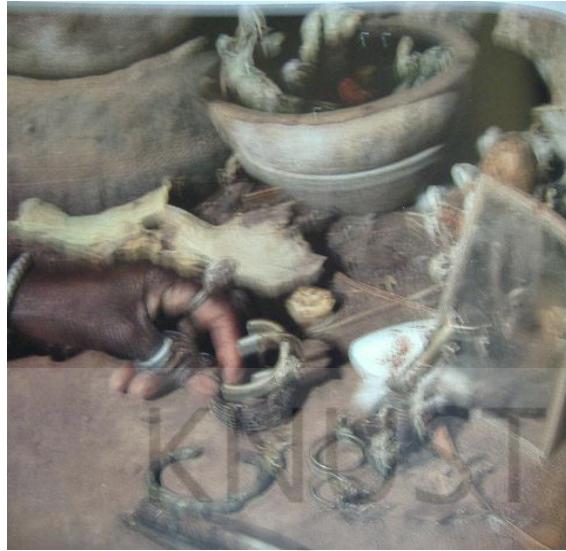
The mask made out of the people's religious beliefs and dedicated to the deity Abownda Awei is made of clay and is also called by the same name (that is Abownda Awei). According to Kwabena Nkota, the chief priest, the mask performs a religious function directed by the deity Abownda Awie. In this regard, in accordance with a revelation by the deity, a person has to wear the mask in order to be imbued with the deity's power to control fire outbreaks. According to the deity's instruction the mask is worn during the dry season only. The wearer, at such a time, scouts the community in search of unattended fires, and puts them off so that they do not consume the people's buildings and other properties. The putting off of the fires is especially done in the windy period when the weather becomes absolutely dry. This "ritual" having a religious connotation, and which utilizes art (that is the mask) is very necessary since thatched roofs abound. In the past, every roof was perhaps made of thatch, which was highly susceptible to fires, hence the necessity of instituting this "ritual" with the support of the deity Abownda Awei (see Plate 4.3).



**Plate: 4.3. The mask of Abownda Awie**

**Source: Researcher's field survey**

Regarding the pot and its content mentioned above, made in accordance with the impact of the religion on the people's art, the researcher was informed by the chief priest that, that is the main shrine of the deity Winnie, the principal deity, and also work through it to protect and heal the chief of the town. When the chief priest is about to appear before the chief, he smears his face with liquid contained in the pot. This is believed to enable him to detect any evil spirit that may be attacking the chief. This art is also thought to enable the chief priest to detect any type of sickness that may attack the chief. Also, when the chief priest applies the mystical liquid to his face his deity Winnie is believed to work through it to prescribe the sort of medication the priest should use to cure the chief's sickness (see Plate 4.4).



**Plate: 4.4. Clay pots in the shrine of Winnie “Temple”**

**Source:** Researcher’s field survey.

The figurines in the brass bowl (made in accordance with the instruction of the deity Winnie, as claimed by Kwabena Nkota, the chief Priest), are said to help the deity to reveal what is hidden to the chief priest. During divination the priest shakes the bowl containing the figurines which are numerous. He then throws the sculptures upward into the air for them to fall. Some of them eventually fall back into the bowl. Others fall onto the ground. He examines those that fall onto the ground, in terms of how they lie down, and informs his client about what his deity has revealed to him through the divination (plate 4.4).

With regards to the people’s religious beliefs and practices and in respect of the instruction by the deity Winnie, two bronze amulets which are made and put in the shrine are believed to arrest witchcraft. According to the chief priest, Kwabina Nkotah, the people believe that, the deity of witchcraft can be invoked through the wearing of the amulets by the accused. Due to the people’s religious beliefs, the accused is made to put

on the amulet which is dipped into the shrine of Winnie to ascertain the truth of the accusation. If the accusation is found to be true, the accused is said to bark like a dog. On the other hand, if the accusation is found to be untrue nothing will happen. Also, these arts are believed to be worn by the chief priest and his assistant Kwaku Badu to aid them to know and to tell the fortunes of individuals and the community as a whole. Similarly, if a native or a citizen from any of the nearby villages such as Krofofromu and others is sick and brought before the chief priest, he dips the amulets into the shrine of Winnie and asks the sick to wear it in order to help the priest to know the cause of the sickness and possible solution to the problem. For the bronze amulets reference could be made to Plate 4.4. Apart from the bronze amulets discussed above, there was a pair of bronze bracelets, one incorporating the head of a man and two fishes, the other a human hand and a fish combined. According to Kwabena Nkotah, the chief priest of Dompim No1 ‘bracelets such as these were worn by himself at a secret meetings with the chief and his cabinet. When he puts on the bracelets he becomes possessed by a deity inhabiting river Winnie and whatever comes out of his mouth is believed to have been said by the god of the river. Again the bracelets protect any member at that particular meeting against all evil forces. For the bracelet again reference is made to the arts in Winnie’s shrine (Plate 4.4). In addition to the other art objects found in the Winnie shrine was a string of precious beads and gold. It is worn as bracelet or necklaces by the chief priest’s assistant. The chief priest also wears it when he is invited by the wife of the chief of Dompim No 1. This is believed to naturalize any taboo (prohibition) which will run down the powers of the priest and protect the women from evil forces and brings blessings and good results such as child bearing, good harvest and long life.

There is a necklace produced as a result of the people's religious beliefs which according to the chief priest ( Kwabena Nkotah) is made of scared iron and stone bead. These stones according to Dompim No 1 mythology, are covenant stones representing good fortunes and hence the power of Winnie the supreme god of the land. The chief priest wears the necklace to meet Winnie, the principal god of the land at night. She is believed to appear in the form of a serpent licking her body from the head to the tale. As soon as she sees the priest wearing the necklace she begins to purify the people of Dompim No 1 from bad omen and to show her power over all the gods of the land by going round the priest three times and conjure instant sunshine for three minutes (see plate 4.5).



**Plate: 4.5.The stone and iron bead.**  
**Source: Researcher's field survey.**

At the back of the shrine are some *suman* which are called *Etia Nframa* and *Ngyirwaho* (a forest beast). The *Etia Nframa* is portrayed in baked rounded clay with holes in them, some geometric shaped wood also with hole in them, leopard leather and three branches

of wood with one knot at the tip are combined together. These are threaded together with a leopard skin. According to Kwaku Badu, the assistant to the chief priest of Dompim No 1, the *suman* is a protective piece and its wearer (being the chief priest during the early morning of the first day of the *Apaho Afahye* festival) cannot be harmed by any negative powers. Before the powers of the *suman* can be provoked, there should be a sacrifice of fowl to it. The blood has to be sprinkled on the *suman* and the head of the fowl tied to it before it is worn. It is worn around the neck of its owner. Kwaku Badu brings it back after it has performed its function and hangs it at the back of the shrine to continue its protective duties against evil forces.



**Plate: 4.6. The Etia Nframa**  
**Source: Researcher's field survey.**

The *Ngyirwaho suman* is a wooden sculpture wrapped in a leopard's skin, as pointed out earlier. This *gyirwaho suman*, which is the principal charm, embodies numerous other charms which are smaller in size. The *Ngyiwaho* (see Plate 4.6) is said to be the house of all the miniature charms and it is believed to give the charms powers to perform their

core function such as healing and protection. According to the chief priest, this art form is carried by a devotee for about one minute when seeking for protection against witches and wizards and healing of leprosy. Again it is believed to hide the top secret of the shrine. Furthermore, before the chief priest can give medicine to anyone, he has to sprinkle water on it to dilute the powers of the evil and brings them to their knees to beg for forgiveness. Its prohibition are as follows;

1. The mention of the word leopard anywhere around the shrine will neutralize its powers.
2. Nobody wears black clothes around its environment on Thursday else its powers will be neutralized and the god inhabiting it will leave it and will never come back.

In connection with the worship of the deity Winnie, there is a mirror in the shrine which stands in front of a small sacrificial altar covered in chicken blood and feathers. A pair of ancestor figures in front of the mirror is believed to be vehicles through which the ancestors advise the priest on any issue bordering his clients and the community.

#### **4.3 The Indigenous Religious Impact on Textile**

In Dompim No.1 community as it is with some sub Saharan African countries, the people attach great significance to cloth for burial. Kobina Nkotah, the chief priest of Dompim No1 declared that raffia textiles are one of the great decorative art traditions of the shrine. The chief priest uses it when he is called to duty. He claims that the raffia has magico –

religious powers which enhance his performances and is also one of the costumes used to train a would-be-priest. The most common occasion for their display is at funerals of chiefs, chief priests and his assistants and agricultural festival. Kwaku Badu declares that, the dressing of a corpse reflects both individual and collective religious beliefs about proper burial since misfortunes await the living if proper burial is not made, therefore, any high standing person in the community such as the chief, the chief priest, his assistant and any member from the royal family is buried with raffia together with the normal burial adornments.

As it is with the Kuba in Democratic Republic of Congo, Dompim No 1 people did have a strong religious belief that, the deceased will not be recognized by their dead relatives in the land of the dead unless they are wearing raffia cloth and it is a taboo to be buried nude. Furthermore, relatives fear that the spirit of the deceased may be angered and troubled if proper respect is not shown. Oral religious tradition has is that raffia is a very powerful material for the god of dance and fertility.

#### **4.4 The impact of indigenous religious practices and beliefs on body art of Dompim No1**

In respect of the people's religious beliefs and practices, there are body arts such as body paintings, hairstyle and scarifications. Regarding the body paintings as mentioned above, the chief priest paints his body with white clay mixed with powder which aids him to perform a special religious dance known as *nhwaaho*. The dance assists him to invoke the powers of a deity needed at that particular moment. Also, the painting of the body is

believed to be neutralizing all contrary powers and get him possessed to attend to his duties. Again as a result of the people's religious beliefs and in accordance with the instruction of the deity Winnie as mentioned by the chief priest, he and his assistant are mandated by the deity to have their bodies painted in white clay mixed with powder to strengthen their powers in most of the religious functions which entail coming together of the whole community.

A pot made out of the people's religious beliefs in the shrine of Winnie in Dompim No1, contains *nyenya* (a kind of small leaves) mixed with water and blood of a dog is placed on an altar as visionary shrine. The *nyenya* leaves in the pot are tied at the ankles of a newly selected priest (*okomfo fofo*) for strengthening his joints and to allow the deity which incidentally is this particular pot responsible for training the newly selected priest to stay with him for the rest of his training period. In addition to *nyenya*, *odum* (iroko) leaves mixed with white clay and white wash is painted on the body of the neophyte every Thursday, so that he may see any evil spirit that wants to harm him and nullify his powers and deal with them to signify the powers of the novice. Similarly, the chief's priest also paints his body on Thursdays with this same paint to give food to the Winnie and her off springs.

After a year of his training the novice's hair begins to become dreadlocks automatically which is an indication of his power against all witches and wizards and again an identification of a strong devotee who will be next to the chief priest in case of his demise . At the end of his training, the new practitioner dresses in full robe (*doso*) with charm upon him. He dances all day. Since the people believe that, the deity can be invoked

through drumming and singing. Kobina Nkotah points out that throughout his training the newly trained medicine men are instructed by the supreme god of the town to dress and paint their bodies in a manner to invoke its presence which the researcher calls it the ‘art of possession’.

In the people’s religion as stated by Kwaku Badu, the assistant of the chief priest pointed out, that for the devotee’s quest for much protection against witchcraft and any other contrary spirit, he or she may seek assistance from the priest. The devotee may be inoculated with black power by the chief priest. He may also be given waist beads, charms to be worn either on the wrist or the ankle. It is believed that these charms and the black powers inflict illness on the witch who attack those protected. This may result in the arrest of the witch. There are those who are given metal rings to wear to ward off the evil spirit or witchcraft. According to the chief priest the devotee with less life force is given scarification on his stomach, behind his waist and on his forehead. This increases his life forces and again fights the evil forces.

During the research, there were some people from Dompim No 1 who had marks or scarification on their bodies. The researcher enquired from James Adjei, a native of Dompim No 1 and it was pointed out that, their mother had still birth (born-to-die) or *Awombawoa*. Therefore these marks were given to them in order to stay and again not to be recognized by their spiritual counterpart in the spirit world. The marks were given to them by the chief priest and are given funny names such as *Kaya*,(stay here), *donko*(slave) *mooko kyenkyen* ( dry pepper) and others

The face mask which is principally a covering for the face and takes many different forms is universal and cuts across almost every culture throughout the world. According to Nana Wonkye an elder from Dompim No.1, during the agricultural festival (*Apaho Afehyaa*) of Dompim No1, the chief priest and his assistant put on face masks. The chief priest's mask looks symmetrical, frontal, and formal and balanced. It has a widespread use of multimedia such as raffia, wood, cloth and pigment. According to the chief priest, though the mask is worn during ecstatic dances, he seeks active communion with the spirits, in order to combat evil forces or to compel the spirit of the dead to act in his favor. During the festive dance, for instance, the masker uses his skill and the power the mask contains to invoke the presence of the spirit deity it represents. He uses the mask as a link between the supernatural and the human. Kwaku Badu, the chief priest's assistant stated that, his mask is for the purpose of honouring the gods and begging or even compelling them to grant fertility to the fields. His mask has a design on his cheek with curved lines to represent rain-clouds, a serpentine line winding and vertical strokes below showing the falling rains. The researcher was not allowed to either take a photograph or draw it because Kwaku Badu told him that it is a taboo to replicate the masks.

Another area where indigenous religion in Dompim No.1 is closely related to be the mask is the honoring of ancestors. The chief and his council members are known to put on masks each representing each clan's supreme ancestor during the *Apaho Afahye* festival. These masks representing ancestors are believed to be the habitats of the souls of the dead and are objects of veneration by each clan. Offerings are brought to feed them in

order to gain their favours. They hold a prejudice about the dead and try in this way to prevent them from harming those still living. The day before the actual festival, two masqueraders (the chief priest and his assistant) are said to parade the principal streets of the town at night. They are not supposed to be seen by anybody. The reason being that, they are art pieces which are hidden from public view and are said to have more spiritual potency than the visible ones. A person may interfere with the effectiveness of the mask if it is seen or it may bring harm to the person who sees it. Another version of the story is that, the two masks represent the spirit of the forest, and one of the objectives of the masquerade is to manipulate and calm the untamed forces. The masks and costumes are used to absorb the life forces of the mythical being that is represented and they are believed to protect the wearers from its power and evil forces. According to Maame Tawiah the mother of the chief priest, and the chief priest himself both from Dompim No 1, these masks are held as sacred objects and used in most of the religious ceremonies for the purpose of cleansing, honouring and blessing. Maame Tawiah again stated that she has a special mask which is supposed to be the guardian spirit of rain in the community. It is thought to control fertility and give protection to pregnant women. This particular mask is huge and the dancer wears it by carrying it over the shoulders with the body hidden beneath a big raffia shirt. This is again used in connection with the worship of the goddess of the river ‘Winnie’. The most unfortunate thing is that pictures and drawing were not allowed to be made because they are not supposed to be seen by ordinary people.

#### **4.5 The Impact of Indigenous Religion on Architecture**

Shrine (Temple) is consecrated to serve as the meeting point of human and divine forces. Tuner (1979) states that “shrines provide a break in the homogeneity of space, a fixed point, a centre whose ritual orientation and construction have cosmogonic value and are considered to produce the works of the god. In Dompim No 1 as well as most parts of Ghana and Africa as a whole the shrine is designated and decorated to represent the gods of the community. The chief priest of Dompim No 1 declared that, ‘the designation and construction were derived from the community’s religious historical experiences. The artistic forms in the location are believed to serve as enhancers and transformers of divine human relations. For this reason it is sometimes known as the “eye” or the “face” of the spirit’.

There are three indigenous religious shrines in Dompim No1 community. One of them houses the accoutrements of the chief priest, the other houses the ancestral figures and black stools at the chief’s palace and the last one is where some cult artists,’ elders of the community, the chief priest and his assistant meet for discussions and production of some public miniature works of art for barren couples and seek the future of the community from the supreme deity of the land.

#### **4.5a The Shrine of Winnie**

For the shrine that houses the accoutrements of the chief priest reference could be made to the previous sub heading of this chapter that is the shrine of Winnie. The shrine is built with mud and roofed with raffia. It is circular in form and has a big compound around it. The people consider circular forms as divine.

#### **4.5b The Temple of the Ancestors**

This is the men's meeting house and it is one of the most important buildings in the community. It has carved wooden supports which represent the seven clans and their mythological ancestors. Every Thursday the men of the cult meet and invite the chief priest to enquire from him if any taboo has been broken so as to perform the necessary rituals. According to the chief executioner (Kojo Abebrese) who was also seen as a religious leader, in the olden days, powers were believed to emanate from the roof of the temple to ward off evil spirit and also to protect and induce fertility. On the pillars of the shrine are carved geometric figures representing males and females who are believed to be the children of the founder of the community, (Kwaku Duah, a member of Dompim No 1 community). He further emphasized, that they are not just a reflection of power but recreation in the spirit world of an "ontological reality".

#### **4.5c The House of the black stools**

Behind the above mentioned temple of the ancestors is a shrine which is said to house a fertility figure and black stools. Both of the shrines share a common wall. The *Tufohen* (the next in command to the chief) claims that, these stools in the shrine are temporary abodes of the spirits of the dead chiefs. He indicated that, this figure and stools need to be revered else the ancestors will bring crises into the community, such as famine, plague, excessive death, drought, illness and poor harvests. He denies that, the ancestors and the shrines are for worship but rather venerated. The stools are used in the selection of a chief or a "nominal high priest" and the figure represents the god of fertility who is also said to

be the offspring of the supreme deity of the community. According to the *Tufohen* there are particular black stool and a mask which came along with the migrants and they are regarded as supernatural objects which enshrine and protect the collective soul of the community and ensure their well-being of every member of the community regardless of the person's religious affiliation. He asserted that, the mask is an embodiment of mystery and it should be respected and feared as such. Based on the people's religious beliefs and practices it is believed that this mask is the mother of all the masks in the community. It is believed to be worn by the chief priest at the climax of the *Apaho Afahye* to drive away all bad omens in the community. Also, it is believed to be worn by the chief, when the chief priest dies to retain his powers and to manifest himself to his successor if he has no trainee. Furthermore, the mask is believed to retain the powers of the dead priest when it is put in his shrine for two days so that his powers do not wander about to cause harm to the living.

When asked, how the mask looks like? Kofi Nankaba, stated that, it has an elongated and triangular nose, an exaggerated eye, an aggressive, unforgiving and vindictive appearance. This is so because the eye is wide opened with cowry shells and red calico placed in the eyes. The mask has incised patterns on the face. He believes that, the incision will aid the identification of the dead queen mother or the chief priest in order for her spirit to be accepted in the spirit world and bring peace, knowledge and blessing to the new coronated queen mother and or the chief priest.

In the shrine is a sculpted piece called *Akua ba*. According to James Adjei a nephew of the chief and a member of the *Asona* clan of Dompim No 1, the figure was made due to the people's religious beliefs to induce fertility in Dompim No 1. It is believed that sacrifice of sheep is made to the statuette when a female from the royal family is in search of a child by the chief priest.

In Dompim No 1 community, it is believed that the placenta of a new born baby is dried and used to prepare medicine for the ritualization of child bearing with the statuette at the shrine. This is done by the spiritual leader to induce fertility and protection. The people see placenta as a religious bond between mother and child, therefore its medical statutes is a bond between the community and the *akua ba* at the shrine which is responsible for child bearing. Yaw Mensah a sculptor from Dompim No 1 indicated that, the *Akua-ba* at the shrine is in mix-media such as clothes, wood, and nails. It is thought that this art work signifies victory over dead since pregnancy is considered to be a matter between life and death for all the relatives of the nursing mother and her child. From the above, the researcher realized that, the people of the community have a belief in the power of ancestors and of deities and supernatural spirit which controlled religious concepts with art forms. Through the intervention of these forces, the people derive a sense of protection and general well being. Certain fundamental needs which are common to all the people are particularly evident in the Dompim No 1 people's religious set up to implement them. These may be considered as the need for survival in the world in which uncertainty was always present and the need for continuity and stability among the people are considered paramount.

#### **4.6 The indigenous religious impact on performing art**

The performing art comprises of drumming, dancing, verbal art and singing. In Dompim No1, it appears most of their performing art are religious. The religious rituals, ceremonies and festivals are always accompanied by music, singing and dancing: these religious arts therefore emerged as a result of the people's religious beliefs.

On the day of the people's *Apaho Afahye*, a priestess by name Okomfo Adjoa together with the *Asafo* Company sings and dances. The *okomfo* is painted with white clay, and she wears charms as necklaces and anklets. According to Kwame Fynn, the head of the *Asafo* company stated that the *okomfo* dances to invoke the spirit of the River Winnie and to perform rituals to major deities to placate and thank them for granting and preserving prosperity. The *Apaho Afahye* is presumed to transform the town with costumed marching groups, singing, skits, and flag dancing and chanting. There is a typical flag dancing sequence, actually a brief martial drama unfolds to the rhythms of drums, clapping and gongs. The dancer proudly carries his banner into a skirmish. She then hides it, rolls it up and tosses it to the assistant who at that point is said to be a soldier for protection. She later retrieves it, unfurling it victoriously. Fynn declares that a specially trained flag bearer twirls, throws, protects and otherwise dances his flag which graphically broadcast the *Asafo* Company's religious and military prowess. This spectacular banner has names "river" or the runoff" or 'rain-water'.



**Plate: 4.7. A priestess (Okomfo Adjoa)**

**Source:** researcher's field survey.

A metaphor for the company's power to sweep obstacles away as they inundate their outclassed enemies. Yaw Badu, a member of the court carvers of Dompim No 1 indicated that, most of their art have always had and continue to have religious, ceremonial and functional origin. When they celebrate a crop harvest season and some initiation passages, some of the ethnic art objects played central roles. For instance, most of their masks are representatives of some sort of spirits and these spirits are believed to possess the dancers as they wear the masks at the masking ceremonies in the festival (*apaha afahye*) which involves the chosen dancer speaking and hearing from the ancestors. Yaw Badu a member of the chief's council in Dompim No1 stated that, this happens as the dancer goes into a trancelike state as drumming and dancing are performed by the *Asafo* Company. He stated that the purpose is often to receive the guidance and wisdom from the divinity responsible for farming. The messages received come out of the dancer's

mouth as utterances and moans. The translation is provided by a spokesperson of the priestess who accompanies the dancer and deciphers the grunts and utterances.

According to Kwaku Badu the chief priest's assistant, in the people's religious funeral rites especially with the ruling class, and the priest, almost the whole time is spent in firing guns, drumming, dancing and singing in the community. Oral tradition has it that the dead must be treated well with elegant funerals in order to bring good fortunes to the living. For instance, the Asafo Company does religious drumming, singing and dancing in accordance with the status of the dead person at a given moment in the community. The religious dance and songs are believed to invoke the deity during the performance to watch the performers back against any obstacle to send the dead into his or her grave without any hitch. In view of the people's religion, the Asafo company performs various musical types; the words of the songs are believed to be used to praise the god in question and sometimes when the chief priest is also possessed he raises religious songs to be performed by the Asafo company to ask for more powers and blessing to perform his priesthood duties such as to drive the spirit of the dead away peacefully. Therefore music, dance, drama and verbal arts will be considered in the next sub-heading.

#### **4.6a Music**

Performing arts, which feature prominently in the people's religion, are music, dance, and drama. The researcher's accounts in the previous sub headings in this particular chapter and chapter three have revealed that music is one of the most significant factors in the people of Dompim No1's religion. In those chapters, the researcher pointed to the fact

that music sometimes forms prominent part in the healing process of a victim, or a client. It is always emphasized in every activity that is deemed religious in the community. For instance during the *Apaho Afahye* festival where the chief priest dances to invoke the spirit of the deity, his devotees sing songs and sometimes he himself comes out with a song to be sung to ginger him to perform his religious activities. According the chief priest, sometimes he consults the deity through the singing, dancing and the throwing about his hands.

Also, the clapping of hands accompanies with the songs to accomplish a religious function and since music is seen as a force that draws the deity and all the good spirits to the religious functions to assist their devotees, music may be seen to have magico-religious powers which are used to attract the sympathy of the supernatural forces. The following words are sung to win the sympathy of the deities:

*Nana brebreu, Nana brebreu.*

Your people need blessing, productions,

fertility and above all sound and safe festival,

Grandmother save us,o

Grandmother grant us mercy, o

Otumfo nana Winnie protect your people.

Nana Winnie, your people thank you for answering their prayers.

#### **4.6b The Dance**

The duty of the dance in effecting the agenda of the religion is believed to be many, for it gives the devotees the access to take part in the religious activities. It was said that the dance acts in consonance with the music and drumming. Dance could be said to afford the devotees full participation in their religious practices. According to the people, there are lots of dances in the community. The under listed are some of the dances.

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. <i>Ntwaaho</i>  | -Whirling                              |
| 2. <i>Ntwaatum</i> | -Jump and fall.                        |
| 3. <i>Ntinwa</i>   | -Dancing from one Conner to the other. |
| 4. <i>Asimpa</i>   | -Dancing in a circle.                  |

Each of the dances has connection with the people's religion. According to Maame Tawiah, the priestess of Dompim No1, the dances which feature most in their religion are the *ntwaaho* and *ntwaatum*. The *ntwaaho* is believed to be done by the priests and their assistants. Maame Tawiah stated that, it is done by jumping and throwing of hands in the air with fly whisk to invoke the deity in question. The dance goes along with some body adornments and paintings.

In accordance with the people's religion the *ntwaatum* dance is performed at any religious function by every one who professes to be a devotee. But when it is performed by the chief priest, he is believed to have envisaged some calamities in the community. The priest does the dance with a lot of arts such as religious proverbs, idioms, body paintings and adornments. With regards to the ordinary individuals, it was said that they can put on any dress to perform the dance. The dance is performed by jumping and lying on the ground while music and drumming are pressed upon.

#### **4.6c Verbal Arts**

The arts are said to possess some supernatural powers which can attract good spirits and ward off evil ones. It was stated by the assistant of the chief priest of the community that, it is through the verbal arts that the chief priest communicate with the deities, does his consultations, heal, bless and communicates to his clients. When the priest is said to be possessed by any of the deities, he uses verbal arts to address the devotees.

The communication takes the form of poetic words done mostly in prayer, libation, sacrifice and invocations. Below are some of the words that are used during the course of prayer.

##### **(Fiase)**

*Twediampon Kwame ye kyere wo nsa nso yemma wo nsa,*

*Asaase Yaa, nsa nie,*

*Nananom nsamanfo nsa nie,*

*Obosomkokro Winnie nsa nie,*

*Abosom nnkumaa nsa nie,*

*Ye siere mmboa,*

*Ye siere mo-adom na mo hyira,*

*Obi'a ompe yempotum mone ne deno wiwinwon,*

*Ye siere mo adam mo hyira.*

##### **(English version)**

Dependable God, we show you a drink but we do not give you drink,  
The earth goddess, this is a drink,  
Our great ancestors, this is a drink,  
Minor gods, this is a drink,  
We need your help,  
We demand your grace and peace,  
Any one who wishes our downfall should be rebuked.  
We demand your blessing and grace.

Based on the people's religious beliefs, it is believed that the gods have listened to their prayers and have the hope that all they have said will come to pass.

#### **4.7 The negative attributes of the indigenous religion on the art of Dompim No.1**

Based on the people's religion, their agricultural festival is celebrated in every two years at Dompim No 1. Most of the religious art pieces such as masks, which are worn by the masqueraders, who are believed to patrol the community till the festival comes to an end and to neutralize any contrary spirit, are let to rot away and often exposed to the weather. This is so because the deity responsible for farming is believed to dislike old stuff with the exception of the masks which are kept at the shrine of the priest.

According to Kofi Andoh, an artist from Dompim No1, some court artists of Dompim No 1 are most of the time said to be commissioned by the chief priest to produce religious artworks .Kofi Andoh, again claimed that, sometimes he is instructed by the gods and the

ancestors to produce works in specific approaches which the researcher calls them “the surrealists approach” where his description seemed to be pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express the true function of thought. Some also gave accounts of how dreams constitute an important form of inspiration between the spirit world and the practicing artists. Kwaku Wirekoh, a court artist from Dompim No 1 attributes his creativity and originality to a “gift from an ancestor” other artists look askance at his work which lies outside the local tradition of making clay pots and other functional objects for the palace. He stated that there are other court artists who also claim that they also receive inspiration from God or the ancestors.

According to Nana Wonkye, an elder from Dompim No1, most of the court arts are often done in secret (such as ancestral figures), particularly in the production of objects relating to secret cult practices and masks which are believed to be the embodiments of the spirit forces they represent. The court artists in Dompim No 1 are believed to belong to a special professional clan which they refuse to name and they are said to possess special occult powers. They claim to have been born with the powers. They are therefore revered. Since every activity of their artistic production is done in secret, it discourages the young ones to learn and take their place when they are no more. Nana Wonkye claims that, the idea of secret production of works all in the name of religion has contributed to the unattractiveness of art to the youth. This has resulted in most of them traveling to the city centers in search of non – existing jobs.

At Dompim No1, some trees such as *odum* and *etie* are not supposed to be cut down for any production of any art form. If such taboo is broken sacrifice has to be made to Winnie the principal deity of Dompim No1 as stated above. Apart from the two trees mentioned above, any other tree that is to be cut down to make a mask or drum or any other art piece is to be propitiated. To this end a cowry shell is buried with prayer at the foot of the tree. Then a propitiatory sacrifice is made. The artist offers the prayer and sacrifices to the spirit of the tree to ensure appeasement, safety and completion of work. He pours the blood of a cock as well as liquor and palm oil onto the tree and his carving tools. According to Nana Wonkye an elder from the town, this taboo is mostly observed by the indigenous religious worshipers but if anybody with different religious faith is found to have broken the taboo he or she is forced to perform the rituals to appease the deity in order not to wage her anger on the rest of the members of the community. With the above religious practices and beliefs, the young ones in the community see such as ‘fetish’ and again complain of not having money to buy these items for sacrifices. With this view, some of them have decided to stay away from carving, modeling, and others.

#### **4.8 Positive attributes of the religion on the arts**

One of the primary importance of the thesis is to emphasize the religious significances of the art of the people of Dompim No1. The importance affect the religion and the art of the people which is distinctively noticed from the fact that no religious practices begin without obtaining first of all such art works as a temple, shrines and many others. For

instance most of the artifacts are embodiments of spirits which are used to heal the sick, the barren, the impotent and also assist in bringing fertility to the community. Based on the religious practices some of the arts which are used in healing have their colours changed from gold to almost black making them purely religious art objects which have not been tempered with.

In the people's religion, some of the arts were used and destroyed instantly. Artists are made to produce new ones during the next festival. To some extent, the artists, as they are made to produce, the more their skills are sharpened. There is a maxim which says "practice makes man perfect".

Due to their religion some of the art are used to communicate to the gods. For instance, dance just like music is a medium through which the chief priest communicates to the divinities. At a point some of the devotees are made to dance in honour of the deity of dance. As they dance, in natural science it is an exercise which puts the body in good shape. Similarly drums are also used to communicate in the people's religion.

Again some of the arts are used to educate. At the passing out ceremony of a newly trained priest, he is made to put on raffia cloth for protection. Both at the commencement and during the passing out ceremonies the young initiate is made to paint his body to ward off evil spirits. The initiate is taught so many things including religious dance, songs, and speaking proverbially and idiomatically.

Furthermore, most of the arts are used to work religiously to serve socio-economic purpose. During their agricultural festival, lots of arts are used before, during and after ceremony. The arts that are seen and used include body paintings, sculptures, textiles, performing arts and others. All these are done to increase yields in farms. By so doing they are able to eat, sell, and keep some for future use.

Moreover, some of the arts are used in the people's religious entertainment. For instance, as the devotees, together with the chief priest and his assistant, dance and sing religious songs, they are in one way, religiously entertaining them and at the same time inviting the deities to come to their aid. From the above, it is clear that, the people's religion have had positive impact on their art

#### **4.9 Summary of Discussion**

This chapter sought to identify the various arts that play prominent roles in the religion of the town, and the arts are classified into visual, body, performing, and verbal art. It again showed description of the various art objects namely masks, figures, amulets, bracelets, beads, pots, mirror and others found in the "Temple" of Winnie the principal deity of Dompim No1. It again dealt with indigenous religious impact on textiles, body art, performing arts such as music and dance and verbal arts, architecture and some negative attributes the people's religious practices and beliefs have had on their arts and the practitioners as well. The artistic creativities are bound up with religious beliefs and practices, communication, healing, fertility, and protection.

Divine inspiration is commonly invoked as the motivation for artistic expression, techniques, and styles. Furthermore, some artists, notably sculptors and ceramists at the court enjoy considerable status by virtue of their so called mystical forces; they are believed to manipulate the materials they work with. The next chapter focuses on the Discussions, Summary, Conclusion and recommendations.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents the discussions, summary, conclusions of the discussions in the thesis and recommendations. The researcher shall consider the following:-

#### **5.1 Discussion of findings**

- 1) Discussion of the findings. And comparing of the Literature Review and that of the field research.
- 2) A summary of the salient features,
- 3) The recommendations of the benefit of the study to the community.
4. Conclusion of the study.

Upon observing the sculpture pieces at the priest's shrine, the researcher realized that almost all the figures have been portrayed in the same styles and some areas of the figures were given more prominence than other parts. This makes the artist a copy artist. Therefore, creativity and originality are compromised. Oral tradition has it that, at Dompim No 1, they believe in one people one style. This reduces the artist to a craftsman.

The tools of the artists for the production of their art works are the same from the 1970s. Because the people believe that, the tools are temporary abodes of some spirits, they are not prepared to change them. These old tools such as axes, knives and others, their usage is very worrisome. A society that does not adapt to change is one whose future is believed not to be bright. If I may borrow the words of Charles Darwin the psychologist, “The might or the strength of a person does not change one’s situation but the one that adapts to change”. (Huber 2005 MEE) The researcher agrees with the psychologist that if the artists allow some level of changes to be made in their tools, it is likely they would see some tremendous improvements in their production of art.

Oral tradition has it that, most of the court art at Dompim No.1, as it happens in other Akan communities are done by men artists with the exception of pottery. Women could not do any art apart from pottery. Regarding this, the researcher enquired from Nana Wonkye an elder from Dompim No 1, and he stated that it was an instruction from the chief priest, who was also directed by the deity Winnie who is believed to be the spiritual founder of the community. The reason being that women menstruate, and it is a taboo for the sacred objects to be met with the menstrual blood. If it is done, it becomes a serious offence and may demand a sacrifice at the spot where it happens. This turns to infringe on the fundamental human right of the women to work and at the same time reduce their creative abilities. Even with the pottery that is meant for women, religion and taboos are prominent in the potters’ art. In Dompim No 1, clay and water are not fetched from the Winnie River on Thursdays. This is also because the god disapproves of that. It is believed that unfinished pots should not be taken away from the community. It is again a

taboo to count a pot before they are fired. Probably the people might have learnt this religious law from the people of Benin in Nigeria because they also believe in this particular taboo. (Chander, 1993 ). Pots are not made during *Apaho-Afahye* festival and also every Thursday. If any of these taboos is broken, it becomes a serious offense and according to the chief priest, it can cause famine, illness, etc, in the community unless the god is appeased. Regarding these, a sheep is killed and its blood sprinkled onto the shrine and the other art objects in the temple of Winnie. These have the tendency of reducing work output and the zeal to work more since works are not finished on schedule and again the lack of money to buy items for rituals in case any of the taboo is broken and it involves the destruction of animals' lives. (Kwaku Mensah an artist from the community )

Some of the artists in the town especially, Kwaku Wireko and Kofi Andoh assert that they sometimes have dreams, in which some divinities like Winnie, ancestors and others, instruct them on the techniques, styles and finishing of art works. This assertion may be doubtful. For this reason, the researcher agrees with Sylla (1988) on issuing a cautionary note regarding the over mystification of the creative process in Africa. Because it is not proper to imply that the artist is always at the mercy of gods or ancestors and therefore the artist should not always be seen as an imitator instead of a creator.

At Dompim No1, the researcher realized that some art works which were meant for religious rituals are left either to rot or left at the mercy of the weather. Therefore there are not many masterpieces for novices to develop from. This is a great pity, because due

to religious influence, the works are not allowed to be sold therefore reducing the interest of the artists to produce new works for the next celebration. ( Kofi Andoh, an artist from Dompim No 1)

During the agricultural festival ( *Apaho Afehyaa*) of Dompim No 1, the chief priest and his assistant put on face masks. The chief priest's mask looks symmetrical, frontal, and balanced. It was made of various forms of multimedia such as raffia, wood, cloth and pigment as already stated in chapter four.

During the research, there were some people from Dompim No 1 who had marks or scarifications on their faces. The researcher enquired from James Adjei, an indigene of Dompim No 1 and it was pointed out that their mothers had still births ("born-to-die babies") or *Awombawoa*. Therefore these marks were given to them in order to prevent their deaths. That is, in the people's belief, the scarifications are believed to disfigure the faces of the "born-to-die" babies to prevent their spiritual mothers in the underworld from identifying and taking them into the underworld. The marks were allegedly made by the chief priest and given funny names such as *Kaya*,(stay here), *donko*(slave) *mooko kyenkyen* ( dry pepper) and others. It is likely that one blade or knife is used to make the marks on all the" born-to-die" babies. This of course, exposes the babies to HIV infections.

## **5.2 "Review of Related Literature" (Chapter Two) Compared With the Field**

### **Research**

This part of the thesis is a comparison between the “Review of Related Literature” and the field research. This exercise is hoped to reveal a great deal of differences and similarities between the indigenous religious practices on art of the people of Dompim No1 and that of other parts of the world.

It is noticed from the “Literature Review” and from the field research in Dompim No1, as in other parts of Africa, that most art objects especially the figures and pots are believed to be vehicles through which the divinities sometimes transmit their message to their worshipers and sometimes doubles as shrines. We are also mindful of the fact that, most West Africans and people from Japan, Australia, Inca, Micronesia including the people of Dompim No1, regard the ancestors, deities and other spirits as superhuman that are invoked at the beginning of every religious ritual through the arts.

Both the Literature Review and the field research recollected the presence of religious temples where the devotees are believed to seek spiritual counseling, and also where the chief priest does his consultations. As it is in many parts of the world including the research area, most of their religious artists are said to be inspired by the divinities in their production. Also, most of them report of receiving divine instructions from the divinities as to how the works are to be done. As stated in the Literature Review and the field research, many of the religious arts especially the masks and figures were made in multiples of materials believed to have spiritual potency which are said to assist in many religious ceremonies.

As mentioned in the field research, some of the religious artifacts such as the masks used by the masqueraders in Dompim No1 are destroyed since the deity responsible for the festival does not wish to usher in the next festival with old masks with the exception of the chief priest's own. This appears not to be common with other parts of the world except in Cameroon where the people have masks responsible for fertility and power as stated in the literature review.



As testified in the Review and the field research, some animal sculptures are used to guard the religious temples and they may be produced in different materials such as clay, cement, and others. There are also, religious bowls meant for cleansing devotees before allowed to communicate with the divine one (see Plate 2.4).

As already indicated in the Literature Review and the field work, there were religious costumes said to be used by the spiritual leaders which are believed to protect them from any evil spirit determined to neutralize their powers. There are also other body adornments such as bracelets amulets, anklets, necklaces, and charms which are believed to be worn for protection (see Plate 4.4).

Comparing the field research and that of the Literature Review, it was acknowledged that performing arts feature prominently in the religious activities of both Dompim No1 and other parts of the world. Such performing arts are music, dancing and drama. These arts are said to be employed to invoke the deities. The arts are therefore a means of

communicating to the divinities and also a way of registering the grievances of the divinities for appropriate remedies to be administered.

The Literature and the field research have mentioned that, there are fertility figures in both Dompim No1 and some parts of the world. Most ethnic groups in Africa are highly interested in procreation; therefore the use of *abaduaba* as the people of Kwahu call it, is seen to be prominent in both the review and the field work. In Dompim No1, there is a fertility deity whose shrine is said to be in the stool room. This cannot be found in the Literature that the researcher reviewed.

In the field research it was realized that, due to the religious beliefs of the people of Dompim No1 any time a crow dies in the town, the elders of Asona lineage present a sheep to be sacrificed upon the ancestral figures. The same cannot be found in the Literature Review.

It was reviewed that the Bonu Anwine mask in the Ivory Coast, comes out during the dry season at funerals of spiritual leaders and festivals. It comes out earlier when something threatens the village order. The same can be said for the people of Dompim No1 where the *Abownda Awie* mask comes out during the dry season to put off unattended fire at night when it appears earlier than the actual time for the *Apaho Afahye* festival. Then something untoward may be happening to the community.

With respect to the literature Review and that of the field research writings form part of Islamic religion and in fact it is the most important of all their art. The writings are done in Arabic, the most sacred of all the art of Muslims. As it was reviewed, the same cannot be said at Dompim No1. In the religion of the people of Dompim No1, there were no forms of writing or means of recording information and events.

### **5.3 Summary of the Thesis**

Beside some little ethnographic studies made in Dompim No.1 and the review of related literature done before the main research, this thesis has shown that most people from the Western world appreciate indigenous religion and its impact on art. Though the effects of religion on human beings and divinities are integral parts of the people's religious practices, the art plays significant roles in accomplishing the people's religious beliefs. This is so because the art runs through all the facets and fabrics of the people's religion. Therefore, the probe into the effects of the use of art in the people's religion and the influence the religion has on the art are therefore the core study of this thesis.

The thesis sought to investigate the impact of the religion of Dompim No1 on the art of the town. Based on the people's religion, some of the arts that feature in their religion are environmental or visual arts, (for instance sculptures, paintings, pottery, textiles, architecture, performing art and verbal art), body art (such as hairdo, trinkets etc).

With regards to the functions of the arts, most of the sculptures serve as temporary abodes or shrines of the ancestors and divinities. For example the Adownda Awie mask

serves as an abode of the deity Winnie through which religious healings and protections are sought.

In view of the people's religion, paintings, both on the body of the devotees and on the walls of the shrines are believed to assist to invoke the divinities to act on behalf of the shrine attendants and the community. The paintings on the walls of the shrines are said to be done by women who have reached their menopause. Also body adornments like bracelets, amulets necklaces, beads, anklets, and so on are believed to protect, heal and perform other religious activities meant to sustain the interest of the worshipers. In connection with the pots in their religion, some serve as shrine just as the big one in the temple of Winnie and others are used to store concoctions meant for various religious activities such as healing and others.

During any of their religious festivals such as the *Apaho Afahye* a lot of costumes are put to use. One of such arts is the religious costumes of the priest. The raffia skirt and the smock with charms are his main costumes when called to duty. These costumes are said to protect him against any evil spirit and other malevolent powers while performing his religious duties.

In spite of some the art serving as shrines, most of them are kept in a room for safe keeping. These rooms are sometimes said to be 'temples' or shrines as well. For example the houses in Dompim No1 which house the religious accoutrements of the worshipers are believed to be sacred and also serve as a place where spiritual consultations are made.

The performing arts mentioned above, are said to be employed to induce the divinities when put to practice during religious functions and again serve as instruments through which some of the deities are communicated to.

Most of the religious arts are said to be made through divination and sometimes the styles and the finishing are said to be given by the divinities through the priest. For instance, the shaggy hair which the chief priest and his assistant carry are said to be mandatory for any one wishing to be a priest since the deity herself is believed to have that hairstyle and easily manifest herself through it. Occasionally, in Dompim No1 some of the religious art forms are said to be destroyed or left at the mercy of the weather based on the deity's instruction as stated already. For example, the masks which are worn by the masqueraders during the *Apaho Afahye* festival are said to be destroyed since the deity dislikes old masks to be used for the next festival.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

The study has shown that the indigenous religious practices of Dompim No1 impact on the art of the people. The study indicates that a strong relationship exists among art, ancestors, divinities, other spirits and the living. The statement is strongly backed by the way the society see the religious leaders and the supreme priest who happens to be the mouth piece of the gods. It is therefore appropriate to conclude that the religion impact on

the art of Dompim No 1, and therefore affects the way of life of the people with regards to rituals, festivals, ceremonies, initiations and others.

This study shows that religion is deeply rooted in the lives of the people, as it forms the subject from which some of the artists of Dompim No1 derive inspiration for their art works. Objects are produced which are vital for rites connected with their religious practices. The practices and beliefs which have strong power on the people reflect on their output of art directly. The association between spiritual beings and art is expressed in the inspirational dreams and divine commissions of which most artists from Dompim No.1 speak. The artists' over reliance on dreams have contributed to make them uncreative and slaves to the spirits and has influenced the religious systems and the development of the community.

In Dompim No1, some of the environmental arts, verbal arts, performing arts and others are clear demonstrations of art forms emanating from the practices of the indigenous religion of the community. In that town, the religious arts are executed on the prompting and in the service of rituals, a view which has made it difficult to see that art is more than being a slave to rituals as stated above. Religious practices emanating from the religious beliefs as stated in Chapter Four, have seen most of the religious arts in Dompim No 1, such as sculpture and painting in some forms described by the researcher as “Unique purity and frightening emotions” “Exaggerations of guilt” “grotesque imaginations” which are believed to be commemorative containers for the spirits.

For the religious arts of Dompim No 1, the objects embody in themselves the beliefs of harmony and a rational relationship between man and the cosmos. Now the image is significant only in so far as it symbolizes the Divine and is seldom interpreted in its formal expressive character.

It is remarkable that a number of decorative arts are a monopoly of women such as paintings on walls, not figures and decorations of the chief's palace. The men are responsible for representational paintings, sculptures and most of the arts which are believed to demand strength.

From the information gathered and the responses from the interviewees who share the assertion that their indigenous religious practices have both positive and negative impact on their arts, it is evidently clear that, the people again acknowledged that, without the art their religion will be meaningless. Therefore, they join the researcher in answering the research question stated in Chapter One.

In spite of the conclusion stated above, the thesis has shown that the people's indigenous religion has impacts on their arts. And it is being encouraged by the political leaders in the community and the government of Ghana, who are advocating the development of arts and crafts to create job opportunity for the youth through the Ministry of chieftaincy and culture and the Art Council of Ghana.

As the thesis has shown the persistence of religious beliefs and practices and almost lack of change in the people's way of lives, these have rendered both sexes inability to produce certain art forms.

Since, it is the aim of the researcher to promote the people's culture; the thesis has come out with valuable information on the people's indigenous religious practices that impact on their arts. As the researcher disagrees with the court artists on their sources of inspiration, the thesis has stated that the environment and the internet should be the sources from which inspirations could be derived in order to produce to meet international standards. As the research has found out and proven that the people are indigenous religious practices have impacted positively and negatively on their arts, the findings could be useful to students and researchers of African art and culture.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

Religion as an aspect of culture is dynamic therefore it must respond to change since man must not be a slave to religious practices. For this reason the ministry of chieftaincy and culture is to educate its members such as the leaders of tradition especially those in Dompim No.1 on the need to break the barrier of gender in the production of art. Its therefore makes it impossible for people to be creative and original in their quest to produce art. This will enable especially the women who are seen as the less privileged to exhibit their God-giving talents in order to gain recognitions and to be employed gainfully.

The people of Dompim No1, should also place premium on some of the good religious practices, values and beliefs such as the ban on indiscriminate cutting of trees, so that natural resources will be used to develop indigenous technologies and also learn from the past to build on the present to develop the future.

The Arts Council of Ghana in collaboration with the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Culture should organize seminars on the need to make public some of the ritual art forms such as sculptures, paintings, textiles etc, for the youth to pick inspiration from them. Again some of the religious practices governing the acquisition of materials for art, for instance the sacrifice that has to be made to the tree and others should be stopped. This will help the youth to go into massive production for economic gains which will undoubtedly, help in the socio-economic development of the Dompim No1 community in particular and Ghanaians in general. This will help reduce migration from the community to the city centers in search of non-existing jobs.

The government of Ghana must from time to time send resource persons from Arts Council to teach the young artists on how to manipulate some of the things in the environment to create designs instead of depending on dreams. The artists should be introduced to computers and teach them how the computer could be used. For instance how to mould art object with the aid of computers.

Art intuitions such as those in KNUST, UEW and the T-Poly are to take up the responsibility to organize talks and seminars for the traditional artists on how to elicit information from the internet and how the environment could be helpful to them.

The District Assembly should promote the art and craft industry to produce art for tourists to buy as souvenirs. This may increase the participation of festivals which will boost tourism in the District and Ghana as a whole. The urban areas are more receptive to new ideas with regards to art and its associate concepts and philosophies. Most art organizations are found in the urban centers. These organizations like ATAG should be assisted by the government to move into the villages especially Dompim No 1 to train some of the indigenous artists who cannot attend school to work to international standards and the artists must be educated that they should not leave some of their religious art works to the mercy of the weather since income could be made out of them. Those who can go to school must be encouraged to do so. The arts which meet international standards will serve as a source of revenue to the artists, the community, district and the country as a whole.

The chief, elders and the spiritual leaders should consider ownership of all old arts for them to be kept in one safe place or museum as it is done in the palace of the Asante King, Kumasi. This will help attract tourists and generate funds for the community for the development to success. This will also unify the people and strengthen the history of the community letting them understand their culture since some arts could tell the history of the community. The artists should be encouraged by the resource persons to buy new

tools for their works. Similarly, the resource persons should advise them to form associations which can source for loans for the expansion of their businesses.



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## **GLOSSARY**

**Fiase**:- It is the language of one of the Akan ethnic groups in Ghana found in the Western Region.

**Wassa**:- Is one of the Akan ethnic groups from Ghana.

**Nkukusa**:- The first three men who formed the nucleus of the king makers of Wassa Fiase Traditional area.

**Winnie**:-The principal deity of Dompim No1 who is believed to be the founder of the town.

**Mitimim**:-An offspring of Winnie.

**Apaho Afahye**:- It is an agricultural festival of the town.

**Abowonda Awie**:- One of the offspring of Winnie.

**Nyenya**:- It is believed to be a religious leaf in Dompim No1.

**Etia Nframa** It is a kind of charm found in the Temple of Winnie.

*Ngyirwaho*: - This is a charm which houses the miniature charms in Winnie's Temple.

*Ntwaaho*: - It is a religious dance done by the chief priest of Dompim No1.

*Abusua* - Family: members of a clan.

*Asona*: - A Name of one of the matrilineal clans in Akan.

*Okomfo*: - The traditional priest.

*Okomfoofro*: -A newly trained traditional priest.

*Doso*: -A special kind of robe used by the newly trained priest.

*Kaya or Donko*: It is a name given to a born-to –die child.

*Ntwaatum*: -A special kind of dance which is done in Dompim No1, where the dancer jumps and falls to the ground in honour of the gods.

*Ntinwa*: A dance done by moving from one Conner to the other.

*Asimpa*: A dance made in a circular form in the community.

*Besiwdan:* A shrine where the high standing personalities in the community go to discuss the what the future has in stall for the community, and again a place for making some religious art forms.

*Odondo:* A kind of drum which is put under the armpit and played with Sick made in the form of the figure seven.

## **ABBREVIATION**

MEE: -	Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia.
ATAG-	Art teachers of Ghana
T-POLY: -	Takoradi Polytechnic.
MWED: -	Mpohor Wassa East District.
C, I, D, A	Canadian International Development Agency
U.E.W.	University of Education Winneba.

## **APPENDICES**

### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The research questions are divided into two main groups of Historical and Religious Impact on the art. The historical questions aimed at finding the root of the people of Dompim No1, their migration trends. While religious impact on art questions unveiled the influence their religion has had on art of Dompim No1.

#### **Historical Questions**

1. Where did the people of Dompim No1 come from?
2. What caused their migration?
3. How did they migrate?
4. Who was their leader?
5. Who was the first chief of the town?
6. How was the chief selected in Dompim No1?

#### **Religious impact on art.**

1. How many art objects are in Winnie's "Temple"?
2. What work does each of the art in the shrine do?
3. How many deities are in the town?
4. What deity does each of the art represent?

5. How does the religion influence the art and their creation?
6. How many religious festivals do the people have?
7. How are the arts made?
8. How are religious arts identified?
9. What does the priest use to heal?
10. Where and how are the arts kept?
11. Why are the arts produced in these forms?
12. How are ancestors chosen?
13. Are all the arts documented?
14. What activities take place at the shrine on the eve of the *Apaho Afahye* festival?
15. Which of the arts feature most during the festival?
16. What is the mode of communication between the priest and the deities?
17. What are the roles of the arts in the religion?
18. What is the role of the pots in the religious activities?
19. What is the significance of verbal arts in the religion?
20. Identify the various types of metal arts in the shrine of Winnie?
21. In what ways are paintings important to the religion?
22. Do you have books where you record the names of your clients?
23. Do you have any kind of material in which a visitor is made to write his or her name?
24. Are there special drumming instruments used specifically for religious festivals?
25. What types of drums are used in the religious festivals?

26. Do you have special costumes for the devotees apart from those believed to be used by the chief priest and his assistant?
27. Are these the only art objects found in this temple

